

Extension of Multipurpose Irrigation Project in Ghumthang Nepal

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Ghumthang is a village situated in Barhabise Municipality, Sindhupalchowk, Nepal. It is about 30 minutes long walk away from Sakhuwa Bazar which is 14 km from Barhabise, the main market. Since the Earthquake of 2015 damaged the water sources and pipelines, people from Hundung, Ghumthang have been facing issues with access to clean drinking water supply. Previously, 1300 meters of pipelines and 8 water taps had been installed in this area to improve the access to water. New water sources had to be identified and connected to a permanent and large water tank through pipelines to act as a reservoir. A consumer's group named 'Kaule Khola Sana Sichain Upabhokta Samiti' was formed which was responsible for the construction and management of these taps under close supervision and monitoring by representatives of ISARD.

However, this was not nearly enough for other household purposes and agricultural activities. More importantly, the villagers expressed the need for more tap water supply to irrigate the farms in order to improve production and in turn increase their incomes. Therefore, in collaboration with financial support (NRs. 500,000/- or EUR 3000) from Himalaya Resources and labour input from the villagers themselves, in 2022 alone, ISARD has been able to coordinate the construction of 20 water taps in Hundung which

continues to benefit 65 households. Besides this, maintenance and repair have been done for 5 pre-existing taps. All of these taps are spaced between 2-3 households to ensure equal access to water in terms of both distance and amount.

Two Case Studies

Sarki Thami, Member of Farmer's Group

Sarki Thami is a 51-year-old farmer who has a family of six including his wife, a son, a daughter, and 2 grandchildren. Previously, the home garden that he used to cultivate was not enough to feed the family let alone generate income. However, after becoming a member of one of ISARD's farmer's group, he has received different foundational training on group management, financial literacy, animal rearing, etc. Since then, he hasn't been doing labour work to generate additional income.

Sarki Thami expresses that he has been engrossed in farming ever since the water supply has been used for irrigation purposes. Before the irrigation system was established, the villagers were only able to grow maize, paddy and, wheat as these crops mostly depended upon monsoon rains. They could not cultivate vegetables and seasonal crops as they all required adequate water for proper growth.

With the taps and pipelines that are easily accessible from Thami's home, he has been growing vegetables in both summer and winter, within tunnels or through terrace farming. These products are used by Thami and his family for consumption. Moreover, for a community that previously had to buy stale and old vegetables at expensive prices, more villagers like Thami have been selling their surplus vegetables in local markets; this has become an additional source of income for the residents of Hundung.

Thami now has 2 vegetable tunnels and one for mushroom farming. For the first time, he was able to earn NRs. 35,000/- by selling vegetables, besides his own consumption. He has been using this income to fund the education of his grandchildren.



Charimaya Pradhan

Charimaya Pradhan is a 54-year-old farmer from Hundung who lives with her family including her husband, son, daughter-in-law, and 2 grandchildren. Although she had been farming for a living, she recalls that she had never been enthusiastic about farming as she is now. She attributes this to the accessibility of water. Since most vegetables require adequate irrigation, she had been discouraged to cultivate seasonal vegetables and stuck to traditional crops such as maize.

After the taps have been made, she has been able to use excess water for agricultural purposes. Thus, she has now made a tunnel to plant tomatoes and other vegetables on the land that was once only used for maize. She now produces sufficient vegetables for consumption and has been able to save household income that was once used to buy vegetables. Additionally, it has also been easier to get water for the cattle which used to take half an hour. With saved time, she has been able to focus on caring for her farms and cattle.

