



Himalayan Project Nepal

A Nepali NGO dealing with Development Aid in Nepal

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Runner Service Report No. 2

On Bakanje Women Empowerment Project funded by Embassy of Denmark

In Bakanje VDC, Solukhumbu District, Nepal

by HIPRON Runner Service (RS) Namgyal Jangbu Sherpa

19. May – 02 June 2012

Concerns: Women Groups (WG), Women Empowerment Project Team (WEP team), District Agriculture Officer (DAO), District Public Health Officer (DHO), District Horticulture center (DHC), District Veterinarian Officer (DVO)

Under the coordination of Ambika Maharjan, HIPRON has implemented Bakanje-WEP 2012-2015 in Bakanje VDC, Solukhumbu in March 2012. The project is supported by Embassy of Denmark and implemented in 9 phases. HIPRON monitor each phase of the project. First monitoring was carried out in March 2012 when the project implementation was just starting, reference to 120416_RS Report.

Meeting with concerned Officials

In second monitoring, I had meeting with concerned officials (DHO, DHC and DVO) in Salleri, District Headquarter of Solukhumbu. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss with them how they can cooperate with WEP, especially, in terms of providing expertise for agriculture, horticulture and Veterinarian training program. We already had made a deal in this regard during previous monitoring, but those officials were transferred and new officers are placed in post. So, we have to start a deal with new officials again.

In meeting, we discussed mainly 3 issues: their availability for WEP, their Daily Allowance (DA), and time schedule of WEP. Regarding their availability, they told me that they would be available, but WEP has to make plan in consultation with them in order not to hamper their office job. They are also working for other NGO. I told them that Ambika, WEP Coordinator, would do that.

On the topic of DA for the training programs, experts are not satisfied with our proposed DA, they think Rs. 700/day is too less. With previous experts, we made deal of same amounts. There is a NGO working agriculture sector in Kanku and Kharikhola VDC in Solukhumbu, and they hire them for 2,000/day and extra bonus. So, experts expect same level of DA from WEP, and they do not want to go any lower. WEP has very limited budget for DA of those Experts, and it is very much likely that WEP cannot use them with this budget unless we do something else. I told them that I would discuss with Ambika about those issues and let them know.

My meeting with DHO was, to update him about health program of WEP and Sagar Bakanje Health Quarter Construction. In addition, we discussed about DHO health Plan in Upper Solu. He told me that he was planning to upgrade sub-health post to Health Post. The priority of upgrade is given on the basis of population density. Unfortunately, Upper Solu is not in his priority, Bakanje is the smallest VDC of Solukhumbu in terms of population. There is a prerequisite from DHO side that the community shall provide 2545 square meter of land for the extension of the facilities for upgrade.

I also discussed with him about employment of Chhemi Sherpa of Bakanje, who received ANM and Special Birth Attendant Training on Himalayan Scholarship Project. DHO said he would employ her in Bakanje Health Post on contract basis. It will a great success if he keeps his word. The Idea of employing her is to utilize her knowledge and skill in her own home village. If she is employed, she will be the highest level of health worker in Bakanje VDC. It was our big wish that she work in Bakanje. Chhemi has previously been doing volunteer service at ChhiringKharka Community Clinic since March 2012 and seeking an opportunity of employment.

Meeting with WEP Team in Bakanje

After my meeting with those officials in Salleri, I went to Bakanje. I met Ambika and her team in Chhiringkharka, Bakanje when they had a home visiting program for consultation to those women who often do not attend WEP meeting. I joined with them and observed their consultation with individual woman about Women Group Meeting (WG). In this individual consultation program, I felt they could share a lot of problem they were facing during the meeting in frankly, and the way Ambika and her team are discussing the problem with the women is very much inspiring to the women. I think in that way the women can be motivated for more participation and interaction in the meeting. However, the program lacked some planning, command and coordination. As a result, first, they succeeded to meet only few women during their home visit and they did not meet most of the women who were on work. Second, none of them except Nurse had specific job, rest were waiting for each other to undertake the action in the beginning, and women seemed to be confused what was really going to happen. I did not join the Women Group meeting this time but I have feeling that WG meeting are more successful. Ambika reported that her team improved a lot especially, from the introductory program of WEP. Now they are active, cooperative, self-motivated and self-mobilized. So, project was going according to the schedule. Participation and attention of

