

SAPPROS Nepal

Newsletter

April – June 2024

2nd edition, 20 July 2024



**Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal
(SAPPROS Nepal)**

39-Kha, Surya Marga, Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal

E: info@sappros.org.np | W: www.sappros.org.np

T: +977-1-532318 | +977-1-5342129



SAPPROS upgrading its strategic plan

On 20 April 2024, SAPPROS Nepal orchestrated a transformative Vision Retreat at the scenic locale of Hotel Country Villa, Nagarkot. This event brought together our esteemed board members and dedicated staff for a profound exploration of the organizational mission, vision, core values, and strategic themes.

This retreat served as a pivotal juncture, fostering a collective understanding among participants and our strategic plan team. It provided an invaluable opportunity to delve into our current trajectory and envision where we aspire to be five years hence, charting a course that distinguishes us from our present state. The retreat encouraged open discussions, insightful reflections, and strategic planning, reinforcing our commitment to sustainable development and community empowerment. This event will now lead to the development of a robust vision in line with the needs and priorities of the communities of Nepal.

Adding to the day's significance, board members and the Executive Director of SAPPROS Nepal proudly launched our inaugural newsletter, marking a major milestone in our communication efforts. This newsletter aims to enhance our engagement with stakeholders, keeping them informed about our initiatives, achievements, and future plans.

Highlights

- Transformative strategic planning retreat held
- GALS catalyst workshop organized
- Awareness on inclusive local level planning raised
- MCHN program resumes in Humla and Mugu
- Climate-resilient community assets advanced in Siraha
- Farmers trained on post harvest vegetable preservation
- Community feedback mechanism advocated in Darchula
- Academic/professional exchange between SAPPROS and TISS
- SAPPROS - Past, Present and Future



Launch of the newsletter.

GALS catalyst workshop organized

SAPPROS Nepal organized the second phase of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) Catalyst workshop under the "Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women" (JP RWEE) Phase II, with support from the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD). Held on 3-7 June 2024, in Lahan, the workshop brought together 25 facilitators from vulnerable rural women farmer groups. Facilitated by Tribhuvan Paudel from IFAD and SAPPROS Nepal's team, the workshop aimed to transform gender systems and behaviors through the GALS methodology.

Participants engaged in interactive sessions on topics such as the Road Vision Journey, Happy Family Tree, Leadership Empowerment Maps, and facilitation skills. The participatory approach ensured effective knowledge dissemination and practical application. Key takeaways included the potential of the GALS tool to foster economic and social empowerment among rural women by promoting mutual understanding, reconciliation, and trust within families. Facilitators are now supporting 400 additional households, demonstrating their commitment to driving women's social and economic development.



Group photo at the orientation program on Gender Action Learning System (GALS).

Empowering people with disabilities through inclusive planning initiatives



Participants after attending an orientation regarding annual planning processes of local governments at the grassroots level to create inclusive policies and plans.

In May 2024, the SAMANATA Program assessed the status of people with disabilities in Chautara Sangachokgadi Municipality and Balefi Rural Municipality. The survey revealed that 81 percent were unaware of local government planning processes, highlighting a significant gap in inclusivity. In response, the program launched initiatives to raise awareness at the grassroots level. Similarly, an orientation for Organization of Persons with Disabilities and Self Help Groups leaders provided detailed information on the annual planning process. Participants, like Raju Thapa, gained valuable insights and began advocating for disability-inclusive policies. These efforts have prompted municipalities to commit to more inclusive planning practices, benefiting 646 people with disabilities and 264 others.

MCHN program resumes in Karnali province

On 14 June 2024, the Mother and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) Programme resumed in the Humla and Mugu districts with financial support from the World Food Programme (WFP). This initiative aims to improve health and nutrition outcomes for mothers and children in these regions by addressing malnutrition and promoting the use of locally available nutritious food.

