

**External Final Review / Experience Capitalization  
of the  
Home Garden Project Nepal, 2002 - 2018**

**REPORT**

**Final Version**



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## 2 Executive Summary

The report is an outcome of individual and collective reflections on the learning from engaging in Home Garden Project (HGP) activities over a period of sixteen years (2002 to 2018). Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) commissioned the Capitalization of Experiences (CapEx) exercise towards the end of the fourth and final phase to document lessons learnt for capitalization.

### Methodology

A team of three consultants (Switzerland, Bhutan and Nepal) reviewed the relevant documents, conducted interviews with SDC, LIBIRD, relevant government officials, and implementing NGOs, held Focus Group Discussions with HGP target farmers in seven selected groups in four districts, in the hills and in the Terai. The results were shared and discussed with key stakeholders of Kathmandu area. A debriefing with SDC concluded the mission.

### Socio-political context

After a 20 years' long vacuum, the country has now established local level political units, as the decision making bodies at local level with mandates, authorities, budget and responsibilities, especially on agricultural sector programme. This change at political level calls for adaptation in the support of technical staff at Palika level. At the same time, the new constitution of Nepal provides special recognition to women, Dalits and the marginalized caste / ethnic groups for inclusion in all sectoral development approaches. From the very beginning, the HGP has been working on inclusive approaches to mainstream socially disadvantaged groups in the project. The context provides huge opportunities to invent and test new modalities in the coming few years for decentralized HG approach at the local level planning and budgeting.

### Progressive orientation in HGP towards nutrition

The HGP appears to be a succession of four phases with slightly adapted wording in the project title and the respective objectives. The key words used comprise of (1) for the beneficiaries: resource poor farmers, disadvantaged groups' families in remote and conflict affected areas; (2) for the project orientation: improve livelihood, nutrition, food security, health, income, reduce economic vulnerability; on-farm management of genetic resources, and (bio-) diversity. There is a gradual shift in the orientation of the project from biodiversity to supporting disadvantaged groups and nutrition. The implementation area of the project increased from originally 4 (phase I) to finally 20 districts (phase IV), phasing out the programme in some districts and taking up in others. In 8 districts, the project was active for 3 phases, in 8 districts for 2 phases, and in 13 districts for 1 phase.

### Impacts made in nutrition and food security of the beneficiary households (HHs)

The project orientation on nutrition and food security was much more explicitly addressed during the third and fourth phases of HGP. The HGP participants have confirmed to have doubled their access to vegetables in their home garden throughout the year. The analysis of the available information (species of vegetables, seasonal availability and nutrient content of the vegetables) confirm that the home gardens contributed sufficiently to address the nutrition requirement of mainly women and children, along with reducing the food scarcity gaps during the year. An overall increase in awareness on nutritional benefits of consuming vegetables was found among women and men.

### Contributions made in policies, and strategies of government, training/research institutions for conceptual clarity and operational procedures

HGP has worked in coordination with the Ministry of Agricultural Development through relevant departments and took lead in drafting the HG implementation guidelines, which is currently in approval process. Likewise, HGP developed a HG manual in Nepali to train the technical staff with good contents. However, apart from few singular interventions, HGP did not establish strong institutional links, neither to research nor to education or health services.

### Implementation modality

In final phase IV of HGP, SDC requested to experiment three different implementation modalities: (i) through LIBIRD directly, (ii) through NGO partners and networks, and (iii) through Department of Agriculture. From the analysis of the modalities tested we can conclude that all three modalities have specific strengths and weaknesses. Taking into account the recent government reform, the suggestion future HG programmes is to construct a pluralistic approach under Palika implementation combining best bets and attributing the different roles and functions to different stakeholders, public and private.

### Institutional development especially of beneficiary groups

The HGP had facilitated the formation of inclusive groups by focusing on women, Dalits and marginalized groups. Each group consists of 25 individual home garden participants. Normally the key positions are held by women from Dalit caste and/or from indigenous ethnicity. In government implemented groups, socio-political empowerment is lower among women, whereas that is very strong in groups facilitated by NGOs. For example home garden groups that the YAC Nepal, LI-BIRD and CDAFN work with women are more conscious about their rights and roles they could play in the socio-political arena. Currently most of the groups are registered with the Palikas whereby they have even received grant support for agriculture. Some women members have been elected as Palika and ward members during the local election held recently. Women members were found to be more active in women only groups whereas men were found to lead or influence in the mixed groups. In some groups in the hills, Dalits still get excluded.

### Impact of migration in promoting HG model

In the feminized context of agriculture, around 80% of the visited, HG farmers (women) do face hardship of meeting the shortage of agricultural labour. Some women leave land fallow whereas some do hire labour to prepare the land and make best use of new tools. Usually women smartly manage their traditional labour exchange system (parma) to fill the gap of absence of male. Some women rather feel more independent to decide their participation, leadership and networking as the sole responsible person for home garden adoption.

On one hand, by focusing on women, the HGP has contributed to migration resilient agriculture, because women stay at home and take care to managing resources most efficiently and store seeds and food for difficult times. However women's indigenous knowledge about climate resilient agriculture initiatives remained less explored and documented.

### Recommendations

#### *Home Garden:*

HG is effective entry point to access small farmers and can be used in projects with broader agriculture orientation. Saving schemes contribute to sustainability of HG activities.

HG manual serves good purpose and can be improved by adding nutrition to the content. Core concerns about GESI and dealing with migration might be included as well.

Palika need technical support for their staff from State level. This gap still needs to be filled with innovative solutions. HGP can contribute with experienced approaches, in regard to e.g. HG manual, staff training and coaching, selection criteria for targeted support, monitoring and evaluation, GESI concerns, multi-stakeholder networks and platforms, etc.

#### *Experience documentation and capitalization:*

Make experience documentation and learning part of the institutional agenda.

Document available experiences of HGP before project ends.

Plan future experience capitalization as part of strategic process in the longer term.

### 3 Abbreviations

CapEx	Capitalization of Experience
CBM	Community Based Management
CDAFN	Community Development and Advocacy Forum Nepal
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office
DAG	Disadvantaged Groups
DLSO	District Livestock Service Office
DWO	Dalit Welfare Organization
FS	Farming System
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
HDI	Human Development Index
HG	Home Garden
HGP	Home Garden Project
JTA	Junior Technical Assistant (agricultural field staff)
LI-BIRD	Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development
LRP	Local Resource Person
MoAD	Ministry of Agricultural Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NARC	National Agricultural Research Council
NASDP	Nepal Agricultural Services Development Programme
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPR	Nepali Rupees
OMS	Outcome Monitoring Summary
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSU	Project Support Unit
RBA	Rights Based Approach
SAHAS	Group of Helping Hands
SIP	Small Irrigation Programme
TA	Technical Assistant (agricultural field staff)
VDC	Village Development Committee
VMF	Village Model Farmer

## 4 Background

### 4.1 Socio-political Context (Armed Conflict, New Constitution, and Federalization)

During the last two decades, Nepal has been continuously facing critical transitional situations in her political processes beginning with the Maoist movement in February 1996. During that phase, the political situation was under a state of turmoil, causing drastic economic downturn as well as serious problem in peace and security. The phase however facilitated a kind of mass awareness on civil rights and the unjust systems based on socio-cultural, economic and political discriminations that deprive certain categories of population from accessing state services in an equitable way. Despite the period experiencing extreme human violence and physical damage of private-public properties, the issues of suppressed position and identity of the deprived people, women, Dalits and caste ethnicities surfaced as the key slogans of movement for gender, caste and ethnic equality.

The Prime Minister under the last King Gyanendra, Mr Deuba, had whimsically dissolved the then existing peoples' representatives forum at local level, that impacted throughout the governance system for example Village Development Committee (VDC). The VDC came under the control of one Secretary (Sachib) who was a government employee, thus replacing the value of people's representative decisions rather than managing just an administrative role for some basic functions. This destruction of local representatives' government has now been revived in a stronger way by the local elections being held after two decades of a vacuum.

The movement attracted the mass population to unite under their own organizational identities and different political banners to abolish the monarchical ruling system. After one full decade of the civil war the conflict officially ended in 2006, with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), followed by adoption of the Interim Constitution of Nepal for a multiparty democratic system. In 2008, a Constituent Assembly was established which resolved to end the 239 years of monarchy and declare Nepal as a Federal Democratic Republic, with inclusive government consisting of one third women members, significant number of Dalits and other marginalized caste representatives. However the then government failed to meet the expectations of the people and faced obstructive political dynamism, which continued through governments changing ten different Prime Ministers with ever changing state government, formed by different major political parties in turn.

Nonetheless, after going through all these hurdles, Nepalese people have gained some hopeful political development with the establishment of the locally elected people's governance units in the forms of village and town municipalities (gaon/town Palikas) in 2017. In the history of Nepal, this Constitutional provision has been the most significant and ambitious transformation with delegation of power to the authority at the local level government in the gaon and town Palikas. This system has been hugely welcomed by the mass population whereas the government bureaucratic system has yet to be sensitized and activated on its operational procedures under the new arrangements.

Back in 2015, Nepal went through a severe earthquake causing huge human and physical damage which again slowed down the pace of government functions, which however called for collaborated interventions among the civil societies and donors to support rehabilitation activities in the affected areas. Although the rehabilitation processes are yet to be completed in many areas, earthquake relief and rehabilitation programmes nevertheless supported building a common ground among the development actors, including donors and other stakeholders.

In regard to the Home Garden project (SDC/LIBIRD), the new development approach provides huge opportunities to work on the mandates focusing on the marginalized women and DAG in home garden. However critical challenges are identifying a suitable operational strategy to transfer the experiences gained from "Home garden for smallholders" to the local governance institutions.

## 4.2 History of Home Garden project Phase I to IV

The first phase (2002 to 2005) home garden project primarily focused on ***knowledge generation*** on increasing the ***diversity and sustainable on-farm management of plant genetic resources*** to improve the livelihoods of the resource poor farmers. The project was piloted in four districts. The first phase, as foreseen, generated much knowledge on home garden. The evidences of relevance are documented in “Home Gardens in Nepal”. The document has three broad themes viz. (1) Status of Home Gardens in Nepal, (2) Understanding the diversity of Home Garden and (3) Enabling and empowering Home Garden farmers that describes the context and usefulness of home gardens to the resource poor farmers.

The second phase, (based on the evidences from the first phase), ***tested development and scaling up*** of the home garden approach ***to enhance the livelihoods of small farmers and families of disadvantaged groups*** in 13 districts. The phase led to realisation that land poor make some income through a variety of income generation options such as i) fresh vegetable selling, ii) marketing of high value species, iii) honey production, iv) mushroom cultivation, v) pigeon and poultry farming, vi) goat rearing, vii) fish farming, viii) piggery farming. This phase demonstrated that home garden is an appropriate entry point to reach to land poor, women and socially discriminated groups in order to enhance their family nutrition uptake and support livelihoods by reducing the cost on vegetable purchases.

