

July - December 2024

# NEWSLETTER



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## MAJOR MILESTONES OF 2024



### Strengthening Government Partnerships for Sustainable Future

On October 6, 2024, Dr. Tirtha Raj Regmi, Heifer Nepal's Country Director, and Tika Kumar Adhikari, President of Social Entrepreneurs Women's Alliance (SEWA) Nepal, held a productive meeting with Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli at the Prime Minister's Office. During the meeting, Dr. Regmi emphasized Heifer's impactful initiatives and the vital role of government partnership projects in driving positive change across Nepal. He also shared valuable insights about SEWA Nepal, an apex body of women's cooperatives promoted by Heifer, which has been instrumental in empowering communities.

To date, Heifer has helped establish 293 social entrepreneur women's cooperatives, benefiting over 400,000 families across the country. The Prime Minister expressed deep appreciation for Heifer's work and showed a strong interest in exploring further opportunities for collaboration with the government in the future.

This meeting marked a significant step in strengthening our partnerships and advancing the shared goal of building a brighter, more sustainable future for all.



### Heifer Nepal Partners with NCF to Strengthen Social Entrepreneur Women's Cooperatives

On October 24, 2024, Heifer International Nepal joined hands with the National Cooperative Federation (NCF) to sign an Independent Contractor agreement at the Heifer Nepal country office. The signing ceremony was attended by key members of the NCF team, including the Chair, Vice Chair, General Manager, Deputy General Manager, and Secretary. This partnership kicks off a vital effort

to assess and support Social Entrepreneur Women Cooperatives (SEWCs) for sustainable development in Nepal.

Under this partnership, NCF will conduct a comprehensive study on the Heifer-supported SEWCs to identify capacity gaps and provide policy advocacy recommendations. In addition, we will organize two provincial workshops in Lumbini and Bagmati, where key stakeholders will come together to review findings and

develop action plans aimed at revitalizing and growing SEWCs.

This collaboration is a significant step toward enhancing the institutional capacity and sustainability of SEWCs, fostering stronger policy dialogue, and ensuring meaningful engagement with local stakeholders. Together, we are working to create lasting impact and drive the growth of women-led cooperatives across Nepal.



## Heifer Nepal Shares Impact of Climate-Resilient Livestock Farming at Outcome-Sharing Workshop

On October 29, 2024, Heifer Project Nepal hosted a workshop to share the outcomes of the “Building Resilience Through Climate-Resilient Livestock Farming in Western Nepal” project. Part of the Green Resilient Agricultural Productive Ecosystem (GRAPE) program, the project has been running in collaboration with GIZ across 14 municipalities in Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces from February 2023 to October 2024. Co-funded by the European Union and the Embassy of Finland, the initiative aimed to empower farmers with climate-resilient, sustainable livestock farming practices.

The workshop highlighted Heifer’s progress and key insights from the project. Attendees included distinguished guests such as Dr. Rajendra Prasad Mishra, Secretary of Livestock Development (MoALD), Dr. Umesh Dahal, Director General of the Department of Livestock Services, Alex Binder, GIZ Program Manager, mayors from the project areas, and representatives from the Finnish Embassy and European Union. The event was chaired by Heifer Nepal’s Country Director, Dr. Tirtha Raj Regmi.

A major highlight was the launch of the “Technologies and Best Practices for Climate-Smart Livestock Practices” handbook.

Dr. Regmi, Dr. Mishra, and Mr. Binder unveiled the handbook, which will serve as a key resource for expanding the knowledge gained through the project. Dr. Mishra commended Heifer’s rapid achievements and emphasized the government’s readiness to collaborate with donor agencies on future climate initiatives. Dr. Regmi reaffirmed Heifer’s commitment to supporting over 400,000 families in Nepal in adopting climate-smart farming practices. He stressed the importance of collaboration between development organizations to help farmers better adapt to climate challenges.

In conclusion, we’re proud to share that the GRAPE project has successfully empowered 1,851 farmers to adopt climate-resilient practices, thanks to continued support and capacity building. This achievement underscores both the resilience of the farmers and the strength of our partnerships.

As we look to the future, Heifer remains committed to advancing sustainable agriculture, fostering innovation, and strengthening partnerships to help Nepal’s farming communities thrive in the face of climate change. Together, we are paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable agricultural future for Nepal.

