1. Objective and relevance

The overall objective of this intervention is for a resilient livelihood and sustainable food security in Hansapur Municipality, Dhanusha District in the Terai Region of Nepal.

The intermediate objectives are:

1. By June 2023, SEIT’s administrative and organizational capacity have been strengthened ensuring a resilient and sustainable organization around *Belhi Integrated Rural Development*.
2. By June 2023, Dalit women and young farmers are empowered by transferring organisational skills, nutritional knowledge, and relevant agricultural skills to increase productivity and income opportunities.

**Context**

Socio-economic conditions

The community Belhi is located in one of the poorest provinces of Nepal (Province 2 in the South-East bordering India). Approximately 10,000 people live in the surroundings divided in approx. 1,400 households.

Farmers of Belhi are subsistence farmers and constitute 80% of the population. Their cultivation system is traditional and land productivity is low. Only 34,000 hectares (44%) are irrigated while the rest of the area depends on monsoon rainfall.

Nepalese communities like Belhi follow Hindu traditions that go centuries back, where women usually live in isolation and their husbands do not allow them to leave the home. Although caste discrimination is forbidden by law, caste rules do not allow Dalit children to mix freely with children of higher casts. Women are not called by their name but referred to as *mother*, *aunt*, *sister*, hence their identity feeling is weak. More than 50% of the women are illiterate. This project has initially worked to strengthen the women’s identity feeling.

Young men have poor income generating opportunities in the communities and hence more often than not seek better fortune in bigger cities or abroad thus leaving agricultural resources unattended.

This intervention takes place in a stable context. The civil war raging Nepal from 1995-2006 is over, and a new federal constitution of the republic was passed in parliament. Local elections have been held for the first time in more than 20 years. Ethnic conflicts may still occur but are expected to find peaceful solutions.

Climate- and environmental conditions

Monsoon rainfall has become less stable and predictable possibly due to climate change. In 2016, Dhanusha only received 25% of the average quantity of rainfall to the detriment of paddy output.

The sharp decline of the rice harvest followed immediately after the earthquake in April 2015. Hand pumps in the villages ran dry. People imagined that calamity was caused by the earthquake in April 2015. But this is hardly the case.

Core to this intervention, is to create resilience among the target group and adapt to climate change through sustainable production systems and stable access to clean water.

Since 2012, the Danish NGO BelhiGruppen Nepal (BGN) has worked with a local organization, Social Eco-Innovative Trust (SEIT[[1]](#footnote-1)) on an ambitious vision called Belhi Integrated Rural Development (BIRD) which by 2024, aims at creating a sustainable community with diverse institutions and value generating working places, that are well organized, efficiently managed, and thus serving as an example of inspiration for others. The key instrument towards this objective is the **Lokh Patchala** organized by SEIT and supported by Hansapur Municipality.

Lokh Patchala

Lokh Patchala (LP) is open village non-formal education for discussion and learning for adults in the village. It is Folk Village School that educates people at different social strata to sit together and discuss different knowledge, skills, and attitudes, making them feel they belong to the community. In Hansapur, SEIT has helped create 13 women’s LP-groups of 20-30 women who meet regularly irrespective of caste affiliation. One of the first assignments was to recount their own history two generations back and two ahead to remind them that they are living individual lives under changing circumstances. Their histories have been written down by themselves if they are literate and if not, by other women who can write. The individual books are illustrated and proudly presented and celebrated at larger conventions, including meals, singing, and dancing.

From this point of departure, LP-groups start discussing common problems in the village, such as lack of toilets and pure drinking water, bad sanitation, menstruation cycles and pads, educational shortcomings, the dowry system and early marriages, poor farming practices, etc. The realization of this range of problems have led to sessions on specific topics where specialists train the women.

The municipalities in the area encourage and sponsor the formation of more LP-groups. Now, 390 women belong to altogether 13 LP-groups, a representative from each of the nine wards (small administrative unit) has joined, and Hansapur Municipality supports with 500,000 Nepalese rupees (approx. DKK 25,000) annually. During natural disasters and the Corona crisis, the organizational setup of the LP-groups play an important role in providing food for poor and elderly people on a voluntary basis.