The focus of the intervention graduated from ***(bio)-diversity to livelihood to health and nutrition***. The phases III and IV were ***mainly up scaling*** the home garden to more districts (16 in phase III and 20 in phase IV) with inclusion of fruits and small livestock in the home garden component. In 8 districts, the project was active during 3 phases, in 8 districts during 2 phases, and in 13 districts during 1 phase.

The earthquake in 2015 changed the priorities of local people - the rehabilitation of houses receiving much higher priority for many families compared to HG. Furthermore, the services provided by earthquake relief programmes has triggered high expectations for material support from HGP also.

By the fourth phase, home garden has proven not only as an appropriate approach to secure livelihood, nutrition and health, food security for the poor and disadvantaged but also as entry for other interventions. Most of all home garden approach has proved to be ***a most powerful approach to empower women and disadvantaged groups***.

Phase IV with three implementation modalities (DAO, NGO/networks, LI-BIRD) focused on training rather than pure technical support and thus aimed at upscaling the programme. The policy changes and guidelines to take home garden nationwide however remain unclear and the task of mainstreaming is not finished.

## 4.3 Rationale for CapEx at the end of phase IV

SDC decided to launch a CapEx (capitalization of experience) towards the end of phase IV. This CapEx is intended to capture main lessons learnt and good practices applied in HGP, in view of valorising these lessons learnt in other projects in future. NASDP (National Agricultural Services Development Programme) and SIP (Small Irrigation Programme) are two of the projects with a big potential to absorb the experience capital of HGP. Projects supported by other donor agencies show a clear interest in integrating CapEx results into their approaches.

The recent Government reform brought a distinct and unpreceded delegation of decision power to local level (including budgets and responsibility for technical staff). This change at political level asks for adaptation in the support of technical staff at Palika level. New modalities need to be invented, explored, and tested in the coming few years. Well documented experience about field level implementation of HG activities (e.g. HG manual, staff training and coaching, selection criteria for targeted support, monitoring and evaluation procedures, GESI concerns, multi-stakeholder networks and platforms, etc.) can be a most relevant support in this tremendous re-organizational task.

The fact that no staff of the implementing organizations has worked for more than 3-4 years in HGP was limiting the access to experience within this CapEx exercise. The reports of HGP are focused on monitoring of results rather than reflecting and analysing implementation procedures; thus they do not offer a large source of documented experience. In order to get hands on experience, SDC in cooperation with LI-BIRD, the implementing partner, might consider to invest some energy and time in documenting experience in the last part of phase IV or even in a subsequent endeavour. It would be interesting to associate other organizations, such as Su-aahara and NARC ("Vegetables go to School Project") to the last step of this CapEx process, in order to take hold of the full state of the art of available knowledge in HG domain.

## 5 CapEx Methodology

### 5.1 Approach: Review, Learning Evaluation and CapEx

The ToR stipulate a twin approach for the end of phase evaluation. On one hand, the ToR clearly ask for a review of results at outcome and impact level; on the other hand, experience capitalization and documentation is asked for, in order to lay foundations for future implementation in the domain of HG.

The following tables are presented in order to establish clarity about the different terms used in this context. Please also refer to annex 2 on experience capitalization and annex 3 on experience documentation.

a) Differentiating review, learning evaluation and experience capitalization:

Review / Report	Learning Evaluation	Experience Capitalization
Verification of results (outputs, outcome, impact) ✓ Effectiveness ✓ Efficiency ✓ Relevance ✓ Sustainability	Verification of results (outputs, outcome, impact) ✓ Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance, Sustainability ➤ Procedures ➤ Cooperation patterns	Verification of available knowledge ✓ Implementation modalities ✓ Techniques, Methods ➤ Personal & Institutional ➤ Implicit/explicit knowledge
Donor focused: What, how much, when, at what prize ...?	Implementer focused: What, with whom, how, why, what for, with what effect ...?	Future oriented: What, what for, in what context, how ...?
<b>PROVE</b>	<b>IMPROVE</b>	<b>LEARN for the FUTURE</b>

b) Differentiating experience documentation and experience capitalization:

Experience Documentation	Experience Capitalization
➤ Make experiences accessible to others ➤ Show, what, how and in what context you have done it ➤ Use text, pictures, videos, stories to make it attractive	➤ Refer to documented experience and experience available with staff to learn best lessons for future implementation ➤ Draw conclusions (capital) from documented and live experience
Process focused: What, what for, in what context, with whom, how, with what ...?	Future oriented: What, what for, in what context, what challenge, how...?
<b>SHOW / DOCUMENT</b>	<b>LEARN for the FUTURE</b>

Experience capitalization (CapEx) means learning for the future and thus needs to be done by the future users; it cannot be delegated to others. CapEx implies personal and institutional learn-

ing; it accumulates and evaluates available experience as a foundation for designing and constructing future interventions. The role of external consultants consist merely in structuring and facilitating this learning process and in adding additional knowledge from sources that might be unknown to the insiders.

Within this multi-orientation of the mission, the evaluation team choose to review specific aspects as per the ToR, to define an inventory for experience documentation yet to be done by concerned experience bearers, and thus to lay solid foundations for a subsequent experience capitalization.

## 5.2 Documentary consultation

The consulted documents comprised a long list. At first level, there were project documents, such as HGP credit proposals phase I to IV, HGP reviews phase I to III, HGP fact sheets, and HGP outcome monitoring summaries. Then there were documents of related projects, such as the credit proposal NASDP, Vegetables go to School, etc. Finally there were documents to be consulted containing more general information about HG. A last group of documents has been handed over during the field visits informing about specific programmes of implementing organizations. The list of consulted documents is presented in annex 4.

## 5.3 Briefing

The briefing served for the clarification about the double orientation of the mission: Review and CapEx. It became clear, that the mission would not bring to an end a full-fledged CapEx, but prepare a solid ground and clear orientation for subsequent steps in experience documentation and capitalization.

The briefing also made clear, that the capitalization on 16 years of experience in the context of SDC with the rotational staff system is a specially challenging task. Who remembers what? Who was already here two, four, twelve years ago?

The briefing contributed to confirm the guiding questions for the interviews (annex 5) with key stakeholders and for the field visits and also the overall programme of the mission (annex 6).

## 5.4 Meetings with key stakeholders and field visits

There were a series of meetings with key stakeholders in Kathmandu, among them MOAD, LI-BIRD, NASDP / Helvetas, NARC (Veg go to School project), Suaahara-Project, Vegetable Development Directorate, and Nepal Agriculture Food Security Support Programme (MOAD/World Bank).

For field visits, the project sites were selected based on the following criteria: (1) Location: Feasible travelling distance, (2) Implementation mode of HG project: Programme implemented by LI-BIRD / partner organisations / GoN (DADO), (3) Outcome: Sites with strong (positive) and weak (negative, doubtful) results, (4) Beneficiaries: Sites with mixed population, (5) Topographical situation: Hills and Terai.

In each project site, we had interactions with LIBIRD district staff, DADO, national partner NGOs (management and field staff), Home Garden Farmers / Women's Groups.

In all meetings we referred to the interview guidelines (see annex 5) and applied methods such as focus group and personal interviews, and used tools such as seasonal calendar, pairwise ranking, etc. List of interview partners see annex 7.

## 5.5 Workshops and debriefing

The workshop held with representatives of key stakeholder organizations in Kathmandu on March 20<sup>th</sup> served to present and discuss the major findings. Four topics have been discussed in form of a commented flip-chart-chat. For details please refer to annex 8 and 9.

During the debriefing with SDC staff on March 21 we focused on (1) results of the review, (2) future challenge in promoting HG approach through projects with specific focus on new situation in Palikas, (3) methodological aspects (“hybrid” of review and CapEx), and (4) the follow-up of the CapEx.

## 5.6 CapEx – the last missing step

In order to capitalize on HGP’s rich experiences, they first should be properly documented by LI-BIRD and its partner organizations and made accessible to interested organizations and their staff. Based on such documented experience, SDC projects and partner organizations may then capitalize on experience and thus take best profit for future design and support of HG activities.

For concrete steps in CapEx follow-up refer to chapter 7.2. “Recommendations regarding CapEx follow-up steps”.

# 6 Review Results and Lessons for CapEx

## 6.1 Overall impression on the project achievements, phase I to IV, Specific focus on women and DAG

### 6.1.1 Review results: Facts, extracts of reports, observations

The first phase with strong focus on research and development generated sufficient knowledge for home garden that built the basis for the subsequent phases. The first phase was necessary to **take stock and document** different aspects of home garden as a means to increase the **diversity and sustainable on-farm management of plant genetic resources** to improve the livelihoods of the resource poor farmers.

The second phase contributed to **developing and testing** the evidences gathered during the first phase to **up scale the home garden approach** to enhance the livelihoods of small farmers and families of disadvantaged groups engaging in increased number of districts.

The experiences from phase II were useful to widen the scope and scale of home garden that resulted in inclusion of fruits and small livestock components in the home garden, scaling up to cover more districts in different regions and try and test different implementation models engaging a wider range of partners – government, national NGOs, local NGOs and CBOs.

By the fourth phase, home garden has proven not only as an **appropriate approach** to secure livelihood, nutrition and health, food security for the poor and disadvantaged, but also as entry point for other interventions. Most of all home garden approach has proved to be **the most powerful approach to especially empower women and disadvantaged groups**.