Key activities include the recruitment of 30 field-level employees and an orientation program in Surkhet on 18-19 June 2024. These sessions provided comprehensive insights into the MCHN program, best practices, and implementation strategies. The programme focuses on reducing stunting, wasting, underweight, and anemia among pregnant and lactating women and children under 23 months. A total of 7,958 beneficiaries are targeted, including 2,935 pregnant and breastfeeding women and 5,023 children.

The successful coordination with local health facilities and strategic discussions have laid a solid foundation for effective implementation, ensuring improved health and nutrition outcomes in these mountainous regions. SAPPROS Nepal in partnership with UN-WFP has been implementing the MCHN program in the Humla and Mugu districts since 2014.



Food distributed among the pregnant, lactating women, and children below the age of 23 months.

Advancing climate-resilient community assets in Siraha



The Joint Program on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE II) project has advanced significantly by signing the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Karjana Municipality and Laxmi Patari Rural Municipality. These agreements highlight a commitment to sustainable development and local empowerment through the construction of climate-resilient, labor-intensive community assets.

In Laxmi Patari Rural Municipality, the project is focused on enhancing agricultural infrastructure by building an Agriculture Product Collection Center. This center aims to improve market access for farmers and boost food security in the region. The project's total estimated cost is NRs 4,865,689.50, with Laxmi Patari Rural Municipality contributing NRs 1,442,236, demonstrating a significant investment in local agriculture.

In Karjanha Municipality, the project plans to construct three deep borehole irrigation systems and a market center. These boreholes will provide a reliable water source for agriculture and domestic use, essential due to unpredictable weather patterns. The market center will stimulate local commerce and support smallholder farmers. The estimated cost for this infrastructure is NRs 3,413,155 with Karjana Municipality contributing NRs 1,000,000. Two boreholes are already operational, benefiting over 40 farmers, 90 percent of whom are women, and supporting the cultivation of more than 20 hectares of land. These initiatives demonstrate a proactive approach to community development through strategic partnerships and shared financial responsibilities. By pooling resources and expertise, the JP RWEE II project aims to build climate-resilient infrastructure that supports local livelihoods. The recent MOUs underscore the importance of investing in community-driven projects to create resilient communities and enhance economic opportunities and food security.

Post-harvest vegetable preservation training organized

On 27-28 April 2024, a two-day training session on Post-Harvest Vegetable Preservation Technology was held in Naugad Rural Municipality-2, Dallekh (Darchula). Aimed at equipping farmers with essential preservation techniques for vegetables and lentils, the training emphasized integrating these practices into the Home-Grown School Meal Program (HGSMP). Twenty lead farmers from all nine Palika of the district, including nine women, participated in the event.

The training covered various aspects of food safety, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technology, and alternatives to chemical pesticides, promoting sustainable farming practices. Practical sessions demonstrated preservation techniques such as cold storage and vegetable drying methods, while field visits offered exposure to off-season production and IPM technologies.

The initiative was highly successful, as evidenced by farmers now preparing dried mushrooms and vegetables, such as dried sliced radish, for the HGSMP during the off-season, ensuring a variety of nutritious vegetables are available in schools. This training has significantly empowered lead farmers with advanced knowledge and practical skills, enhancing the HGSMP and promoting sustainable and safe agricultural practices.

The collaboration between local experts and farmers has laid a strong foundation for improved food security and agricultural resilience in the region. This training not only advanced the participants' technical skills but also fostered a community-wide commitment to sustainable agriculture and food security.



Community-based feedback management system advocated



On 17 May 2024, a one-day advocacy meeting was held in Mahakali Municipality 4, Khalanga, Darchula, to discuss the establishment of a Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) and resource allocation for the management of the Home-Grown School Meal Program (HGSMP). The meeting brought together 16 key stakeholders, including Palika representatives, Ward Chairpersons, the Nepal Telecom Head of Darchula district, and Palika heads of various branches such as Agriculture, Education, and Public Health. The primary objective was to advocate for the CFM system and ensure that resources were appropriately allocated for the sustainable management of HGSMP. The discussions focused on setting up a Toll-Free Number to address community concerns efficiently and improve the overall effectiveness of the program.