# FROM THE FIELD: IMPACT STORIES



## Heifer Nepal's LTOH department and One Health Unite to Celebrate World Rabies Day

On World Rabies Day, Heifer International Nepal, in partnership with the One Health Coordination Committee and local NGOs, conducted awareness sessions in 27 schools within its project areas. These sessions aimed to raise awareness about zoonotic diseases, with a focus on rabies. The sessions also introduced students to the One Health approach, which emphasizes the interconnectedness between human, animal, and environmental health.

Targeting grades 7 to 10, the sessions also involved teachers, local leaders, and veterinary and medical professionals. Students learned about risks of rabies, the importance of timely vaccination, and treatment, along with other zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and the significance of One Health approach.



## Celebrating Dashain with Prosperity and Community Success

This Dashain, our hearts were full of joy as we celebrated the incredible achievements of the Heifer-supported Shree Upahar Social Entrepreneur Women's Cooperative. Through their hard work and dedication, goat exports from Rambha Rural Municipality comprising 7 cooperatives now generate over NPR 30 million (USD 226,000) annually. This contributes to a total export value of approximately NPR 60 million (USD 450,000) across 11 locations in Palpa. The impact of goat farming on these communities is profound. The income from goat sales is not only changing lives but also enabling cooperative members to send their children to school and grow their businesses. Goats are being exported to key markets in Butwal, Bhairahawa, Pokhara, and Chitwan, and traders are now traveling directly to the village to purchase goats from the cooperative.

This story is a powerful reminder of the hope, resilience, and prosperity we've built together. It reflects the strength of our traditions, the unity of our people, and the collective effort that continues to drive us forward.

## Gift Earned Through Resilience

-By Nabina Basnet

“You all show us the building constructed within this timeframe, and we will see.” This promise, spoken by Tara Kumari Basyal and Sharda Ghimire Chalisey, echoed through the corridors of bureaucracy and doubt. Government agencies had set a 25-day deadline for the completion of a building that would house the Social Entrepreneur Women’s Cooperative Limited. Despite the pressure, the women didn’t just meet the deadline, they defied expectations and proudly unveiled the completed structure within the allotted time.

It wasn’t the first time Tara and Sharda had been and felt underestimated. The cooperative, from its very inception, faced attempts from others to suppress their voices. Whether during cooperative registration or various other administrative tasks, there was a constant effort to undermine their work simply because they were women. Yet, each obstacle only fueled their determination.

Today, Upahar Social Entrepreneur Women’s Cooperative stands as a beacon of success, having evolved from operating out of a rented house to owning a substantial piece of land. Spread over 13.3 Aana (4,556 Sq. Ft) of prime real estate in Ward No. 2 of the Sainamaina Municipality, the cooperative is now a thriving institution, with 244 groups and 3,811 share members, each of whom forms part of the cooperative’s ever-growing family. Tara, the manager, recalls the cooperative’s humble beginnings with a smile. “Starting with just 11 groups and 234 members, it feels incredibly rewarding to have built such a large family”, she says, remembering the days when the vision seemed so distant.

Founded in 2011 with modest savings of NPR 5 (USD 0.037), Upahar Cooperative has now amassed a total asset base of NPR 161.6 million (USD 1.2 million). This transformation showcases the power of perseverance, hard work, and solidarity. The cooperative, once a small grassroots initiative, now amassed a total asset base of NPR 161.6 million (USD 1.2 million). This transformation showcases the power of perseverance, hard work, and solidarity. The cooperative, once a small grassroots initiative, now provides vital services to its members. It sells and distributes meat, chicken, cattle feed, and chemical fertilizers at subsidized prices. For many of Upahar’s members, these products are a lifeline, available right at their doorsteps, at prices they can afford.



In addition to these tangible benefits, the cooperative also offers various loan options to its members. Tara and Sharda have worked tirelessly to ensure that no woman is held back due to financial constraints. “We provide loans at an interest rate of 14% without collateral, 12% with collateral, and 11% for large-scale farmers”, explains Sharda, the president of the cooperative. “We believe no sister should be stopped from pursuing her dreams just because she lacks money. We’ve given loans up to NPR 1.5 million (USD 11,000) to help women take charge of their futures.”