#### Phase I – research/studies and documentation

- Documented historical perspective, structure, composition, utilisation and underlying indigenous knowledge systems of Nepalese home gardens
- Added new species and cultivars in their home gardens to the already maintained and promoted locally adapted plant species
- Recognised resource home gardens as means to enhance conservation, access and supply of various plant genetic resources to the communities
- Noted the diversity kits and diversity fairs as means to enhance access to seeds and materials create awareness and locate the custodian of genetic resources

- Noted the need to focus on the overall situation of gender social exclusion status in the larger community. Need to develop a project gender strategy and specific indicators for gender and social inclusion
- Noted the need to develop appropriate strategy to develop “farmer based networks approach” and produce “farmers’ friendly reading materials” for local farmers to raise awareness for ensuring participation of marginal farmers for policy advocacy. There is a need of policy briefs to raise awareness on the need for incorporating home gardens within the agricultural strategy of the country
- Noted the needs to orient CBM approach towards empowerment of communities through facilitation to articulate and negotiate their aspirations within the larger community
- Experienced need to specifically target subsistence farmers for home gardens to improve their livelihoods
- Realised the need for a strategic approach and more focus on raising awareness on nutritional contributions by home gardens
- Noted the need to improve approach in order to make home gardens more appealing to market oriented farmers to earn cash income from selling some part of produce

### ***Phase II – bio-diversity and nutrition and income***

- Changed food habit of Dalit family particularly vegetable. Dalit privileged to consume significant amount of vegetables (considered as food of elite group) in their daily diet that was never possible before
- Visible interests of the farmers groups to enhance species diversity particularly of vegetables and fruits in their home garden as evidenced by the land poor cultivating diverse species in their home garden
- Increased vegetable diversity in terms of species and increase availability of vegetable consumptions by the family
- Seasonal vegetables such as onion, garlic, broad leaf mustard, phenugreek, foeniculum vulgare (sounp), beans, tomatoes, cowpea, pumpkin, brinjal, gourds, spinach, cress, cauliflower, cabbage, beans (kause simi) etc. are new vegetables for most of the land poor households
- Year the round cultivation of the vegetables and increased diversity of species were more visible in even in small piece of land
- The farmers experienced significant reduction of expenses on vegetables
- Established home garden income generation fund to provide the land poor and DAGs with an access to financial capital for income generation activities, within the scope of home gardening
- The approaches of home garden found to be useful interventions in changing the attitudes and behaviour of the target households particularly in developing the confidence of the Dalit and marginalised groups

### ***Phase III - nutrition and diversified dietary sources, up scaling and policy influence***

- Home Garden project has contributed to enhancing the food supply (from less than three months to more than six months per year) and nutritional security of the target beneficiaries. The participants grow around 10 types of crop/plant species per year and consume vegetables all year round in addition to food habit of taking cereal-based food with very little vegetables
- The Home Garden group members have become aware of the fact that different types of vegetables, fruits and animal products are the sources of various types of nutrients and vitamins
- Ministry of Health and Population’s (MOHP) “National Nutrition Policy and Strategy 2004” emphasized the nutrition education activities and promotion of home garden
- The dietary diversity in food consumption pattern among the DAGs families increase and include fish, chicken, goat, buffalo, sheep, rabbit, honey and mushroom produced in their HGs

- Demonstrated home garden can produce relatively larger economic impact on the DAGs and small land holders and reduce the vulnerability
- Confirmed that home garden can increase their self-sufficiency and reduce/save expenditure on vegetable purchases
- The home garden members adopt varieties that can withstand poor management, are cold tolerant, adapted to water logged/excess water, drought, heat tolerant and do well under disease and pest pressure; this shows that home garden is more resilient to climate change than the conventional farming practices
- Home garden is women's domain and women constitute majority of the project's participants and beneficiaries who stay at home and utilize their free time for undertaking the farming activities. The migration of men has no impact on home garden and is 'migration resilient'
- Improved representation of DAGs in decision-making positions

***Phase IV nutrition and diversified dietary sources, up scaling and integration of HG in government programme***

- Increased the home garden components significantly (by 69%) in the households of target beneficiaries
- Households consume fresh home garden products of six types or more per season (34.6% households consumed more than six as compared to 6.6% baseline)
- Improved nutritional status of woman and children (54 % from 23.7 % baseline)
- Reduced expenditure on vegetable purchase from the baseline of 63.8 % households to 37 % by 2017
- Increased representation of DAGs from 27.3% baseline to 60% by 2017. Women representation in the executive positions was 79% in 2017. Women from DAGs have started to raise their voice in as well as outside the groups
- Prioritized 588 ultra-poor home garden groups for leadership position and credit lending out of 700 groups

Many learnings were made during the implementation of the various phases which helped to test and validate in the subsequent phases:

- Home garden can be resource pool for (bio-)diversity and traditional species
- Home garden can improve nutrition and food security
- Farmers integrate many home garden components in their gardens and practise integrated farming
- HG is climate and migration resilient (despite the reduced availability of workforce in women headed households, vegetable production increased in project area)
- HG can be unique entry point into livelihood and other programmes: Suaahara (Nutrition) → HGP (Vegetable) → SIP (Small Irrigation) → Micro Finance (saving and credit), entry point for follow up interventions like climate smart agriculture and biodiversity interventions
- HG is pro-poor and pro-DAGs as opposed to commercialisation of agriculture
- HG can reduce expenditures on vegetables, create savings and earn income from sale of surplus
- HG is a strategic approach to implement women empowerment programmes and inclusive development and social harmony in the heterogeneous communities. Women from HG now take leadership positions even in political representation
- Self-assertiveness of women has increased, especially in areas with a close follow-up of the programmes (coaching of the women's groups) by a local NGO; many women declare to be in a position of autonomous decision making at household level
- HGP offered opportunities to create a platform for networking among the NGOs
- HG can be a step towards commercialisation of agriculture and create opportunities for agriculture related enterprises (seed producers, agriculture cooperatives)
- Water availability for irrigation is often a limiting factor.

Most remarkable change of HGP, identified in focus group interviews:

Seen by women: (1) Awareness, knowledgeable about new technologies; (2) year round availability of diverse types of vegetables enriched child and women's health; (3) saving of money (around NPR 300/week) from buying vegetables from outside market; (4) recognised as capable leaders; (5) HGP women are elected members in the new local government; (6) organised in saving group around HG and mobilise own saving for small credit; (7) reduced sickness in children during monsoon (due to eating nutritious diet); (8) changes in daily dietary intake, daily consumption of vegetables; (9) empowerment of women in terms of access, utilization, selling of surplus, group mobilization, and in outreach.

Seen by men: (1) Money in women's pockets (economic empowerment of women); (2) sending kids to school; (3) women's contribution is visible; (4) improved nutrition. In addition, sanitation (kitchen, toilets) are mentioned by men; but this change is primarily due to the support by the earthquake relief programmes and not to HGP.

Seen by school boys and girls: (1) Variation in daily menu; (2) boys and girls are knowledgeable about nutrient dense vegetables; (3) behaviour change in eating vegetables in the community.

Seen by outsiders: (1) vegetable and fruits available in households; (2) more consumption of safe and fresh food increased sale of surplus production; (3) groups' saving schemes; (4) social cohesion (e.g. saving scheme as per the poorest member's capacity); (5) claiming own demands (e.g. tools, tractors, seeds, mushroom spawns from Agriculture Modernization Project); (6) reduced (no more) malnutrition; (7) enhanced group unity and diversity through targeting DAG.

It is difficult to follow how the experiences from all the previous phases were useful for the subsequent phases. Not many staffs from the earlier phases were engaged in implementing the following phases. Some farmers referred to a few cases of transfer of their knowledge and skills about home gardening into their close neighbourhood, on voluntary basis. Nevertheless it was difficult to gauge the cumulative impacts of the projects, since each phase of the project worked with new groups. The outcomes recorded can be used at best to compare the results from one HG group to the other and not to learn what works under what conditions and with what socio-cultural communities and groups.

### 6.1.2 Conclusions for CapEx: Good practices, lessons learnt

HG is an integrated farming system approach that combines traditional practices and modern practices to increase nutrition and food security and can be climate resilient. HG approach is therefore most suited for small farmers and disadvantaged groups to ensure food and nutrition security.

HG group approach, supported by social mobilizers, is best suited for programmes empowering women and disadvantaged groups, as well as for social inclusion and harmony promotion.

HG is most relevant to the present stage of agriculture development of Nepal where agriculture is left in the hands of women while males migrate. HG experiences provide basis to develop agriculture policies (selecting interventions and targeting farmers).

Benju Dhakal, LI-BIRD field officer stated a nice example regarding her working attitude: "What I like in my work is to see and understand the reality, the farming system of the people we are working for. Only on the basis of a profound understanding I can contribute to the development." HGP plays an important role in promoting suitable working attitudes among young staff.

## 6.2 Impact on nutrition and food security

### 6.2.1 Review results: Facts, extracts of reports, observations

Nutrition remains one of the most important challenges in Nepal both in rural and urban areas. According to the 2017 Global Nutrition Report, Nepal is off course in meeting the World Health Assembly targets related to **under-5 wasting as well as under-5 overweight**. Children in food-

secure households have the lowest rates of stunting (33%), while children in food-insecure households have rates up to 49%. The rates of **anaemia** in women of reproductive age remain unacceptably high, with 35% of the population affected. Additionally, **vitamin A deficiency** is a problem for children, with almost 40% deficient in vitamin A.

The USAID Nepal country profile (updated 2016) reports that **micronutrient deficiencies are widespread**, with almost half of pregnant women and children under five, as well as 35% of women of reproductive age being anaemic. Only 24% of children consume iron-rich food, 24% of children meet a minimally acceptable diet, and only half of pregnant women take recommended iron supplementation during pregnancy. **Green vegetables are consumed by many, but only when in season (6 months of the year).**

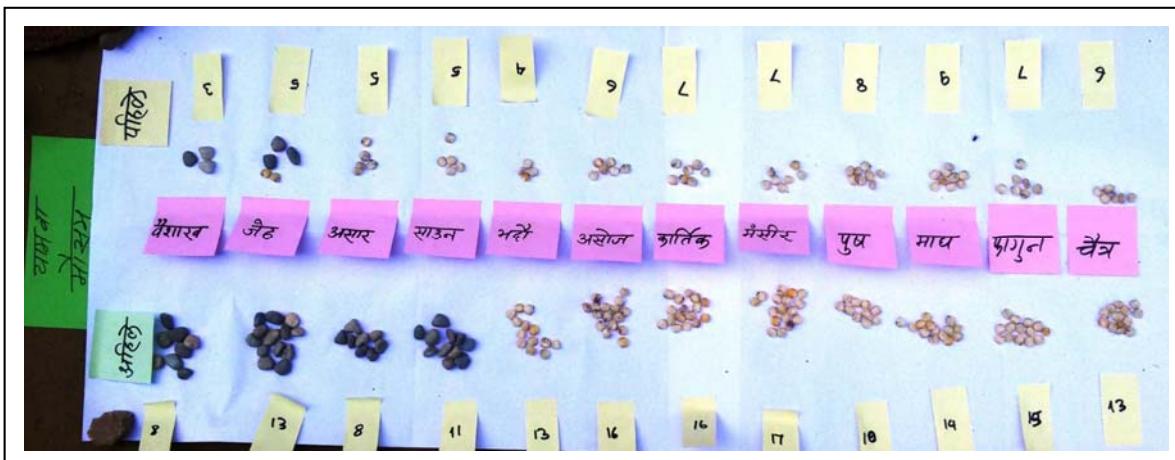
The home garden project aimed to address the nutrition deficiencies and intervened among others with diversity kit. The following table shows the list of vegetables and other home garden components like fruits and small livestock:

8 winter vegetables	6 summer vegetables	7 fruits	Livestock
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radish</li> <li>• Broad leave mustard</li> <li>• Onion</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Coriander</li> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• Beet root</li> <li>• Cress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Cucumber</li> <li>• Pumpkin</li> <li>• Gourd</li> <li>• Faba bean</li> <li>• Bitter gourd</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mango</li> <li>• Litchi</li> <li>• Pear</li> <li>• Plum</li> <li>• Orange (mausambi)</li> <li>• Lime</li> <li>• Lemon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bees</li> <li>• Goat</li> <li>• Poultry</li> </ul>

Final evaluation of HGP III reports 18 species of vegetables and fruits in the home garden before the project and 26 species after the project.

