

READ Nepal

Annual Report 2014

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READ Nepal Overview

Rural Education and Development (READ) Nepal, an INGO established in 1991, partners with communities to build Community Library and Resource Centers (CLRCs) in villages across Nepal. In more than two decades of operation, READ CLRCs are transformed from being traditional libraries to effective community development centers with a strong focus on lifelong learning, social empowerment and economic development, which is needs-based, community-owned and sustainable. To date, READ has built 59 Centers in 40 districts of Nepal.

Vision:

READ Nepal believes that empowering rural communities is critical to alleviating Nepal's poverty. It envisions a Nepal where individuals, families and entire communities have access to the knowledge, resources and opportunities necessary to build more prosperous future.

Mission:

READ Nepal partners with rural communities to create vibrant places to live and thrive. Its proven and replicable model focuses on CLRC as a vehicle for social and economic transformation. Combining education, enterprise and community development in the CLRCs, READ Nepal collaborates with rural communities to ensure their long-term maintenance and success.

How READ works?

READ partners with rural villages to build CLRCs that offer knowledge, information and opportunities to villagers that lack the most basic educational resources. READ works with each community to seed an enterprise that will generate much-needed income to sustain the center over the long run. READ Centers are community owned and operated, so that each community embraces the management and development of its respective center.

READ Centers are designed to serve whole communities and their surrounding areas. Resources are available for all – adults, children, students, teachers, women and even those who are illiterate.

Each READ supported CLRCs have at least four of the following sections:

Library Section with 3,000-5,000 books, magazines and newspapers in both English and the local language.

Information Communications Technology (ICT) Section equipped with Computers, Internet access (where available) and computer skills training will be provided through this ICT section of CLRC.

Women's Section with literature and educational materials relevant to women's needs (on topics such as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, gender rights, financial literacy, etc.)

Children Section with child-friendly furniture, educational toys, and reading materials.

Audio Video Section with TV, video, DVD player, telephone, fax and copying services, projector and a selection of relevant educational DVDs and CDs.

Training/Meeting Hall: where staff and partners conduct programs related to community development, literacy, health, livelihood skills and more.

Sustaining Enterprises:

Each READ supported Community Library and Resource (CLRC) is paired with a sustaining enterprise or income generating source that is seeded by READ and then operated by the community. In addition to creating local employment and providing a service to the community, the profits from the enterprise help cover the operating expenses of the CLRCs over the long run.

Till 2014, 88 sustaining enterprises or income generating sources have been set in READ CLRCs to sustain such as turmeric farming, souvenir shop, storefront rental, ambulance service, mill, catering services, guest rooms, cyber café, cooperative with micro finance, training hall etc.

Education

Each READ Center is equipped with relevant educational resources including books, newspapers, magazines and journals. These Centers are instrumental in creating literate environment and sustaining literacy skills. They do so by providing free space and resources, educational trainings such as literacy classes and further tying up literacy with practical livelihood concerns and ICT activities.

Adult literacy courses give an opportunity to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills that can change their lives. In addition to literacy courses, READ Centers conduct various activities that promote habit of reading in the community such as educational competitions, literacy retention activities, storytelling, art workshop, environmental education, health education and so on.

READ Centers have sections specifically for children that feature books for early readers and educational games and toys.

Adult Literacy

Literacy classes are run by 12 READ CLRCs in 2014. 5 CLRCs have conducted literacy classes in partnership with District Education Office as a part of Mission Literate Nepal campaign. Altogether 3731

S.N	Centers	Partnership	No. of participants		
			M	F	Total
1	Laxmi Narayan CLRC	DEO	0	800	800
2	Lumbini Tinau CLRC	-	8	16	24
3	Moti CLRC	-	0	160	160
4	Thak CLRC	-	6	6	12
5	Tikapur CLRC	-	0	60	60
6	Triveni CLRC	DEO, CLC	5	395	400
7	Jhuwani CLRC	DEO, CLC	74	754	828
8	Janajagaran CLRC	-	28	170	198
9	Jana Chetana CLRC	DEO	52	798	850
10	Gardi CLRC	DEO	96	264	360
11	Fulbari CLRC	-	0	15	15
12	Agyauli CLRC	-	2	22	24
Total of 2014			271	3460	3731

local adults including 3460 women and 271 men were made literate through literacy classes offered at READ supported CLRCs.

Children Education

In addition to giving thousands of children access to educational toys and games at READ Centers, we also provided early literacy and numeracy training to children and conducted educational completion programs with 2,229 children.

Women Empowerment

READ CLRCs provide safe space for women to gather, learn, and advocate. Women empowerment leads to increase in family income, better child and maternal health and girls' access to education due to increase in their decision making abilities. Women empowerment program of READ includes literacy and housewives' classes for women, leadership development workshop and trainings, gender sensitization, trainings on livelihood skills and health education. In addition, Center's Women Savings cooperatives give the women easy access to credit and promotes saving habits among women of local villages.

Economic Empowerment

In addition to providing access to information, READ CLRCs actively support the economic development of rural villages through livelihood skills trainings such as sewing, fish and poultry farming, off-season vegetable farming and hammock making training that are relevant to the local economy and can help villagers earn an income. Additionally, microfinance training and creation of savings cooperatives are offered where it is feasible.

Technology

In order to meet the need for technology-oriented solutions, READ CLRCs have an ICT section that provides computer, Internet, email facilities, along with phone, fax, printing, and scanning to the people of underprivileged rural communities. Most READ Centers have computer facilities that provide basic computer lessons to advanced courses for professional purposes, and free Internet services. These facilities enable locals to gather information, create, learn, and communicate with others while they develop essential digital skill.

Five Prioritized Outcomes of READ: READ Nepal conducts different activities to achieve its five defined prioritized outcomes as mentioned below with the number of beneficiaries.

Outcome	Men	Women	Total
Increased access to information or knowledge	10474	26342	36816
Increased access to economic opportunities	3743	11148	14891
Increased women's empowerment	350	24355	24705
Increased community engagement with READ Center	253	228	481
Increased culture of reading	1285	4787	6072

READ Nepal's Project of 2014

1. Practical Answers Service

Project Overview:

Practical Answers Service program involves receiving and responding local enquiries about agriculture/livestock, climate change and Disaster Reduction Management and other topics related to improve quality of living. The enquires are responded through various responding mechanisms such as knowledge materials- posters, flex prints, pamphlets; community radio program; video shows; interaction with experts; orientation programs; health camps; group formation and group discussion on issues and so on. The enquiries are received from communities, group, and/or individuals by email, letters, phone, SMS or through enquiry boxes placed at each centers.

The program also support skills development training in case of high demand from community and has provided trainings on mushroom and potato farming, homemade pesticides, mineral block making, livelihood trainings like bag making, tailoring training and so on.

In 2014, six of the project implementing Centers namely Tikapur, Gyanodaya, Agyauli, Jhuwani, Agyauli and Lumbini Tinau CLRC piloted Mobile Knowledge Center service as its outreach service to cater services to rural communities who are unable to visit the library.