The impact of these financial opportunities is profound, but so are the educational programs that accompany them. Through various awareness and empowerment initiatives, Upahar is shaping the future of its members. Tara proudly shares, “Savings are a vital lesson. We teach our sisters, many of whom didn’t know what savings meant, and now they are even saving for their children. The change is incredible, and it fills me with pride to see it.”

The cooperative’s work has transformed not just women’s lives, but the entire community. Women, once confined by societal norms and unable to step outside their homes, are now achieving remarkable success. Their activism has sparked a wave of change, one that has uplifted men, women, and children alike. The gifts the cooperative has given to society from financial empowerment to educational opportunities have made a lasting impact, creating a ripple effect that extends far beyond the cooperative’s walls.

As the cooperative continues to grow and evolve, one thing is certain: the Upahar Women’s Cooperative is more than just an organization; it is a symbol of what women can achieve when they come together, support each other, and fight for their place in the world.

# FEATURE STORY

## Celebrating 80 Years of Community Empowerment !

On July 14, 2024, Heifer International marked 80 years of supporting over 46 million smallholder farmers. Founded in 1944, Heifer's mission has been to empower people through access to knowledge and resources, helping them overcome hunger and poverty.

To celebrate this milestone, Heifer hosted a week-long anniversary event in September 2024, featuring a "Passing on the Gift" ceremony. The guests including donors, families of Heifer founders, and staff from across the globe gathered in Kathmandu on September 16 for a series of impactful field visits and community engagements.

### *Field Visits & Community Connections*

On September 17, guests were introduced to Heifer's mission and programs before splitting into two groups for field visits: the donor group headed to Janakpur, while the family group traveled to Sindhuli. Over the next few days, both groups immersed themselves in the lives of local farmers, visiting Self-Help Groups (SHGs), participating in farming activities, and learning about sustainable practices. Highlights included visits to the Bishwambhar Pariwar SHG in Ramgopalpur, where guests worked alongside local women, and a vibrant day in Khayarmara and Dudhali, where they shared meals, worked on farms, and learned about goat farming and sustainable fodder practices.



### *Celebrating Women, Dairy Innovation, & Culture*

On September 20, guests explored Milky Way Project areas, meeting women dairy farmers and witnessing hands-on innovations in dairy farming. The day also included cultural exchanges, local food preparation, and a lively cultural show that celebrated Nepal's diverse ethnic traditions and vibrant heritage.

### *Passing on the Gift Ceremony*

The celebrations culminated on September 21 with the historic “Passing on the Gift” ceremony in Kamalamai Municipality, Sindhuli. Eleven families received first-born Holstein calves, a gift from families who had previously benefited from Heifer’s support. This exchange symbolizes community growth, self-sufficiency, and lasting change. The event was attended by key figures, including Prakash Shrestha, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad Mishra, Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.



### *Reflecting on 80 Years of Impact*

The event concluded with a debriefing session on September 22, where guests shared their reflections on the trip and expressed a strong commitment to continue supporting Heifer’s mission. CEO Surita Sandosham summed up the celebration: “This moment has been decades in the making, built on a proud history of partnership and shared vision.”

This 80th anniversary celebration is a tribute to the hard work, dedication, and collaborative spirit that has fueled Heifer Nepal’s success over the years. We are deeply grateful to our guests, staff, and the incredible communities who made this event possible.

# SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION



## World Food Day at Heifer

On 16 October 2024, Heifer Nepal celebrated World Food Day by engaging in meaningful discussions about the importance of nutritious food, the role we can play in building sustainable and resilient food systems, and the right to food. We also focused on respecting food producers

and exploring how we can foster empathetic relationships with them. In line with the theme, “Right to Food for a Better Life and a Better Future”, we wrapped up the day with a fun food-themed quiz, promoting awareness in an interactive and enjoyable way.

## World Soil Day at Heifer

This year’s World Soil Day was centered around the theme “Caring for Soils: Measure, Monitor, Manage”, shining a spotlight on the critical need for accurate soil data to drive sustainable agricultural practices. Saksham Social Entrepreneurs Women Agriculture Cooperative Kankai, in partnership with Heifer International Nepal and Kankai Municipality, brought together cooperative members, municipal leaders, and local stakeholders for an engaging and informative celebration. Mr. Yadu Kumar Uprety, Agriculture Head of Kankai Municipality, emphasized that improving soil health is crucial for combating climate change and desertification. He urged collective action and the adoption of sustainable farming practices to protect our soils. The event also included an interactive session where cooperative members







shared their personal experiences and soil management techniques. Practices such as composting, crop rotation, and organic farming were discussed as essential tools in preserving soil health for future generations.