Phase IV OMS survey 2017 reports that 69.5% beneficiary households managed five or more types in their home gardens as compared to baseline report of 36.8%. Likewise, 36.4% of the households consumed six or more types of fresh home garden products compared to 6.6% baseline report.

The review / CapEx team during the discussions with home garden groups gathered that the participating households increased the different species of vegetables from maximum of 7 before the project to 19 species after the project. The diversity of vegetable species and their seasonal availability is illustrated in the following figure:



The above figure shows the number of vegetable species and seasonal availability before (above the months) and after (below the months) the HG project – Ramechhap district. It shows that at any time of the year, the families participating in the HG has some vegetables (minimum of 8 species) in their garden at their disposal within easy reach throughout the year and at times as many as 19 species after participating in the home garden project as compared to maximum of 7 species and in some months almost without vegetables.

The following table shows the species of vegetables available during the months of the year:

Sl. No.	Nepali Months	Corresponding English months	Vegetables
1	Baisakh	15 April – 14 May	Pumpkin, tomato, faba beans, coriander, peas, brinjal, bottle gourd, onion, garlic
2	Jeth	15 May – 14 Jun	Pumpkin, cucumber, jackfruit, bottle gourd, sponge gourd, colocassia root/yam, green chilli
3	Asar	15 Jun – 14 Jul	Spinach, pumpkin, tomato, jackfruit, broad leaf mustard, mustard, sponge gourd, bhindi,
4	Saun	15 Jul – 14 Aug	Spinach, bhindi, bitter gourd, broad leaf mustard, gourd, beans
5	Bhait	15 Aug- 14 Sep	Pumpkin, tomato, gourd, jackfruit, brinjal, colocassia root/yam, cress, parase (N)
6	Asoj	15 Sep – 14 Oct	Spinach, radish, mustard, cabbage, cauliflower, bhindi
7	Karthik	15 Oct – 14 Nov	Spinach, carrot, radish, mustard, cabbage, cauliflower, coriander, cucumber, mushroom
8	Mangsin	15 Nov – 14 Dec	Spinach, radish, mustard, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, colocassia root/yam, tarul, broad leaf mustard
9	Paush	15 Dec – 14 Jan	Spinach, fenugreek leaves, tomato, carrot, kusum sag (N), cauliflower, cabbage, radish, pea leaves, chick pea, broad leaf mustard, french bean,
10	Magh	15 Jan – 14 Feb	Fenugreek leaves, cauliflower, cabbage, potato, bethu (N), colocassia root/yam, colocasia (leaves), faba beans, broad leaf mustard, mustard leaves, khesari (N), pea leaves, peanut leaves, onion (leaves and bulbs), latte sag
11	Phagun	15 Feb – 14 Mar	Fenugreek leaves, broccoli, carrot, pea pods, bokula, Khesari (N), french beans, onion (leaves and bulb), garlic, musur (dal) leaves, tomato, beet root.
12	Chaitra	15 Mar – 14 Apr	Spinach, pumpkin, bhindi, radish, gourd, garlic, onion, sponge gourd

The HGP introduced 14 types of vegetables through supply of diversity kits. The rest of the vegetables were traditionally found in the areas. The nutrition knowledge inputs by the HGP increased the awareness on the nutrition potential of the traditional herbs and plants and the communities now use these as vegetables.

Women are considered most vulnerable to nutrient deficiencies especially iron and Vitamin A. The women require iron and folic acid during preconception, iron and Vitamin A during pregnancy, lactating mothers need 60 mg iron and 400 µg folic acid per day and Vitamin C and children from 6 months to 1 year require vitamins, minerals, proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

Fenugreek leaves, spinach, broccoli, carrot, capsicum, pumpkin, tomato are rich sources of **iron and Vitamin A**; green peas, garlic, turnip are rich sources of **iron** and green peas, spinach, fenugreek, garlic, onion, pumpkin and turnip root are rich sources of folic acid (**Vitamin B**).

The following table presents frequently available vegetables and their nutrient content per 100 grams of edible vegetables:

Sl. No	Vegetables	Fe (mg)	Vitamin A (I.U.)	Vitamin B (mg)				
				B1	B2	B3	B5	B9
1	<b>Tomato</b>	0.64	900	0.12	0.06	0.4		30
2	<b>Capsicum</b>	0.7	4450	0.08	0.08	0.5		
3	<b>Bitter gourd</b>	0.61	380	0.07	0.09	0.5		
	<b>Cabbage</b>	0.4	130	0.05	0.05	0.3		
4	<b>Broccoli</b>	1.1	2500	0.10	0.23	0.9		
5	<b>Carrot</b>	0.7	11000	0.06	0.05	0.6		
6	<b>Green peas</b>	1.5	-	0.3	0.1	2.1	0.6	65 µg
7	<b>Fenugreek green leaves</b>	17.2	6450	0.05		0.7		
8	<b>Spinach</b>	10.9	9300	0.03	0.07			
9	<b>Fresh garlic</b>	1.7	-	0.2	0.11	0.7	0.596	3 µg
10	<b>Onion</b>	0.5	40	0.03	0.04	0.4		
11	<b>Pumpkin</b>	0.8	1600	0.05	0.11	0.6		
12	<b>Turnip</b>	0.5	-	0.04	0.07	0.6		

Source: School Vegetable Gardening – Concept, Curriculum and Action, NARC, Nepal by Dhruba Raj Bhattarai et al.

The analysis of the available information (species of vegetables, seasonal availability and nutrient content of the vegetables) presented above are sufficient indicators that the home gardens contributed sufficiently to address the nutrition issues of mainly women without going into details of measuring health related indicators. The other components of home garden namely fruits and small livestock have potential to add to the already nutrient rich vegetables.

The seasonal availability of vegetables (fig above) and the species of vegetables (table above) demonstrate that the food scarcity gaps during the year has closed with at least 8 species vegetables available at any time of the year. This demonstrates that the home garden has made generous contribution to food and nutrition security of the disadvantaged groups in the rural communities.

Outcome monitoring survey 2017 reports that the baseline showed 63.8% households used their family income for vegetable purchase before that decreased to 37% in 2017. The report also shows that the number of households selling the surplus home garden products has increased to 33.7% from the previous year of 29.5%.

The review / CapEx team gathered that households save a minimum of NPR 300 per week not having to purchase vegetables. Some households also earn as high as NPR 30'000 per year. All the home garden groups maintain saving scheme with monthly deposit of NPR 100. Assuming that only savings are available to purchase food at times of scarcity, at the least NPR 1'200 in a year will be available to purchase essential food. This demonstrates the contribution of home garden to the food security.

There is increased awareness nutritional benefits of consuming vegetables. The OMS survey 2017 report 36.4% of the households consumed fresh home garden products of six types or more per season as compared to 6.6% of the baseline. The same OMS reports that about 54% respondents saw improvement in nutritional status of woman and children as compared to 23.7% in 2016.

The review team were told similar stories by the home group members during the interviews. One women claimed that her eye sight improved after consuming vegetables.

Six out of seven HG groups were fully aware of nutritional benefits of eating vegetables. The advocacy by the promoters of “1000 Golden Days of Child and Mother” – South Asia Food & Nutrition Security Initiative, seem to have enhanced the knowledge on adoption of improved dietary habits among the pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Therefore, it would be justified to credit home garden with enhanced nutrition availability, increased food security and increased knowledge and skills on food and nutrition especially for women and children.

## 6.2.2 Conclusions for CapEx: Good practices, lessons learnt

Human Development Index (HDI) is a proven basis for targeted interventions (selection process of most disadvantaged groups).

Lesson learnt confirmed by NGO in Mahottari: HG approach and HG techniques are key for family nutrition during the whole year, provided there is sufficient information on link between HG produce and nutrition.

The sustainability of HG activities is confirmed by different groups during field visit. HG groups are core for sustainability (common goal, mutual encouragement). Saving schemes have a fostering function to sustainability of HG groups.

Lesson (to be) learnt: Many actors at Palika level perceive commercialization of agricultural products as top-priority; for them, HG focused at women and DAGs has lesser importance. Such strategy is promoting wealthy farmers with sufficient land, and excluding households with very limited or no land. There is a need for MoAD to promote HG strategy focused on women and DAGs as a self-standing activity at Palika level.

## 6.3 Project contribution to policies and government strategies related to pro-poor HG

### 6.3.1 Review results: Facts, extracts of reports, observations

**Definition of Home Garden:** The ToR raise the question on a common understanding of HG. The definitions that are in use and that have been discussed and amended by the workshop participants are presented here:

Definition 1: *The home garden is a traditional land use system around a homestead, where traditional and improved varieties of vegetables, fruits, spices, fish, poultry and livestock are maintained by the household members and the products thus generated are primarily intended for family consumption* (Jan 2014-2018: Integrating Home Garden into small Farming and Livelihood system, Home Garden Project Phase IV);

Definition 2: *Systematically managed area around homestead covering vegetables, fruits, herbs and ornamental plantation, including also integrated farming of livestock, fish, beekeeping, etc., where the farmer herself / himself manages the biodiversity conservation.* (2071, LIBIRD, Home garden Training Manual in Nepali)

In the stakeholder workshop, the majority preferred the first definition, which they modified by including some suggested points:

Suggested revised definition: *The home garden is an improved land use and farm management system around a homestead where traditional and improved varieties of vegetables, fruits, spices, fish, bees, poultry and livestock are maintained by the household members and the products thus generated are primarily intended for family consumption contributing to nutrition and food sovereignty, including addressing the issues around unpaid care work of women who are the primary contributors.*

Generally, the term **home garden** is understood as more comprehensive term than **kitchen garden**; the latter is comprising few vegetables and spices, but not livestock, mushroom cultivation, bees, etc.