The strengthening of civil society

As the organizational setup of the LP-groups have proved to be strong and enduring, this intervention will continue working with this structure. The women will be further empowered through this intervention, as they receive new knowledge and tools to manage and improve their own lives, their children’s, and their livelihood. This is further explained in section 3.

This intervention works through SEIT’s LP-organisation. In Nepalese LP means ‘Folk High School’. These groups create and strengthen active citizenship among the most disadvantaged population (Dalits). It is inspired by Grundtvig’s natural law of education stating that when young people of both genders hitherto out of touch meet one another and are guided by motivated teachers, they will start exchanging experiences and ideas and together they will become aware of their identity, empower themselves and find solutions to mutual problems.

This far many good results have already been achieved through the partnership between BGN-group and SEIT. Some of these are:

* LP-groups comprising 390 women meet regularly for empowerment, awareness of democratic and human rights, advocacy, identity strengthening, and organising micro-coops as tools to combat poverty
* A health clinic has been running for four years now. It offers free eye check-up, a dental hygiene awareness program, and workshops on healthy habits, safe pregnancy, and safe delivery, among other things. Through the work in the LPs a need for hygienic pads for menstruation was identified, to enable women to keep working and not stay isolated during their period.
* In 2020, a production of hygienic pads, called SafePad, was established. A small factory gives employment to local women and its products are being marketed all over Nepal
* A computer house was constructed for basic computer education and teachers’ training.
* A demo-farm is well on its way, consisting of a cowshed for 50 cows, a biogas plant, irrigation system and 15 polyhouses for vegetables, fodder fields, as well as a dairy and a butchery for processing of milk and meat. This demo-farm is planned to be fully operational by September ‘21. It will be the location of agricultural production as well as practical training for an agricultural school planned to open in 2025.
* A cow stable was inaugurated at the beginning of 2020 with high yielding cows moving in soon after.
* A biogas plant producing degassed organic fertilizer and biogas fuelling a generator producing electricity was completed by the end of 2020 in cooperation with AEPC[[2]](#footnote-2).
* A fishpond has been established.
* A drinking & irrigation water project in collaboration with UNDP, AEPC/RERL[[3]](#footnote-3) and Hansapur Municipality was initiated by the end of 2020. This project will provide clean drinking water for all households of Belhi and irrigation for the demo-farm and farmers in Belhi. It will be concluded before the monsoon 2021.
* A Technical School offering admission to young people without an SLC-certificate[[4]](#footnote-4) was inaugurated in 2019. Workshops are equipped with used machinery from Dk. It is supported by CTEVT[[5]](#footnote-5). Mainly due to the corona pandemic no students have graduated so far.
* A series of teacher training courses have been organised for primary and secondary schools in the area.
* A school for Dalit-children has been established in order to enhance educational opportunities for Dalits
* The staff of SEIT has been trained in budgeting, reporting, accounting, and preparing audits.

Rationale of the intervention

Departing from all the good experiences above and the capacity that has already been built among SEIT and the villagers, this intervention aims at strengthening the administrative and organizational capacity of SEIT to ensure a resilient and sustainable Belhi Integrated Rural Development. SEIT will remain and their community intervention and services are essential for the rural sustainability and empowerment of the Dalit women and young farmers.

To prevent urban migration among young men, this project also focuses on income generating upskilling on the one hand, and on the other hand to empower Dalit women and other rural women. The project has a strong focus on some of the core issues that frame their disadvantages. Many of these issues have already been treated in earlier interventions and have hence created a good base to build upon. At an overall level, this intervention will support the Belhi community in creating resilience against climate changes and volatile working opportunities, as well as empowering the community to play a proactive role in their own lives.

1. The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)

Dairy without Borders (DwB) is a Danish NGO that focuses on establishing and supporting minor local projects within the milk and dairy sector in selected developing countries. Since its establishment in 2015, DwB has successfully supported projects in Mongolia, and Kenya and is currently initiating projects in Tanzania and Bolivia. DwB has worked together with BGN giving expert guidance concerning dairy technology and agricultural practices for almost two years. DwB bases its support on professional volunteers, who cover the entire dairy supply chain. Furthermore, DwB has provided the design and architecture of the dairy-butchery.