A highlight of the day was the rally in Ward No. 3 of Kankai Municipality, where vibrant banners advocating for soil conservation and sustainable agriculture were proudly displayed.

This rally energized the local community and reinforced the importance of soil protection. Local government officials, including the Ward

Chairperson pledged continued support for sustainable agriculture initiatives in the region. On the other hand, the Heifer Nepal team also participated in tree planting and made a pledge to protect the soil at the country office, emphasizing the crucial role of healthy soils in supporting agriculture and ecosystems. Looking ahead, Heifer Nepal is committed to advancing soil protection efforts through continued farmer training, advocacy for pro-soil policies, and the promotion of climate-smart technologies.

# ON THE HORIZON

## Introducing BAGAR: Reviving Nepal's Floodplains

The Building Agroforestry-based Adaptation plans for Resilient floodplains (BAGAR) project, focuses on regenerating and sustainably managing floodplains. The project targets vulnerable communities in Marin (mid-hills) and Gadhimai (lowlands) municipalities of the Bagmati river basin, where frequent climate-induced flooding and sedimentation have caused food insecurity and loss of livelihoods. The communities, including marginalized indigenous groups (Tamang, Magar, Majhi) and Dalits, have limited voice in local governance, exacerbated by informal land tenure systems. BAGAR will collaboratively develop ecosystem-based agroforestry plans,

emphasizing native fodder species that can withstand floods, providing both food and livestock feed. These plans aim to reduce flood risk, enhance ecosystem services, and create livelihood opportunities. The project will focus on seven wards of Marin and nine wards of Gadhimai municipalities, with a 24-month duration. Key innovations include empowering communities through co-design of plans, leveraging local partnerships, and creating models for broader application in the region. The project's goal is to improve flood resilience, food security, and community livelihoods through ecosystem-based planning.



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## 1. Can you tell us a bit about your background, how you came to join Heifer, and your current roles and responsibilities?

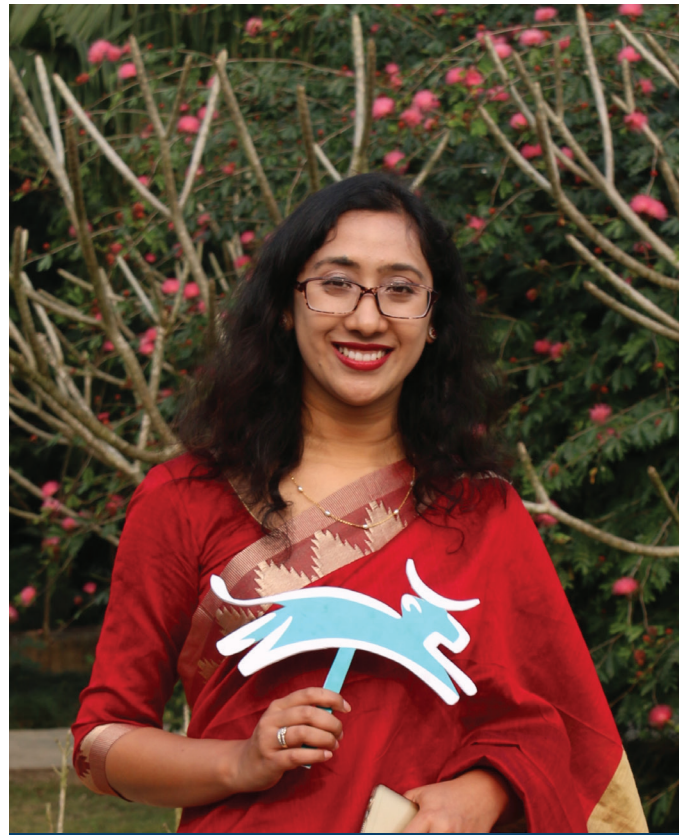
I started my career as a part-time lecturer at Tribhuvan University but soon realized my passion lay in the development sector. I transitioned to an Italian NGO, leading two regional health projects for nearly four years, then spent 14 months with a British NGO focusing on health sector initiatives. In both roles, I specialized in fundraising, networking, and building partnerships.

