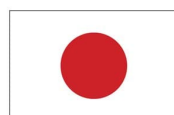


From Vulnerability to Resilience: A Community-Led Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative



Pathway of Community Resilience: "One River One Community"

"Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate-Induced Disaster Risks (SCRCDR)"
Urlabari Municipality, Morang, Koshi Province of Nepal



From
the People of Japan



Strengthening Community Resilience: A Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction

For nearly two decades, **Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)** and **Shapla Neer=Citizens' Committee in Japan for Overseas Support** have partnered to strengthen community resilience and reduce disaster risks. Together, they have also responded to other emergencies such as Gorkha Earthquake 2015, COVID-19 and water induced disasters like flash floods and landslides occurred in Nepal. This long-standing collaboration supported by **Shapla Neer Japan, the Government of Japan-MOFA**, focuses on disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation, and livelihood enhancement of vulnerable communities.

Rural Reconstruction Nepal-RRN, founded in 1989 as Grassroots Institute for Training and Services- Nepal (GRITS-Nepal) and renamed and officially registered as **Rural Reconstruction Nepal** in 1993, has been dedicated to transforming the lives of marginalized communities across Nepal. With a strong focus on social justice, sustainable development, Climate Change and DRR, food security, education, health, and self-governance, RRN has operated in over **60** districts, reaching **1.5** million families. Its impactful work in disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, and community empowerment continues to drive lasting change, strengthening resilience and self-reliance in Nepal's rural communities.

Shapla Neer, founded in **1972**, is dedicated to empowering vulnerable communities in Asia with a focus on DRR, human rights, and sustainable development. Since **1996** **Shapla Neer** has played a vital role in partnering with RRN to address water-induced disasters, particularly flash floods, by strengthening supporting infrastructure resilience and promoting livelihood recovery. Efforts to prevent and mitigate natural disasters, particularly flash floods have been carried out through the development of gabion structures, earthen embankments, and bioengineering solutions. These initiatives aim to protect vulnerable communities along with various rivers and streams of Madi Municipality Chitwan under projects such as **Disaster Preparedness and Sustainable Development Project (DPSDP)**, **Community Initiatives for Disaster Preparedness (CIDP)**, **Water Induced Disaster Preparedness (WIDP)**, **One River Once Community (OROC)** projects and now ongoing **Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate Induced Disaster Risk (SCRCDR)** project in Morang.

The partnership between RRN and Shapla Neer has yielded significant achievements over the years. Together, they have strengthened Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), implemented early warning systems, and raised awareness on disaster preparedness while enhancing resilient infrastructures. Looking ahead, both organizations remain committed to strengthening community resilience against disasters and climate change. Their focus extends to promoting sustainable livelihoods and reinforcing disaster risk management systems across Nepal. This enduring partnership stands as testament to their shared commitment to nature-based solutions, action-oriented research, and long-term sustainable development.



“



Mayor Mr. Ganga Pd. Kharel,
Urllabari Municipality, Morang

“We are grateful to RRN, the SCRCDR project and Shapla Neer for protecting our communities from flash floods. This holistic approach goes beyond embankments, strengthening education, awareness, preparedness, livelihoods, risk mapping, emergency support, and training-including simulations with our municipal police. With Teli River already supported, we look forward to continuing this collaboration in Solti River, which is highly vulnerable.”

What Is “Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate-Induced Disaster Risk (SCRCDR)”?

The “**One River One Community**” approach, successfully implemented in Madi Municipality, Chitwan, has become a flagship program aimed at saving lives and livelihoods of communities affected by floods and disasters. Building on this success, the approach has been extended to **Urlabari Municipality in Morang, Koshi Province**, through the project “Strengthening Community Resilience Through Climate-Induced Disaster Risks (SCRCDR)” in Morang District. It focuses on prevention and protection through risk **mitigating infrastructures, enhancing livelihoods through small-scale watershed management and water source protection, small irrigation systems, seed distribution, soil fertility improvement, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM), manuring and composting.**



Overall Objective: The primary objective of the project is to **enhance water resource management to reduce flood damages and improve the livelihoods of flood-vulnerable communities in Morang District, Nepal.** The project aims to achieve this through two main outcomes:

- 1. Enhanced institutional capacities of communities and local governments** on water-induced disaster risk reduction.
- 2. Improved water resource management** to enhance community resilience to flood disasters.