DwB experts and their role in the project

**Karl Simonsen** has over 50 years of experience working as a dairy technician and managing a small dairy plant. KS visited Danusha in the Autumn of 2019 to research Nepalese dairies including a small local dairy and has transferred skills in yoghurt and cheese making to its owner.

**Jörg Kerchlango**, architect with more than 30 years of experience in the planning and design of industrial plants in the food industry. JK designed the butchery-dairy plant in Danusha and visited the area in 2019.

**Jørgen Friis Pedersen**, dairy technician with extensive experience from a lifetime working in various positions in the dairy sector.

**Jens Anneberg**, dairy technician, and business administration, has more than 25 years’ experience as independent senior management consultant for international companies and organizations like the EU, DANIDA and GTZ, having fulfilled assignments primarily in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, incl. Nepal

**Jørgen Henriksen** has over 30 years of experience working with rural and economic growth in developing countries JH has supported so far with his experiences with nutritional values of forage and the needs of high-yielding dairy cows, and establishment of cooperatives.

**Isabel Sande Frandsen** has 18 years of experience working with development projects. Isabel is the only person employed in DwB. ISF is the administrator of the project.

DwB-volunteers will be responsible for training LP-facilitators and villagers to make dairy products such as yoghurt (curd), Nepalese cheeses (paneer), butter oil (ghee), and mango ice-cream, apart from the specifics mentioned above.

Belhi Group Nepal (BGN) is a Danish NGO run by volunteers. Most of BGN’s volunteers are retired academics who use their professional and personal skills on projects under the heading ‘integrated rural development’. The objective of BGN is to combat poverty and care for development in a range of areas, to improve and stabilize the livelihood of villagers in the district of Dhanusha, with Belhi at the centre, as well as to establish democratic structures in cooperation with public and private organizations.

BIRD (Belhi Integrated Rural Development) is BGN’s overall effort that ties together all its development programmes in the villages. To achieve this BGN works closely together with SEIT to realize its various components, each of which focuses on a specific theme while stressing the importance of sustainable capacity building. On the one hand this approach provides jobs and on the other hand it enhances local

know-how. BGN has been active in Nepal for more than 10 years. Due to the high ages of BGN-members and the likelihood that we shall have to withdraw most of our economic support from 2025, it is our goal to make SEIT independent and sustainable from that year onwards.

BGN-experts and their role in the project

**Flemming Topsøe** is co-founder of BGN and has supported its interventions since 2012. He is a professor emeritus in mathematics (KU) and together with Dr. Ferenc Kovacs responsible for the BHC (Belhi Health Clinic). Of late he has initiated BIRD-SafePad company which manufactures sanitary napkins.

**Søren Koch** is a civil engineer specialized in water. He joined BGN in 2018 and is a member of the board. His efforts have been centered on the successful reopening of an obsolete water boring in Belhi. He is now in charge of BIRD-Drinking water project started recently in cooperation with UNDP and AEPC.

**Dan Ch. Christensen** is co-founder of BGN and has been active in Dhanusha since 2006. He is a professor emeritus in history (RUC) and has been an amateur-farmer for 50 years. He is responsible for planning and running BIRD-AGRO together with a group of agriculturalists and dairymen from DwB.



Three other members of the board of BGN (Vagn Frikke Schmidt, Kirsten Rasmussen, and Astrid Dahl) are responsible for construction, accounting, education, and technical and vocational training.

C0: administration, C1: agriculture, C2: drinking water, C3: construction, C4: BHC (Belhi Health Clinic),

C5: BTI (Belhi Technical Institute), C6: education, C7: Lokh Patchala, C8: emergency relief

