

## Result Oriented Leadership Development: A Challenge Project Approach

### Enhancing Livelihoods of Smallholder Farmers in Central Terai District of Nepal- ELIVES

Enhancing Livelihoods of Smallholder Farmers in Central Terai Districts of Nepal (ELIVES) project is a 3 year project funded by DFID and co-funded by ADRA UK and is implemented in four districts of Central Terai region (Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi and Mahottari) from April 2015. The ELIVES project combines key strengths of project partners - ADRA Nepal, iDE and FORWARD Nepal and district based partners (LNGO) to enhance livelihoods and income for poor and marginalized smallholder farmers with a focus on women and socially excluded groups in particular, Dalits, Janajati and Madhesi.

The project aims to bring tangible change in poor people's lives through interventions on goats, vegetables/lentil and market access/promotion. The project worked with 600 farmer groups comprising over 13,000 HHs. The project's work in developing local service providers and building market systems has ensured that the beneficiaries continue to get services and access to market and also benefitted the wider community. The end line survey revealed that skill enhancement in vegetable and goat production, coupled with increased access to services and markets increased annual income by £80 for 66.5% of beneficiaries.

amongst the local government and community-level stakeholders

The ELIVES project also included ROLDP to catalyze beneficiary-led local development process with the aim of enhancing community capacity in leadership, negotiation and coordination as well as their skills to identify needs, design and implement projects and seek technical and financial support from potential organizations to effectively and efficiently implement the project.

### Background

The Result Oriented Leadership Development (ROLDP) approach has been used by ADRA over past years which involves a series of training to improve the leadership and management skills of target beneficiaries. The approach is useful in developing capacities of local communities and civil society leaders in identifying and prioritizing needs, developing need-based projects (Challenge Projects), and their effective implementation in an inclusive manner. ROLDP has shown considerable promise as an approach to access local funds, mobilize available resources, and to increase ownership in community. ADRA Nepal has been successful in capacitating the district level government officials (duty bearers) and the communities (right holders) in addressing their local needs and priorities through effective mobilization of local resources, fund raising and project cycle management, while maintaining financial integrity and transparency. In addition, the promotion of bottom-up planning process through increased knowledge and skills on leadership and governance, helped to strengthen relationship and ownership



*1 Solar pump installed under challenge project*

## Process / Methodology of Activity Implementation

ADRA first starts with a training to selected participants from community groups on ROLDP process in order to make them capable of identifying and prioritizing needs and designing and implementing small-scale projects. The groups then design a project with coaching and mentoring from project staffs. Then ADRA provides the “Challenge Project Seed Fund” as a starter, which is followed by searching for additional resources by the groups in support of ADRA staff to make the fund bigger and work at a bigger scale than just the seed fund could have made possible. Finally, the group implements the project in close supervision of ADRA staff. The project is termed as a “challenge project” because communities take a challenge in completing the bigger project building on a small “seed fund” provided by the project. This process is illustrated below.

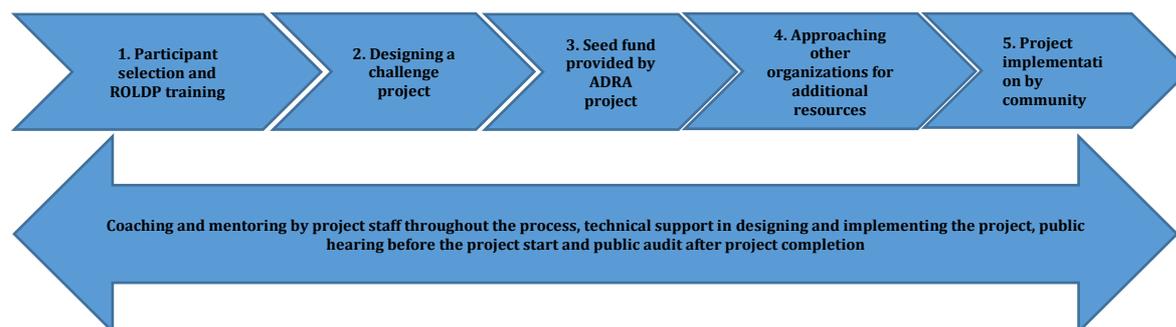


Figure 1. Flow diagram showing steps followed in implementing challenge project initiative