The meeting successfully laid the groundwork for the establishment of a robust CFM by preparing and submitting a draft Community Feedback Operational Guideline to Mahakali Municipality for review. Once finalized, the Toll-Free Number will be reactivated, allowing the Local Government to efficiently address feedback, including those related to the HGSMP. This initiative enhances the responsiveness and problem-solving capabilities of the local government, ensuring the long-term success of the HGSMP. The collaborative efforts and engagement of key stakeholders signify a significant step toward sustainable program management and improved food security in the region.

Enhancing resilience and livelihoods in earthquake-affected communities of Bheri municipality, Jajarkot

SAPPROS Nepal, in collaboration with HRDC Jajarkot and with financial support from the Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI), is implementing the "Supporting the Resilience and Livelihoods of Earthquake-affected Communities" (SRLEAC) project in Wards 1 and 2 of Bheri Municipality, Jajarkot District.

This initiative aims to support the most vulnerable households by fostering economic recovery and building resilience, ultimately establishing a foundation for long-term stability and well-being.

The SRLEAC project focuses on approximately 150 households in the most severely earthquake-affected areas. The interventions prioritize vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations, ensuring that livelihood assistance and recovery initiatives reach those in greatest need. Key activities include the construction of beehive shelters to restore beekeeping, the demonstration of climate-smart agricultural technologies, the restoration and improvement of livestock sheds (particularly for goats), the rehabilitation of drinking water supply and irrigation schemes, and the installation of electric cereal grinding mills.

By addressing these critical needs, the project aims to create sustainable income opportunities and enhance the overall resilience of the affected communities. The active involvement of local stakeholders, including the Bheri Municipality and Ward Offices, ensures coordinated efforts and the successful implementation of these vital initiatives.

This short-term project has been started from 17 May 2024 and will be completed by 30 July 2024. The pictures (on the right) depict the goat-shed and canal constructed under the project.



SAFE project launched in Rukum West



The Strengthening Resilience of Assets and Food Security Enhancement (SAFE) project has commenced in Rukum-West District, Nepal. Running from 10 May 2024 to 31 January 2025, this initiative, funded by the United Nations World Food Programme (UN-WFP), aims to uplift vulnerable communities in Aathbiskot, Chaurjahari, and Sani Bheri Rural Municipalities. The project is set to support 5,800 households, covering approximately 29,000 individuals. It focuses on improving livelihoods, enhancing nutritional status, increasing access to skills training, strengthening community assets and infrastructure, and reducing gender-based violence and protection concerns. As a response to the aftermath of the November 2023 earthquake, the SAFE project seeks to enhance food security among the most vulnerable populations, including the elderly, individuals with chronic illnesses, and people with disabilities.

In June 2024, following the staff training, inception meetings were held in the three municipalities to introduce the project to local government officials and community leaders. These meetings aimed to secure necessary support and collaboration for successful implementation. During these sessions, participants were briefed on the Joint Recovery Action Plan (JRAP) under the SAFE project, which addresses urgent needs while laying the groundwork for long-term resilience. The meetings resulted in the initiation of community asset and road selection processes, as well as the identification of beneficiaries for cash assistance. The project's comprehensive approach includes conditional and unconditional cash transfers, skill training programs, and infrastructure improvements, all aimed at building community resilience and enhancing food security in the earthquake-affected areas.



Collaboration between CECI and SAPPROS strengthened

On 24 April 2024, SAPPROS Nepal's Central Office in Kathmandu had the honor of hosting Mr. Marcel Monette, the CECI Interim Regional Director for Asia, and Mr. Deepak Khadka, the CECI Interim Country Representative for Nepal. This visit marked a significant step towards strengthening collaboration between CECI and SAPPROS Nepal. The representatives from both organizations engaged in fruitful discussions about potential partnership opportunities, focusing on making tangible improvements in the lives of people affected by disasters in the remote and fragile lands of Nepal.