Expected Results:

- 1. Strengthened disaster management capacity of communities and local governments.**
- 2. Promoted community-based/managed flood protection infrastructures and bio-engineering to reduce potential loss of life, livelihood, and environmental assets.**
- 3. Promoted watershed management** for water recharge and irrigation to flood-vulnerable communities



Location and Beneficiaries:

The project focuses on flood-vulnerable communities along the Teli-2 and Teli-3 River corridors in Urlabari Municipality, Morang District, Koshi Province. These areas frequently face floods, severely impacting marginalized and ethnic groups, including Dhimal, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Newar, Magar, Damai, Kami, and Danuwar. The direct beneficiaries are 820 households (3,797 people) residing along the Teli-2 and Teli-3 rivers in Ward No. 2 and parts of Ward No. 3, whose homes, farmlands, and livelihoods are at risk. The indirect beneficiaries are the population of Urlabari Municipality, as flood management efforts will contribute to overall disaster resilience. The project prioritizes community-led disaster preparedness, resilient infrastructure, and inclusive participation, ensuring that vulnerable groups, particularly marginalized ethnic communities, benefit from sustainable flood mitigation measures.

Area- Urlabari Municipality Morang District, Koshi Province	Households (HHS)	Population
Direct Beneficiaries (Teli-2 & Teli-3 River Corridors– Urlabari Mun Ward 2 & 3)	820	3,797
Indirect Beneficiaries (Urlabari Municipality)	17,650	70,908

(Source: National Population and Housing Census 2021)

Alignment With National And International Goals

The SCRCDR project aligns with national and international goals, enhancing disaster risk management and resilience at the grassroots level in Urlabari Municipality, Nepal. It supports particularly to local level and advocacy to provincial, and federal on relevant policies, and promotes risk-informed planning, resilient infrastructure, and social inclusion, contributing to global frameworks like the Sendai Framework and Sustainable Development Goals.



National/International Goals	Alignment
Constitution of Nepal (2015)	Enhances disaster management capacity and policy advocacy across government levels.
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (2017)	Supports multi-tiered DRM structure and establishes and strengthening of disaster management committees/funds.
National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2018)	Reduces disaster mortality and enhances community resilience.
Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) 2019	Identifies vulnerable communities and supports inclusive climate adaptation management committees/funds.
15th and 16th Five-Year Development Plans	Establishes early warning systems and implements DRR measures for flood disasters.
Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Planning Guideline (2018)	Facilitates local disaster and climate resilience plans.
Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030)	Reduces disaster risks, builds resilience, and develops resilient infrastructures.
Sendai Framework (2015-2030)	Integrates risk-informed planning, strengthens local governance, promotes resilient infrastructure, enhances early warning and emergency response, and emphasizes social inclusion.

By following these national and international frameworks, the SCRCDR project ensures a comprehensive and inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction and community resilience.

Tika Karki-Turning the soil, growing a future:

For **62-year-old Tika Karki**, life near the Dumre stream in Devijhoda, Morang, has always been a struggle. Every monsoon, she watched helplessly as floods eroded her land, washing away not just her crops but also her hopes for stability.



With no other source of income, Tika's financial worries grew heavier each year. That was until she found a new path through the **SCRCDR** project by **RRN**. Through hands-on **Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training**, she learned sustainable farming techniques that could turn even vulnerable riverbanks into thriving fields. Encouraged by the program, she planted vegetables using organic methods and soon **earned NPR 20,000** in a single season. The support didn't stop there, RRN provided her with agricultural tools and quality seeds, further igniting her passion for farming. What makes Tika's journey even more remarkable is her personal battle with cancer. Despite her illness, she finds strength in organic farming. She believes that pesticide-free vegetables not only nourish her family but also contribute to her own

well-being. *'This is more than just farming. It's healing, its independence, and it's a lifeline,'* she says with a hopeful smile. With renewed confidence, Tika is now expanding her farm, proving that even in adversity, resilience can bloom.

Key Findings and Progress of Mid-Term Evaluation

Based on the internal Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) report for the project “Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate Induced Disaster Risks,” the progress and achievements are as follows:

Institutional Strengthening

The project significantly enhanced local disaster management capacities by strengthening Local Disaster Management Committees (LDMCs), Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), and Ward Disaster Management Committees (WDMCs). The establishment and operation of these committees have enhanced coordination and strengthened disaster response efforts at the local level. Training sessions on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation were conducted for community members and schools, enhancing their awareness and preparedness.

The project also provided technical support to develop DRR related plans at ward and municipal levels, including Risk Sensitive Land Use Plan (RSLUP), Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan (LDCRP), and Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (DPRP). These plans provide a structured approach to disaster risk management and climate change adaptation.