## Outcomes/Initial Impacts

### Catalyzing resource generation through a small seed fund

As saying goes ‘money attracts money’, this initiative has become highly successful in leveraging resources locally by putting small amount of seed fund. The challenge projects have been able to generate over 66 % of total project cost from stakeholders and community (Table 1). Major sources of resources include Village Development Committee’s block grant, other projects implemented by NGOs, community forestry user groups, District Agriculture Development Offices and District Livestock

**Table 1. Amount of resource generated and type of projects implemented by Challenge Project implementers**

Types of challenge project	# of challenge projects	Total cost (NPR)	ELIVES support	% of project support in total cost	# of HHs benefitted
Drinking water and sanitation	2	345,110	161,000	47	67
Collection center facility upgrading	1	161,500	75,000	46	106
Fodder and forage resource centre	3	417,500	168,950	40	74
Goat resource centre	7	1,547,900	389,000	25	61
Mineral block making enterprise	4	394,300	185,000	47	198
Model goat sheds in a farmer group	1	616,400	75,000	12	19
Plastic house and plastic mulching	4	479,990	248,930	52	43
Irrigation systems	57	6,876,825	2,347,894	34	1,107
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>10,839,525</b>	<b>3,650,774</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1,675</b>

Service Offices. Whereas, communities themselves make in-kind contribution in the form of labor. Notably, the projects developed under ROLDP approach have garnered attention of non-project

beneficiaries as well as other projects/organizations, including government organizations. In some cases, government organizations have committed additional funding to upgrade the facility after being impressed by communities' effort and successful completion of the projects.

### Need-based solution targeting right challenges

Since the local community members themselves conduct need assessment and design a project based on the pressing challenges they identify, there is a high chance of addressing the right challenges in right way. Until now 79 challenge funds have been supported by ADRA through different project and most of them are successful in targeting right problems. Most of them are allocated to implement the following activities: drinking water and sanitation, upgrading collection centers, establishing goat resource centers, mineral block making enterprises, model goat shed construction, plastic house, plastic mulching and small-scale irrigation such as digging bore holes for irrigation and low-cost solar pump installment. Out of 79 projects, 57 were related to irrigation given that water scarcity was single-most challenge faced by farmers in the project area (Table 1).

### Collective action for wider impact

The initiative does not only benefit from collective fund generated from different sources but also collective efforts made by the local communities. Due to their involvement from planning to implementation, community members are an integral part of the initiative. Besides, they also contribute substantive amount of cash and in-kind support (labor) to realize the success of the initiative. This is a clear example of 'more than the sum of its parts' as individual source wouldn't have achieved equal or more than the challenge project approach has been able to secure. By participating in project development, resource generation and implementation in challenge project as a group, the networking skills, solidarity, trust and mutual help and other social capital have been substantively elevated. People have developed the attitude of collectively acting and respecting other community members irrespective of their caste and creed.



*2 Community Goat Resource center developed by farmers in Mahottari*

### Community capacity and ownership for sustainability

During the project development and implementation process, the project has given several capacity building trainings and exposure, which has increased the awareness, knowledge, skill and attitude of people. This has led to increased local ownership and motivation of the trained people to participate in the initiative. The group members now have better leadership, negotiation and coordination skill, which will in the long run help them generate resources to address their local problems and challenges.

## Key Learnings

The challenge project is an innovative approach to enhance community ownership and capacity to identify needs, design project and implement activities to address right problems and challenges facing the communities. It has proven that good planning can generate resources from overlooked sources. Despite its success, there are some loopholes that need to be fixed to make the initiative a big success in the long run. The learnings of the project in this respect are listed below.

- Staff need to be adequately oriented on the process so that they understand the challenge project is different from other activities or it is not just about implementing a predefined activity so that they can accordingly convey a right message to the community. Currently, most of the groups have

prepared irrigation projects using solar powered pumps (57 out of 79). Despite water scarcity being a major problem, selection right scheme needed less imposition of ideas from project staff.

- Coordination with local government is key to success but the timing of project selection did not align well with local governments' planning process. Planning in right time and alignment with government programs are among right principles that need to be considered in future. Orientation to local government officials in ROLDP process would have helped them to better engage local people in 7-step planning process and be able to respond community needs in a better way.
- Since their own cash is also involved, communities filter least important interventions from the priority list and select the most pressing issues/problems only. Hence, group contribution likely leads to better success.



3. Mineral block pressing machine



4 Women farmers displaying mineral blocks

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