The understanding of home garden and kitchen garden differs among farmers and technicians at the local level and also among authorities at the policy levels and implementing agencies; however all of them generally referred to:

- Diversification of species maintaining a year round vegetable production and utilization calendar
- Contributing to health and nutrition: Previously limited to consumption of potato, onions and seasonally available local plants, the dietary consumption has now changed into more than a dozen types of vegetables, including local wild vegetables
- Enabling the participant farmers to earn an annual income ranging from NPR 3'000 (1.5 ropani land owner) to NPR 30'000 (3 kathhas land owner)
- Source of livelihood
- Average size differs from farm to farm (1 ropani (500m<sup>2</sup>) to 2 ropanis (1'000m<sup>2</sup>)) depending upon land holding (the standard size of HG plot defined by NASDP is 200m<sup>2</sup>)
- While the visited farmers in Mahottari, Ramechhap and Kailali (managed by NGOs) were found confident on explaining about home gardening concept, the farmers in some other groups were less clear on the nature and characteristics of HG
- In areas under DADO management, the project staff and the farmers tend to give more importance to production and market oriented approach in comparison to nutritional impact and behaviour change.

The discussions confirmed the need for a common understanding of home garden. It needs to be shared among farmers, LRP, technicians at Palikas and Ministry involved at all levels in promoting HG as an approach to integrated family farming.

**Understanding the nexus HG to nutrition:** Despite the project introduced a nutrition focused HG approach, articulation of longer term nutritional impact was more prominently found in the

Terai districts where women farmers explained how they have changed their vegetable consumption habits after the project, and they think HG has contributed to improving eye sights and reducing malnutrition among pregnant women, lactating mothers, and among children. In the hills, however even though consumption of vegetables is being augmented, the nutrition aspect of the HG project has not been adequately explained. On the other hand, good practice has been adopted by women farmers in Ajaymeru, Dadeldhura after receiving social mobilization services from District Education Office, empowerment education from WDO, nutrition education from Suaahara project, and the group has now been registered also in Chhimeki Micro finance for micro credit services. The presence of the local Community Female Health Volunteer is an added value to this group formation. This group has extended their cooperation with the HG group of the next village in order to strengthen their cooperative. Despite having been exposed to such a wider networking, combined with social and technical knowledge, the focus on integrated nutrition and livelihood has yet to be strengthened (HG as a mean for reducing malnutrition, stunting, mortality rates, and so on).

**Policy guidelines on HG:** The Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action (FNSPA) of Nepal (2016) mentions Horticulture as one of the areas to improve nutrition and income, influenced by HGP. Comprehensive HG implementation guidelines have been revised by LI-BIRD and partners: "HG Norms and Programme Implementation Guidelines" (4-5 pages, in Nepali only), and submitted for approval. MoF did not approve these guidelines due to clause on group grant. These guidelines (without this clause) are in a second round of the approval process. The guidelines comprise following contents: (1) Site selection, (2) Beneficiary selection, (3) Components to consider (vegetables, animals, mushroom ...), (4) group size, (5) Activities (training topics, input supply ...), (6) Budget. In no government office (Department of Agriculture, DADO), the draft guidelines have been at hand.

**Inter-service coordination:** The cooperation among Agriculture, Livestock, and Health services is often rather weak. At local level, NGOs or Palikas take initiatives to link and coordinate.

**Irrigation:** LI-BIRD and MOAD support small scale irrigation in HG, wherever water is available. Sprinkler irrigation proved to be the best suited technology (cheap, easy to handle. Drip irrigation would be water saving, but is more expensive and clogging prone (easily clogged if water is dirty). Irrigation with watering can is a more labour intensive option, suitable for tiny plots.

**Empowerment of women:** Younger women farmers in the hill group are empowered to negotiate with the local government units for claiming for irrigation support and they have been offered a grant of NPR 1'50'000 for irrigation by the local government.

However they face a secondary position at home in decision making for major productive assets, where they have to seek approval from the elderly in laws. Through HG involvement, gradually they have been feeling more accepted and appreciated for their knowledge, skills and networking capacities, both at home and at the community.

*"In the past, my mother in law used to stop me from cooking two/three vegetables, due to the fact that it could consume much oil, but these days after having tasted different varieties of vegetables, she rather asks me for different vegetables instead of one."*

The women HG members met in Dadeldhura, Eir gaon, have been able to influence the decisions of the gaon Palika and ward level planning and have received an amount of one lac (Nepali rupees) from the municipality and gaon Palika budget to carry on their HG activities. The women HG members in other visited places were found to be aware about their rights to claim programme support at the local Palikas and municipality level, however due to unclear status of the Palikas budgetary planning in most of the places, there is no significant contribution been given to women involved in HG activities. The process of consultation has started and women HG members' access to local Palikas has been improved compared to their past access to the VDCs. Those groups that involved in Women and Child Development Office are more empowered in voicing own needs, mobility, networking than those without networking with this office.

**Research:** Link to NARC is rather formal and merely one-way (topics identified by agronomists → research hypotheses → results → application of results). Neither distinct, HG specific requests from the field to research nor HG specific research results exist; astonishingly, neither

for topics linked to biodiversity (LI-BIRD's core topic). LI-BIRD claims to have informal links to NARC Horticulture Division, but annual reports do not contain respective information. Stronger formal links have existed at the project start in 2005, also between LI-BIRD and international researchers in bio-diversity (see references in manual "An Introduction to Home garden").

**Training JT/JTA:** No formal links between HGP and Education Department and training institutions are established. HG as training component is existent with JT course, and planned for JTA course (2 sessions). This is a very slim portion and definitively does not contain real practice nor include nutritional or social aspects related to the promotion of HG. LI-BIRD offered repeatedly introduction courses to HG for JT/JTA instructors.

**Secondary school:** HG is not included in curriculum of the secondary school. The project "Vegetables Go to School" (under NARD) has developed a curriculum for home gardening and practically tested in several secondary schools. Approval is pending. In primary school curriculum, there is one single lesson, but no practice.

### 6.3.2 Conclusions for CapEx: Good practices, lessons learnt

For 90% of Nepali farmers, home garden is far more relevant for the own nutrition than for sale. Only about 10% of the farmers produce vegetables for marketing. Therefore, nutritional impact of HG should be a priority agenda in policy guidelines compared to the aspect of commercialization. If policy guidelines are too much commercialization oriented, demanding market oriented crops might replace nutritious vegetables cultivation in the longer term.

LI-BIRD document "An Introduction to Home garden" (written in Nepali) is a manual with useful content for field staff. It might serve as basic document for technical staff in Palikas. The table of contents of the manual include the following topics, such as

- Introduction to nutrition and its importance, child nutrition, balanced diets, etc.
- Introduction to Home Garden (difference between kitchen garden and home garden, types, management, calendar, etc.)
- Analysis of household nutrition, develop crop calendar
- Mapping of Home garden
- Soil management
- Management of irrigation
- Nursery management
- Pruning/thinning of fruit trees
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Raising livestock (goats, pigs, chicken) as part of home garden
- Income generating activities (fish firming, mushroom, beekeeping).

The manual is very rich in agricultural technical topics and thus helpful to enable the users for implementing home garden, at the same time, it could be improved by considering the following dimensions:

- The weightage to nutrition topic needs to be more elaborated including the focus of home garden for improving health status of pregnant women, lactating mothers, children along with other family members.
- A chapter on Social Mobilization focusing on HG approach for smallholder women and DAG would enable the target participants to articulate their rights and needs.
- A pictorial presentation of the inter linkages among the HG productions, nutrition and income generation contributing to the overall goal of an improved livelihood and family well-being will be helpful for participants to articulate the importance of socio-economic and technical interdependency of the HG cycle.
- A picture also on Palika members and HG member farmers planning HG activities in the annual planning sessions could be very helpful at this moment.
- In general terms, focus should be kept on GESI and practical utilization.

LI-BIRD built up good relations to central government. → Lesson: Important selection criteria of core project staff is the capacity to build good relations between institutions and government.

## 6.4 Implementation modalities (LI-BIRD, Government, NGO and network)

### 6.4.1 Review results: Facts, extracts of reports, observations

LI-BIRD as primary grantee, partnered with a few service providers (NGOs and networks), namely SAHAS Nepal, RIMS Nepal and Rupantaran to provide services in some of the project districts, following previously established partnership with TUKI and CEAPRED. LIBIRD influenced the Department of Agriculture for passing a standard for the home garden for DADOs to follow while integrating home gardening into their regular programmes. This policy initiative made integration of the home garden possible in the government extension system. Consequently, DADOs in 10 out of 15 home garden districts in the third phase have integrated home garden components at various degrees into their regular programmes. Similarly, it was observed that NGO partners have integrated home gardens in various projects and programmes in their organizations.

In its fourth phase, the project articulated an approach to (1) promote GoN ownership and use of government system and mechanism to deliver so that capacity strengthens, (2) build synergies and complementarities; (3) building voice and structure of local groups for sustainability. Likewise, the project strategy was defined as integration of home garden in the government's regular programme and in NGOs' livelihood or development programmes, mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), promoting a Rights-based approach (RBA) to development and building partnership with multiple stakeholders for achieving impact at scale.

Corresponding to the identified approach and strategy, the Project Framework in the fourth phase had aimed at formation of home garden as integral part of the regular agriculture development plans and programme of Nepal Government, while provisioning for SDC to provide direct budget support to the Government of Nepal by signing a bilateral agreement between the Governments of Switzerland and Nepal. Whereas the overall goal of the project is to contribute to improve family nutrition and resilience of smallholders and disadvantaged groups, especially women, by scaling up home garden practices', the project defined its outcome 2 as, "Government line agencies, local government and non-government organizations in working districts integrate home garden into regular plans and strengthen capacity to respond to demands of the home garden farmers".

Subsequently, the project has been implementing the HG programme through three models: LIBIRD directly implementation, LIBIRD partnering with national NGOs and networks, and DADO signed agreements with SDC to implement home garden project activities in three VDCs of twenty districts each covered by the project. LIBIRD and partner NGOs were responsible to implement in seven VDCs and the DADO was responsible to implement HG activities in three VDCs of the same districts.

In the period of 2016/17, LIBIRD facilitated project implementation through the following national and local NGOs, namely, Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS Nepal), Rupantaran, Everest Club Dailekh, Resource Identification and Management Society (RIMS) Nepal, Youth Action for Change (YAC) Nepal, Self Help Initiative Promotion (SHIP) Nepal, Dalit Welfare Organization (DWO), Banke, Parivartan Nepal, Machapuchhre Development Organization (MDO) Kaski, Community Development and Advocacy Forum (CDAFN), Mahottari, Rural Development TUKI Association (RDTA) Dolakha, Ecology, Agriculture and Rural Development Society (ECARDS) Dolakha.