In schools like Sunpakuwa Secondary School and Saraswati Basic School, Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSP) and School Improvement Plans (SIP) were implemented, promoting a culture of safety among students and staff. Visual aids like risk maps and change photos were developed to demonstrate risk reduction over time. Additionally, a Ward Emergency Operation Centre (WEOC) was established, enhancing local capacity for immediate response during disasters.

Infrastructure Development

The project constructed essential infrastructure to mitigate flood risks, including earthen dams, gabion embankment, retaining walls, drainage systems, and irrigation facilities. These structures have played a vital role in reducing flood damage and improving water resource management. Bioengineering techniques, such as planting Napier, vetiver, broom grass, and mandola, were applied for slope stabilization and flood protection, enhancing the resilience of the landscape.

To further reduce flood risks, the project established early warning systems in five locations. These systems provide timely alerts to the community, enabling swift evacuation and reducing potential loss of life and property.



Community Engagement

The project actively engaged the community through various awareness campaigns, including street dramas and cultural events, to promote disaster preparedness and climate resilience. School-based DRR and resilience training empowered students and teachers, creating a foundation for community-wide disaster awareness. Search and rescue training was provided, along with community drills and simulations to test emergency response capabilities. The household-level contingency plans and the distribution of Go-Bags, including essential medicines provided by local health posts, equipped families for emergencies. The community's voices, captured during key events, reflect an increased awareness and proactive stance towards disaster management.



Livelihood Support

Efforts to support livelihoods included riverbank protection and the promotion of climate-resilient crops, vegetable, and fruit farming. These initiatives not only mitigate flood risks but also improve food security and boost income generation for vulnerable households. By providing training in integrated pest management and sustainable agricultural practices, farmers have adopted eco-friendly and cost-effective farming techniques, enhancing agricultural productivity and resilience.

Overall, the project has demonstrated considerable progress in building disaster resilience and enhancing livelihoods in the flood-prone areas of Morang District, Nepal. The combined focus on institutional strengthening, infrastructure development, community engagement, and livelihood support has laid a solid foundation for sustained disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.



Policymaker visited project sites

On 20th May 2024, Secretary of the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC), Mr. Dinesh Bhattarai, along with other officials, conducted a joint monitoring visit to the project area. They interacted with CDMC members, observation of flood prevention infrastructure and discussions with school teachers. During the review meeting, Secretary Bhattarai remarked,



"I am returning to Kathmandu with a positive impression. This project not only strengthens flood management but also truly empowers the community. Unlike many initiatives that focus solely on advocacy, this project ensures both empowerment and direct support, which is commendable."



On 21st May, 2024 Koshi Province Assembly Member **Hon. Umakanta Gautam** monitored project activities and observed the Light Search and Rescue Training, appreciating its role in enhancing community disaster preparedness.



Strengthening Schools for Safer Learning Environment

Ensuring Safe Learning at Saraswati Basic & Sunpakuwa Secondary Schools through Key Support Initiatives:

Disaster-Resilient Schools: Awareness on Disaster resistant structures, emergency preparedness drills, and risk reduction strategies incorporated in **School Improvement Plan (SIP)** which benefited all schoolchildren and communities of catchment areas.

Developed SIP (2081-2085): Enhancing education quality through creating safer learning environment for **9,76 school-children** including girls 513 (53%) of both schools.

Comprehensive School Safety Plan: The Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) in Nepal focuses on safe learning environments, disaster management, resilience education, and emergency preparedness with first aid and control measures.



School Community Engagement: More than **200** schoolchildren including school Management Committees (SMC), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), and Child Club members directly engaged in disaster preparedness drill and simulation and awareness raising activities in schools.

Commitment for Safe Learning Environments

School Committees	Roles & Responsibilities
School Management Committee (SMC)	Oversees policies, governance, and infrastructure improvement.
Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)	Enhances parent-teacher communication and supports school development.
Teachers	Ensure quality, inclusive education and improve student learning through life skills.
Child Club	Engages students in governance, child rights, and safety awareness.