Funding partner: Practical Action

Project Implementing Districts and CLRCs are listed in the table below:

District	Implementing Partners	Funding	Implementing Year
1. Chitwan	1. Jhuwani CLRC	READ	2011
	2. Sauraha CLRC	READ	2013
	3. Dibyajyoti CLRC	READ+PA	2013
	4. Gardi CLRC, Madi	READ	2013
2. Nawalparasi	5. Agyauli CLRC	PA	2011
	6. Shiva Shakti CLRC	READ+PA	2013
	7. Deurali CLRC	READ+PA	2012
3. Lamjung	8. Laxmi Narayan CLRC	PA	2013
4. Kailali	9. Tikapur CLRC	PA	2011
	10. Jana Chetana CLRC	PA	2013

5. Banke	11. Gyanodaya CLRC	PA	2011
5. Bardiya	12. Tribhuwan CLRC	PA	2013
6. Sarlahi	13. Chaturbhuveshwor CLRC	READ+PA	2013
7. Siraha	14. Srijana CLRC	PA	2013
8. Sinduli	15. Kamala CLRC	PA	2013
9. Nuwakot	16. Janajagaran CLRC	READ	2013
10. Rupandhehi	17. Lumbini Tinau CLRC	READ	2012
11. Kaski	18. Deepshika CLRC	READ	2013
12. Parvat	19. Moti CLRC	PA+READ	2013
13. Lalitpur	20. RIRC (Badikhel)	READ	2014
14. Kathmandu	21. Triveni CLRC	READ	2014
15. Kavre	22. Gyan Bikas CLRC	READ	2014

Outcomes of program (Jan-Dec, 2014)

- 63,896 enquiries received, out of which 63,083 were responded (i.e., 98.72 %)
- 299 interaction programs were conducted.
- 216 technical groups were formed
- 220 Focus Group Discussions were carried out
- 30 trainings were conducted- 16 related to agriculture/ livestock and 14 women empowerment
- 5 Orientation programs with expert- 2 on health issues and 3 on legal issues
- 13 human healths organized
- 14 animal health camps organized
- 29 Mobile knowledge Centers

2. Expanding Educational and Livelihood Resources in Terai with specific focus on ICT and Youth Project funded by Reach Out To Asia (ROTA)

READ Nepal and Reach Out to Asia agreed to work in partnership to implement a three-year project in the Terai region of Nepal with an objective to improve educational and livelihood resources of that region with much special focus on ICT and Youth. The Project is funded by Reach Out To Asia (a part of Qatar Foundation) and our partner for implementing youth programs is Restless Development. The project period will be from January 2014 - December 2017.

Project Implementing Districts: Nawalparasi, Parsa, Dang, Bardiya and Kalika

District	READ CLRCs
1. Nawalparasi	1. Agayuli Hub 2. Pragatunagar Satellite 3. Jahada Satellite
2. Parsa	4. Bhanu Hub 5. Pokariya Satellite
3. Bardiya	6. Tribhuwan Hub 7. Kalika Satellite 8. Basghadi Satellite
4. Kailali	9. Tikapur Hub 10. Bhanu Sati Satellite 11. Janata Satellite
5. Dang	12. Deukhuri Hub (New Center)



Brief Project Overview

This project incorporates three key themes in order to provide rural communities in the selected districts of Terai region of Nepal with access to enhanced educational and livelihood opportunities through non-formal education, with a particular focus on youth engagement. This project has been implemented in 5 districts of Terai, with this more narrow geographic focus allowing for more efficient programming and monitoring. The concept has a particular focus on engaging youth (ages 10-25) to be active participants and to receive relevant and valuable training to improve their opportunities.

The three major components of the project are:

- Scaling READ's **Hub-Satellite Model**¹ with a Special Focus on Youth
- Deepening Youth Engagement in READ Centers, including vocational opportunities
- Further Developing READ's 'ICT for Purpose' Program

Project Summary Activities of 2014 objective wise is mentioned below:

Objective 1:

To provide access to educational resources, information, and livelihoods to over 100,000 people in the Terai through the establishment/upgrade of 11 READ Centers across 5 districts. Over 35,000 people will be directly impacted through using the Centers and the provision of trainings on literacy, livelihoods, community engagement, health environment, etc.

¹ READ Nepal has developed Hub-Satellite model to create interdependencies between a centrally located, full READ CLRC (called a "Hub"), and nearby smaller "Satellite" center(s). The model was developed to reach more remote communities that are too small to be eligible for their own 'Center' and to provide deeper impact in selected rural areas while reducing the overall cost of establishing a READ CLRC.

The activities accomplished in 2014 to meet the objective 1 are as follows:

- **2 existing READ hubs** were upgraded in 2014 namely, Bhanu in Parsa district and Agyauli in Nawalparasi district. Building including compound renovation was done in Bhanu hub where as Agyauli Hub constructed new building raising funds from local level in addition to ROTA's support. Other renovation works include new ICT and Youth sections set up, books update in library section, resource update in audio-video section of these Centers.
- **3 New Satellite Centers** were established in 2014: Pokariya Satellite in Parsa, Pragatinagar and Jahada Satellites in Nawalparasi district. Each satellite has 5 different sections namely Library, Women, Children, Youth and ICT section.
- **13 set up Trainings provided:** Social mobilization, sustaining enterprise and library management cum set up training were provided to 3 new satellites whereas Sustaining enterprise and Institutional Strengthening & Good Governance training were provided to 2 hubs. In total, 3 events of training were provided for capacity building of Library Management Committee (LMC) and subcommittee members in 2014.
- **2 Sustaining Enterprises ²Established:** Agyauli hub and Jahada satellite in Nawalparasi launched Storefront for rental as their sustaining enterprises.
- **2 Sustaining Enterprises Underway:** Storefront construction in Pragatinagar Satellite, Nawalparasi is underway. The community had decided to build bigger building with the funds raised from Municipality and other local supports. The shortage of construction materials few months back in Nepal due to strike and agitation throughout Nepal, delayed the construction process. Similarly, Bhanu Hub has completed all administrative process including payments to purchase **Ambulance** for its sustaining income. The delivery of the vehicle from India will be delayed and it is expected to be arrived by mid February 2015.
- **Phase III Trainings Conducted:** 14 trainings in different themes were completed in five centers upgraded and established in 2014. Phase III trainings were provided after the inauguration of center such as livelihood skills, women empowerment, financial literacy, basic health, literacy and other demand based. Total training beneficiaries of 2014 are shown in below table:

Name of Centers	# of events	Beneficiaries		
		Female	Male	Total
Bhanu Hub, Parsa	3	25	59	84
Pokhariya, Satellite, Parsa	3	47	45	92
Agyauli Hub, Nawalparasi	3	66	12	78
Pragatinagar Satellite, Nawalparasi	3	74	29	103
Jahada Satellite, Nawalparasi	2	31	28	59
Total	14	243	173	416

² Each READ CLRC has its own Sustaining Enterprise that generate income to cover the basic operating cost of the CLRC thereby ensuring long term operation and success.

Objective 2:

To improve the education and opportunities offered to 3000 youth through the provision of life skills training, sports clubs, academic and career support, and health awareness; ii) to provide at least 100 youth with in-depth vocational skills training and an additional 175 youth with more general livelihood skills training; and iii) to create a sustainable structure for youth engagement through the formation of 11 Youth Leadership Clubs that focus on the needs of youth throughout the community.

- **Youth Leadership Subcommittees (YLSCs):** 12 YLSCs were formed, each in 12 centers. The community youths were first oriented on youth program and role of YLSC. 22 selected youths were provided with Initial Life Skills trainings (total 11 trainings). These trained youths themselves formed the YLSC at the end of the training.
Each YLSC consists of 15 youth leaders who receive leadership, life skills, health and various capacity building trainings and cascade their knowledge and skills to other youths of their community. They also plan and lead activities to build leadership of youths and actively engage them in the centers. *(An overview of YLSC structure and its tie up with Library Management Committee (LMC) is shown in annex 1.)*
- **Youth Leadership Training:** The 15 young leaders of each YLSC received Youth Leadership training (except in Deukhuri hub, Dang- the training scheduled for February 2015). This training was focused on supporting youths to develop leadership capacity to take action in their community. They were trained on planning, social mobilization, local resource mobilization, facilitation, team work, effective communication, leadership quality and volunteerism. In 2014, 156 YLSC representatives received basic youth leadership training.
- **Girls' Sports Club:** Total 11 Girls sports clubs/groups were formed in 11 centers (except in Deukhuri hub, Dang). Total 20 sports trainings were conducted in 2014 in 10 centers (2 trainings per center). Altogether 298 girls had participated in the sports clubs in 2014. Trainings in 2 centers- Pragatinagar satellite, Nawalparasi and Deukhuri hub, Dang are scheduled for January/February 2015.
- **Life Skill ToT:** 44 youths from 11 YLSCs (except Deukhuri hub, Dang) were provided with Life skills ToT. These newly trained trainers conducted total 22 Life skills cascade trainings in their communities. The ToT in Dang is scheduled for 2015. Altogether 264 youths received initial life skills training in 2014.
- **Health ToT:** 44 youths from 11 YLSCs (except Deukhuri hub, Dang) were provided with Health ToT. These newly trained trainers conducted total 22 Health cascade seminars in their communities. The ToT in Dang is scheduled for 2015.
- **Career Guidance Sessions:** Total 12 career guidance sessions were conducted in all 12 centers benefitting 485 youths in 2014. The sessions focused on livelihood options like self-employment (entrepreneurship) and jobs where the participants were able to know their capabilities, talent, skills and knowledge they possessed. They became able to assess their current situation (economic and social) by identifying their individual capacity to reach towards their lives' goals.
- **Question Box Set Up:** Question boxes were set up in 11 Centers (except in Deukhuri hub, Dang- will be set- up in January 2015). The YLSCs have started to conduct Question/Answer activities. YLSCs

