



Newsletter

of the Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal

June 2017



Dear readers,

I am happy to share with you the 19th issue of the Newsletter of the Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal.

This issue of the Newsletter highlights the activities we undertake to enrich the bilateral relationship between the two countries. It covers activities related to Switzerland's commitment towards poverty reduction in Nepal and its support to the disadvantaged groups to avail for better access to basic goods and services. We have highlighted for you in this issue Switzerland's commitment to address the issue of exclusion and inequality, its support to promote innovation skills, work done by Swiss company Trunz Water Systems AG in Nepal, and other events.

On 1st of August this year, the Swiss Embassy in Nepal will enter ninth year since its establishment. I hope you will enjoy the read and look forward to seeing you on the 1st of August.

Mandakini KC
Communication and Knowledge Management Officer

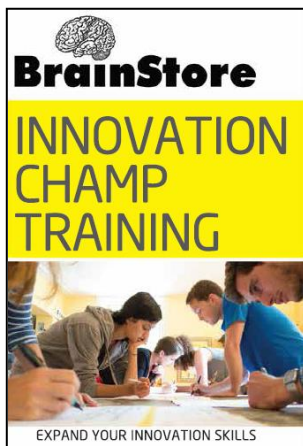
The rebound

Persons with disabilities still face multiple barriers to achieve their full and equal participation in development. They are excluded from many opportunities. The Basketball League for wheelchair-users in Nepal fulfils different purposes in this regard. It creates an opportunity for young people with disabilities to engage in sport and play in teams. It also raises awareness of the rights of people with disabilities among the society.

The Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal, together with the Turkish Airlines, supported the second edition of premier wheelchair basketball competition - ENGAGE Empowering League 2017 from 27th May to 1st July 2017. This support is part for Switzerland's commitment to address issues of exclusion and inequality.



The final of the League will take place on 1st July 2017 from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm at National Army Training Center in Lagankhel. For more information, log on to:
www.facebook.com/engagenepal or www.engage.org.np.



Promoting Innovation Skills

A two-day hands-on innovation workshop was organised by the Growth Leadership Academy (GLA), from 23 to 24 June 2017 to learn a set of robust, replicable and scalable innovation tools. The main objective of the workshop was to enhance innovation skills, to understand the key factors of successful innovation work and to create great ideas at the push of a button. The training was conducted by Swiss innovation experts, Mr. Markus Mettler and Ms. Milena Rutz from BrainStore.

The Swiss Embassy funded the workshop, partially, and provided subsidy on fee to 15 high potential women and members from disadvantaged groups.

Log on to www.brainstore.com to know more about BrainStore.

The helpful Nexus

Despite Nepal's notable socioeconomic progress in the past years, a large part of the population do not have the access to availability of quality drinking water sources due to inadequate waste-water management and arsenic contamination from natural and anthropogenic sources. Especially Terai, the Southern belt of Nepal, is affected by a high concentration of bacteria and arsenic in groundwater sources. The country struggles to overcome these challenges and needed innovative, market-based solutions to provide reliable access to basic infrastructure services.

REPIC project "Nexus Center Nepal" led by WECONNEX AG, a spin-off from the Swiss company Trunz Water Systems AG, completed in April 2017. The NEXUS Concept was developed in 2014 which is an entrepreneurial center that sells clean drinking water and offers business premises for local businesses. The first NEXUS Centers are in operation in Chitwan and Nawalparasi districts, serving a customer potential of 24'000 beneficiaries daily. The full business plan is targeting 100 NEXUS Centers alone in Nepal serving 400'000 people.



The Nexus Centers currently in operation in Nepal

The Final Report "NEXUS Center Nepal" is available at www.repic.ch.

REPIC, a Swiss Interdepartmental Platform for Renewable Energy, Energy- and Resource Efficiency Promotion in International Cooperation is supported by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE).

Vital trail bridges

In Nepal, trail bridges are vital for rural mobility. During the earthquakes of 2015, almost 80 of them were severely damaged or destroyed making it difficult for thousands of inhabitants in the mountainous regions to reach to basic services such as education, health services and local markets.



Image source: Trail Bridge Support Unit

“Before the earthquakes around 80 people used to cross the Rampate Amare trail bridge in Sindhupalchowk district every day”, Iswari Prasad Dulal (63 years) explains. The inhabitants were forced to find other means after the disaster. “You can imagine how difficult it was for people to cross the river. You had to take a detour of up to one hour and during the monsoon, the rains later made it even more difficult.”