Voice from the Ground

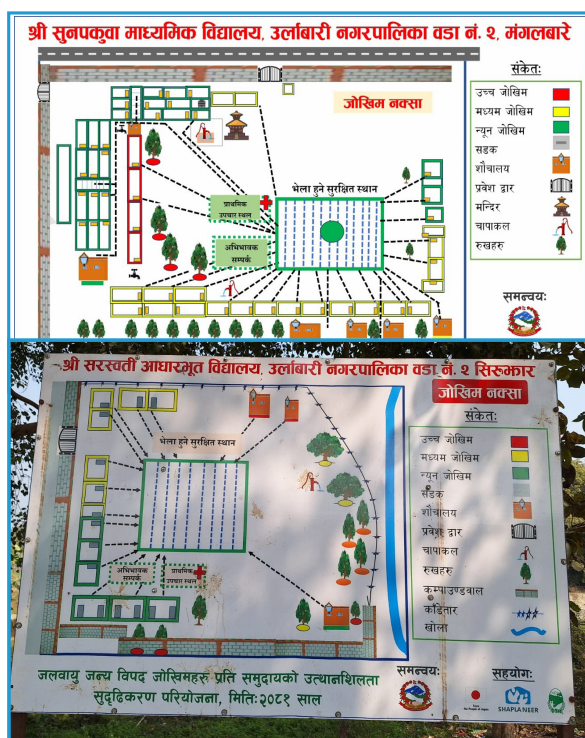
“



Rajan Kumar Kandel
Ward Chairperson, Utlabari-2

“Our community has gained invaluable knowledge and skills in disaster risk management, thanks to RRN and Shapla Neer. The investments in flood protection structures, rescue training, and bioengineering along the river corridor have made a real difference. We now have functional local disaster committees, and our municipality is committed to allocating funds for embankment maintenance and disaster preparedness. We are truly grateful.”

”



Project Progress So Far during Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE)

- ☑ 10 CDMCs & 2 WDMCs established, enhancing community preparedness.
- ☑ 3 rain gauge devices installed for early warning systems, benefiting 3,797 individuals in flood-prone areas.
- ☑ Mud dam, retaining wall, drain and gabion embankments constructed, protecting 820 vulnerable households.
- ☑ 160+ households trained in emergency response including search and rescue.
- ☑ School DRR programs conducted in 2 schools to benefit 976 school children.
- ☑ Agriculture, IPM and vegetation training, seeds and input supports for 50 households for livelihood.
- ☑ One river dam and irrigation canal constructing and one watershed-water source protection to lead irrigation facilities for more than 60 Hectare land of 200 households.
- ☑ As per MTE reviewed, 42% of total budget utilized efficiently in 18 months.

In conclusion, the flood-vulnerable people living in the Teli 2 and 3 river basins now feel relatively safer from the risk of flood-induced disasters compared to before the project's implementation. The Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) has been proactive in addressing small damages caused by the riverine dam, ensuring timely interventions and community safety. The irrigation scheme has become more accessible for community use, promoting sustainable production and consumption practices. Additionally, flood-vulnerable households in the Teli 2 and 3 river corridors have enhanced their farming skills and increased profit margins following the introduction of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and crop calendars. Notably, no loss of life or livelihood damage has been observed in the Teli 2 and Teli 3 communities since the project's introduction, highlighting its effectiveness in disaster risk reduction and resilience building.



Key progress Against Baseline Indicators-SCRCR Project

Key Indicators	Baseline Key Findings	Project Mid-Term Progress
DRR & CCA Awareness	92% lacked DRR & CCA knowledge; 96% unaware of flood coping strategies; 100% had no contingency plans.	160 households developed contingency plans (106.7% of target); community awareness improved through 2 DRR training events.
Flood Vulnerability & Impact	91% identified floods as the major hazard; 80% felt unsafe from Teli River floods; 34% faced property loss.	3 rain gauge early warning systems installed; evacuation drills conducted in highly vulnerable communities; flood protection gabions, mud dams, and retaining walls constructed.
Agricultural Land & Food Security	53% had land (avg. 9.5 Kattha); 63% had irrigation; 4% had 12-month food sufficiency.	Riverbank farming & organic vegetable farming promoted; IPM training provided, increasing income from surplus vegetable sales. Irrigation infrastructure are being constructed as per plan.
Infrastructure & Early Warning	No early warning systems, hazard maps, or emergency safe shelters.	Ward Emergency Operation Center (WEOC) established; flood simulation exercises conducted; hazard maps installed in schools. Safe shelters still lacking.
Local Government & Community Capacity	LDMC & WDMC existed but were weak; no disaster task forces; NPR 10M allocated annually for DRR.	LDMC & WDMC held meetings (100% of target); ward-level DRR policies & plans developed; municipal funds allocated but WDMC capacity still needs to be strengthened.
School DRR & CCA	No training, plans, or hazard maps; schools disrupted by floods.	2 schools received DRR training, developed school safety plans, and conducted evacuation drills; DRR knowledge should extend to families and communities.