in Parsa and Nawalparasi prepared monthly wall magazines as part of this activity and answered the queries of youths through these magazines. In 2014, 205 youth queries were addressed.

- **Facebook Group:** Facebook is very popular amongst youths and easily accessible through mobile phones. Thus, YLSCs in Bardiya, Kaialali and Pragatinagar Satellite, Nawalparasi have set up their own facebook group where all the youths of the community who use facebook are invited. The YLSCs are planning to provide information (answer of queries) through these facebook pages. 205 queries (related to health, career and education) of youths were collected in 2014. The YLSCs answer the queries in which they have gained knowledge through the trainings like Life skills, leadership, Career Guidance and Health. For queries in which they require support they plan to consult the local teachers and Restless Development (however, there is no such case so far).
- **Homework Group Formation:** Homework groups were formed in 11 centers (except in Deukhuri hub, Dang- will start in February 2015). Students of grade 6 to 9 came together in this platform to share and learn with each other. The sessions are being facilitated by young facilitators focusing on Mathematics, Science and English. In 2014, 598 students had participated in the homework groups.
- **SLC Preparation Classes:** SLC preparation classes were held in 11 centers (except in Deukhuri hub, Dang- will start in February 2015). Students of grade 10 were tutored as a part of preparation for School Leaving Certificate (SLC) Examination with special focus on Mathematics, Science and English as the students in Nepali community find these subjects the most difficult ones. The classes are run in a peer- support modality. This has helped the students to be more open and speak out their problems. In 2014, 360 students enrolled in SLC preparation classes.

Objective : 3

To create more sustainable, impactful ICT facilities through the deployment of lower energy consumption hardware and alternative sources of power and to develop a formal ICT program that uses technology to provide access to information, facilitates communication among families and communities, and enhances education for youth.

- **5 ICT Sections set up:** ICT section was setup in Bhanu Hub, Pokhariya Satellite, Agyauli Hub, Pragatinagar Satellite and Jahada Satellite. Each Center is well equipped with laptops, printer, router, switch and other ICT equipments with internet connectivity. Among these five centers, two hub centers are provided with eight laptops and ICT equipments and three satellite centers with five laptops. Solar Energy System was also installed in all these centers to supply uninterrupted electric power during the power cut (load shedding). ICT section provides computer training, internet, email, printing and copying facilities to the locals.
- **ICT Administrators recruitment:** 5 ICT administrators were recruited in 5 centers, Bhanu hub, Pokhariya Satellite, Agyauli hub, Pragatinaga Satellite and Jahada satellite (1 in each center) to operate the ICT section and to provide basic trainings to local people. Candidates were selected through written assessment and interview. Out of five ICT Administrators in five libraries three of them are female.
- **Training to ICT Administrators:** Training of Trainers on ICT was provided to 5 ICT administrators of 5 centers Bhanu, Agyauli, Pokhariya, Pragatinagar and Jahada. 3 librarians also participated the ICT training.
- **Training Module Developed:** READ Nepal ICT team has developed different nine manuals in Nepali language for community people and ICT administrators. Manuals on Windows 2007

Operating System installation, MS Word 2007, MS Excel 2007, MS Powerpoint 2007, Computer Handbook, onlinevidyalaya installation, Skype, Blogger and Adobe Photoshop were prepared.

- **Blog for information dissemination:** All five community libraries have created and started their own blog site to share the information through internet. The site will be hosted via dedicated server including dedicated domain once the community ICT Administrator became able to manage it.
- **Face book page of libraries:** Libraries have created facebook pages of their libraries for information sharing and dissemination.

3. 'Grandparent's Story, My Picture' Project

In 2014, READ Nepal launched a new project 'Grandparent's Story My Picture' with the funding support of 'Kate Kinley Gregg Foundation' to boost children's creativity, to preserve Nepalese culture of storytelling, and to promote intergenerational bonding (love/respect) and learning among generations in the community. Since, Community libraries set up by READ are the much suited platform for the communal gathering and meetings where both elders and children often visit, the project was implemented through READ's five Centers in 5 districts of Nepal.

Throughout the project period, grandparents come to library, shares local stories and folklores with the children who then recreate these stories with illustrations under the expertise guidance from NESCHIL. At the end of the project the stories were published in a form of book, altogether 5 books were published and distributed. In each place theatre show was also performed by Mandapika Theatre Art group based on published story.

The project was implemented in five READ CLRCs throughout 2014 in coordination with implementing partner Nepalese Society for Children's Literature (NESCHIL) and funding partner the John Robert Gregg Fund. The project was implemented in five READ CLRCs namely Jhuwani, Laxmi Narayan, Janajagaran, Triveni and Model Center (Badikhel).

The major objectives of GSMP project were:

- a. To explore and preserve local cultures and traditions
- b. To inform the community & the adult generation about their older culture, history and tradition
- c. To involve children to identify their culture and help them to understand their local culture.
- d. To develop children's capacity in creative story writing & illustration
- e. To promote reading and writing culture among children
- f. To renew relationships across generations in the community
- g. To increase community engagement and involvement in READ's Community Library



A team from READ Nepal and NESCHIL visited Jhuwani CLRC from 26-27 April, 2014 to launch the project. The visiting team had a meeting with LMC and held interaction with elders and children, and these elders and children were briefly oriented to the project.

4. Funding puppetry and theater for women empowerment project

READ Nepal piloted 'Women Empowerment through theater project' in funding support of Norwegian Amateur Theatre Association (NATA) in the year 2013-2014 at Gardi Community Library and Resource Center (CLRC), Madi which demonstrated that theatre / drama is an effective tool of public awareness.

The project's objectives were:

- Identification of women issues and make the stakeholders aware of them through theater and drama
- Livelihood development of women through different income generating trainings
- Establish a sustainable women's section and women's cooperative in the library

The outcomes of the annual project (Aug 2013-Aug 2014) are summarized as follows:

- 20 local actors were trained by trainers from Mandapika Art Group.
- Six street dramas, five puppetry shows and four Forum Theatre were shown during the project period which was viewed by around 4000 local villagers. The dramas were performed on local issues such as child molestation, child marriage, girls trafficking, family planning, and wild life conservation and so on.
- Two income generating trainings were conducted. Mushroom farming training had benefited 33 villagers while embroidery training benefitted 13 women.
- A Women's Savings Cooperative was established at Gardi CLRC. Gardi Community Library has tied up with Sahanshila Women Saving & Credit cooperative Ltd. with the initiation of women sub-committee. The Cooperative with 265 members and NRS 2.5 million annual transactions now runs the Gardi CLRC from January 2014. The project supported NRs. 50,000 (US \$ 510) to Women's Savings Co-ops.