the women in meeting also improved according to her. Yet, I am a little concerned about the Social Mobilizers (SM), especially their too much engagement in WEP. According to the plan, each SM is responsible for two villages, but practically all 3 are engaged whole period in each WG meeting and in all places. They make their accommodation and food together in team, but they do not have any allowance for food and accommodation which other staff (Project Coordinator, Project Assistant and Nurse) does have. Furthermore, they have very low salary which cannot cover half of food expenses compare to the allowance other staff have for food and accommodation. So, Problem can come about this issue in the WEP team if they are not aware.

Bakanje WEP (2012-2015) is implemented in 9 phases and each phase has 3 round of Women Group Meeting. As reported by Ambika, in each round, WEP team carried out mainly 7 meetings, one meeting in each village (there are 6 villages) and one VDC women meeting. In 1st round meeting they carried out introductory program of WEP. In second round meeting, they gave advocacy training on Right Based Approach, Social Development, Networking, Group strengthening and proposal writing. In third round, they conducted health awareness program with nurse lecture on the topic of Women Health, Hygiene and Sanitation, Nutrition and Child Health. Nurse also checked the health and sanitation condition of women and child by home visiting. Ambika informed me that 1st phase program is becoming highly success. It is going to be completed by the end of June 2012.

About the Bakanje baseline survey, Lhakpa, surveyor, conducted the survey very successfully according to Ambika, but she wants to check them before it can be sent to Kathmandu.

We also discuss with Papa Kurt's proposed schedule for coming autumn in which he offer support for WEP if Ambika will be available in Bakanje during festival of Dashain and Tihar. Ambika appreciated for the offer but she wants to celebrate the festival with her family in Kathmandu.

On my meeting with DAO, DHC and DVO, Ambika and discussed the issues, mainly the DA of Experts. Through discussion, we got some options which we agreed to forward for HIPRON Board Meeting for consideration once Ambika is back to Kathmandu from Bakanje. Options are, (1) to make tighter schedule for agriculture, horticulture and veterinarian training program to raise DA according to their demand without exceeding the whole budget, (2) handing over them the programs in package for available budget so that they can decide on period of training program and schedule in consultation with Ambika, it possibly not that effective though, (3) option is, to find fresh and freelancer student of agriculture science who want to do the job according to the project description inside the allotted budget, and last option is to seek Embassy approval for withdrawing the program. We also agreed to seek board's advice.

Ambika and WEP Assitant Sarawati Khadka will come back from Bakanje by 3rd week of Jun and nurse will be back one week earlier.

As to the timeline, Ambika agreed to make new schedule of training in consultation with the officials if they are to be hired for training.

Conclusion and recommendation

The first phase of the WEP is on the way to completion. As mentioned above, WEP is going well and that WEP team is doing good job. Cooperation and participation of women in WG meeting is very satisfactory. However, Ambika should be aware about the engagement of the Social Mobilisers and put them on work according to the project implementation plan. Unnecessary of their engagement might create problem.

As to the cooperation from Government Official bodies, there are some problems. First, they have temporary job and they always keep transferring. So, when we visit their office, we each time find new officers and then we need to talk to them from the beginning again. Second, there are some NGOs who offer them very high salary for similar program as ours and they do not want work for any lower salary. Thirdly, there are only few experts at DAO and DHC, and they cannot cope with our schedule due to their own schedule. WEP needs to take these 3 things in to consideration for agro based trainings.

There is a lack of internal communication and reporting between HIPRON & WEP. I have discussed this issue with Ambika several times but still it has not been effective. Ambika and I should together to find out the way for better communication and effective reporting.

Kathmandu, 9 June 2012

Namgyal Jangbu Sherpa, Managing Officer, HIPRON

