



Newsletter

of the Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal

September 2017



Dear readers,

It gives me pleasure to welcome you all to the 20th issue of the Newsletter of the Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal from Ekantakuna. For more than two years the Embassy was temporarily based at Man Bhawan after the 2015 earthquakes. The old charming 'Swiss House' in Ekantakuna that had Swiss Presence for more than 60 years was seriously damaged by the earthquakes. And now we are back!

In August, Nepal experienced heavy rainfall that resulted in widespread flooding across 35 districts of the country. The Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal, through SDC Humanitarian Aid has made efforts to extend its support to the affected households.

Among other news, in this issue we have also highlighted the 'Financial Literacy Class' an initiative by Swiss funded Safer Migration (SaMi) Project to empower women members, focusing mainly on women members and particularly wives of migrants.

I hope you will enjoy the read.

Mandakini KC
Communication and Knowledge Management Officer

Support to those in need

In August, several districts in Nepal recorded the heaviest rainfall in 60 years, and over 80 percent of land in the southern Terai region was flooded. The Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal, through SDC Humanitarian Aid, provided emergency support to the victims of the floods.

The Embassy provided CHF 20'000 to an initiative by the local radio station Janaki FM of Janakpur that handed food packages to 500 Dalit families in Dhanusha & Mahottari Districts of Province 2. Similarly, Embassy contributed CHF 50'000 to Handicap International to provide Non Food Items (NFI) Kits and in-kind support to people with disabilities; pregnant and lactating women; ill and elderly, in Banke and Dang district of Province 5. The kit included items that would help them to cover their basic essential needs of shelter, food, and clean drinking water among others. The Embassy has also joined hands with Terre des Hommes (TdH) and agreed to provide CHF 40'000 to improve access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health and Child Protection needs of flood affected children and communities in Bardiya district. This collaboration will also include support to the local government to be able to identify local hazards and to prepare themselves to address related challenges.

In addition, Switzerland has also decided to contribute CHF 50'000, through SaMi project, to support 225 flood affected households in Sunsari and Saptari districts (Provinces 1&2) to sustain their supplies for at least two months.

Empowered Bhumika



Bhumika Shahi is 27 years old and lives in Kailali district with six family members including her in-laws, husband, son and daughter. Her husband currently works in Dubai. Before that, he worked in Saudi Arabia for three years.

Bhumika first attended the financial literacy class in 2016. The financial literacy classes in Kailali district are organised by partners of SaMi Project.

The 'financial literacy package' covers contents such as poverty and ways to get out of it, participation and shared decision making in family, making financial goals and family budget, maintaining record of income and expenditure, reducing unnecessary expenses and improving savings, involvement in income generating activities, use of formal financial institutions, and insurance, etc.

After attending the classes, Bhumika understood why her husband had to keep going abroad for work, and how she could help him by engaging herself in income generating activities back home. She was able to distinguish between necessity and luxury. She also started to save money in two Saving Groups.

SaMi Project started financial literacy component in 2014 targeting the remittance receiving households, focusing mainly on women members and particularly wives of the migrants. This initiative was taken to empower women members to make rational decisions related to financial management, to make them realise how they can best use remittances and to reduce family tension linked with management of remittance.



Bhumika wanted to work from home for an income. With the consent of her family, she decided to make use of the two *kattha* land (0.067 hectare) owned by her family that lay vacant. She started fish-farming. High demand for fish in the district led her to start the fish farm. At present she estimates that there are more than a 1000 fishes in her pond. She plans to expand her buffalo and goat business too. When her husband comes home this time, Bhumika believes that he will not go abroad and join her in expanding their business.

(A case story compiled by Laxmi Shah –Financial Literacy Facilitator, SaMi Project)

Longest trail bridges

In July this year, the 'longest' hanging pedestrian bridge was opened in Zermatt, Switzerland. Nearly 500 metres(m) long bridge for hikers is billed as the longest hanging pedestrian bridge in the world. The 494m bridge, named the Europabrücke (Europe Bridge), hangs up to 85m above the Grabengufer ravine.



Detailed news available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40764453>

Switzerland's support to build trail bridges in Nepal dates back to more than four decades and is acknowledged by the Government of Nepal and other stakeholders. Till date, around 7000+ trail bridges have been built in Nepal with the technical assistance of the Swiss Government through Trail Bridge Sub-Sector programme, implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. Among many trail bridges in Nepal, the longest single span trail bridge is the one constructed in Ghatghaon of Surkhet district. It is 355m long. SDC, through Trail Bridge Support Unit, rehabilitated the bridge after it was damaged by the floods in 2014. Nevertheless, the Dodhara Chandni Bridge, a multiple span trail bridge that stands over Mahakali River in the far west, is the longest trail bridge in Nepal. It is 1400m plus in length with each span of not more than 225m, supported by piers in between.



Ghatghaon Bridge in Surkhet



Dodhara Chandni Bridge over Mahakali river

Celebrating Swiss National Day 2017

The Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal organised a reception dinner for the Swiss colony in Nepal to celebrate the Swiss National Day on the 1st August 2017. The invitees gathered at the residence of the Ambassador which was decorated in true Swiss style and relished appetizing food prepared by the GATE College.

The sixth edition of 'Meeteri', an annual magazine of the Nepali Swiss Friendship Society, was also launched jointly by Ambassador Jörg Frieden and Mr. Khem Lakai, President, Nepali Swiss Friendship Society.



Announcements

- **Jazzmandu 2017**

Swiss Band – 'NepaMali' will be performing at Jazzmandu 2017. The Jazzmandu 2017 is scheduled to jazz up Kathmandu from 12 to 18th October at different venues.

Weblinks

[Embassy Kathmandu](#)
[Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation](#)
[SDC Nepal](#)
<http://www.swissworld.org>

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