Social Eco Innovative Trust (SEIT) is a Nepalese NGO registered in 2012. SEIT was founded by a group of young students of medicine, engineering, environmental science, some of whom had been forced to join the Maoist Liberation Army. After the armistice and the return of parliamentarism, most of them volunteered to campaign for democratic political parties but were disillusioned by observing the ensuing political differences under the new constitution. On this background this student-group decided to form their own NGO intending to work independently for local development in all fields mismanaged for so long by incapable and corrupt governance. At this point the group leader, the son of a poor rice farmer, had already been supported to acquire a university degree for some years by a Danish individual working briefly for Care Denmark in the district of his village. The student group decided that their NGO, SEIT, should not be organized along the Danish model as a member-organisation, but they organized all local villagers (including those unable to pay a membership fee) in village committees and later in Lokh Patchalas voicing the needs of the people. Today SEIT is run by a board consisting of the founders and a number of employees paid by BGN. Thanks to a number of projects seeking to gather the villagers around health campaigns, educational initiatives and construction and agricultural practices, SEIT enjoys considerable support from villagers and government institutions. Lately, UNDP has entered a partnership with SEIT and BGN around a drinking water and irrigation project as well as a dairy-butchery- and polyhouse project that is intended to become a model for diffusion into other districts of Danusha in the not-so-distant future. Apart from a demo-farm run by SEIT, a series of private skill-based micro-coops producing milk, meat and vegetables for the urban market are being formed. Each micro-coop decides their own bylaws and economy and receives support (skills, subsidy, mentor) from SEIT/BGN and DwB. Furthermore, SEIT has a community house where there are ongoing activities, such as Dalit-teaching, cultural events, health campaigns, and as described earlier teaching for early school leavers. Facilities of the community house are rented out now and then and hence create an extra income.

The capacity of SEIT has improved considerably through their partnership with BGN. Experts have been appointed: an agronomist (Rajak), a manager of technical schools (Raju), a medical doctor (Guru), experienced NGO-leaders (Pancaj and Priyanka), an accountant (Bijay), to name only the leading managers of SEIT. The director of SEIT, Amit is the founder and holds a degree in environmental science from Kathmandu University.

Hansapur Municipality supports SEIT’s Lokh Patchala organisation with annual contributions and has contributed NPR 2 mio. (approx. DKK 100,000) to BIRD-DWIP, the drinking and irrigation water project contracted with UNDP. Hansapur Municipality is an ‘other actor’ in this project, anchoring the project in the local context and ensuring replications and sustainability

Since the elections in 2019[[6]](#footnote-6), when local administrations were elected, SEIT has worked closely together with Hansapur Municipality and the government of Province 2. SEIT has also been networking successfully with technical experts in the private sector.

**Roles and responsibilities**

SEIT is the lead of the project and the one to ensure the timely and efficient implementation of the activities, for each stage in close collaboration with BGN and DwB. SEIT holds the financial and narrative reporting responsibility and will provide DwB and BGN with quarterly narrative and financial updates. Furthermore, SEIT is responsible of local auditing[[7]](#footnote-7), the timely involvement of Hansapur Municipality and the government of Province 2, as well as an integral part of the skills transfer by DwB and BGN.

The nutritional training will be the responsibility of SEIT, as will the teaching and training in cooperative operation and management. SEIT’s LP-coordinator Kamal Pancaj has held this role since 2006 and holds the responsibility of organising the trainings. SEIT’s head of BIRD-AGRO, Dev Narayan Rajak, is responsible for running agricultural courses in collaboration with AEPC and a female Maithili-speaking Nepalese dairy technician recruited by Nepal Dairy Science Association.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Apart from Danish experts, Nepalese trainers will be recruited from CTEVT, Nepal (Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training), with whom Belhi Technical Institute (another SEIT/BGN component) is already enjoying a close partnership. CTEVT has developed short term courses (3 months theory and on-the-job-training) for organic vegetable producers, dairy technicians, slaughterhouse technicians, livestock assistants, etc.

DwB has been and will be instrumental in planning, guiding, and monitoring the construction and design of the dairy plant as well as training staff. The volunteers of DwB will be responsible for training LP-facilitators and villagers, as well as SEIT staff to make dairy products such as yoghurt, Nepalese cheeses (paneer), butter oil (ghee), and mango ice cream. Furthermore, they will teach about milk hygiene and food safety.

Furthermore, DwB holds the administrative responsibility towards CISU.

BGN is responsible for butchery training and will hire two experienced butchers to prepare and carry out this part of the training. BGN’s project-lead of BIRD-AGRO will work closely with SEIT’s LP-coordinator.