As a direct outcome of these discussions, the SRLEAP (Supporting the Resilience and Livelihoods of Earthquake-affected Communities) has been launched in Jajarkot district. This project aims to support the livelihood and resilience of communities severely impacted by the recent earthquake. The collaboration underscores the commitment of both CECI and SAPPROS Nepal to address the urgent needs of disaster-affected populations, leveraging their combined expertise and resources to foster sustainable development and resilience.

The visit by Mr. Monette and Mr. Khadka not only highlighted the shared goals of CECI and SAPPROS Nepal but also set the stage for future initiatives that will benefit the most vulnerable communities in Nepal. This strengthened partnership is poised to bring about meaningful change, ensuring that those affected by disasters receive the support they need to rebuild their lives and communities. (Refer to the news number 12 for details.)



A success story of Ram Pari Ram

Ram Pari Ram, a 60-year-old resident of Sakhuwanankarkatti rural municipality - 3 in Siraha district, has dedicated her life to agriculture and livestock farming since her teenage years. She supports her family, which includes her husband, son, and daughter-in-law, by working on their 0.1 katha of land and sharecropping on an additional 4 katha. Her husband and son work as daily wage laborers, while her daughter-in-law assists with household and farm activities.

The JP RWEE II project marked a turning point for Ram Pari Ram and other women farmers. Through capacity-strengthening training in Agriculture Information Management Systems, Nutrition and WASH, and Insurance, they gained valuable knowledge to improve their agricultural practices. Despite facing challenges such as limited access to resources, Ram Pari Ram and many other women adopted strategies to mitigate risks in livestock farming. Recognizing the importance of risk management, she insured her two goats through a livestock insurance scheme.

Tragically, one of her insured goats died during childbirth. This loss impacted her family both emotionally and financially. However, Ram Pari Ram remained resilient, initiating the insurance claim process with support from the JP RWEE II project team. She gathered the necessary documentation and submitted her claim to the insurance company. Despite the challenges, she secured an insurance payout of NPR 9,000, which covered 90% of the insured amount.

With the insurance payout, Ram Pari Ram plans to purchase another goat and insure it to guard against future risks. Her successful insurance claim has inspired other smallholder women farmers in her community to consider livestock insurance, enhancing their financial security and resilience.

The JP RWEE II project's intervention has empowered women farmers in Siraha and Saptari districts, capacitating 120 groups with 3,458 participants, including 3,364 women. The project has also trained 50 participants on crop and livestock insurance, developing them as insurance facilitators who assist farmers in navigating insurance policies. This initiative has significantly contributed to the economic empowerment and resilience of rural women farmers in these regions.

The importance of mitigating risks with livestock insurance

The case of Ram Pari Ram underscores the importance of livestock insurance in mitigating risks and ensuring financial stability for smallholder farmers. In rural areas, livestock often represents a significant portion of a household's assets and income. Any loss due to illness, accidents, or other unforeseen events can have devastating effects on their livelihood.

Livestock insurance provides a safety net, allowing farmers to recover from losses without falling into deeper financial hardship. It encourages the adoption of better farming practices, as farmers are more likely to invest in high-quality livestock and proper care when they know they have some level of financial protection. Additionally, the process of engaging with insurance schemes educates farmers on risk management, further contributing to the sustainability of their agricultural activities.

For women farmers, in particular, livestock insurance can be a game-changer. It not only offers financial protection but also empowers them by increasing their confidence and decision-making authority within their households. Women who successfully navigate insurance processes become role models in their communities, demonstrating the benefits of risk management and encouraging others to follow suit.

The JP RWEE II project's focus on training and supporting women in understanding and utilizing insurance schemes is a vital step toward building resilient agricultural communities. By promoting livestock insurance, the project is helping to create a more secure and prosperous future for rural women farmers, ensuring that they are better equipped to handle the uncertainties of farming life.



Left: Ram Pari with her goat which died.



Right: She received compensation amount for her fully insured goat.

