



## SUCCESS STORY

# Bridge helps more than 500 students get to class

Hari Prasad Tharu is a seventh-grade student at Shree Sarada Lower Secondary School in Shahipur village, in the Bardiya District. The school is two kilometers from his house, and to get there, Tharu crosses a stream that is often flooded during monsoon season (July-September). Two long wooden logs have served as a bridge to cross the stream for Tharu and hundreds of other teachers and students, but the makeshift bridge is useless when flood waters are high.

In January 2009, the USAID/Nepal Flood Recovery Program (USAID-NFRP) set out to build a permanent solution to this problem. The program organized construction of a 6-meter culvert. The design uses a concrete “slab” as the bridge floor, and if water levels reach above the culvert, side railings let water pass through and over the bridge floor, which will keep the bridge safe for use during high water levels.

Prima Subedi, principal of Shree Sarada, said that the majority of the 568 students are from villages on the other side of the stream. Classes would often be empty during monsoon season.

“All the students from the other side of the stream were deprived of their education during the floods, but it was not only the students who suffered,” Subedi said. “The school also faced problems. There was no vehicular access to the road until this culvert was built.”

With the construction of the culvert, students and staff now have year-round access to school, and transport access has allowed the school to receive supplies.

“I am pleased that during the upcoming monsoons, the students will not be absent due to the floods,” Subedi said.

The bridge has also improved the economy of the community. During the three months of construction, USAID-NFRP employed 388 person days of local labor, and now that the culvert is complete, growers can cross easily to reach markets across the river.

USAID-NFRP works with flood-affected communities throughout the Terai region to increase farmer productivity and income, rehabilitate and develop small-scale community infrastructure, improve awareness of sanitation, nutrition, gender and protection issues, and strengthen local organizations by expanding participation among youths and vulnerable populations. The program is made possible by the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

### BEFORE



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Logs placed across the river in Shahipur were frequently submerged during monsoon season.

### AFTER



Principal Subedi and her students test the bridge.

**“I am pleased that during the upcoming monsoons, the students will not be absent due to the floods.”**

— Prima Subedi, School Principal