With the success of this pilot project, READ Nepal signed a new agreement in 2014 with the Kavli Trust and Norwegian Amateur Theatre Association, Norway, to continue the theatre project in Chitwan district. The new theatre project will be carried out from July 2014-July 2016 through four READ Centers namely Gardi CLRC, Jhuwani CLRC, Dibyajyoti CLRC and Tarauli CLRC in Chitwan district.

Project's Goals:

- To educate communities about social issues hampering women's empowerment in Madi and other nearby communities
- To improve the livelihood and self-confidence of women by providing relevant trainings to access economic and educational opportunities

- To encourage all community members to promote women's empowerment by being aware of women's issues, by helping women access relevant knowledge, and by discussing women's issues with others

The project was implemented to strengthen and continue theatre program in Madi through building the capacity of the theatre group to make them more independent, impactful, and sustainable over the long term. In 2014, Gardi CLRC organized 10-day advance theatre training with the trainers from Mandapika Art Group to 30 local artists of Madi. Two street dramas were shown in social issues such as negative consequences of gambling and witchcraft. Also, advance literacy training was provided to 8 participants from 4 centers. TOT based training on advance literacy class was held on 23-25, December at Jhuwani CLRC, Chitwan. Altogether 8 participants, two participants from Dibyajyoti, Tarauli, Gardi and Jhuwani CLRC had participated in the training. The objective of the training was to build the capacity of the participating library staff to conduct the advance literacy classes at their centers.

5. Women Empowerment Project

To promote the empowerment and self-sufficiency of women through trainings, women's empowerment program was implemented in four CLRCs namely Moti Center at Parvat, Gardi CLRC at Chitwan, Lumbini Tinau CLRC at Rupandhehi and Model Center at Badikhel in 2014. The training were conducted in ToT module in which women trainers were produced in each center who then facilitated the cascade training to empower underprivileged women in their community and to increase women's access in the library.

These women were trained on facilitation skills, empowerment, gender and violence, equality, leadership and leaders, positive thinking, women's rights and legal provisions, formation of women's group, saving and credit cooperatives, local resources & income generation.

To make these women self-reliant, each CLRC conducted the skill based trainings as per their need and demand:

- Incense Stick Making by Moti CLRC, Parvat
- Mushroom Farming by Lumbini Tinau CLRC, Rupandhehi
- Sandal Making by the Model Center
- Doll Making by Gardi CLRC, Madi

Outcomes:

- 52 women trainers trained
- 461 local women empowered on women issues
- 119 women trained in livelihood trainings

6. Playground Support in Agyauli CLRC, Nawalparasi to promote Child Development

To promote Child Development through playgrounds, a project was piloted in Agyauli CLRC where new playground was constructed with the funding support from Ray and Kaori Zage (Funder). By extending

the early childhood resources such as playgrounds at the READ Center, the project aim to attract more children and parents towards these Centers. More than 50 children visit the Center after new playground has been established.

7. The Beautiful Library Project

In 2014, the Beautiful Store, Korea, and Read Information and Resource Center (READ Nepal) entered into an agreement to build a new community library at Nawalparasi as a part of 'The Beautiful Library Project'. The RIRC is a national level implementing partner of Rural Education and Development (READ) Nepal that was established in 2006 under the NGO Act of Nepal at the District Administration Office, Kathmandu.

A new library- Fulbari Community Library and Resource Center was established in Nawalparasi which is a Satellite Center of Agyauli Community Library and Resource Center (Hub).As per agreement, the project period will be from February 2014 to June 2017 that is 3 years support after inauguration.

The local community and agencies had contributed for the library building and land. Nava Jagrity Fulbari Youth Club donated 2.5 kattas (0.2 acre) land that already had a small house with two tin-roofed rooms. With the funding support from the project, four other rooms were constructed. The library has five sections namely library, women, children, ICT and AV sections with an office room. Construction of five rooms was started in 2014 to generate room rentals as a part of its sustaining enterprise.

The library renovation and construction work was supported by an active participation from the community people. Local women, students, youths and peoples were engaged in local fund raising activities and also provided labor support- skilled/ unskilled labor work while building.

Fulbari Community Library and Resource Center

Inauguration date: May 8, 2014

(Registered in District Administrative office on June 22, 2014)

Location :

District: Nawalparasi , VDC: Kolhuwa, Ward Number-8

VDC Literacy rate: 62.36% (Male: 36.31 %; Female: 26.05%)

Reach:

Coverage Population: 13652 (Male: 6676, Female: 6983)

Coverage Households: 2235 HHs Library

Coverage Area: Kolhuwa VDC

Target Community: Tharu, Dalit , Magar, Newar,Brahmin, Chhetri

Different sections of library and users data

1. **Library Section:** There are 2,790 books available in the library section along with book shelves, and reading table. The books on various subjects were selected based on a demand from the community. In 2014, more than 6000 local villagers visited the library section for reading books and newspapers, and other education resources available in the section.
2. **Women Section:** Library has setup women section with 150 books on women's issues and women's reproductive health along with health related IEC/BCC materials and neo-literate books. The women's Savings Cooperative is run through the women's section. In 2014, 1319 women visited the women section for reading books, counseling and attending meetings.
3. **Children section:** The children section has about 1,253 children books, soft toys and playing materials. In 2014, 2266 children visited the section.
4. **Information and communication Technology (ICT) section:** ICT section is equipped with 5 laptops and one printer which are installed with solar back up. A solar system has been installed in the library to supply power during 12 hours load shedding. In 2014, 1872 people visited the ICT section to use laptops and free internet service.
5. **Audio-video and youth section:** An audio-video and youth section has 31" color TV, DVD player, around 40 educational cassettes and CDs and various indoor and outdoor sports materials. In 2014, 1338 youths and children visited this section.

Technology

ICT section Set up: New ICT sections were set up at 11 READ Centers namely Bhanu, Pokhariya, Agyauli, Deurali, Fulbari, Pragatingar, Jahada, Gardi, Panauti, RIRC and Janajagaran Centers. The ICT sections were equipped with laptops, printer, internet connectivity and alternative energy (solar system). Solar panels were installed in all 11 Centers; Gardi CLRC received grant support of solar panel worth NRs 100,000 from Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC), Nepal Government.

Internet Connection to Janajagaran CLRC, Nuwakot: Internet was connected for the first time in Janajagaran CLRC, Kumari, Nuwakot. Internet service provided by Janajagaran CLRC is the first and only one internet service in Kumari VDC, Nuwakot. Neither the service of Nepal Telecom nor other ISPs has reached to this remote village. READ has established a relay station in Jivanpur VDC of Dhading to make connection operational. Janajagaran CLRC is connecting to relay station using wireless technology. Besides providing internet service, Janajagaran CLRC also conducted basic computer and communication training for local people.

Basic Internet and Communication Skills Training : Two events of trainings were held, one at Janajagaran CLRC with 25 participants and other at Deurali CLRC with 28 participants.

Capacity building of ICT Administrator and librarians: Two events of ICT Administrator Trainings (TOT level) were held in Gyan Bikas CLRC and Agyauli CLRC to deliver the knowledge and ICT skill to ICT administrator and librarians of 8 Centers namely Bhanu, Pokhariya, Gyan Bikas, Agyauli, Gardi, Fulbari, Pragatinagar and Jahada CLRCs.

Trainings

Workshop on 'Leadership and Sustainability' for sustainability of NCLA

The workshop on 'Leadership and Sustainability' was jointly organized by READ Nepal and NCLA on January 6 and 7, 2014, at Dhulikhel, Kavre. A total of 26 participants from NCLA Board and READ Nepal had participated in the two-day workshop. The main objective of the workshop was to build the leadership skill of new NCLA executive members for smooth operation and sustainability of NCLA. Dr. Shibesh Chandra Regmi facilitated the workshop.