“



Bhisma Budhathoki

Ward Chairperson, Uralabari-3, Morang

“The investment made by RRN and Shapla Neer in our ward has been life-changing. We are now equipped with disaster preparedness skills, and our local disaster management committees’ function effectively. With a trained rescue team in our villages, we can respond swiftly to flood emergencies. The embankments along the Teli River have given us a sense of security, and we have allocated funds for their repair and maintenance. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the project for strengthening our disaster resilience.”

”



Why Is SCRCDR's OROC Model The Best Option for Other Parts of Nepal?

The Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate-Induced Disaster Risks (SCRCDR) project in Morang District, Nepal, builds on the successful OROC model to enhance community resilience to flood disasters. Following are the key programmatic strategic approaches:

Community-Centered Approach: The OROC model emphasizes community participation and ownership, making it adaptable to other flood-prone areas in Nepal. By involving local communities in disaster risk reduction and management, the model ensures that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the communities.

Integrated Flood Management: It combines structural measures (e.g., flood protection infrastructures) with non-structural measures (e.g., community capacity building, early warning systems). This integrated approach is essential for addressing the multifaceted nature of flood risks in Nepal.

Scalability and Replicability: The success of the OROC model in Madi Municipality demonstrates its potential for scalability and replication in other districts, particularly in the Terai region and Chure range, which are highly vulnerable to floods.

Alignment with National and International Frameworks: The OROC model aligns with Nepal's National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This alignment ensures that the model contributes to national and global efforts to build resilience to climate-induced disasters.

Focus on Upstream-Downstream Linkages: The model addresses the interconnectedness of upstream and downstream communities in managing flood risks. This is particularly relevant in Nepal, where upstream deforestation and land degradation exacerbate flood risks in downstream areas.

Local Government Engagement: The model actively involves local governments in disaster risk reduction and management, ensuring that interventions are integrated into local development plans and budgets. This engagement is crucial for the sustainability of disaster risk reduction efforts.

Livelihood Diversification: The model promotes not only resilient infrastructures but also livelihood activities, such as riverbank farming and agro-based enterprises, which help communities recover from flood damages and reduce their vulnerability to future disasters.

Early Warning Systems: The establishment of community-managed early warning systems under the OROC model is a critical component for reducing the impact of floods. These systems can be replicated in other flood-prone areas to enhance community preparedness and response.

Capacity Building: The model focuses on building the capacity of local communities, governments, and institutions to manage flood risks. This capacity-building approach is essential for ensuring that communities can independently sustain disaster risk reduction efforts.

Ecological Engineering: The use of ecological engineering, such as riverbank plantations and bio-engineering, not only reduces flood risks but also contributes to environmental conservation. This approach can be replicated in other areas to address both disaster risk reduction and environmental degradation.



“



Uma Acharya

Community Member

“We never knew about disaster preparedness before. Now, we save small amounts (Rs. 5-10) in a community fund, have go-bags ready, and know exactly where to evacuate in case of floods. Our village has become much more resilient.”

”



Learning and Good Practices

Holistic Model: “One River One Community” Approach for Disaster (Flood) Management

Community Engagement & Inclusivity: Involving Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs) and beneficiaries in decision-making ensures that local knowledge and needs are incorporated. This approach promotes ownership and strengthens community resilience in the face of floods and other disasters.

Effective Communication: Maintaining regular and transparent communication with community members fosters trust, minimizes misunderstandings, and enhances collaboration during disaster response and recovery.



Utilizing Indigenous Knowledge: Respecting and integrating local indigenous practices and knowledge into the project activities leads to more culturally relevant and effective solutions, ensuring the sustainability of interventions.

Collaborative Governance: Strengthened Coordination between Government Agencies

Capacity Building: Comprehensive training for **Ward Disaster Management Committees (WDMCs)** and **Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs)** is essential for improving local disaster management capabilities. This empowers communities to respond swiftly and efficiently during emergencies.

Empowering and Developing Guidelines: Developing and distributing clear guidelines about roles and responsibilities, followed by refresher sessions, ensures all stakeholders understand their duties and are empowered to act when needed.

Institutional Strengthening: Supporting and advocating for policies that institutionalize disaster management roles within local governments is key for ensuring long-term sustainability and continuous support for disaster resilience efforts at the local level

Sustainable Techniques: Use of Ecological Engineering for Long-Term Impact

Technical Know-How Training Programs: Ongoing training and refresher sessions are critical to keeping all stakeholders, especially community members, equipped to handle their social and technical roles effectively and confidently.

