

Success stories:

Vegetable farming changed my thoughts



Jhankar Bhul, age 35, permanent resident of Duwadi, ward no. 4 of Marku VDC, Achham district was doing vegetable farming since long but due to traditional way of farming he was not able to succeed. Because of seasonal vegetable farming it was not possible to make as much income, he says. Doing seasonal vegetable farming there is low income and finding market is also difficult. As an entrepreneur Jhankar

was selected for the Young Farmer Entrepreneurship Program in Marku VDC. After selection he participated in the 11 days Farmer Business School and 6 days vegetable farming skill development training. From this Bhul learnt about what business is; how to do, why and how to keep record books? He also learnt to select vegetable seeds, nursery management, seasonal and off-seasonal vegetable farming etc.

Nowadays, Bhul has started not only seasonal but also off-season vegetable farming. He has been doing off-seasonal vegetable farming in plastic made houses. Including tomato he is specially farming cabbage, eggplant, onions, garlic, potatoes and chili. In his experience, there is a big difference in earning from vegetables than cereal crops. As one can make more profit even in small land and can make more income by selling he is more interested in vegetable farming. In his experience, even though more effort and investment is needed for off-seasonal farming, income and market demand is very good. Customers come home, there is no problem in selling and one can earn as much money as estimated. He says, I am now slowly making this vegetable farming more off-seasonal oriented than seasonal thereby less farming of other crops, and vegetable farming has also brought change in my thinking.

Before his family is not accustomed eating vegetables in his house but once they started farming vegetables they became habitual of eating vegetables. Nowadays, when there is no vegetable in the menu his children even don't want to eat that, he says. In the past, Jhankar Bhul has spent his youth in India as a wage worker but nowadays he is busy in vegetable farming in his own locality, this has brought happiness in the family. Rs.10 earned in own country is more than Rs. 100 earned abroad, Bhul has been proving this proverb. In reality he has become an example that living

together with the family working in the village, sitting together to laugh and happiness is far better than going abroad for work. He feels proud when seeing him people from Safebagar to Chaukutteasks him what vegetable has come in the market.

Benefits of being organized

Kebi B.K. of Payal- 6 still remembers the bitter incidence happened in his life six years ago when he failed to find loan for the treatment of his sick wife even going all around his village for help, and lastly had to put 4 ounces of gold that he only poses as guarantee and treated his wife. "All white appearing things are not salt, not all people are kind and not all tree produce fruit. It is because of our activeness and love toward the group that we today are the lender not debtor" said in one breathe by group member Sita B.K.



"YES Nepal taught us to get organized. Initially, we faced problem regarding how to be open in the community and move on. Wondered who would say what in mind. We used to hear that even so called elite people of the society could say to our children that their parents have HIV/AIDS and we used to feel sad hearing this" says Chairperson of the Group. Another member of the group added in her traditional accent (saying *Mu panabhandobhayaakkuda*) "it has been six years taking the medicine and it is hard to sustain without working in the field. Being daily wage labor we give more priority to work than medicine. We are annoyed with the problem to collect medicine every month because of which there is no regularity in consumption. One day discussion during group meeting was done on disadvantages of leaving medicine. I feared hearing that infected people of other VDCs ahve died because of leaving medicine. At that time I remembered my kids. I thought about the situation of my children without me and then after I started taking medicine regularly."

Another member JhupriPrki told, previously I also lacked trust on medicine. Even taking medicine regularly many people have died in front of me, at that time I used to feel why they wouldn't have died if medicine could cure. Later on I realized that they have died because they didn't take medicine regularly thinking it would not work. They used to tell other that they take regular medicine but in reality they don't, were the people involved in bad habits. Discussion during the group meeting gave me much strength; I started to bring myself medicine. Before, I used to take help of other but going to doctor in person make my regular health check-up and gradually made huge improvement in my health, she told during group meeting. Not only in monthly saving and loan mobilization but the discussion on many other things during the group meeting has benefited all members.

After 'Reaching Across the Borders for HIV/AIDS Prevention (RAB) Program' was started by YES Nepal undoubtedly support has reached in the livelihood of infected people but along this regularity in taking medicine, discussion over health, nutrition etc have accordingly developed their capacity. While forming groups their voices are becoming collective as well as more support has reached for their work, said by local facilitator Motisara Dhami.

Revolving fund became help for helpless

Resident of Ghughurkot, ward no. 5, Dil Bahadur (Dile) and Sunita Kami are husband and wife are Parents of 5 children, they both are HIV infected. They remember their past days and tells: "my father used to work in a rice mill in Panjab, India. Although he used to earn good money working in the mill he didn't pay much attention for my education. When I was in class 5, my father took me to see Panjab. Even though I stayed 4 years with my father, he didn't teach me any work nor allowed to work either. After 4/5 years I turned 19 years and my father took me back home to do my wedding. Getting undue pressure from my mother I got married with Sunita. Although got married there is no decrease in my desire to visit different cities of India for work and ultimately I became Mumbaiwala.