During the workshop, new steering committee of NCLA learned about leadership skills and importance of team building. Also, this workshop helped to elucidate the relationship between NCLA and READ Nepal by collecting expectations from both parties. NCLA members identified strategic interventions and set work plan for each intervention. This will help NCLA to achieve the milestones of each strategic plan in 3 years. READ Nepal has committed to support NCLA for three years during which NCLA has to develop its sustainable mechanism.



Refresher training on M&E and Library Management

READ Nepal organized two events of M&E and Library Management refresher training with the objectives of orienting librarians of READ CLRCs on M&E techniques and process, Library management, data recording and reporting.

The detail of the training is tabulated below:

Date	Location	Number of participants (librarians)
6-8, April, 2014	Kaski	21
10-12, April, 2014	Nawalaparasi	26



Capacity Building Training on Practical Answers Project

Five days Capacity Building Training on Practical Answers Project was held from 14-18 May, 2014 at Nawalparasi. The training was jointly facilitated by the team from READ Nepal and Practical Action. The training was provided to 22 social mobilizers and 15 participants including coordinators & LMC member from Practical Answer's sub-communities joined the training on the last day of the training.

The training helped the participants understand about Practical Answers Service and its implementation process, queries collection and queries responding mechanisms, knowledge management committee formation, using various knowledge materials, forming Practical Answers Corners, Success stories and photographs collection and report writing. The LMC members were oriented about financial reporting template of the Practical Answer Service and the legal compliance for the nonprofit making organization.

Phase II trainings – for capacity building of LMC members

S.N	Training	CLRCs	No. of Participants			Total
			M	F	Total	
1	Library Management Training (15-day)	1. Pragatinagar CLRC	3	25	28	98
		2. Jahada CLRC	6	28	34	
		3. Fulbari CLRC	7	12	19	
		4. Pokhariya CLRC	13	4	17	
2	Social Mobilization Training (5 days)	1. Pragatinagar CLRC	11	15	26	96
		2. Jahada CLRC	12	13	25	
		3. Fulbari CLRC	14	10	24	
		4. Pokhariya CLRC	16	5	21	
3	Sustaining Enterprise Management (3 days)	1. Agyauli CLRC	12	6	18	153

		2. Pragatinagar CLRC	11	6	17	
		3. Jahada CLRC	19	10	29	
		4. Fulbari CLRC	19	19	38	
		5. Bhanu CLRC	20	9	29	
		6. Pokhariya CLRC	18	4	22	
4	Institutional Strengthening and Good Governance (4 days)	1. Agyauli CLRC	14	7	21	44
		2. Bhanu CLRC	14	9	23	
5	Proposal writing Training	1. Deukhuri CLRC	26	8	34	34

Meet your users' need training

READ Nepal organized Library Management Training on 'Meet your library users' need' at Dhulikhel, Kavre on Nov 3-8, 2014, to the librarians and representatives from Library Management Committee of 14 Community Library and Resource Centers (CLRCs). The training was facilitated by READ team along with Ms. Susan Schuner, Associate Director from Mortenson Center, the University of Illinois who had facilitated some sessions. The main objectives of the training were to help participants know about the library users and identify their needs, and help to develop interpersonal communication skills of the participants. 28 participants from 14 Community Libraries namely Jhuwani CLRC, Tarauli CLRC, Sauraha CLRC, Dibyajyoti CLRC, Gardi CLRC, Agyauli CLRC, Deurali CLRC, Shiva Shakti CLRC, Fulbari CLRC, Laxmi Narayan CLRC, Lumbini CLRC, Triveni CLRC and Janajagaran CLRC attended the training.

Award and Recognition in 2014

- **READ Nepal awarded by Library of Congress, USA:**

READ Nepal was selected in **Best Practice Honorees** category for implementing best practice in the promotion of literacy and addressing felt needs of villagers through community libraries. Library of Congress, USA, recognized READ Nepal's working model as effective integration of theory and practice in increasing motivation to read and write and documented in Best Practice Book which is also put in websites: <http://read.gov/documents/best-practices2014-for-web.pdf> . 14 organizations from different countries including Nepal were selected Best Practice Winners. They were evaluated and selected based on innovation, sustainability, replicability and evidence based practice.

Library of Congress Literacy Award 2014 Ceremony was held on 8th October 2014 in Washington D.C. USA. Chhatra Khatri, Program Director of READ Nepal attended the program to receive the award and to participate in filming of best practices which will be put in website of Library of Congress.

International Visits

Four Staff from READ Nepal- Mr. Durgesh Yogi, Mr. Raju Shrestha, Mr. Chin Kaji Shrestha and Ms. Deepa Subedi visited USA to participate as the Mortenson Associates program in Mortenson Center for the Library Programs, the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. During their stay in the Mortenson Center, they had some special programming and participated in the Small Public Library Management Institute that the Illinois State Library holds for rural librarians and engaged in a train-the-trainer program. Their visit was from May 22 to Jul 5, 2014.

Working with students from GMIX program

Ms. Hayley Tobin and Mr. Alberto Ramos, MBA students from the Stanford Graduate School of Business –GMIX (Global Management Immersion Experience) program, visited Nepal from Aug.24 to Sept. 19, 2014, to work on a country level sustaining enterprise to continue the READ mission in Nepal. They had collected information for preparing a business plan of country level sustaining enterprise from field (production/Supply side), from buyers' side and government organizations.

READ Global ICT Consultant visit

READ Global ICT Consultant Mr. Alex Pompe visited three libraries that include two ICT pilot centers – Janajagaran CLRC, Deurali CLRC and Phulbari CLRC. During the visit the ICT consultant monitored the ICT equipment including alternative power systems and provided his feedback to READ Nepal ICT team. He also discussed with the members of Library Management Committee, library users and library staff about the challenge and possibilities of ICT in the rural community.



READ Global ICT Consultant Mr. Alex Pompe with Rajendra Poudel and Ashesh Acharya

National Day Celebration

7th National Library Day Celebration: READ Nepal and READ supported celebrated the 7th national library day on August 31 by organizing various programs. READ Nepal and NCLA participated in the rally program organized by the Ministry of Education. The slogan for this year's library day was 'Promotion of library for the civilized society'. Some of the activities organized by READ supported CLRCs are as follows:

- Janachetana CLRC- Rally program
- Moti CLRC-Essay writing competition for housewives and song competition
- Sauraha CLRC-Quiz competition, interaction program
- Gyanodaya CLRC-Essay writing competitions, rally program
- Jhuwani CLRC-Rally program, poem and children's art competition

- Gardi CLRC-Art competition
- Tikapur CLRC-Quiz contest
- Deepshika CLRC-Interaction program on ‘Need and importance of Community library’

Literacy Day Celebration: To mark the International Literacy Day on Sept. 8, the model Center organized an essay writing competition on the “Role of Community Library in Women’s literacy” among the 15 literate women of Badikhel VDC.

Technical support for library setup- READ Nepal helped Ligtening Nepal to establish library in Mugu district of Nepal under the initiation of its youth group. READ Nepal supported in resource collection and oriented them in basic library management.

- Refresher training on M&E and Library Management were conducted for 48 READ CLRCs.



New CLRCs Inauguration in 2014

In 2014, 5 new Centers were inaugurated. The construction of Triveni CLRC and Gyan Bikas CLRC was started in late 2013 whereas 3 new Center namely Fulbari CLRC, Pokhariya and Pragatinagar CLRC were established and inaugurated in 2014. Jahada CLRC was established and opened to public in 2014 but inaugurated in January 2015.

1. Triveni Community Library, Kathmandu:

Catchment area	4885
population	
Coverage households	1026 HHs
Sections	Library, Women, Children with ICT section
Sustainability Project	Integrated agriculture farming (Cow & Vegetable)



Triveni CLRC was inaugurated on 18 March, 2014 by Mr. Mahashram Sharma, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Education, Nepal Government and Mr. Bhola Kumar Shrestha, Advisory Board member, READ Nepal in the presence of more than 350 local community people. After inauguration, the library was opened for the community.

