

Project Newsletter

SUMMARY

The quarterly meeting of Project SRIJANA II, held on February 5, 2025, for the period October 2024 to January 2025, brought together key stakeholders to review progress, address challenges, and plan for sustainability in Jumla and Bajhang. The agenda focused on partner updates, sustainability efforts, and action plan implementation. Monitoring visits revealed the need for enhanced technical support, local government ownership, and stronger market linkages for entrepreneurs. Vocational training outcomes showed promise, with job placements secured and market connections established. The meeting also featured the Year-1 Annual Review, highlighting lessons learned and setting the stage for Year-2 planning. The project continues to empower youth and enterprises while forging sustainable pathways forward.

Key Activities and Progress (Oct-Jan'25)

The Cordaid/NCID team, overseeing the broader scope of Project SRIJANA II, reported critical insights from monitoring visits to Jumla and Bajhang. In Jumla, the women's cooperative requires ongoing facilitation to operationalize its collection center, alongside a push for greater local government ownership to ensure long-term success. In Bajhang, the focus was on technical assistance needs, including improving product quality, completing licensing processes, and enhancing labeling and packaging. Entrepreneurs in both districts need sustained business counseling to sharpen marketing skills and establish business-to-

business (B2B) connections for better inventory management and increased turnover. The team also monitored vocational training outcomes, tracking 6 participants from Bajhang (welding, carpentry, industrial tailoring) and 7 from Jumla (carpentry, tailoring), with two Bajhang trainees securing jobs at a garment factory in Lalitpur via the on-the-job training. A market visit to 'Udhyami Ghar' sparked interest from the owner in sourcing Bajhang products, while the NCID-led Annual Review Meeting for Year-1 emphasized quality delivery, sustainability evaluations, and action plan development with partners INF and UMN-PYS.

Project Updates: Jumla

In Jumla, INF has made significant strides in vocational and livelihood support. The quarter saw the introduction of Suman Lamichhane as the new livelihood thematic lead, signaling fresh leadership for the initiative. INF launched advanced vocational training programs tailored to market demands, accepting applications from youth and conducting specialized training in local breed goat and sheep rearing, rabbit farming, and cow/buffalo farming. Beneficiaries received in-kind support, including 18 rabbits for two youths starting commercial rabbit farms and for four youths developing buffalo sheds, tailoring shops, and furniture businesses. Key accomplishments include the Start and Improve Your Own Business (SYOB) training for 30 youths, advanced goat farming training for

15 participants, and three-month basic vocational training for 10 youths. With a budget of NRs 1,581,619, INF utilized NRs 1,267,128 (80.11%). Challenges such as limited field staff, difficult topography, and delayed government budget allocations persist, but the focus remains on demand-based skills development and farm startups for the next quarter.



Project Monitoring Visit in Jumla

Project Updates: Bajhang

In Bajhang, UNM supported 165 beneficiaries (52 males, 113 females), comprising of 27 Dalits, 138 other community members, 27 persons with disabilities, and 6 single women. The team overspent its NRs 2,543,570 budget, recording NRs 2,648,037 in expenses due to additional activities carried forward from the last quarter that were completed in the last two months of 2024. Through developing linkage with a marketing cooperative, the project facilitated the sale of 11,900 kgs of soybeans, generating NRs 714,000 (EUR 4882.72) for 45 individuals. The functioning of the milk collection center is progressing which collected and sold 1,486.5 liters of milk. A collective market management practice has been established.

Two collection center sheds were constructed to provide collective marketing service to farmer beneficiaries at two different locations, Thalara Kholi Bazar and Mahendhar (ward no.4) under

the ownership of established local cooperatives to ensure sustainability of the services. Three vegetable farmers benefited from river water pumping irrigation with an electric motor. The project also facilitated in the business registration processes for three enterprises -a herbal soap enterprise, an agricultural farm, and meat selling fresh house.

An additional 5 participants are enrolled in welding and garment vocational skill training at Olgapuri Vocational School, Lalitpur. Highlights include successful on-the-job training (OJT) in driving for one individual youth and electricity training for five graduate youths, now earning NRs 15,000-NRs 23,000 (EUR 102.58-EUR 157.29) monthly. Joint monitoring visits, a social audit, and collaboration with local government underscored progress despite practical challenges.

Moving towards Sustainability

Bajhang

During this quarter, in Bajhang, UMN is scaling up its collaboration efforts for sustainability through strategic partnerships with local governments and other development agencies in the districts. Collaboration with local government has deepened, with a notable contribution of NRs 1,03,000 (EUR 704.37) alongside the project's NRs 2,53,000 (EUR 1730) to construct a collection center and upgrade the noodle enterprise. Project collaborated with the full-board scholarship package provided by Olgapuri Vocational School at Kathmandu valley and enrolled a total of 5 youths in welding and industrial tailoring vocational skills training as per CTEVT (Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training) curriculum for four to six months. Besides, a total of 7 youths have been placed in jobs/employment via On-the-Job training opportunities through collaborative support of Olgapuri Vocational School at different enterprises, private companies and construction sites within and around Kathmandu valley.



Five participants were enrolled in welding and garment training at Olgapuri Training Center (first two images) and enterprise upgrade support in chowmein production and furniture manufacturing unit (last two images)

A three-days herbal soap skill training provided a total of 22 participants on cost-sharing basis with the enterprise section of the local government and USAID funded 'Jal jungle' project with training cost contribution of NRs 124,000 and NRs 17,500 respectively and SRIJANA project support of NRs 245,000. Besides, herbal soap enterprise women group marketed and sold their products in local trade fare at Bajhang and Allo/Himalayan nettle fiber bags enterprise women group displayed their products in a 10-day trade fare at Dhangadhi. Project collaborated with the Cottage and Small Industry Office of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Dhangadhi for stall management and travel logistic support. The 'Jal jungle' project also contributed with NRs 16,500 for the participants' logistic cost management. All these collaborative efforts aim to sustain youth's entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.