The organizational training and facilitator training will be undertaken by BGN and when needed in consultation with DwB.

The intervention will take place in two phases as described below. Professionals of DwB, BGN, AEPC, CTEVT and SEIT within a range of activities will come together each performing in their special field, such as cultivation of forage and vegetables, livestock management, processing and marketing milk and meat products, and organising micro-coops. These activities are interrelated and interdependent. This holistic perspective will give the partners of the intervention a broader understanding of integrated rural development and create foundations for future interventions.

Target groups, objectives, and expected results

The primary target group:

8 SEIT staff

24 LP-facilitators (train the trainer concept)

240 Dalit Women

240 young men and farmers

Total: 512

The key objective of the intervention is to improve the capacity of SEIT to organize and transfer agricultural and nutritional knowledge and processing skills of raw materials to the target groups and with this ensure a resilient and sustainable organization around the Belhi Integrated Rural Development (BIRD).

Apart from SEIT-staff, the primary target group consists of the members of the LP-groups. There is a total of 13 LP-groups in four villages. Of these 24 individuals have already received some level of facilitator training and will hence be the ones to receive further facilitator training, as well as stronger skills within either of the areas they choose to work with (dairy, livestock, butchery, etc.). The LP-facilitators play a key-role within the Train-the-Trainer concept. From the LP-groups 240 Dalit women will take part in the various trainings, as will 240 young men and farmers.

The secondary target group:

Families and neighbours to the LP-group members: approximately 5 per participant: 2,520.

Families and neighbours will benefit economically from the primary target group’s training and participation in this intervention, but also through non-systematized replicates of the newly acquired skills and knowledge.

The overall objective of this intervention is for a resilient livelihood and sustainable food security in Hansapur Municipality, Dhanusha District in the Terai Region of Nepal.

The intermediate objectives are:

1. By June 2023, SEIT’s administrative and organizational capacity has been strengthened ensuring a resilient and sustainable organization around *Belhi Integrated Rural Development*.
2. By June 2023, Dalit women and young farmers are empowered by transferring organisational skills, nutritional knowledge, and relevant agricultural skills to increase productivity and income opportunities.

This project has 8 different topics:

1. Construction & maintenance
2. Irrigation & polyhouses
3. Vegetables & fodder: Cultivation of forage and vegetables in irrigated fields and polyhouses (SEIT/ AEPC/ CTEVT)
4. Livestock (Cows, goats & poultry): Livestock management, forage, milking, organic fertilizer, insemination (SEIT, CTEVT , Dept. of Livestock)
5. Dairy technology: Management of dairy, production of curd, cheese, ice cream, butter oil, hygiene, food safety (DwB/ CTEVT)
6. Abattoir technology: Management of butchery, goats, poultry, smoking, hygiene, food safety (DwB, Danish butcher/ CTEVT)
7. Retailing: Shopkeeping, marketing, accounting, hygiene, food safety (BGN/ SEIT)
8. Micro-coops: Organisation of micro-coops, bylaws, technology, economics (Batch Chanda Cooperative Association/ SEIT)

The target group will be introduced to all 8 topics and will then choose which of the topics, they want to specialize in and work with. Furthermore, they will choose whether they will want to work as jobholders (training in job functions), micro-coop members (micro-coop operation), or they prefer to work as private tenants and farmers on their own private plot (private plot operation with new skills applicable to their individual activities).

During the whole period, SEIT will monitor and systematize the learning outputs and adjust the implementation according to findings and feedback from the target group.