Insights from TISS students' practicum with SAPPROS Nepal



In April 2024, four students from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai, specializing in Social Work in Livelihoods and Social Entrepreneurship, embarked on a transformative journey to Nepal. Their mission was to gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural, economic, and demographic contexts at national, district, and village levels, with a particular emphasis on the conditions and practices of both organic and non-organic farmers. This Rural Practicum, organized in collaboration with SAPPROS Nepal, spanned several municipalities including Tokha, Tarakeswhar, Helambu, Indrawati, and Patalakhet. Through field surveys, key informant interviews (KII), and focus group discussions (FGDs), the students gathered crucial data and insights that shed light on the agricultural landscape of Nepal.

During their fieldwork, the TISS students identified numerous strengths within the farming communities. One of the most notable advantages was the prevalence of off-season farming. This practice allows farmers to generate income throughout the year, supported by a reliable water supply. Additionally, farmers have developed innovative pest control methods, studying insect behaviors to apply pesticides judiciously. This approach not only promotes sustainable farming practices but also aligns with SAPPROS Nepal's mission to uplift farmers by encouraging organic farming as a resilient livelihood. By adopting sustainable practices, farmers can improve their economic stability and contribute to environmental conservation.

Despite these strengths, the students also highlighted several gaps that hinder the progress of farmers. A significant issue is the lack of social networks among farmers like Mr. Govinda, who is not part of any self-help groups (SHGs) or collectives. Such networks are crucial for negotiating better market prices and alleviating financial burdens. Another critical gap is the insufficient government assistance in the form of subsidies. Providing subsidies for seeds, crop insurance, and ration cards for farmer households could substantially reduce production costs and enhance agricultural productivity. Furthermore, promoting organic farming and healthy food habits among the population remains a vital area for policy intervention. The practicum offered the students invaluable exposure to the field, allowing them to comprehend the dynamics of different demographic regions and the impact of SAPPROS Nepal's interventions. The insights gained from this undertaking underscore the importance of continuous support for sustainable farming practices and the need for robust policy frameworks to enhance the resilience and livelihoods of Nepal's farming communities. Key recommendations from the students include collaborating with local government bodies to form and implement policies based on farmers' needs, establishing seed banks to support the healthy food movement, and promoting ecotourism, cooperatives, organic farming, and micro-enterprises. These initiatives could create a synergistic model that boosts local economies while supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

SAPPROS Nepal : An Epitome of Sustainable Development Efforts

- Dr. Ek Raj Ojha, *Executive Director*

SAPPROS Nepal (Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal) has by now, in its 33 years of operation, emerged as a most distinct and decisive force in Nepal's nonprofit and nongovernmental sector, dedicated to uplifting rural communities through its diverse sustainable development related initiatives. Established with a vision to empower poor producers and enhance their livelihoods, the organization has evolved over the past three decades, expanding its scope and impacts across various dimensions of development. This brief article delves into SAAPROS Nepal's historical journey, its concurrent activities, and strategic focus areas aligned with the global sustainable development goals (SDGs).



Source: Google (Global SDGs), July 2024.

A. Historical Evolution and Developmental Activities

Founded in 1991, SAPPROS Nepal began its journey with a primary focus on socioeconomic empowerment, healthcare, and education. Over time, the organization recognized the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability with community well-being, leading to a strategic shift towards sustainable agriculture and natural resource management, green productivity, and balanced and sustainable development.

SAPPROS Nepal has played a crucial role in promoting organic and natural farming practices across Nepal. By advocating for methods that reduce reliance on chemical inputs and enhance soil health, SAPPROS Nepal supports rural farmers in achieving higher yields sustainably. This approach not only improves food security but also preserves the ecological balance of the country's diverse landscapes. Thanks to its unwavering commitments and contributions towards uplifting the living conditions of disadvantaged sections of rural communities in the country, the organization was received the renowned The Right Livelihood Award, also known as the alternate Nobel Prize, as early as in 2010.