The Government of Nepal prioritised the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the damaged trail bridges in light of the importance of rural infrastructure for rebuilding livelihoods. It made an appeal to the Swiss Government for material and technical support, basing later’s intervention on the long-standing expertise it has in Nepal. The SDC responded positively by providing materials such as cables, bulldog grips, steel parts, amounting to CHF 1 million, while the Nepali Government funded construction processes. Technical assistance for the survey, design, construction supervision and reporting was provided as well by SDC through Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. The support of the SDC came in addition to a contribution nearing CHF 11 million already committed for the period 2014-2019 to help the Nepal Government and other partners in the construction and repair of trail bridges.

By the end of 2015, the majority of detailed bridge reports were prepared, allowing for the reconstruction work to start. ‘User committees’ undertook and managed the reconstruction work. In that way the local communities were fully involved. They were supported on technical and social aspects by local NGOs, technical officers at district level and staff of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation.

In the course of the year 2016, 62 bridges were repaired and rebuilt and another 10 by April 2017 (two years after the earthquakes). The remaining seven damaged bridges will be rehabilitated by July 2017.

“We were all eager to finish it as soon as possible as our lives were totally disrupted”. Sanu Maya Tamang (52 years) was a member of a ‘user committee’ that was established to reconstruct the Jhangrali 100 metre-long trail bridge in Dolakha district. Her family has now rebuilt their house and a shop. “I did not even think about rebuilding before the bridge was built. How could I have transported the materials? Now things are slowly getting back to normal.”

(Taken from: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/activities-projects/projekte-fokus/Project-database.filterResults.html/projects/SDC/en/2001/7F01702/phase4.html>)

Joy of being a semi-skilled worker

“It was difficult to find a regular job in Dang, so we moved to Kapilvastu district, few years ago. Here, I decided to work as a construction labour in roads, houses etc., to support my husband”, says Sita as she takes off her safety helmet and wipes her face.

Sita B.K and her family moved to Kapilvastu district from Dang in the West of Nepal in 2009 in search of employment. Working as a blacksmith, Sita’s husband’s income was insufficient to meet daily needs for a family of five people.

In 2013, Sita came to know about Swiss project that was constructing motorable bridge, near where she lived, in Kapilvastu. She went to meet people from the programme at then’s Kapilvastau District Development Committee (DDC) and showed her interest to be part of the construction of the bridge. During her discussion with the staff at the DDC, she found that the programme also offered a training “Gabion Box Weaving and Gabion Box Filling” at the bridge construction site. She actively took part in the 15 days long training and learned skill of gabion box weaving and gabion box filling work.



“I came to know the training type and its benefit in getting the employment in construction business and I decided to take part in the training”, said Sita.

Local Roads Bridge Programme (LRBP), started in the year 2011 to construct motorable bridges across the country to make local roads operable in all-weather. The programme provides technical support to the Government of Nepal to build the bridges in correct ways and ensure fair employment opportunities to local people. The programme has a mandatory provision to employ at least 60% of people from socially and economically discriminated groups in the bridge construction works, out of which at least 25% have to be women. It also provides different types of certified and non-certified training to potential women on construction works so that women also earn more as skilled or semi-skilled workers.



“Just as a labour I used to only earn Rs.400 per day in this bridge. After the training, I got the gabion box weaving work and earned Rs.600 per day. I never thought that I would be able to work as semi-skilled worker in the construction business by getting only 15 days training. Thanks to LRBP, the training not only gave me skills, but helped me to build my confidence to work in construction related work and earn more money.”
Now Sita’s husband also joins her in construction field and together they earn more than Rs. 20,000 in a month. “The additional income has helped me to pay my children’s school fees and to live an easy life in our own village”, says Sita taking pride.

LRBP is being technically supported by Swiss Embassy/SDC through a Swiss Consulting Firm AF- Iteco AG.

Announcements

- **List of Swiss International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) in Nepal**

The list of Swiss INGOs active in Nepal is now available in the Embassy's website - <https://www.fdfa.admin.ch/countries/nepal/en/home/international-cooperation/strategy.html>

If you wish to enlist your organisation in the list, please write to us at: kathmandu@eda.admin.ch

- **Are you applying for a Student visa to Switzerland?**

The list of documents that have to be submitted while applying for the student visa is now available online at: <https://www.fdfa.admin.ch/countries/nepal/en/home/visa/entry-ch/more-90-days/documents-national.html>

Weblinks

[Embassy Kathmandu](#)
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