



SUCCESS STORY

New bridge saves homes from flooding



Photos by Fintrac

BEFORE This old, damaged pipe culvert was regularly inundated during monsoon season, isolating the Geta community.



AFTER The new bridge allows for flood waters to flow unobstructed while maintaining a vital connection to outside markets and services.

The Mohana River flows by the small village of Geta in the western district of Kailali, but every year during monsoon season, flood waters from the river would submerge the old, damaged pipe culvert that was used as a bridge. For three months out of the year 300 families were isolated from neighboring villages.

Bandhuram Chaudhary is a leader in the Geta VDC and a client farmer of USAID-NFRP's Livelihoods and Income Generation (LIG) component. He remembers when the flooding would get so bad people had to leave their homes.

"The people had to fight the floodwater and leave their homes to find a safer place. Three years ago, during one of the worst floods, one woman got swept away," Chaudhary said.

USAID-NFRP saw that Geta VDC needed a reliable passage to markets and emergency services. The program held meetings with the community about the project and employed local masons and daily laborers to build a six-meter concrete culvert that rises four meters above the river, so that flood waters can flow unobstructed. The program also reinforced sections on either side of the road.

The project generated thousands of hours in paid labor that injected NRs 600,000 in wages into the local economy. The people of Geta VDC now have a constant connection to the district headquarters of Dhangadhi; and more than 3,000 households in adjoining VDCs and neighboring districts are also benefitting from the new bridge.

"The situation has completely changed now. Despite the high floods this year, the new culvert was never submerged. The community never had to move, even during the worst floods," Chaudhary said. "Our entire community would like to thank USAID-NFRP for helping us solve the flooding problem and supporting us as we try to develop."

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).