



Digital Mentoring and Continuing Education for Improved Service and Market Linkages among Community Animal Health Workers in Nepal

Background and Rationale

Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) play a crucial role in improving livestock productivity, food consumption, income, and nutrition in rural areas by providing basic veterinary services. However, their remote locations often limit their access to markets and opportunities for skill enhancement. To address this, the new project will design and evaluate a Digital Mentoring and Continuing Education (DMCE) platform for CAHWs in Nepal, along with a Virtual Collection Center (VCC) goat marketing tool to enhance collective goat marketing through cooperatives.

Objective

To improve the quality of community animal health worker services by designing and evaluating a digital consultation and education platform. This will strengthen relationships between community animal health workers and production material providers, while also increasing farmers' income from goat sales through cooperative marketing and the use of appropriate technology.

Project Scale

The project aims to reach **400** Community Animal Health Workers, **50,000** farming families, and **116** Social Entrepreneurial Women Cooperatives.

Partners

Heifer Project Nepal, University of Florida, and University of California Davis.

Duration

December 16, 2023- June 31, 2026

Working Areas

The project will be implemented in Heifer's working areas in Jhapa, Morang, Rautahat, Bara, Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Chitwan, Dhading, Nuwakot, Sindhuli, Tanahu, Kaski, Parbat, Baglung, Nawalpur, Palpa, Rupandehi, Kapilvastu, Arghakhanchi, Gulmi, Pyuthan, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, and Surkhet.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Digital Mentoring and Continuing Education for Improved Service and Market Linkages among Community Animal Health Workers in Nepal project aligns with 6 Sustainable Development Goals: No Poverty (1), Quality Education (4), Gender Equality (5), Decent Work and Economic Growth (8), Reduced Inequalities (10), and Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Cross Cutting Themes

- **Women as CAHWs:** Our intervention focuses on empowering women as animal health microentrepreneurs and smallholder livestock producers, especially in goat farming. This approach aligns with local labor divisions and highlights small livestock as a vital livelihood and empowerment opportunity. The digital bundle aims to boost the productivity of both CAHWs and their clients.
- **DMCE and VCC App:** To tailor the digital bundle for women, we will refine our existing DMCE and Virtual Collection Center (VCC) Goat Marketing applications to meet the needs of women technicians serving women clients. The key features will include flexible training and mentoring options, enabling women to manage household responsibilities. Additionally, the bundle will align with local cultural norms regarding women’s empowerment and interdependence.
- **Mixed crop-livestock systems:** In our context, goats are particularly resilient to extreme heat and water stress. Therefore, the digital bundle presents a promising opportunity to improve animal health, productivity, and market access, facilitating in climate change adaptation.

Digital mentoring and continued education for CAHWs will increase client numbers, visits, and service quality. This will result in higher income and greater empowerment, especially for female CAHWs. By expanding their range of services, CAHWs can attract clients and negotiate better prices, thereby increasing profits.

For livestock keepers, improved service quality and a broader range of services will encourage the uptake of animal health services, leading to improved animal health and productivity. This will lead to increased income and larger herd sizes. A higher volume of cooperative sales will strengthen these organizations, leading to greater empowerment and improved access to services, such as inputs and credit.

The Virtual Collection Center (VCC) aims to boost the marketing of live goats by leveraging cooperatives. This initiative will not only increase the number of goat sales but also enhance the revenue and income for both individual goat farmers and cooperatives.

Expected Key Results

Theory of Change

