



SUCCESS STORY

Building a bridge of opportunity

“Farmers, traders, students – everyone is benefitting from this project. The community is very grateful for USAID-NFRP’s help.”

— Chakra Chaudhary



Photos by Fintrac

BEFORE This bridge on the Babai River was the only connection to markets and health services for members of the Baniyabhar VDC. During the monsoon season, the river would rise above the bridge, stranding thousands.



AFTER USAID-NFRP built this bridge over the river and now villagers can safely cross the river year round.

In the southern flatlands of midwestern Nepal, the villagers of Baniyabhar have struggled for decades against the monsoon tide of the Babai River. Although normally not a mighty river, the Babai overflows during monsoon season, covering the small wooden bridge that connects 4,500 households to markets, schools, clinics and businesses. The flood cut off these people every year until the river would subside.

USAID-NFRP conducted surveys in the area, asking villagers about their concerns and hopes for the development of the region. The villagers’ main concern was the bridge over the Babai.

“For 20 years there have been plans to build a bridge, but without any funding, the project never materialized. The bridge is our priority, our dream,” said Gunakher Rimal, a social worker in Baniyabhar.

USAID-NFRP stepped up to make that dream a reality. The program built a 19-meter bridge that stands four meters above the river. What had seemed impossible for decades was completed by USAID-NFRP in four months. The project cost NRs 6,664,459 (about \$90,000), and was built with the help of community donations of in-kind services and more than NRs 100,000.

“Our communities are so lucky that we finally have what was once just a dream. This bridge has brought new opportunities for development in the area. Farmers, traders, students – *everyone* is benefitting from this project. The community is very grateful for USAID-NFRP’s help,” said Chakra Chaudhary, who lives in the Baniyabhar.

People now have year-round access to health services and businesses, and wholesale dealers can make regular visits to local farms, buying produce from growers to sell at local and regional markets.

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).