



The project has adopted a holistic participatory approach of conservation and development linking climate change impacts with promotion of livelihood options such as infrastructure development, conservation of water sources and forests. Forest resources are recognised as the base for subsistence agro-livestock based livelihoods. These resources fulfill the demand of fodder, fuelwood, timber, thatch for roofing of houses and livestock sheds, and bedding materials for livestock which finally is converted into manure.

During the first year the community members supported the project with their remarkable contributions in each activity and took over the execution and management responsibilities. For the longer term sustainability of the project capacity of the communities will be developed in institutional development, organising, planning and implementation. Specifically for efficient implementation of the project activities following strategic measures have been adopted:

- Assess the impacts of climate change and focus project activities on the vulnerable areas and the populations.
- Identify potential livelihood options and support communities to diversify and strengthen them.
- Support communities and stakeholders at different levels to include climate change in their long-term development and sectoral planning.
- Ensure wider involvement of community and stakeholders both in planning and implementation.



Major Achievements

During the first year of the project following major outputs were achieved:

- Installed a simple meteorological station in the village to record weather data and monitor the climatic conditions of the area.
- Enhanced capacity of the community members on goat raising, slopping agricultural land technology (SALT), vegetable farming and animal health by providing skill development training, workshops and exposure tours.
- Enhanced level of awareness on community forest management, disaster preparedness, climate change and its impacts.
- Supports provided for increasing income, adopt sustainable farming technologies and diversify income sources of the community. Altogether eighty-five households received support for vegetable seeds, improved breeds of goats and fruit tree seedlings.
- Support and input provided to improve irrigation system and protect riverbank to mitigate the impacts of flood and utilise the scarce resources in a sustainable way.

Project activities are concentrated on the self-reliance of the community to diversify the income options along with the conservation and wise use of natural resources for their sustainability to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change. As per the need of the community future activities will emphasize on reducing the risk of flood and drought, and increasing community capacity to be prepared for prevention of disasters and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

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COPING WITH Changing Climate



Increasing Resilience of Poor Communities to Cope with the Impacts of Climate Change

Climate change is not just a threat but a reality now. People living in fragile environments are victimised by its adverse impacts such as floods, droughts and diseases. To help people increase their resilience towards and cope with such adversities, Practical Action Nepal, with financial support from Allachy Trust UK, is implementing a three year pilot project 'Increasing Resilience of Poor Communities to Cope with the Impacts of Climate Change' in Kabilash VDC of Chitawan district since October 2004.

The project covers the catchment area of Jugedi stream and its tributaries. There are six scattered settlements in the project area. Population of these six different settlements is about 1,100 from nine ethnic groups including the *Chepangs*¹. The area falls in the subtropical climatic zone and is rich in natural resources like forests and surface water. However, adverse climatic conditions such as droughts and floods have accosted lives and properties, and shrunk livelihood opportunities of the communities over the past years. For example, the flood of August 2003 cost massive lives and properties. Likewise, prolonged drought in 2005 hindered the plantation of major agricultural crop paddy. Occurrences of calamities like these are becoming more frequent in the recent years.

¹ *Chepangs are marginalised indigenous group, their livelihood is mainly based on forest resources.*

At present the major occupation and thus the source of income of people living in this catchment is agriculture followed by livestock raising. However, nearly 70 per cent of the households face food deficiency for more than six months and the remaining population has difficulty arranging a meal a day for more than 9 months in a year.



People now know that the local climate has changed over time, casting adverse impacts to their livelihoods – the culprits being erratic rainfall, prolonged drought, floods and invasive plants and pests. In spite of the realisation they are yet not aware of the actual reasons behind these vicious conditions, neither have the concerned organisations and agencies been able to come up with segregated and long-term meteorological data with which to educate them.



Objectives



The overall objective of the project is to increase resilience of communities to cope with the impact of climate change. The specific objectives are as follows:

- ➔ To establish community-based disaster preparedness plan for mitigation of, and adaptation to the impact of climate change
- ➔ To develop sustainable technologies for natural resource management, water conservation and agriculture
- ➔ To build capacity of community, institutions and stakeholders to cope with the impacts of climate change
- ➔ To influence policy at different levels to support and incorporate community based climate change adaptation measures through influences and sharing of learning from the project with the policy makers and through networking