The project implementation will take place in 2 phases (further described below), and is hence composed as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Regarding objectives** | **Expected outputs** | **Activities** |
| In pursuit of objective 1By June 2023, SEIT’s administrative and organizational capacity have been strengthened ensuring a resilient and sustainable organization around *Belhi Integrated Rural Development* | 1.1 By December 2022, 8 SEIT-staff manage administrative and organizational skills. | 1.1.1 Training in management and organisation of BIRD1.1.2 Training in financial administration and economic flows.1.1.3 Pedagogical training and training in relationships with villagers.1.1.4 Training in the interdependence of 8 topics (construction & maintenance, irrigation & polyhouses, vegetables & fodder, livestock, dairy tech., abattoir tech., retailing, and micro-coops).1.1.5 Supervision and repetition of trainings.  |
| 1.2 By December 2021, 24 LP-coordinators have improved their facilitator skills and acquired introductory knowledge of the 8 topics. | 1.2.1 Training of Trainers (observation, facilitation, advocacy, coordination and governance knowledge, and attitude towards women and under privileged groups of the community).1.2.2 Training of Trainers follow-up.1.2.3 Training material for the 8 topics (construction & maintenance, irrigation & polyhouses, vegetables & fodder, livestock, dairy tech., abattoir tech., retailing, and micro-coops) developed and produced.1.2.4 Introductory training to the 8 topics. 1.2.5 Review and Reflection workshop for all facilitators. |
| 1.3 By March 2022, 24 facilitators have carried out trainings in relevant agricultural topics with SEIT-monitoring. | 1.3.1 In depth training in the 8 topics. 1.3.2 Food and equipment safety course.1.3.3 Training in pedagogical skills. 1.3.3 Review and Reflection workshop for all trainers1.3.4 Implementation and replications. |
| In pursuit of objective 2By June 2023, Dalit women and young farmers are empowered by transferring organisational skills, nutritional knowledge, and relevant agricultural skills to increase productivity and income opportunities.  | 2.1 By June 2022, 480 women and young farmers (240 of each prioritising Dalits) from 4 communities have received training in 8 topics and chosen their special field of competence. | 2.1.1 Theoretical training in the 8 topics.2.1.2 Practical training in demo farm.2.1.3 Training in job functions, micro-coop operation or private plot operation.2.1.4 Food and equipment safety course.2.1.5 Trainees’ application of acquired skills and know-how in all 8 topics.2.1.6 Follow-up session with participation of external experts. |
| 2.2 By June 2022, 480 women and young farmers have improved their nutritional knowledge from ‘farm to fork’. | 2.2.1 Training in healthy food and diversified nutrition.2.2.2 Training in child diseases and public health. |
| 2.3 By June 2023, 12 micro-coops with distinct aims have been organized in four villages. | 2.3.1 Training in cooperative operation and management.2.3.2 Training in organisational development: including bylaws, registration, division of labour etc. 2.3.3 Training in business planning and operation: accounting, savings, investments, and profit sharing.2.3.4 Formation and running of micro-coops. |

First phase (July 2021 – June 2022)

The first phase has a two-pronged approach. One approach is to empower the 8 SEIT-staff in general management (organization structure of BIRD, interdependence of its range of components, relationships with villagers, suppliers, and customers, as well as economic flows).

This part of the intervention does not start from scratch in so far as there are already 3 highly skilled and experienced BIRD managers (Amit, president of SEIT, Rajak, agriculturalist retired from DAO, and Pancaj LP-manager).

SEIT and especially Pancaj, Amit, and Rajak will carry the main responsibility of the successful impact of the intervention, while DwB and BGN will transfer the necessary professional skills – always in close collaboration with SEIT about needs and wishes for specific skills transfer.

SEIT is the institution embedded in the local cultural setting and hence in possession of the necessary cultural sensitivity required to enter into appropriate relationships with the villages, whether users, suppliers or customers encountering BIRD.

The external experts will train SEIT staff and facilitators to adopt and organise BIRD, but the overall responsibility for transforming the new knowledge into practice, i.e. counseling, adjusting, mediating, and monitoring the transfer and application of new technologies and cultivation methods will lie in the hands of SEIT.

The other approach is to improve the 8 SEIT-staff and 24 LP-facilitators’ facilitation and pedagogical skills, and to transfer skills in the 8 topics (construction & maintenance, irrigation & polyhouses, vegetables & fodder, livestock, dairy tech., abattoir tech., retailing, and micro-coops). Moreover, they will receive general training in food and equipment safety, as well as nutrition and child disease courses.

The 24 facilitators have already received trainings and hence have some level to build further on. These trainings will be a mixture of group sessions and on-the-job trainings provided by external experts (both Danish as well as Nepalese) during 2½ months.

The expectation is that LP-facilitators will be able to replicate trainings with the LP-women and young farmers within the topic they specialized in.