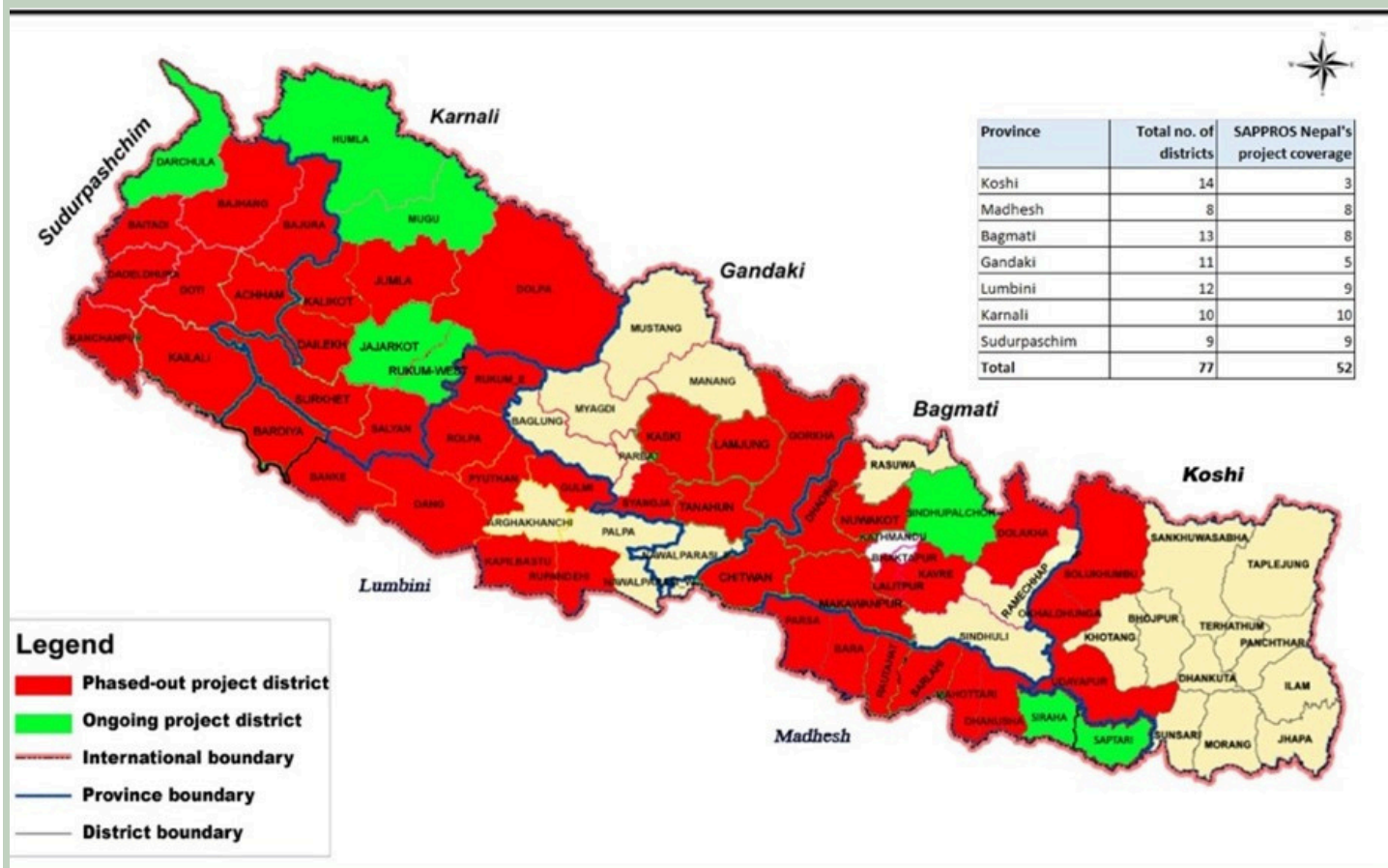
B. Core Achievements

Since 1992 till today, SAPPROS Nepal has achieved significant milestones across various thematic working areas. In organizational development and capacity building, activities such as social mobilization training, technical assistance for projects such as the Basa Project, and support for smallholder market access have benefited 48,703 households and 272,736 individuals with a budget of NRs. 197,236,872. Infrastructure and WASH initiatives, such as BHAKARI and UREKA, alongside educational projects, such as Purnima and Anukulan-X, have benefitted 123,573 households and 679,651 people, with NRs. 551,231,195 expended.