He said in 2004 in India itself he knew for the first time that he has HIV. Just then he returned back home but didn't tell about this even to his wife and made unsafe sexual intercourse with her could have transmitted HIV to Sunita as well. I also used to feel unwell time and again but when I wanted to go for treatment my husband used to seem indifferent, her wife Sunita said. When I asked why you are not going for treatment, my husband said I didn't go because "other will know".

Through support from YES Nepal operated RAB program there is revolving fund mobilized among the group of infected people, Dil Bahadur knowing about this from social mobiliser of the program-Rajendra B.K. After knowing that like him other infected persons are also there he felt like falling from the sky and become very happy. Then there came sudden change in his internal fear from death and he along with his wife went to District Hospital Mangalsen. When the doctor said if he would take medicine regularly he can live normal life like before and then he started taking medicine. After check-up it is found her wife didn't have to take medicine. I gradually started

recovering and in the initiative of social mobiliser Rajendra B.K. we get associated with VDC Helping Group, says DilBahadur.

Like other members of the Helping Group, husband and wife made understanding of taking loan from the revolving fund to buy buffalo, and adding the remaining amount in the loan of Rs 18,000 they bought buffalo. They started to keep one lot of milk in home and started another lot selling at shop. Through little income made from selling of milk and ghee they have already returned some amount of the revolving fund and little is left so far. The revolving fund has given me new life-hesolute and nowadays he advise other infected people that revolving fund can also be your friend. For the protection of this revolving fund we need helping hands, say DilBahadur.

One name role many



Tika Bhandari, 34, is the resident of Kuika VDC ward no. 4. He has two sons and two daughters. Tika is third child of his parents. Tikasays, he in his early age had left the school and went different cities of India for work where he spent 17 years. After becoming HIV infected I didn't tell anybody about this but my health went on deteriorating when I found this program by YES Nepal raised much enthusiasm in me. Many things in my mind like 'no

matter what I do I will die now, it is because of my blunder mistake I became HIV infected/' used to trouble me a lot. To heal this mental trauma I got a lot of support from this program and staff members, he says.

His wife Bindra Bhandari stressing the same thing said "Before Tika did not speak anything to us and used to stay gazed alone. When this sister (facilitator) came,informationprovided by her proved to be good medicine for him". When he got affiliated to the group he took Rs.15000 for goat farming. So far he has sold goats of worth Rs.52000 while he still posses 5 goats in his farm. He has already returned back his loan to the group, and it has helped him to send his children to school. The formation of group helped him not just in income generation but also in medical treatment. In each meeting of the group discussion is done about 'who went to collect medicine, whodidn't bring, who is regularly taken medicine', this has given additional benefit to him.

Nowadays, I realized that for HIV infected person regular medicine and balanced diet is important. He has experience that avoiding bad habits and drugs could make life long and healthy. The most important thing he is happy about is that his wife is not HIV infected and he says that it is my

prime duty to save her from contamination. As his wife started telling about measures to protect from HIV infection, he laughs with shyness.

Everybody joins hand seeing us doing business.



Chandika Farmer Business School lies in Janalikot VDC ward no. 4. In this group there are 20 members. Before the start of Farmer Business School, members of this group used to do farming in traditional ways. The production made from that farming could support food for just 3-6 months. Two of the members used to sell little quantity of vegetables while other members of the group used to do vegetable farming just for their own consumptionsometimes. After

Farmer Business School got started Yearly Business plan of farmers was developed because of which farmers started to produce their products as per the demand of the market. They made agreement to make purchase and sell of agricultural products at collection centers and buy materials from local agro vets. Seeing how members of farmer groups slowly becoming business persons, they started getting financial and technical support from Agriculture Service Center, VDC office, cooperatives and various other agencies. Nowadays, business farmers of that place are regularly producing different varieties of vegetables during winter and rainy seasons. Yearly each member is earning at least 10 to 60/70 thousands. As earning raised they are excited to start vegetable farming by taking other's land in lease. This has eased them to cover their family expenses and make collective savings.

From watchman to entrepreneur

Dirgha Auji, aged 38 is a resident of Binayak Panchadewal Municipality ward no.2. He got married in BS 2052 and has two children. He has a family of six including his wife, children and parents. In a year, he used to spend two months at home and in India for remaining months to earn livelihoods. In that course, in year 2063, he returned home ill. He visited many traditional shamans for treatment but were in vain. After nothing worked, he went to District Hospital where he was diagnosed having infected with HIV. After that, he reduced his participations in public functions and community work. When he came to know about YES Nepal's program for PLHIVs in his village, he went to meet the staff of the program. Then realizing his mistake of going to India even

after contracting HIV, he got affiliated with a group of PLHIVs. He started savings in the group and regularly attended monthly meeting. At present, he has a buffalo which he bought taking a loan Rs 40,000 from his group. He and his family members at daily basis consume diary product from the buffalo milk and also manage to sell milk and butter. His monthly income from the buffalo is over Rs 9000 a month. Mr. Auji says, 'YES Nepal's supported PLHIV group is my hope of living. I am able to make house expenses from the money I make by selling milk produces. My wish to live in my own village and with family has been fulfilled by YES Nepal. Regular intake of medicines and diet can improve our health and thus can we do most of the indoor and outdoor works.