2. Fulbari Community Library, Nawalparasi:

Catchment area	13659 (M: 6983; F: 6676)
population	
Coverage households	2235 HHs
Sections	Library, Women, Children, Audio Video and Youth with ICT section
Sustainability Project	Storefront rentals



Fulbari Community Library and Resource Center, a Satellite Center of Agyauli Hub, was jointly inaugurated by Mr. Ramu Raj Kadariya, Local Development Officer, Nawalparasi, Ms. Boram Kim, The Beautiful Store, South Korea & Mr. Bhola Kumar Shrestha, Advisory Board Member of READ Nepal on 8 May, 2014 in the presence of more than 300 local people. The library was built in the land with two rooms building donated by the Kolhuwa Village Development Committee. Later, with the funding support from the beautiful store, four rooms were constructed.

3. Gyan Bikas Community Library, Panauti:

Catchment area	27358 (M: 13091; F: 14267)
population	
Coverage households	5943 HHs
Sections	Library, Women, Children, AV & Youth, ICT section with Conference Hall
Sustainability Project	Souvenir shop



Gyan Bikas Community Library was jointly inaugurated by the chief guest, Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Affairs and Local Development Minister, Mr. Prakash Man Singh and READ's Founder President, Dr. Antonia Neubauer. Among the distinguished guests were Mr. Madan Krishna Shrestha and Mr. Haribansa Acharya (Famous Nepali actors) and His Excellency Mr. Peter W. Bodde,

Honorable Ambassador of the United States of America for Nepal. The program was broadcast live through local television, and more than 2,000 people were present during the program which included representatives from the Nepal Government, local government, INGOs and NGOs, community libraries, banks and corporate organizations, schools, journalists and media personnel, READ advisory board members and staff along with local community people.

Ms. Sanjana Shrestha, READ Nepal's Country Director acknowledged every Nepali for their contribution and announced READ Nepal's new fundraising campaign 'Community Library Lovers' Campaign'.

4. Pokhariya Community Library Inauguration:

Catchment population	area 6995 (M: 3558; F:3437)
Coverage households	1015HHs
Sections	Library, Women, Children, Youth, Audio video with ICT section
Literacy rate	53.42%
Sustainability Project	Storefront rentals and fish farming (Proposed)



Pokhariya Community Library, a Satellite Center of Bhanu Hub, was jointly inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Mr. Prakash Man Singh and Rania Abou Mosleh, Reach Out to Asia (ROTA) on Nov. 4, 2014. Among the special guests were Local Development Officer; Central Development Officer; Mr. Abdul Rab and Mr. Hazem Idriss from ROTA; Ms. Sanjana Shrestha, READ Nepal; Ms. Kaajal Pradhan, Head of Operation, Restless Development; and members from Constitutional Assembly.

There was live broadcast of the program through local television & FM radio stations. The inaugural ceremony was observed by more than 3000 local people. Ms. Sanjana Shrestha acknowledged community's engagement and contribution to establish Pokariya satellite center. The Center is now open to the local community.

5. Pragatinagar Community Library Inauguration:

Catchment population	area 13,856 (Male: 6348; Female: 7508)
Coverage households	3125 HHs
Sections	Library, Women, Children, ICT, Youth and Audio video section
Literacy rate	81.39 % (M: 87.99 %; F: 57.87%)
Sustainability Project	Storefront rentals and a training hall



A new building of Pragatinagar Community Library, a Satellite Center of Agyauli Hub, was jointly inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Honorable Prof. Dr. Shashank Koirala and Advisory Board Member, Mr. Manohar Bhattarai on Dec. 15, 2014. Other special guests were Mr. Krishna Poudel, Member of Constituent Assembly; Mr. Khadka Bahadur Kumal, District Education Officer; and Mr. Chhatra Bhahadur Khatri, Program Director of READ Nepal.

The program was live broadcasted through local television & FM radio stations. The inaugural ceremony with diverse cultural performances by the community was observed by more than 3,000 local people. The Center is now open to the local community.

Meeting and Coordination

In 2014, 4 DPAC and one CPAC meeting were conducted. New DPAC was formed at Parsa.

- DPAC at Rupandehi district was held on Jan 6, 2014.
- DPAC meeting at Nuwakot was held on Jan 19, 2014.
- DPAC meeting at Parsa was held on Sept. 22 at DDC office.
- DPAC meeting at Nawalparasi was held on Dec 5, 2014.

Central Project Advisory Committees (CPAC) meeting was held on Feb 21, 2014, at Dhulikhel in the presence of the members from Social Welfare Committee, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and Ministry of Education. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Madan Prasad Rimal; Director, Social Welfare Council. During the meeting, the CPAC members appreciated READ Nepal's program and READ's coordination with government agencies.

SWC Monitoring Visits

Social Welfare Council (SWC) team members visited six READ Centers from 12 to 20, December for the final evaluation of READ Nepal's work. The visiting team includes Ms. Radha Poudel (team leader), Mr. Bhupendra (SWC representative), Mr. Nawaraj Rijal (Ministry of Education), Ms. Shobha Pokhreal (Ministry of Women's Affair) and Mr. Janak Baral (Finance expert) along with Mr. Saajan Thapa from READ.

The team visited READ Model Center, Gyan Bikas Community Library, Agyauli CLRC, Pragatinagar CLRC, Lumbini Tinau CLRC and Tikapur CLRC. During their visit, they held meetings with the LMC members, observed library sections, conducted Focus Group Discussions and conducted interviews with library users and beneficiaries, collected views of local government agencies regarding READ Centers' programs and discussed legal and financial aspects of the Centers with the LMC member.

SUCCESS STORIES

Creating Awareness on Child Marriage

Nira Bot, a local woman in early thirties, resides with her family in Gardi 4 Bankatta, Madi, Chitwan district. Her four-member family consists of her husband, three sons and one daughter. She belongs to 'Bote' community which is marginalized ethnic group that subsist on fishing; they catch and sell fish in the market for income. Bote community had their own tradition of child marriage.



On 22nd Dec 2013, Gardi Community Library theater group, performed street theater called "Jokhim" (meaning *Hazard in Nepali*) on Child marriage and its consequences at Bankatta, Madi. The theater group consists of 20 local actors who were trained by Gardi Community Library and Mandapika Art group. When Nira heard of street drama, she was very excited and watched it with her whole family members. Watching the drama, she realized that Child marriage should be stopped to avoid the consequences it brings such as poverty, women abuse, women health problems and so on. The drama was very effective in conveying the message and necessary information to the local community, most of them are illiterate.

Nira thought Child marriage was a serious issue. So, she discussed this issue with her family and asked her children what they had learnt from the theatre show. She shared the harmful consequences of child marriage with her children. She further expresses that she will not repeat the mistake that her family did years ago, when her parents married her at 14 years old. She says, "I will let my children enjoy their childhood. They will go to schools instead of having children at a young age after marriage. I will allow my children to marry only after 20 years." She also suggests Gardi Community Library to conduct such educational street dramas in other places of Madi.

From illiterate to entrepreneur

Phirli Chaudhary is a 40-year-old mother of three from Bachauli village, Chitwan. Like other families of Jhuwani, her family is involved in agriculture. The harvested vegetables and grains were sufficient for family's consumption only and there was no other source of income. Also, to start new business, she lacked enough money.

Phirli came in contact with Jhuwani CLRC in 2011 through its savings and credit cooperative. Through the cooperative, she had access to much needed credit and was able to buy 4 piglets with NPR 20,000 (US \$ 208). After 7 months, she earned more than NPR 100,000 (US \$ 1041) by selling those pigs.