LIBIRD assisted developing capacity of the implementing NGOs mainly on maintaining a sound financial, accounting and governance system, including developing collective action plans for improvement and follow up monitoring and advice.

During the field visit, we collected personal views about strengths and weaknesses of the three implementation modalities from the different interview partners. Participants of the stakeholder workshop added their views. The table does not show a statistically representative result, but a summary of randomly collected opinions.

**LI-BIRD directly implemented:**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HG focused: HG is LI-BIRD's core theme ("own baby")</li> <li>• Biggest promoter of HG in Nepal</li> <li>• Link to large knowledge base (20 years own experience and international research)</li> <li>• Farming Systems model as reference is a must (input – production support – marketing, gender, agriculture – livestock)</li> <li>• Action oriented organization</li> <li>• Selection of staff according to LI-BIRD criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional memory not strong enough due to frequent staff change and missing documentation of experience</li> <li>• Phasing out remains an open issue: Who will take over LI-BIRD dynamics?</li> </ul>

**NGO implemented:**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local context and beneficiaries well known</li> <li>• Network of local partners</li> <li>• Local NGO well connected with Palika</li> <li>• Clear contracts and agreements negotiated between LI-BIRD and NGO</li> <li>• Effective planning, fast implementation</li> <li>• Efficient use of locally existing facilities</li> <li>• DA rules adapted to local context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes weak governance</li> <li>• Institutional memory depending on persons, not well documented</li> <li>• If failure, NGO has maybe bad reputation, but no sanction</li> <li>• Technical competence limited</li> <li>• Sometimes under political influence</li> <li>• Donor driven project logic; sustainability not ensured at the end of project</li> <li>• Repeated overhead costs in a cascade model (SDC – LI-BIRD – SAHAS – CDAFN (Community Development and Advocacy Forum Nepal))</li> </ul>

Positive side effects:

- Local NGO extending HG activities also in other projects
- Organizational strengthening and capacity building of local NGO

**Government implemented (district level):**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups in district area are known (registered)</li> <li>• Easy coordination with other agricultural support programmes (plastic houses, irrigation, etc.)</li> <li>• If failure, high accountability by government staff</li> <li>• Government continues programme after external funding, even at reduced level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative procedures slow, complicated approval process, especially for policies; often half year break in implementation</li> <li>• No conceptual clarity of HG and respective role of Government</li> <li>• Limited number of staff; other duties to implement, thus competing with HG</li> <li>• Institutional memory missing (no systematic experience documentation)</li> <li>• Government input supply and production oriented (diversity kit); less support for marketing, nutrition and social aspects</li> <li>• Gap in coordination at different levels</li> </ul>

The recent government reform invites all stakeholders to consider how to develop an implementation model with specific tasks for all actors; think about working together, and not to compete with each other.

The comparison of the three modalities turned out to be not very significant. Each approach has its specific strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, the DADO implemented approach is no longer relevant due to the government reform. However, the ToR specifically asked to compare the three approaches according to specific criteria; a tentative evaluation is given in the following table:

Modality	Successful in operationalization	Efficient (logistically, financially)	Strategically appropriate (effective)	Sustainable (long term impact, self promoting)
LI-BIRD	yes	yes	Full understanding of HG strategy	Saving scheme supports fostering group dynamics
NGO	yes	yes	Good understanding of HG strategy	Saving scheme supports fostering group dynamics
Government	partially yes no extra staff, less time available to invest in HG activity	yes no extra staff costs	HG strategy less focused, but embedded in agricultural programme	Saving schemes and one matching fund; Gov. support sustainable, though at reduced level

The interactions held by the CapEx mission with only a sample of the NGOs provide an understanding about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and the challenges to contribute to establish home garden in their respective areas as well as integration into their other existing projects/programmes. The NGOs met with were SAHAS Nepal, RIMS Nepal, CDAFN and YAC Nepal. The NGOs were found convinced on the Home garden as an entry point to reach the poor, deprived groups, mainly from the discriminated caste groups and have integrated the elements of home garden project in their ongoing projects. The NGOs have facilitated the critical aspect of networking between the HG groups and the newly established local governance units, e.g., town and village Palikas, by ensuring their registration as credible groups for service (Palika's) provision. In all four visited districts, namely Mahottari, Ramechhap, Kailali and Dadeldhura, the NGO facilitation enabled the home garden groups to develop their agencies as credible to claim and receive Palika's allocation of budget for agriculture and micro-irrigation purposes.

The review / CapEx team also explored experiences of government (DADO) staff about implementation of home garden. The DADO technical staff in Dadeldhura was found to be highly motivated to continue working on home garden initiatives, as he had found it highly beneficial for child and maternal health as well as for income generation at a limited scale. He was also convinced on the usefulness of HG approach for reaching the resource poor smallholders who could fulfil their bare need of year round food security through HG production and small income. The DADO implemented activities have been successful in enabling the target group participants to adopt the new technologies by provisioning the basic tools and equipment for production, however the group dynamic was found to be weaker than in those groups facilitated by NGOs. The farmers in DADO supported groups were found to be more supply driven rather than articulating on their rights to claim public services and resources. Although there is a chance for these groups to be integrated into DADO's national programme on home gardening due to the involvement of government extension staff who could help them get registration in the Palika's service groups.

During this exercise, the situation of the DADO service structure is not clear at the district and local level, thus it is difficult to draw conclusion about potentialities of sustainability for the DADO implemented HG farmers groups.

Both the government and NGOs staff have experienced certain crucial lessons by working with the DAG and women participants and were able to adjust their time, visits, training approach to suit the specific target households, thus flexibility in working approach was a key lesson learned

by the front line field technicians and social mobilisers. Their level of understanding and appreciation of local knowledge, traditional skills and some healthy habit of cooking also increased.

In two groups in Ramechhap district, the LIBIRD direct implementation has been oriented rather to technical performance and market access. Both the groups have been equipped with technical knowledge, developing market oriented interests due to having access to a regular weekly local marketplace. One of these groups has been registered in the village Palika as an agriculture group, whereas the other group seemed to be unaware about the potential benefits of being registered in the Palika. Both these groups seemed to be rather dominated by men, even if men make a small number as group members. There is serious need to orient such groups on women's leadership role in home gardening since they are the primary users of the home garden related resources and services.

The CapEx reflection points out to one critical observation on the part of adoption of right based approach by DAG and women farmers in Home garden approach. Despite involving very credible Right Based NGOs, there is no evidence of critical sharing among all NGOs on underlying issues (smallholders' marginalization, gender and exclusion regarding access to services, productive resources). Thus, the NGOs miss to create policy guidance, and DAG, women and Dalits risk to remain excluded.

The role of private stakeholders, such as AgroVet, is rather marginal in the domain of HG. There is a small role in seed supply; but the "last mile" in seed supply is either organized by DADO office, NGOs or on private initiative of the local farmers' and women's groups.

#### 6.4.2 Conclusions for CapEx: Good practices, lessons learnt

The government reform with Palikas as new entity with big decision power changes the context for implementation modalities completely. New implementation modalities need to be developed in an intensive interaction between projects and Palikas. Central Government services at federal and State level will have to discover a new role and new cooperation modes with the Palikas and non-government actors. A first grid might help to establish an inventory of roles and functions in order to negotiate among stakeholders about who best can contribute what in future:

<b>Role, functions</b>	<b>Probable stakeholder</b>
Setting legal frame and rules	Government, MOAD
Law enforcement	State government, Palikas
Defining development priorities	Palikas
Financial authority	Palikas, MOF, MOAD, (Donors)
Implementing HG programmes	Palikas, technical Palika staff, local NGOs
Technical support	National NGOs, State agricultural staff
Input supply	Palika staff, NGOs, cooperatives, private business
Marketing	Farmers, cooperatives, traders, private business
Coordination	State government, national NGOs, Palikas
Service demand, claiming rights	Local stakeholder groups, cooperatives, NGOs, farmers' association

A pluralistic approach might be the most appropriate solution for the future. Each actor can contribute in the domains where s/he has own best strengths. A good coordination among stakeholders will be demanding and needs to be assured by different entities at different levels.

The technical and social support, in the context of HGP so far provided by the PSU, and in the context of the Government administrated areas by DADO and DLSO need to be conceived in a new way at State level. We suggest – as an alternative to heavy government services – mandates given to well-qualified national NGOs comprising documentation, training, networking and organizational development. These NGOs would work at State level in close contact with the State Government offices, in cooperation with research, professional farmers' associations, private service providers, media, donors, and other NGOs. Thus, each State would be able to address the regional challenges and support the Palikas and their technical staff in an adequate manner.

HGP PSU has developed suitable procedures on how to support local field staff with regional training and monitoring approaches. This experience can be translated into the new Palika settings. This issue can be taken up best in the context of the NASDP and SIP (SDC funded projects) and in many other projects beyond SDC.

## 6.5 Institutional development (beneficiary level and partner organizations)

### 6.5.1 Review results: Facts, extracts of reports, observations

Institutional development can mainly be observed at local level with beneficiaries (women groups) and local NGOs. At the level of DADO office no major change due to HG activities can be observed. The biggest changes however are just to start: The newly installed Palikas will necessitate major institutional developments, internally with all the technical committees of the Palikas, as well as with the integration of the technical staff into the new Palika structure. And a support structure at State level needs to be defined as described in the previous chapter.

Up to now, at the national and district level LI-BIRD and DADO are main implementing partners of the home garden project. Accordingly the fund flow follows this implementing set-up. LI-BIRD engages two/three other national NGOs – SAHAS and RIMS. While LI-BIRD further implements the project in the field, SAHAS partners with the local NGO CDAFN and RIMS with YAC. DADO implements through the extension services at the VDCs. Future adaptations to the changing context (Palikas instead of districts) will need to be made.

To develop the capacities of the implementing partners, LI-BIRD organizes training for local NGO staff twice a year in the respective regions and furnishes training material. HG trainings are also offered to other NGOs on request (3-6 per year).

The capacity building follows the cascading approach to maximise the reach and coverage. LI-BIRD trains the staffs (TAs) of local NGOs who train the local resource persons (LRP) and who in turn train the members of the HG groups. The training contents include also sessions to inform farmers about their rights. Technical Government staffs are invited to explain their services. 70-80% of local resource persons seem to be capable to convey the training contents conveniently to the groups.

CDAFN, implementing partner of SAHAS, works towards achieving the objectives of home garden project to support family nutrition of the DAG households, livelihood improvement (vegetables/livestock), women empowerment and social harmony. CDAFN used to working on disaster risk reduction, water shed management improvement. Its activities benefit from HGP: CDAFN finds HG useful as entry to engage in livelihood activities and uses HG in other projects that the NGO is implementing.