Jumla

In Jumla, INF is fostering sustainability efforts by accelerating collaboration with local government and stakeholders. During this quarter, INF introduced a tri-party agreement mechanism with local government and beneficiaries in Kanakasundari Rural Municipality to encourage responsibility and ownership in sustaining the entrepreneurship and employment creation efforts. Local government contributed a total of NRs 810,000, to subsidize a total of 35 beneficiaries in different individual

businesses including goat/sheep farming, vegetable farming and beekeeping. Local government is contributing 50% of training cost for Village Animal Health Worker training targeting women.

Ward level local government and women cooperative conducted series of meetings in order to seek the best solution to operationalize the collection center and to make collective marketing effort for Jumli local organic products. INF facilitated the linkages between beneficiaries and banks, micro finance companies, cooperatives and saving groups schemes for business loan service to start-up their businesses and scale up operations. A total of 10 different business enterprises are financed with NRs 2,404,000 (EUR 16,439) in total from different financial institutions. A saving group mobilized its saving fund of NRs 290,500 (EUR 1,986) for business operation purposes. All these collaboration and linkage building efforts are contributing towards sustainability of youth entrepreneurship and employment creation efforts in Jumla.



Start your own business Training at Kanakasundari Rural Municipality



Naina Budha, a commercial vegetable farmer

		Bajhang	Jumla	Total
SRIJANA-II, Sustainability Status	Doing business (Beneficiary)	268	40	308
	Involved in groups (Beneficiary)	514	93	607
	Group saving (Number)	7	1	8
	Business loan from s aving groups (NPR)	197,720	290,500	488,220
	Business loan from MFIs (NPR)	1,100,000	2,404,000	3,504,000
	Beneficiaries linked with Local Govt. Subsidies	86	35	121
	Local govt. subsidy contribution (NPR)	1,719,650	810,000	2,529,650
	Vocation skill improve & OJT placement (Beneficiary)	21	10	31
	Placed in jobs (Beneficiary)	7	0	2
	Oct-Jan 2024			

MFIs=Micro Finance Institutions (i.e. includes Bank, Micro Finance Companies, Cooperatives.)



Group photo taken during Advance level goat farming training



Visit to 'Udhyami Ghar' a sales outlet of Nepali local products as part of market linkage from the project

Success Story

Making Herbal Soap: A Women Enterprise in Thapagaun

In Thalara Rural Municipality, Ward No. 1, Thapa Gaun, a group of women from families of migrants, now run the Thapagaun herbal soap enterprise. These women, seeking alternative income and a sense of empowerment, turned to entrepreneurship with a focus on using locally sourced materials like Chyuri (butter tree) fruit seed oil, nettle, and aloe vera, local white clay etc. The initiative took root through a project in collaboration with local government that provided skill training in soap production techniques, along with materials and start-up support valued at NPR 3,69,000 (EUR 2523). Of this, NPR 2,45,000 (EUR 1,675) is from SRIJANA project and NPR 1,24,000 (EUR 847.98) from

local government contributions. The project also facilitated the group's official registration as an enterprise.

In just four months, seven women produced and sold 1,600 soaps, earning each member NPR 3,000 monthly. This steady revenue brought more than financial relief and boosted their self-confidence and fostered independence. The community began to see them differently too, recognizing these women as breadwinners rather than just housewives. What started as a bid for survival has grown into a sustainable, women-led venture, proving that local resources and determination can reshape lives and perceptions alike.

Ashok's Journey of Buffalo Farm

Ashok Baduwal, a 40-year-old man with disabilities, lives in Baduwalbada village, Ward No. 5, Kanakasundari Rural Municipality, Jumla District. Once a laborer in India, he returned home after COVID19 seeking a new path. Through SRIJANA project, Ashok received training in commercial buffalo farming along with practical support: one buffalo, a freezer, utensils, and cement for an improved buffalo shed. He

added his own investment—roughly NPR 16,000 to enhance the shed and NPR 5,000 to buy the buffalo—turning opportunity into action. Now, his buffalo farming brings in NPR 45,000 monthly.

With this income, Ashok supports his family and funds his children's education, including his elder son's MBBS studies. Beyond his household, he's taken on a leadership role as the Secretary of the Malika Agriculture Disaster Management Group. His farm is on its way to being officially registered, and he's laying plans to open a dairy shop soon. From a laborer abroad to a farmer and community figure at home, Ashok's efforts have built a foundation for stability and growth.

Success Story

Writing a Better Life— Sarita's Story of Independence

Sarita Kumari Saud, a 22-year-old from Thalara RM-4, grew up in a family grappling with financial hardship, worsened by the return of a migrant relative facing limited prospects. Like many unemployed youths in her village, she sought job opportunities to support her struggling household. Her chance came through SRIJANA project that offered her a six-month training program in electrical and electronics at a recognized training center. The investment—NPR 11,600 from the project and roughly NPR 18,000 from a community fund—equipped her with skills and a shot at a better future.

After the training, Sarita joined an On-the-Job training program at Kathmandu

Electro Tech Service in Kupandol, Lalitpur. Her dedication paid off when she landed a job there, earning NPR 16,000 monthly. With this income, she covers her tuition fees, pays rent in the city, and sends support back home to her family. Her achievements challenge the notion that technical fields are just for men, proving women can excel and earn in these roles too.

Her progress prompted the training center to collaborate with the project, securing training quotas for others from similar backgrounds. From a young woman seeking a way out of poverty in Thalara to a self-reliant worker in Lalitpur, Sarita now stands as a symbol of what's possible with opportunity and grit.