In March 2013, I joined Heifer International Nepal as Communication and Resource Mobilization Manager. Although unfamiliar with the organization at the time, I was drawn to its holistic community development model. I quickly connected with the work, especially the inspiring women in the communities we serve, and celebrated my 10th anniversary with Heifer this year.

Currently, as the Associate Director of Partnership and Business Development, I lead efforts to build business relationships with partners and funders, aiming to scale impact and diversify revenue streams.

## 2. What's a fun fact about you that most people at work wouldn't know?

Most people might not know that I have a hidden talent for baking! I can whip up a delightful variety of cookies, muffins, and cakes. From classic chocolate chip cookies to intricately decorated celebration cakes, I find joy in creating treats that bring smiles to others. It's my way of adding a sprinkle of sweetness to life!



**Sumnima Shrestha**

*Associate Director-Partnership & Business Development*

## 3. How has working at Heifer contributed to your personal and professional growth? Are there any skills, knowledge, lessons, advice you've gained since joining Heifer that you're particularly proud of?

Working at Heifer International for nearly 11 years has been an incredible journey filled with rich experiences and immense opportunities for growth. During this time, Heifer has been instrumental in my personal and professional development. I have enhanced my leadership and decision-making abilities while building expertise in strategic and systems thinking. My role as a networker has allowed me to engage with a diverse range of individuals, connect with the global community, and cultivate meaningful relationships.

Although I do not work directly with communities, the efforts I invest in generating revenue contribute significantly to improving the livelihoods of women across Nepal. Witnessing the transformative impact on these women fills me with pride and reinforces the value of the work I do.

## 4. How do you see yourself developing and growing in your role?

Development challenges and the fundraising landscape are evolving rapidly, along with significant shifts in how development partners operate. I envision myself adapting to these changes by honing the necessary skills, leveraging resources effectively, and continuing to support Heifer's mission.

# BRUSHSTROKES OF HOPE



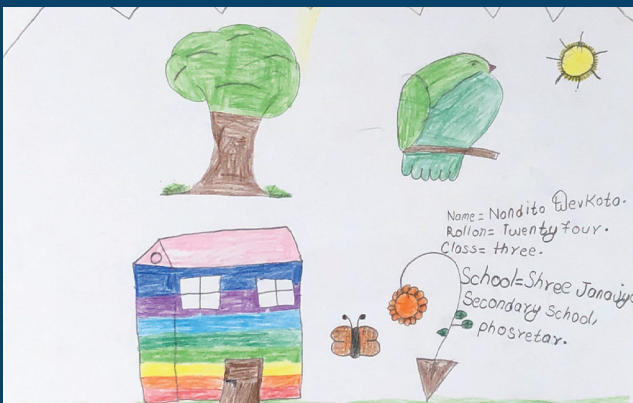
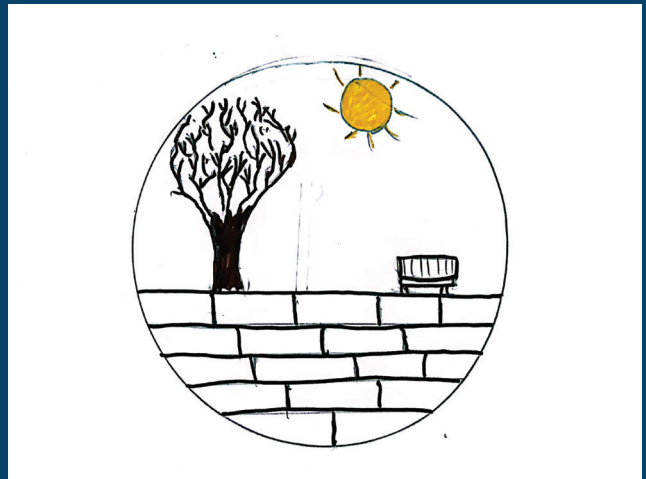
Art by Bibisha Khadgi, Grade 1  
Shree Janajyoti Secondary School, Phosretar



Art by Anuja Tharu, Grade 6  
Shree Tribhuvan Model Secondary School, Thakurbaba



Art by Anuja Tharu, Grade 6, Shree Tribhuvan Model Secondary School, Thakurbaba



Art by Nandita Devkota, Grade 3  
Shree Janajyoti Secondary School, Phosretar



Art by Sita Kunwar, Grade 3  
Shree Janajyoti Secondary School, Phosretar