Local/Indigenous Knowledge Utilization: Involving local communities in decision-making ensures that their insights and experiences are leveraged, leading to more effective, practical, and sustainable interventions.

Exit Planning: A well-planned exit strategy is essential for the smooth transition of ownership and responsibility for disaster management initiatives to local communities and local governments, ensuring that the benefits of the project continue long after external support ends.



These good practices, adapted from the “One River One Community” approach, have been successfully replicated in the **SCRCDR project in Urlabari, Morang**, helping build disaster resilience and sustainable livelihoods through community-driven, ecological engineering solutions.

Battling the Tides: Strengthening Resilience in Urlabari



In the flood-prone landscapes of Urlabari Municipality, Morang, the community faces a relentless challenge. With 11 rivers carving through the region, annual monsoon floods destroy homes, farmland, and livelihoods. Among the most affected is **Diya Nepali**, a geriatric resident of Ward 2, who has endured sleepless nights as rising waters sweep away her land and livestock. To combat these threats, the RRN's SCRCDR support from Shapla Neer and MoFA Japan, is working to safeguard lives and property. With **653 households** in the river corridor-120 classified as highly vulnerable HHs where the project focuses on disaster risk reduction, sustainable water management, and resilient livelihoods. Key interventions include nursery management training, integrated pest farming, and bio-engineering techniques to help affected families regain stability.

Additionally, the project prioritizes early warning systems, local government capacity-building, and disaster preparedness action plans. Given that nearly 8% of the local population has disabilities, response measures also emphasize inclusive disaster management, ensuring protection for the most at-risk groups including women, children, and the elderly. For residents like Diya, this initiative brings hope. "I believe this project will finally address the struggles we've faced for years," she said. By integrating community-driven solutions with long-term resilience strategies, the project is paving the way for a safer, more sustainable future.



"I am **Gita Giri**, a local resident of Urlabari and RRN employee, I witnessed the devastating non-seasonal flood of October 20, 2021, which swept away ripe paddy fields and livestock, forcing families to flee. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies, such as early warning systems, are crucial for safeguarding lives and livelihoods.

Also, **Shanti Limbu** (39)-survivor and Community Leader, has been living in Tinghare Tole for 25 years; Shanti lost her mother-in-law to the 2006 flood, which struck at night. This tragedy pushed her to relocate for safety. Her story highlights the importance of community solidarity in times of disaster.

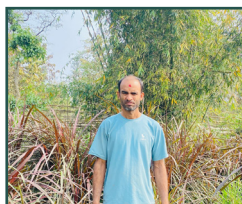
Likewise, **Laxmi Kumari Adhikari** (47); a teacher at Saraswoti Basic School. With 11 years of teaching experience, Laxmi emphasizes the role of DRR and climate education in empowering students. Educated youth become community catalysts, promoting preparedness, sustainability, and resilience.



Sumi Rai, a student of grade 8 at Saraswoti Basic School, lives near the Teli River; Sumi struggles with the constant fear of flooding, which disrupts her studies and daily life. Her experience underscores the urgent need for safer schools and communities. **Sunita Rai** (33), a resident of Tinghare Tole since 2000, battled the 2021 flood to save her pigs, a vital source of income. Under the cover of darkness, she braved rising waters, only to lose the protective barricade around her home. Her determination reflects the harsh realities of flood-prone communities.

From Gulf Struggles to Green Job:

After years of hardship in Qatar, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia, 39-year-old Mr. **Dhrub Bista** from Urlabari-02 returned home with a dream-to build a future in agriculture. With a small loan, he started goat rearing and vegetable farming but struggled to expand. When Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) introduced an income generation program, Dhrub eagerly joined through the Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC). With RRN's support, he is now establishing a nursery to grow and sell grass saplings for livestock and bio-engineering, ensuring a sustainable income. "I won't regret choosing agriculture," he says with confidence, grateful for RRN's support in turning his vision into reality.



- Presented by Mr. Prabesh Karki, PC and Gita Giri, Agriculture/Livelihood Technician.

Stories of Strength and Hope



Presented by Shaligram Ghimire, SM Luma Pariyar, 38, migrated to Urlabari from Pathari, Morang, in 2008. Living with her two children, she earns a living by cultivating cereal crops and marigold flowers on her 0.06-hectare land. However, life near the Teli River is full of fear, as annual floods threaten her home and livelihood. **“For years, we have struggled with floods, using sandbags as makeshift barriers. Nights during heavy rains are sleepless, as rising water forces us to evacuate,”** she shared.