The 24 facilitators will receive general training in facilitator skills under the Train-the-trainer concept together with SEIT-staff. Instruction material and power-points in Maitili/Nepali will be distributed and introduced beforehand. SEIT-staff will participate in all trainings and will furthermore receive instructions in CISU-reporting and documents.

Second phase (January 2022 – June 2023)

In this phase the 240 LP-women (ratio 1:10) and 240 young farmers (ratio 1:10) prioritising Dalits from the 4 villages Belhi, Tola, Laliya and Nikal will receive training in the topics they wish to work with (construction & maintenance, irrigation & polyhouses, vegetables & fodder, livestock, dairy technology, abattoir technology, retailing, and micro-coops) The training will be organised as group sessions in classrooms for bookish instruction and workshops on the demo farm for the practical training comprising the same subject areas. These trainings will take 2½ months in small teams and be specific and in depth. Instruction material and power points in Maitili/Nepali will be handed out. While they put the newly acquired skills into practice, they will receive ongoing follow-up trainings. The target group will be divided according to gender to heed experience from the work in the Lokh Pachalas: Nepali women feel freer to talk when gathered with other women. Villagers who demand specific skills (e.g., insemination, special cheese making, smoked ham, mutton or fish) will be offered further external training. Immediately after the trainings the actual application will take place. SEIT will oversee the application of learning outputs and serve as mentors and mediators during the implementation.

In Autumn of 2022, SEIT will make a monitoring workshop with the target group. All participants will be asked to evaluate the newly acquired skills and the actual application of these. They will be asked to give feedback on needs and wishes for further skills transfer and adjustments of the intervention, so to increase the expected impact and empowerment.

Following the mid-term monitoring, the external instructors will provide follow-up training for 2 weeks.

Monitoring, evaluation, and systematization

The performance of trainers and trainees will be appraised continuously. During the Autumn-workshop the trainees’ skills will be tested on the demo-farm, so to be able to adjust the intervention. By the end of the intervention, the trainees’ will be tested again and a report on all 480 trainees, including dropouts, will reflect the outcome of the intervention. There will be questionnaires (for the literate) to fill in and plenum discussions for qualitative evaluation. Quantitatively, the output will be measured by numbering the participants eligible for jobs in the various production activities and their performance indicated by productive and economic results.

SEIT coordinates, supervises, monitors, and ensures the application of the learning outputs. They will make sure that follow-ups and adjustments will take place in the right moment and that the implementation is timely and qualitative.

Along-the-way-experience will be collected during the 2 phases. Unsettled issues will be caught up when external experts are present. All questions from the 2 phases of the intervention will be collected as useful experience for future interventions of capacity building by DwB internationally and by BGN/SEIT in surrounding districts.

Micro-coops

The LP-groups will form micro-coops in a voluntary and independent way. A typical micro-coop has 5-6 members. Mutual trust is not to be taken for granted in Nepal. But neighbours and LP-participants will often know each other well and be potential members, whereas larger groups are less likely to join one macro-coop, which may become realistic in the longer run. Similarly, members of a micro-coop will not necessarily share their cows or their milk. Their cooperation will be limited to production of forage and milking in common. The cooperation of the micro-coops will be regulated by bylaws elaborated by the members themselves under supervision by SEIT. Every member of a micro-coop will have a personal bank account, to which payment of their produce will be made digitally and instantly by means of a special application installed in their mobile phones. A micro-coop can produce vegetables, milk, poultry, goats. It is expected that 72 women from the LP-groups will form micro-coops during 2021 – 3 micro-coops in each of the 4 villages. It is of utmost importance that the pioneering micro-coops perform well and increase the income of members as other women/farmers will only follow if they are convinced by economic success of the pioneers.

The formation of micro-coops has already been going on in LP-groups for more than a year. During this time, it has become evident that the villagers wish to retain private ownership of their animals and their milk. On the other hand, it is generally applauded that cooperation around growing feed, milking and mucking will be advantageous to all. Discussions on bylaws are going on among 8 potential micro-coops as they feel encouraged by the prospect of subsidies, guidance in feeding plans, and mediation by SEIT in cases of conflict. Dalit women tend to welcome the idea because job opportunities will become available and enable them to save up money to establish their own micro-coops. It will be easy to ascertain the economic performances of cowsheds, chicken farms, vegetable plots, etc. organized as micro-coops.