With this income, she not only paid back her loan but also purchased two cows with the remaining earning.



As she began visiting the CLRC, she learned about its different programs. In 2012, she joined Literacy class and Mushroom farming training conducted at Jhuwani CLRC. These classes were provided in Jhuwani CLRC through the MEDICT program, which was funded by NORAD from 2010-2012 with NAAL and READ Nepal as the 'implementing' partners. After receiving the training, she grows mushrooms at her home, and till date she has sold mushrooms, earning more than Rs. 15,000 (US \$ 156). She was so confident of her new skill that she even taught mushroom farming to five local women from her village. These women are also successfully growing mushrooms in their homes.

In 2013, she learned making mineral blocks, homemade pesticides, and managing a cattle farm through Practical Answers program of Jhuwani CLRC. In addition to literacy skills, she is now economically empowered and makes a monthly earning of more than NRs 16,000 (US \$ 167) by selling cow's milk and mushrooms that she grows. Currently, her two daughters are pursuing higher studies at the local college and her son goes to school. She says, "Though I am illiterate, I have always encouraged my children to study. I can send my children to schools because I was able to earn." She saves her income in Jhuwani's savings cooperative every month. Utilizing the CLRC's resources, there was improvement in her family's economic and social status in the village.

Access to Information helped Rajkumari earn more !



Rajkumari Chaudhary, who lives in a family of five at Sripur-8, Kailali district of Nepal, is 45 years old. Like other villagers, farming is their main occupation for living. So, she had participated in various agriculture based trainings conducted by different Agriculture Office but due to lack of follow up after training, she never practiced what she had learned. As a result, there was no improvement in agricultural yield.

Being a member of technical group formed by the social mobilizer at Janachetana CLRC, Rajkumari got an opportunity to participate in various trainings and programs offered by the CLRC. She had participated in

Rajkumari Chaudhary

Vegetable interaction program on cabbage, potato, cauliflower and tomato farming. In the program, she got a chance to interact with Agriculture expert who answered her queries for ‘small size of cabbage and disease affecting cabbage’. She learned that vegetables should be sown at a distance that improves air circulation and also provides enough space to grow the vegetables, and prevent transmission of plant diseases.

After applying the knowledge she had learned, more vegetables were grown in her garden. Also, social mobilizer of the CLRC regularly visited her farm to follow up. After training, she sold one quintal potatoes at the rate of NPR 35 per Kg earning NPR 3500 and sold tomatoes earning NPR 6000. Happy with the increased productivity this time, she said, “Before I had to ask my husband for buying bangles, soaps and other basic things, but now I don’t have to ask him instead I give money to my husband.” She thanked Janachetana CLRC for this. “I didn’t know the library gives information to illiterate people like us. I am happy to be a part of the technical group formed at the CLRC,” she said who is now a regular visitor of the CLRC.

Back to my own home!

Narahari Ghimire, 24, is a resident of Dudharakshya 5, Basgadi, Rupandhehi district. He lives with his family of



Narahari Ghimire at his mushroom farm

six members. Four years ago, he went to the Gulf country to earn money for which he took a loan of NRs 110,000 (US \$ 1145.83) but his dream was shattered when he did not get job as he imagined and he was made to do menial work there. After some years, he returned to Nepal instead of working there illegally after his visa date expired. Back home, for months, he spent many days without any work. Again, he thought of going abroad once more and applied for Qatar but was rejected.

Meanwhile, he learnt about Mushroom farming training offered by Lumbini Tinau Community Library and Resource Center under 'Practical Answers Service Program' which is funded by READ Nepal and Practical Action. Immediately after participating in the training, he started Mushroom farming with the loaned amount of NRs 30,000 (US \$ 312.5). At the beginning, he sowed 160 packets of mushroom spawn from which 27 kg of mushroom was grown. He sold mushroom at the rate of Rs 200 per kg earning more than NRs 50,000 (US \$ 520.83). He paid back his loan and now he is planning to continue mushroom farming business on commercial basis.

After earning profit through mushroom farming, he realized that if only he had worked with the same dedication and investment here, he would have settled into his business by now. "I have made mistakes in the past. But, now I am determined to work here," Narahari said. Thanking Lumbini Tinau CLRC, he said, "Working abroad, I spent more money than I had earned and I end up being penniless. But, only after few days of training at the library and few months of hard work, I earned more than Rs 50,000. So, there is no point to go abroad for employment." He now advises his friend and other youths to seek employment opportunities in Nepal.

Unemployed learning alternative skill

Laxmi Gurung, 28, lives in Bhandardika, Lekhnath municipality in Kaski district. Laxmi comes from a large middle class family and it was difficult at times for her parents to provide for all the children.



Laxmi successfully completed her School Leaving Certificate examination from a government school but was not able to continue her studies. Household work became her daily routine, and as much as she wanted to get a job, she wasn't able to find one that fitted with her skills and education.

One day, she heard of a Doll Making Workshop being held at the Deepshikha Community Library. She was **Laxmi Gurung showing dolls made by her** interested in attending the training program. She hoped that while there she could make something significant, something worthwhile from the training she would receive.

She signed up for the training that day and attended the month long program. In summing up her experiences Laxmi has said, "After the training, I was able to give continuity to the doll making. I was taking materials from others and making them the dolls for free. After I had honed my skills I started getting more and more orders. Eventually, I was able to open a shop of my own." Per month, Laxmi can now earn between Rs. 5,000- Rs 10,000 (US \$ 52-104). Because of an excess of orders, she employs her sister to help her in making the dolls, and, she has been able to help her parents -supporting them from the money she has earned.

Laxmi hopes to expand her shop and even to give training to others; to motivate them to become independent. Helping to empower the women and the unemployed of her community has become one of Laxmi's passions and she hopes to one day be able to help those who, like her, were unable to complete their education due to financial difficulties.

Information empowering farmers !

Rajendra Mudbhari, aged 34, is a resident of Kumari-6, Nuwakot district of Nepal. He lives with his father, wife, two sons and one daughter. His family's main source of income is agriculture. He owns 21 ropani (2.594 acres) of land but he grows vegetables and crops in only 4 ropani (0.494 acre) of land and with little



knowledge on how to control plant diseases and new farming techniques, he could not grow much.

In 2013, READ Nepal launched Practical Answers program in partnership with Practical Action at Janajagaran CLRC in Nuwakot. Rajendra, being a regular visitor of the library, became a member of technical groups called 'Jwalamukhi' consisting of a group of local farmers. Then, he began participating in the agriculture interaction programs offered by the library such as off-seasonal vegetable farming, paddy farming, corn farming and using fertilizers, and so on. These interaction programs were facilitated by agriculture experts from District Agriculture Development Office.

Rajendra is also a member of Agriculture Cooperative at the CLRC and has some savings in the Cooperative. From the cooperative, he had bought fertilizers, wheat and corn seeds for sowing.

Rajendra used to follow traditional farming methods which limited the productivity of vegetables and crops before, but now after the training, his knowledge and skills in agriculture has improved, and this helped him produce more vegetables and crops as compared to last year. This year he grew vegetables like green chilies, tomatoes, ladyfingers, [Rajendra Mudbhari growing green chilies](#) potatoes, long gourds, green beans, cabbage and cauliflowers in his farm which he sold at the local market nearby the library.

Last year his annual earning was only NRs 1,00,000 (US\$ 1,052) but this year, after applying the knowledge and technical skills he learnt during the interaction programs, he made an income of around NRs 3,00,000 (US \$ 3,158) by selling vegetables and crops. He spends the income in his children's education and for buying medicines.

He says, "The interaction programs organized by the library has linked farmers like us with agriculture experts whose proper guidance and teaching has helped in increased production of vegetables and crops." Thanking Janajagaran Community Library for his transformation and success in agriculture business, he says, "This year my income was more than double of what I earned last year and this is all because of knowledge and skills that I learned after participating in the agriculture interaction programs organized by the library."