Now, as a member of the Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) under the SCRCDR project by RRN, she is hopeful. Regular meetings, awareness campaigns, and discussions have strengthened her confidence. RRN is helping manage the river and increase disaster preparedness. We believe this initiative will reduce flood risks and improve our resilience,” Luma said optimistically.

Krishna Prasad Dahal, 56, migrated from Tehrathum to Urlabari in 2034 BS. With limited land (0.036 ha), he sustains his family of nine through sharecropping. Living close to Dumre River (Teli 3), he has witnessed severe floods washing away his crops, pushing his family into hardship. “For years, there was no initiative to control flooding. We relied on bamboo and sandbags for temporary protection,” he recalled. Now, as chairman of the Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC), formed under RRN’s project, he is actively involved in risk reduction efforts. Stakeholder meetings, capacity-building programs, and awareness campaigns have united the community. “We are now better prepared, our land and livelihoods protected, bringing much-needed relief to flood-prone families,” Krishna said with determination.



“



Ambika Prasad Luitel

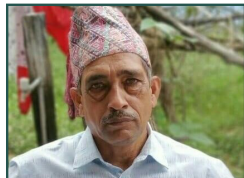
Agriculture Officer, Urlabari Municipality

“The lives and lands of our communities are now much safer. We are planning to utilize river corridors for farming, following the ‘One River, One Community’ approach of RRN. This inclusive model ensures that no one is left behind. The technical skills provided to villagers are highly valuable for long-term sustainability.”

”

Rising Above Floods: Sirujhar Villages' Tale of Transformation

Arriving in Sirujhar A and B, I was greeted by the joyful sight of children playing outside their school; a stark contrast to the constant flood threats they faced just a few months ago. Thanks to the community-led disaster risk reduction efforts, the atmosphere now brims with safety and confidence.



Schools Transformed: From Fear to Safety Bishwanath Dhungana, a teacher at Saraswati Basic School, shared: "We used to send students home early whenever it rained, fearing floods. Now, strong river embankments have banished our fear, and we can focus on education again." Guru Prasad Khatiwada from Sunpakuwa Secondary School added: 'Our school is now a safe haven.' The transformation is remarkable, infrastructure as well as in the community's newfound confidence.



Empowered Community: Ram Bahadur Shrestha, Chairperson of the Sirujhar "A" CDMC, said: "We mobilized the village, formed a disaster committee, and trained in search and rescue. Now, every household has an Emergency Plan, Rabilal Danuwar with a Go-Bag (Jhatpat Jhola) as seen in the picture. "Farmers like Raj Kumar and Uma Danuwar, who once lost crops to floods, now thrive with better irrigation and organic farming".



Investing in Safety and Sustainability: The community collaborated with the government for support. Tanka Gautam, Chairperson of the Irrigation and Water Users' Committee, shared: "We built a dam, ensuring steady water supply. Farmers are now thriving." With community contributions, an irrigation system worth NPR 700,000 benefits 25 hectare. of land. Provincial funding also secured an iron-truss bridge, ensuring safe access for flood-prone settlements.



A Safer Future Leaving Sirujhar Ka and Kha villages, I reflected on the community's resilience. Their transformation includes building embankments and irrigation canals alongside vegetable farming and capacity development, and ultimately supporting communities to reclaim and protect their right to a secure life. Thanks to RRN's One River One Community Flagship approach, the SCRCR project brought:



- i. River embankments, bioengineering, and plantation to protect villages,
- ii. Safe schools for protected learning environment,
- iii. Household emergency plan and disaster preparedness,
- iii. Improved food security via sustainable farming through irrigation facilities and expanding economic opportunities in the river corridors.

As I departed, I saw a village transformed; children laughing, farmers tending crops, and families preparing for a secure future. This is not just a success story; it is proof that community-driven resilience is possible and inevitable. The farmers of Sirujhar Ka and Kha, especially the Danuwar, a marginalized minority in Nepal, have shown the way. Their story deserves to be told far and wide. - **By Bhanu Parajuli**

“



Sunita Limbu
Member/beneficiary

"Before this project, we would stay awake in fear every time it rained. Now, we sleep peacefully, knowing our village is protected. I have also started growing vegetables, which provide additional income for my family. This project has changed our lives."

”

Ms. Mandha Pokhrel: From Struggles to Success in Sustainable Farming

Mandha Pokhrel, 56, from Devijhoda, Urlabari, always relied on subsistence farming—growing rice, maize, and mustard for her family’s meals. Though she had often heard of farmers earning a good income from vegetables, she never imagined it was possible for her. But repeated floods damaged her land, making even self-sufficiency a challenge. Everything changed when she joined **RRN’s IPM training**, where she discovered the potential of organic farming.



