



SUCCESS STORY

Bridge connects life between rural villages in Nepal

Monsoon season in Nepal can bring devastating floods and rising river waters disrupt the lives of many Nepali citizens, making it difficult and even dangerous to attend school, conduct business, or travel to receive medical care.

In Nepal's Banke District, a small wooden bridge was all that connected the Udharapur and Ditapur VDCs. It was old and rundown and the river it crosses is notorious for flooding, often rising five meters or more. The bridge had a reputation of danger. Sashi Ram Upadhyea's son-in-law died when he slipped off the bridge and drowned. Each monsoon season, parents keep their children home so they don't have to test their fate on the bridge. Community activists had worked to build a permanent solution, but the funding just wasn't there.

USAID-NFRP saw that the villages surrounding the bridge could only thrive with a solid bridge that would allow goods and people to travel freely for agricultural and economic development – even when the river levels were high.

USAID-NFRP built a 12-meter, double-span concrete culvert that can be used even when the river rises.

The bridge cost NRs. 6,226,310, including community contributions of NRs. 547,789. The project employed 30 local laborers for 90 days.

The new Udharapur Bridge has benefited six villages and 784 households. The bridge rises 6 meters above the river bed and has vented railings, so the water can pass through even if it rises over the bridge.

All aspects of life in the community have benefited from the new bridge. People can now cross the bridge without fear, and children and teachers can go to school during the monsoon season. Agricultural commerce between villages can continue year-round, and those who have to cross the bridge to see a doctor can now do so at any time of year.

“Our dream has been fulfilled. The bridge was constructed in short duration, and we are satisfied with its quality,” said Maiya Ram Neupane, a staff member of nearby Jansakti Lower Secondary School.

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.

This shoddy bridge was dangerous for pedestrians to cross and rising rivers during monsoon season regularly halted traffic.

AFTER



Villagers come for the opening of the bridge.