Material input

Cow sheds, poly houses, and livestock are funded by 25% of the micro-coop’s own savings, 25% subsidies from BGN/SEIT and the remaining 50% by biannual loans at a low rate of interest. Initiatives to form micro coops will have to emanate from the participants themselves under LP guidance. As soon as bylaws and 25% savings are ready, subsidies and loans will be released. Consultation, insurance, veterinary services, and insemination are offered free of charge by SEIT. The Dalit population will have the opportunity of getting a job in a micro-coop to cut forage, milk cows or transport milk cans. As wage labourers, they can save money to pay 25% of their own micro-coop, apply for a subsidy of another 25% and borrow the remaining 50%.

Benefits for the target groups in brief

The new employment possibilities have the potential of decreasing migration to urban areas and the Gulf states and encouraging young men and women to work in agriculture, especially young people without a SLC-certificate (almost 90% of the villagers). An important cross-cutting part of this intervention is the strong focus on nutrition. Traditional nutrition in rural Nepal is characterized by very little variation, and malnutrition of children and elderly people is frequent. Hence, this intervention does not only aim at improving the income opportunities to diminish migration, but also to ensure that especially women learn about child diseases, public health and not least how better to care for their children’s nutrition by learning to grow more varieties of food. SEIT will be empowered organization- and administration wise.

Sustainability and replications

This project is sustainable in its essence. A solid basis of skills and trainings have been transferred to the local partner SEIT, which in return has replicated and organized trainings with the local communities for almost 10 years. The overall focus is on trainings and skills transfer to empower Dalit women and farmers and to encourage young men to take responsibility for their villages. SEIT will receive continuous training and counselling to perform each time better as a democratic organization and training provider.

A foundation of improved economic performance has been laid with the purchase of high yielding cows, the building of a cow shed, polyhouses, a slaughterhouse, and a dairy plant. And not least a new water supply system has been secured through the UNDP-project described previously. Guided tours to the demo-farm, courses, and eventually the agricultural school will disseminate agricultural knowledge to farmers from Belhi and surrounding villages, who may not have participated in the intervention in the first place.

Assessment of Risks and Mitigation Measures

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Risk Factor** | **Likelihood** | **Background to assessment of likelihood** | **Impact** | **Risk response** | **Combined residual risk** |
| *Corona-restrictions may delay the international travels* | *Possible* | *Since Spring 2020, travel plans have been impossible to predict. It is very likely that 2021 and part of 2022 will be affected in the same way.* | *Moderate*  | *Some of the training might be possible to be instructed virtually to the SEIT-team, that can replicate to the target group.*  | *Moderate-low* |
| *Corona-restrictions may restrict the target group from attending trainings.* | *Unlikely* | *As everything around the Corona-pandemic is unpredictable, this is a possibility that, however, is not considered to be very likely at this stage.* | *High* | *A no-cost extension will be applied for to allow for better times.* | *Moderate-low* |
| *Long term agreements with governmental institutions are not guaranteed.*  | *Possible* | *Political stability in Nepal is vulnerable, and politicians may change overnight.*  | *Moderate* | *SEIT works on not depending on local or regional governmental agreements or support.*  | *Moderate-low* |
| *Lack of capital, inability to save money for bigger investments*  | *Possible* | *The Nepali smallholders lack experience in saving money and do not have an investment mind.* | *Moderate* | *Cheap loans administered by local bank manager and coop. society are introduced.* | *Moderate-Low* |

1. See description under partners [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (Nepal Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Renewable Energy for Rural Livelihood (UNDP Nepali programme) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. School Leaving Certificate (12 years’ schooling). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Council for Technical Education and Technical Training [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. First elections in Nepal under the new Constitution. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hem Kafle is a state authorized auditor based in Kathmandu, who, apart from auditing SEIT’s accounts, also provides supervision and counseling to SEIT’s accountant. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. NDSA: Nepal Dairy Science Association, Kathmandu v/ dir. Tek Thapa. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)