**Institution of Home Garden Groups:** Identification of poor communities is done by the DADO with suggestions from Local Development Officers using HDI indicators based on the existing village Development Committee Profiles. Further groups were formed respecting SDC's inclusion guidelines to include women and DAG groups in all groups except where there is a strong homogenous community. The HG project has heavily focused on women, particularly on women from the economically poor groups. Women are encouraged to participate as executive members of the groups.

The HG groups with saving and credit integrated into the HG groups are managed by an executive committee. The facilitators and LRP (usually members of the groups) provide backstopping support to the HG groups.

80% of HG groups at village level have been created in the frame of the project and 20% already existed with purposes other than HG. Most often groups are formed with the strong belief to get easier access to external support (donor and Government driven building of groups). HG groups expect subsidies more than advice; however, they are open for advice.

**Role and Inclusion of Women and DAGs in CBOs:** The HG Project constantly made efforts to promote gender equality and social inclusion values through two major strategic interventions,

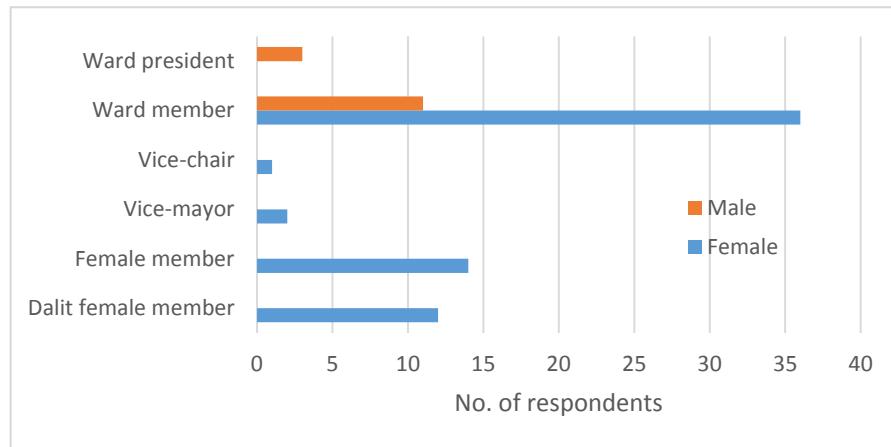
e.g., staff recruitment for providing technical and social backstopping services ensuring 50% of man and woman staff, formation of farmers groups ensuring maximum number of women participants, including promoting representation of women from disadvantaged groups and Dalits in key positions of farmers groups, as per feasibility. This approach led into empowering HG women members towards local election held in 2074 BS (2017-18), which is confirmed by a recent study given below undertaken internally by SDC/LIBIRD.

Table 1: Inclusion of HG members in the local election:

Caste/Ethnicity	Candidacy in local election %			Elected HG members in local election %		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
BCTN	16.2 (32)	27.3 (9)	17.7 (41)	9.2 (6)	42.9 (6)	15.2 (12)
Dalit	51.5 (102)	27.3 (9)	48.1 (111)	50.8 (33)	28.6 (4)	46.8 (37)
Janajati	26.3 (52)	30.3 (10)	26.8 (62)	33.8 (22)	14.3 (2)	30.4 (24)
Others	6.1 (12)	15.2 (5)	7.4 (17)	6.2 (4)	14.3 (2)	7.6 (6)
Table Total	85.7 (198)	14.3 (33)	100 (231)	82.3 (65)	17.7 (14)	100 (79)

Out of 231 HG member candidacy, 79 were elected in the local election, where about 82 percent were female. The majority of the female were from Dalit (50.8%) followed by Janajati female (33.8%). It can be said that female from Dalit community got more empowered being in the group, especially those that proved natural leadership qualities. Now they can table their agendas on the assembly and be a part of the decision making.

Figure presenting the number of elected HG members by position and sex:



The position-wise elected HG members were also analysed. Figure 1 shows that majority of the female were elected in ward member. Female members were only succeeded in two positions in vice mayor and one position in vice-chair. It seems that there is still lack of female participation in the main decision making position. This result also supported by the result of the local election 2074 BS. Out of the total 293 mayor position, only 6 were elected from the Dalits and out of 460 chairpersons' position Dalit got only 4 positions. (SDC/LIBIRD: Home Garden members' participation in local election, 2074)

**Experiences of Home Garden Groups:** Based on her day to day experiences from community interaction, Benju, a LI-BIRD field officer, emphasized that in cases of a woman's underestimation, they must be empowered to be capable to talk for herself; "Empower women by fostering their independence and autonomy, though not in opposition against men, rather fostering self-consciousness (my actions, my results, my merit)". Benju herself faces behavioural discrimination against her as a female officer which in some way she has been handling tactfully, which has been a valuable real life experience for her. She would never ever have imagined the way the villagers (mostly men) would underestimate a woman senior officer in the presence of a male junior technician. She claimed that the project policy to employ women officers for district is in itself a very good practice whereby they establish role models of gender transformative roles.

In the eastern districts, the HG groups composed of women from different caste/ethnicities have strong impact in reducing such forms of discrimination. Women in some mixed groups expressed sense of empowerment – being able to adopt new technologies, such as poly tunnel and plastic pond; having increased access to year round green vegetables and earning nearly NPR 10,000/year (Gyanumaya Buthathoki, woman farmer) by selling home garden products in the nearby market.

In women only groups, a majority of them have demonstrated high capability of women in leadership positions built around the HG programme. Many such women have been now elected as gaon Palika members, where men also supported their representation.

Women as individual and as group

- Decide on making multiple use of the smallest plot of land (1.5 kattha to 2.5 katthas)
- Explain the technical and nutritional outcome of HG through knowledge and skills gained
- Take role of “marketing agent” for own group production by a dalit woman
- Negotiate and execute land lease agreement with private land owners to access to land for HG
- Register the HG groups with gaon/town Palikas to access gaon/town Palikas fund (e.g. allocation of NPR 50,000/per ward in Bhangaha Nagar Palika)
- Influence ward and Palika budget and planning to support in irrigation (pond) for agriculture
- Stand for election; HG member women and men are elected as ward and gaon/town Palika members
- Remove the veils that are traditionally worn by women
- Establish networks with micro finance institutions, district health office and women development office with support from Community Development and Advocacy Forum Network (CDAFN).

The project policy ensures inclusion and women's involvement leadership roles in groups. However men were found to be more vocal and taking leadership in two mixed groups (e.g. Majuwa group). In one instance the role of Chairperson held by a woman was replaced by a man during the process of formally registering the group in the newly established gaon Palika. Without full knowledge of the group dynamics it can be seen as a power struggle between man and woman when it comes to making a formal representation by the informal groups that was functional for home gardening activities as well as group saving activity.

The HG project's conscious and systematic efforts try to close gaps between castes and ethnicities. The efforts to include Dalits and other castes and ethnicities has to a certain extent succeeded in forming and maintaining heterogeneous groups. Yet some discrimination persists. A case in point - Ajaymeru HG group in Dadeldhura district had a Dalit woman member in the majority Chhetri community. The Dalit woman could not participate when the group started saving scheme since she could not save and this led to her exclusion. In the same community, the Dalit woman technical staff who provides services found herself barred from entering the houses of the Chhetri group. These issues were seldom discussed openly among the actors and thus remained suppressed during the project implementation period (3 years). Such harmful traditional practices can work as silent killer barriers for social inclusion.

Periodical assessment of working conditions and status of gender promotion as well as inclusion could inform systematically the programme managers to review and rework on the Theory of Change on the social aspects to enhance inclusive home garden programme.

Knowledge sharing among farmers is at minimal level within HG groups and almost non-existent between HG groups and other farmers. There is no evidence reported in LI-BIRD documents.

With the facilitating support of implementing NGOs, home groups have registered themselves with the Palikas. The Palikas from their sides sent the JTAs and TAs, collected demand lists and managed to get fund (around NPR 50'000 per group) allocated for HG groups.

The CDAFN (NGO) believes that 75% of the total 144 groups they supported for home garden project in Dhanusha and Mahottari, will be able to sustain through networking with the service agencies, whereas the remaining 25% of the groups might need some more support, at least

for one more year. The NGO has integrated HG approach as a movement for improving household food security and nutrition in all other programmes implemented by it.

The feminization of agriculture and increasing work burden for single women is a crucial concern for some. "I have to continuously till the land to grow one crop after another in the home garden. This causes severe pain on my knees and increases pain on my backbone". The participant adds, "Women are paid NPR 600 and men NPR 1000 per day; this inequality in the agricultural wage system for men and women is injustice". Since some women like her has to labour for wage near the village, adopting and practicing home garden is an opportunity to work in one's own garden and escape injustice of inequality of labour wage for men and women.

**Future of Home garden:** So far the project provided the seed varieties and fruit sapling species and other inputs supplies. Now the farmers have to manage all such inputs on their own. The farmers have stored their own seeds but still they need seeds and inputs from district agriculture development office. While HG groups have been registered with Palikas and receive some fund support, they are yet to realise the need for plans to ask for long term support from the Palikas for future sustainability. So some issues still remain such as: Who (women, men, project staff) decides over which seed variety and what fruit species? How could they maintain networking with other agencies for sustained access to technical services for home garden?

Answer to the question where to get services after the project:

"We have learnt how to produce new species; we will produce seed ourselves or buy it. We know, where to buy them."

**Positioning HG programme in the Palikas:** The experiences so far show that the Palikas are willing to take on board the support to home garden. The Palikas accepted the registration of HG groups in the Palikas, with support from JT/JTAs collected demands for support to home gardens and allocated fund to support home gardens. Next steps can be requests to the Palikas for technical support required for home gardens; Palikas then can organize technical government staffs.

Palika in Mahottari applies a participative approach in decision making (community meetings in each Ward). Palika chair and vice chair plan a tour through all Wards with technical staff posted at Palika level (education, health, agriculture, irrigation ...) to discuss challenges and programmes.

### 6.5.2 Conclusions for CapEx: Good practices, lessons learnt

Home garden has (1) empowered women through participation in group discussions, (2) developed technical knowledge and skills through access to training, (3) reduced dependency on market for vegetables through easy access to varieties of food available in the home garden, and (4) created opportunities to develop leadership skills and be part of the executive committees with options to participate in elections to the Palikas.

Targeting DAG households has been into practice effectively by the applied selection process. This is a first step to applying GESI principles and to promote a rights based approach.