Earning income through libraries

30 years old Susmita Tamang lives in Bachhauli-6, Chitwan. She lives with her husband and two daughters. Her husband is a driver and her two daughters both attend the local school. Her home is nearby the Sauraha CLRC and so she regularly visits the library and participates in all the training programs.

In 2012, she participated in skills training to learn machine embroidery. She acquired many new skills even though she knew already new some of the basics, such as; how to use a sewing machine and sew basic clothing. At the training she learnt fabric painting and now does embroidery and painting on T-shirts, cushion covers and bags for the CLRC's Souvenir Shop. In 2013, the CLRC appointed her as a trainer for a workshop that they held on embroidery.

This year, Susmita took part in a 'Hammock making' training organized by the CLRC. The workshop was initiated as an income generating skills training and was made available to 15 local women. Hammocks are widely used in the local Hotels but they are usually bought from other places. In Sauraha, there are 80-90 hotels and each hotel needs 2 hammocks. Realizing this, the CLRC decided to initiate the project to make and sell hammocks prepared locally. Products are sold through the CLRC's Souvenir shop.

Last year, Susmita was able to save NRs 20,000 and she used that to build a toilet in her home. "I could build the toilet at my home because of my savings from sewing. I didn't need to ask for money from my husband".

Susmita also has savings in the CLRC's Savings Cooperative. Last year, she invested in pig farming after taking a loan of NRs 20,000 from the library's Cooperative. Already, her investment has been returned and she has paid the loan back.

The sewing, embroidery, the pig farming and hammock making have enabled Susmita to dramatically improve her financial position. Sushmita is regularly earning NRs 12,000 a month selling hammocks and by supplying embroidered and painted T-shirts, bags and other items to the CLRC community shop she can further supplement her income.

Recently, Susmita bought a scooter from her savings and has been enjoying her new found freedoms, freedoms she would still be dreaming of without the support and involvement of the Sauraha CLRC.



Sushmita making Hammock at Sauraha CLRC



New Techniques Help Farmers Thrive

Gopal Lal Shrestha (51) lives in Kumari-8, Nuwakot district with his wife, three sons and one daughter. Gopal and his family have always been farmers and depend on subsistence agriculture for livelihood like most of



Nepal's smallholder subsistence farmers. Despite owing 1.4 hectare (28 ropani) of land, he was not able to produce vegetables at large scale.

So, when Gopal heard about vegetable interaction program being held at Janajagaran Community Library and Resource Centre under Practical Answers Service Program, he decided to go along. Gopal learned new cultivation techniques and modern methods on soil preparation, selection of plants, using seed beds and a nursery to established healthier plants for the field, plant spacing, composting techniques and pest management. In addition, he had access to books, knowledge materials and educative videos on new farming techniques at the Center.

Gopal Shrestha at his farm

Following the course, Gopal has seen many positive changes. His methods of plowing and composting have changed, he requires less seed and less fertilizer and he has seen a reduction in the number and severity of pests and plant diseases attacking his fields; the end result being stronger, healthier crops and consequently, better quality produce and higher yields.

Now he grows a variety of vegetables, including; tomato, onion, potato, capsicum, ginger, turmeric and snake beans. Last year, Gopal earned a combined NPR 65000 (US \$ 677) selling potatoes and vegetables at the markets in of neighboring districts including Kathmandu. This year he made NPR 130,000 (US \$ 1354) i.e., double the amount of his previous year's income.

He has invested his profits into buying a garment (wool) factory for his three sons, and, setting up a grocery shop. He has also borrowed money from the Janajagaran Agricultural Co-operative to purchase a tractor with which to plow his fields and which will also provide him with an additional income stream; through renting the tractor out.

"I thought I knew what I was doing, I had been farming for so long" said Gopal, "but, the library has given us so much education – the interaction programs and educative videos have been especially helpful, and, now with the Agricultural Co-operative it can help us to improve our farms and businesses too, so that our children won't have to work as hard as we had to".

Library provides access to credit and other programs

Sabhada Rana, 31, a resident of Bhaihara-5, in Kailali district, lives with her husband, son and daughter. Farming is her family's main occupation; however the produce is sufficient for their small family only.

In 2013, Practical Answers program was launched in Janachetana CLRC at Kailali, under which the Practical Answers Technical Group called 'Kopila' was formed



Photo 12: Sabhada Rana at her restaurant

comprising of 9 women. The group members are encouraged to participate in agricultural interaction programs and video shows. Since most of the women are illiterate, social mobilizer at the library helped them access books and resources related to agriculture and livestock. The library provides the venue to hold weekly meetings for them.

The group members also began to practice savings and credit among themselves. The group started to collect NRs 50 per month from each member. This practice has provided them access to the much needed credit. Sabhada has always thought of starting alternative business but she did not have enough funds to do so. She did not visit banks fearing that they would ask her for collateral or a guarantee and other documents, which she could not produce.

In April 2014, Sabhada borrowed an initial amount of NRs 10,000 from the group and opened a small restaurant with NRs 20,000. Six months later, now the business is running well, with an estimated worth of NRs 50,000. Sabhada has successfully paid back her loan and is now thinking of expanding her business.

She thanked Janachetana CLRC for encouraging her and other residents to form a small group and for motivating group saving and lending. 'Without the library and the Practical Answers Technical Group, I could never have started this restaurant. My husband and I would still be struggling to feed our family'.

Sabhada has also participated in three agricultural interaction programs offered by the library namely mushroom farming, vegetable farming and paddy farming, which were led by Agriculture experts from District Agriculture Office. She is hopeful that in future she would be able to grow more vegetables and rice after using new farming techniques and skills.

New knowledge improves productivity

A subsistence farmer, Saligram Neupane, 49, lives in Madi-1, Chitwan district of Nepal. His family consists of seven members. Even with the fifteen years of knowledge and experience in agriculture, he was struggling to keep its vegetable farms profitable as he was applying the same traditional practices that have been used for generations.

For many years, he encountered various challenges in his farm and suffered losses in business due to plant infections



Saligram selling cauliflower in a local market

and diseases that destroyed most of the grown vegetables and thereby, decreased the vegetable production.

In 2013, READ Nepal supported Gardi Community Library and Resource Center was established in Madi and soon the library launched Practical Answers program, a joint program of READ Nepal and Practical Action.

Under Practical Answers program, the library conducted various agricultural interaction programs that are led by agriculture experts from District Agriculture Office. After participating in the interaction program on potato and cauliflower; he initiated cauliflower farming in 12 katthas (one acre) land. It started well but after some time, the stem of growing cauliflowers started to turn black and decay. Immediately he inquired social mobiliser from the library, who called agriculture expert to visit his farm. Upon visit, the expert clearly informed about the cauliflower disease, how to diagnose, manage and control cauliflower infections and diseases.

This year, Saligram invested Rs 35,000 (US \$353) to grow Cauliflower in 12 Katthas land and has already earned Rs 70,000 (US \$ 707) by selling cauliflowers and hopes to earn Rs. 80,000 (US \$ 808) in few months. After 85 days of hard work, he expects to make a profit of Rs 115,000 (US \$ 1,161) by selling cauliflower only. Each day, he moves from place to place in village to sells cauliflower in a cart and for this he has even hired two helpers.

Saligram was recognized by District Agriculture Office, for his dedication and success in agriculture, which provided him the grant support of Rs 10,000 to buy climbers seedling.

“Library has made my work much easier... there are books on agriculture farming and interaction programs with agriculture experts,” said Saligram. “Before I used to think library as a place for reading books only, but now I realize library is a knowledge center for farmers like us, helping to answer our queries, connecting us with experts and moreover by provides us access to reading materials and books on agriculture to flourish our agriculture business.”

Apart from cauliflower, he has starting growing other vegetables like brinjal, cabbage, potato, tomoato, chilli and brinjal.

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