Food security and livelihood efforts, including projects such as Ratamate LRP and RWEE, have supported 61,086 households and 335,973 individuals, with NRs. 414,661,533 utilized. Disaster risk reduction and resilience programs, such as RECoVER and COVID-19 Livelihoods Recovery, reached 176,721 households and 971,965 individuals, with NRs. 1,404,608,521 disbursed. Education, health, and nutrition initiatives, encompassing HGSM and MCHN, have reached 146,815 households and 822,164 individuals, with NRs. 651,380,507 paid out.

In total, SAPPROS Nepal has positively impacted 556,898 households and 3,118,628 people across 52 of the total of 77 districts in the country (Map 1), through utilization of a total budget of NRs. 3,219,118,628.

Map 1: SAPPROS Nepal's Working Area Coverage in Nepal



C. Contemporary Developmental Thrusts

In congruence with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SAPPROS Nepal has prioritized the following crucial spheres:

a. Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID):

SAPPROS Nepal integrates green productivity initiatives that optimize resource efficiency and promote renewable energy solutions in rural communities. By leveraging local innovations, and appropriate, cost-effective, environmentally-friendly and sustainable technologies, the organization enhances productivity while minimizing negative environmental impacts.

b. Organic/Natural Farming:

Emphasizing the importance of healthy soils and sustainable agriculture, SAPPROS Nepal continues to educate and support farmers in adopting organic/natural farming practices. Through capacity building and technical assistance, it enables farmers to diversify their crop production packages and improve market access for organic produce.

c. Conservation of Land and Water:

Recognizing the critical role of natural resources in managing rural livelihoods, SAPPROS Nepal executes projects focused on land and water conservation. These efforts include watershed management, afforestation and reforestation programs, and sustainable land use practices aimed at preserving and enriching Nepal's biodiversity and mitigating adverse climate change impacts.

d. Promoting Healthy Soil and Healthy Food:

SAPPROS Nepal promotes initiatives that ensure the production of nutritious and safe food through sustainable agricultural practices. By advocating for balanced and organic fertilization, integrated pest management, and crop rotation practices, the organization supports farmers in enhancing soil fertility and crop resilience.

D. The Strategic Approach

SAPPROS Nepal follows a strategic approach emphasizing community participation and contribution, partnership building, and sustainable development policies and practices. By collaborating with local stakeholders, government agencies, and international organizations, the organization ensures the scalability and sustainability of its development projects. Through conduct of research, monitoring, and evaluation processes, SAPPROS Nepal continuously adapts its strategies to addressing emerging challenges, mitigating constraints and anomalies, capitalizing on potential opportunities, fulfilling the intended objectives, and optimizing the expected impacts.

E. Closing Remarks

SAPPROS Nepal strives to exemplify how grassroots organizations can drive meaningful change largely through sustainable development related initiatives. By focusing on SDGs, GRID principles, green productivity, organic farming, and environmental conservation, this 33-year-old noted institution in Nepal not only uplifts the overall living conditions of rural communities but also contributes to the country's broader developmental goals. As the organization continues to innovate and expand its reach, it remains committed to fostering resilient communities and promoting sustainable livelihoods across Nepal's diverse landscapes and their inhabitants. Sincere gratitude is expressed here as well for the generous invaluable financial and technical support SAPPROS Nepal obtained from over 35 partner/donor organizations, besides the amazingly supportive and supplementary participation gained from its numerous other like-minded stakeholders. We earnestly look forward to having an increasingly expanding, invigorating collaborative and cordial relationship with individuals and institutions devoted to attaining wide-ranging, deepening and sustained process of progress, prosperity and peace for all in our common home – the planet earth.

This article draws largely on facts and figures gleaned from official records and publications of SAPPROS Nepal. - Author.