Equipped with new knowledge, Mandha began cultivating vegetables and fruits—not just for her kitchen, but for the market. Using only **natural fertilizers** and sustainable techniques, she soon reaped the rewards of her hard work. In just one season, she earned **NPR 30,000** a sum that once seemed beyond reach.

‘Before, I only grew for survival. Now, I grow for a future,’ Mandha shares, her eyes gleaming with pride. With sustainable farming as her foundation, Mandha’s journey is a testament to the power of knowledge, adaptation, and the unwavering spirit of Nepal’s farmers.

SCRCDR addresses Vulnerable and GESI: A key strength of this project is its inclusive approach, actively engaging vulnerable communities, women, and youth in disaster resilience, livelihood protection, and vegetation restoration. It aligns with our gender-responsive and risk-informed policies, while also supporting infrastructure and empowerment for both women and men. We look forward to expanding this collaboration especially in another river and strengthening women’s livelihoods!

- Ms. Mina Kumari Khatiwada, Deputy Mayor- Urlabari Municipality



Calls for Joint Action in Urlabari: **Hon. Umakanta Gautam**, Parliamentarian of Koshi Province, urges RRN, Urlabari Municipality, and Provincial authorities to collaborate for greater impact. While RRN builds rivers’ embankments, gabion walls, and irrigation systems, the Municipality must step up with plantation, bio-engineering, riverbank farming, and disaster preparedness. Encouragingly, a Provincial fund has been allocated for a truss bridge, and the Municipality plans to widen the **Sirujhar B** bridge—signs that collaboration is taking shape. However, financial support from the Municipality/wards is still lacking. Gautam calls for shared investment and technical skills transformation to protect vulnerable communities and schools—because resilience is built together.



Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to Rural Reconstruction Nepal-RRN's SCRCDR Project interventions in Urlabari Municipality, Morang, Koshi Province. Your dedication and collaboration have been instrumental in achieving meaningful changes in disaster risk reduction and building the community's resilience through holistic "One River One Community-Approach and Strategy" over the past two years of the project.

A special acknowledgment to the Project Staff, the Mid-Term Evaluation Team, Local Government Representatives, Ward Disaster Management Committees (WDMCs) and Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), School Teachers, SMC, the Child Club, Municipal Police, and other stakeholders. Your tireless efforts and unwavering commitment have been pivotal in driving transformative change and led to "From Vulnerability to Resilience: A Community-Led Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative". Our special gratitude to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respective Ward Chairpersons of Urlabari Municipality, Morang for their cooperation and support while implementing this project. We extend our gratitude to Mr. Bhanu Parajuli, Expert (consultant) for collecting and documenting stories, project progress, lesson learned, and best practices along with capturing voices and testimonies. His efforts in editing, designing have effectively encapsulated the essence of RRN's work, and the positive changes experienced by communities, resulting in this final communication material (Booklet).

About RRN

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) is a non-governmental development organization established in 1989. Over the past 30+ years, RRN has been dedicated to promoting socio-economic empowerment, democracy, human rights, and environmental sustainability. Over the years, it has been operating across more than 60 rural districts and reached out to 1.5 million HHs across Nepal. RRN collaborates with marginalized communities to build resilience, enhance livelihoods, and ensure inclusive and equitable development.

Vision Statement

A just, equitable, and sustainable society where every individual enjoys their fundamental rights and contributes to collective development.



Contact Information

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

Address: 288 Gairidhara Marg, Lazimpat-2,
Kathmandu Nepal

Website: www.rrn.org.np

Phone: +977-4004976

Email: rrn@rrn.org.np

Social media: <https://www.facebook.com/rrn.nepal>,

X: @RRNnepal,

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/rural-reconstruction-nepal-rrn/posts/>

Call to Action

Building Resilient Communities Together!
Our "One River One Community" approach has strengthened coordination, empowered communities, and promoted sustainable solutions like ecological engineering. Now, it's time to **replicate and scale up** these successes for greater impact!

Replication: Expand our community-driven flood management model to other vulnerable areas.

Scaling Up: Strengthen disaster resilience by supporting wider adoption of proven strategies.

Disclaimer

The findings and recommendations presented in this booklet are based largely on the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) report, progress so far made by project and field observation by expert, including validation of infrastructure sites, livelihoods, case stories and testimonies. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, the insights provided are for communication and informational purposes only.