CapEX can further contribute to strengthening HG programmes of Palikas by

- Establishing guidelines to provide the services required for home gardens
- Publish manuals/guidelines to potential service providers to implement HG programme
- Coordination of line services (agriculture, livestock, health/nutrition) → encourage, influence, support sectorial committees of Palikas.

Asked for how to get technical support in future, one field technician answered: "In these times of globalization of information, I trust to find relevant information on the internet. I will use my mobile phone – or I will call friends who are expert in this domain."

There are many trainings offered by Government and project to farmers. In order to attract them, training allowances are paid with the side effect, that participating in a training becomes a profession (earning more income than with field activity).

Most important learnings of TA during their work for HGP:

- Differences in the farming systems of different families
- Local HG techniques (mulching, seed conservation, ...)
- Social change in villages
- Organic plant protection as alternative to spraying chemicals
- How to coach a saving and credit group
- Promote composite HG kit → contacting and cooperating with local AgroVet staff
- "It is not a question of discussion in meetings; it is a question of understanding in the field."

## 6.6 Impact of migration on HG

### 6.6.1 Review results: Facts, extracts of reports, observations

49% of income in Nepal originates from remittances. 3 mio people are working abroad, not including seasonal workers in India.

HGP had a migration and climate resilient effect due to strengthening social cohesion and diversifying seed pool.

Under a feminized context of agriculture, around 80% of the visited HG farmers are under male migration; women face hardship of meeting the shortage of agricultural labour to meet the demand for land preparation and management of surface irrigation. Some of the households leave their land fallow whereas some do hire labour to help preparing the land and managing pond construction for irrigation. Some women also face hardship to take production to market in the absence of male members, which is gradually being handled by one focal person within the group to take the role of a marketing agent.

Usually women are formed into saving groups, where they discuss about their problems, thereby planning for mutually assisted labour sharing in traditional way of sharing labour (parma system).

On the other hand, women also expressed some interesting experience of being solely responsible for household and other resource management. They expressed that "the rural women are already overburdened by triple roles of responsibilities, thus adding their role into home gardening has increased their work burden. However the project provisions of necessary inputs, such as, water can for irrigation, poly tunnel (plastic panels), corn sheller, etc. have eased their work burden and encouraged them to undertake the adoption processes of all new technologies taught by technicians.

Another interesting experience of the women has been that they rather feel more independent to decide over their participation, leadership and networking as the sole responsible person for home garden adoption.

### 6.6.2 Conclusions for CapEx: Good practices, lessons learnt

Women are the stable group in villages taking responsibility for their household. Therefore, projects should focus their HG interventions on women's groups.

## 7 Recommendations

### 7.1 Recommendations regarding Home Garden Approach

**Promote HG approach.** The HG is considered to be an effective entry point into livelihood programmes; fast changes are visible, especially in the context of small scale farmers, women headed and DAG households. An economic benefit results by saving expenditures for vegetables and by selling extra (surplus) products. The HG approach can successfully be integrated in projects with a focus in agriculture, irrigation, extension, nutrition and health. Focus on small farming households and their self-sufficiency in food production; accordingly do not over-estimate the potential of sales of surplus.

**Maintain an integrated farming systems perspective.** Family farms are very different, not only in size, but also in location, food habits, etc. HG deploys best effects, if it is well connected to nutrition and integrating agriculture, irrigation and small livestock. Consider small grants as part of HG (e.g. for small irrigation) and marketing links.

**Initiate saving schemes in groups to strengthen sustainability.** Saving and credit schemes in a group gives members a good reason to meet regularly and to share issues of concern. This contributes to the sustainable functioning of HG groups. Consider small grants and matching funds to foster this effect.

**Support Palikas.** Perceive Palikas as an opportunity and influence, coach and support them, even if they seem to start initially spending all their money for infrastructure. Go on convincing them to invest money in livelihood and nutrition. Refer to existing rules on how to use allocated budgets at Palika level.

**Contribute to a support structure for Palikas at State level.** Beyond the immediate support to Palikas within existing channels, contribute to a support structure for Palikas at State level. Build on experience of implementation modalities made within HGP and adapt it to new socio-political context. Consider designing a multi-stakeholder approach in the sense of a pluralistic agriculture service delivery system integrating aspects of nutrition and health. This recommendation is especially valid for NASDP. Refer to the conclusions in chapter 6.4.2 (Implementation modalities, conclusions), and to the various functional diagrams in the project document of NASDP.

**Support field level staff with well-designed HG support material.** Revise the HG manual for TA/JTA (in Nepali); integrate pictorial presentation on inter-connectivity of HG, nutrition, and income; include content on gender and social inclusion. Facilitate accessibility to information: Print this useful manual in big numbers and distribute them; consider creating a website or an application for mobile phone about HG topics in Nepali language for TA/JTA.

**Facilitate access to fallow land.** Appraise urgent needs for access to land. Inform village groups about their rights and facilitate negotiations between local government and village groups.

### 7.2 Recommendations regarding CapEx follow-up steps

#### 7.2.1 Experience documentation and sharing during project period

**Make learning an institutional agenda.** Identify learnings regularly (annually, at the end of each project phase). Make best use of learnings from precedent years or project phases for the following period. Install a system of reporting cum management response (wherever this is not yet existing) to link operational with strategic level.

**Foster documentation and knowledge sharing.** Identify core topics (hot spots) for experience documentation regularly (e.g. yearly) and plan time for concrete documentation of good practices and lessons learnt by concerned stakeholders during project implementation, not only at the project end. Be clear what for and whom for you are documenting experience; think of all

possible stakeholders and their needs for information. Focus on questions like “How? What for? Whom for? With whom?” Accordingly design the most appropriate (attractive) form of experience documentation. Cooperate with journalists, PR specialists, and mass media.

**Share live experience and documented experience.** At least annually, invite staff of own organization and thematically related projects for experience sharing events. Share documented experience actively!

**Consider establishment of thematic multi-stakeholder platforms.** Many countries have installed multi-stakeholder thematic platforms as a key of thematic knowledge management. In such platforms, representatives of administration, research, extension, input supply, production, and marketing meet regularly to develop policy guidelines, recommend research-development priorities, and suggest support programmes.

**Plan experience capitalization as part of the strategic process (SDC):** Appraise the strategic relevance of the project experience in view of the future application in new contexts and decide for experience capitalization in time. Cross-check with future users about their interest in and purpose for an experience capitalization. Decide jointly about the most suitable approach. Involve relevant stakeholders (experience bearers) actively in key moments of CapEx during ongoing project period (as long as staff is under contract!). Include other donors' experience in a capitalization process!

## 7.2.2 CapEx follow-up

The review revealed a lack of well documented experience at the end of the project. To fill this gap in the remaining project duration (phasing out period from April till July 2018) or in a follow-up period, we suggest to document relevant experience.

Possible thematic orientations for experience documentation are:

- HG and nutrition (incl. monitoring at HH level)
- HG and empowerment (incl. approaches to targeting small scale farmers, disadvantaged people, women; and identifying their needs)
- HG as an extension topic (different solutions for different farming systems, in rural and peri-urban areas)
- HG and irrigation
- HG and livestock (with focus on chicken)
- HG and seed bank of local vegetable (conserving genetic resources on farm), cooperation with research
- HG implementation within new Palika structure by a multi-stakeholder network: Based on available experience, suggest a model for the future: Role of Palikas, NGOs, CBOs, farmers and women groups, private enterprises (such as AgroVet, private seed producers, ...), Government
- HG guidelines for implementation and monitoring of results, incl. long term effects of HGP
- HG and sustainability: Which forms of self-organization of HG practitioners and village groups worked well?

A few principles might increase the effectiveness of the concrete experience documentation:

- Link with experiences made in other projects “Vegetables go to School” (SDC/NARC), Suaahara (US aid)
- Document in Nepali language for TA, JTA, farmers (women and men)
- Organize story-telling and story-writing competition among field staff to collect good practices and lessons learnt
- Engage journalists for documentation and mass media for dissemination.

With reference to SDC's concept paper on HG, and referring to the learning agenda of other stakeholders (MOAD, LI-BIRD, NASDP ...) following steps in pursuing CapEx should be envisaged:

1. Identify potential future users of the CapEx, i.e. field level HG staff, Palika elected members, partner organizations implementing HG projects, SDC projects with HG component (NASDP, SIP), MOAD representatives, donors
2. Define needs and interests in CapEx by the different users (handpicked contacts)
3. In cooperation with LI-BIRD, prioritize topics to be documented, decide on form of documentation
4. Identify with LI-BIRD the staff being able and having time for contributing to the different documentations
5. Document experience choosing appropriate methods (writing, interviews, storytelling, image book, video, ...); cooperate with journalists or PR specialists
6. Invite partner organizations for amendments, proofreading, feedback and corrections; proofreading should be done also by future users, e.g. field staff
7. Assure professional editing
8. Capitalize experiences of HGP jointly with implementing organizations, other donors, and Ministries (representatives at federal and State level).

### 7.3 Further recommendations to SDC

SDC intends to share experience with its thematic network Agriculture and Food Security (AFS) by drafting so called "factsheets". Two topics are planned at present:

- How Home Garden Project has contributed toward the socio-political Empowerment of Women and disadvantaged groups
- How Home Garden can contribute to promote self-sustainable local genetic resource base, specifically local land races.

Two cross-cutting issues would be included in these two topics: (1) How to sensitize the relevant actors to promote and practice Home Garden, and (2) Why Home Garden is important.

In the view of sharing experience from HGP Nepal, interesting topics for the AFS community might also be:

- Targeting the poor: Selection process of beneficiaries (women, DAG): Criteria, application, experience, lessons
- GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) / RBA (Rights Based Approach) in practical application: Principles, procedures and effects
- Implementation modalities (farmers' groups, role of DADOs, NGOs, PCU, Support Unit); implementation mode (strengths and weaknesses of each approach)
- Cascade model in training efforts from PSU to trainers to field staff to LRP (Local Resource Person) as core contact person to farmers' groups
- Coordination of line services (agriculture, livestock, health/nutrition) within decentralized Palika structure, and role of sectorial committees of Palikas
- Diversification of crops and use for family nutrition.

A second specific recommendation comes from LI-BIRD PSU to SDC, referring to the tender and contract of phase IV: "Define expected outcomes and outputs, budget frame and frame conditions; but please refrain from defining too many operational and budget details."

## 8 Annexes

1. Concept Paper / ToR
2. SDC Knowledge Management Toolkit: Experience Capitalization
3. SDC Knowledge Management Toolkit: Experience Documentation
4. List of consulted documents
5. Interview Guidelines
6. Mission programme
7. List of interview partners
8. Workshop – presentation of results
9. Minutes of stakeholder workshop