



A Systemic Approach to Refugee and Host Communities Livelihoods in Nepal

December/2024

A Bhutanese refugee family farms potatoes in their kitchen garden using high-quality seeds and fertilizers at the Beldangi Refugee Settlement in Damak, Koshi Province. © Kathaharu Productions.

At a glance



Partners

- ▶ Local employment centres / employment service coordinators
- ▶ Local chamber(s) of commerce, district chapters of FNCCI, etc.
- ▶ Local agriculture cooperative(s), Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Association Nepal, Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal, Hotel Association Nepal, trainings service providers.



Donor

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Nepal



Duration

February 2024 – December 2024



Target groups

Bhutanese refugee and host communities in Koshi Province; and urban mandate refugees and host communities in Kathmandu



Geographical focus

The project will work primarily in Koshi Province and also in Kathmandu:

- ▶ Beldangi, Damak, Jhapa District, Koshi Province (Bhutanese refugees and host communities)
- ▶ Pathari Shanishchare, Morang District, Koshi Province (Bhutanese refugees and host communities)
- ▶ Kathmandu (urban mandate refugees and host communities)

Background

The refugee situation in Nepal requires innovative solutions to meet the needs of both refugees and host communities. Nepal has welcomed refugees from Tibet, Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia. While many Bhutanese refugees resettled elsewhere, over 6,300 remain in Koshi Province, and about 950 urban refugees reside in Kathmandu.

Since 2020, UNHCR and ILO have promoted private sector development to support refugees in Nepal. In 2021/2022, they conducted a market systems assessment in Koshi Province to identify growth opportunities for Bhutanese refugees and host communities, utilizing the Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS) for designing livelihoods interventions.

In 2023, interventions under the Building Inclusive Markets for Refugees and Host Communities Project were deployed. One intervention targeted the potato farming sector, focusing on land access, quality seeds, and postharvest technologies to improve productivity. Another addressed the lack of entrepreneurship skills among refugees and host communities, highlighting the limited availability of training and business development services.

Objectives

The second phase of the project has three key objectives:

- ▶ Improve and scale up market-based livelihood interventions for Bhutanese refugees and host communities in Koshi Province (Beldangi refugee settlement in Damak/ Jhapa district and Sanishare refugee settlement in Patri-Sanishare/ Morang district).
- ▶ Explore new high-potential sectors of intervention in Koshi Province within around 75 km radius of the two Bhutanese refugee settlements in line with market trends and employers' demand.
- ▶ Provide technical support to UNHCR Nepal and partners in the implementation of sustainable livelihood interventions for urban mandate refugees in Kathmandu.

► Achievements

- In 2023, under the first phase of the project, 60 (28 refugees and 32 host community farmers, 33% women) benefited from land lease, advisory support, the voucher programme, and extension services, including the farmer field school and training on commercial potato farming and marketing. This was achieved through the engagement of multiple local actors, including the Mansarowar Agriculture Cooperative, the Economic Empowerment Center, two local agrovets supplying quality-inputs, and as a spillover effect, the Apex Biotec Research Center, a private sector organization that initiated partnership with Mansarowar to supply additional virus-free potato seeds. In the current phase, the project is expanding to other high-potential value chains (e.g., broad beans, spinach, cucumber).
- Further, 20 Trainers (including 3 refugees, and in total 30% women) from Damak and neighbouring municipalities were trained and certified as SIYB Trainers following the ILO's SIYB programme quality standards. Subsequently these trainers provide entrepreneurial trainings to 93 potential and existing entrepreneurs in Damak (including 40 refugees, and in total 60% women).
- Together, the two interventions successfully improved livelihoods of 664 Bhutanese refugees and host community livelihoods in Damak.
- Following the 2023 interventions, UNHCR and ILO launched the second phase of the project titled: A Systemic Approach to Refugee and Host Communities Livelihoods in Nepal Project. The main goal of the ongoing second phase is to build on the initial efforts and engagement of local stakeholders to improve the livelihood opportunities of more refugees and host community groups, by implementing market facilitation interventions on both, the demand and supply sides of the labour market, to make markets more inclusive for the refugees and host communities.



After undertaking ILO's Start and Improve Your Business training in Damak, an entrepreneur has been using his skills to grow his fresh house (meat) business. © Kathaharu Productions.



A refugee family was provided with farming land on a lease, good quality seeds and fertilizers and trainings to undertake potato farming as a viable livelihood option. © Kathaharu Productions.

© International Labour Organization 2024

► Contact details:

ILO Country Office for Nepal
Nayabato, Dhobighat, Lalitpur, Nepal
T: +977 1 5970 424
F: +977 1 5450 714
E: Kathmandu@ilo.org
W: www.ilo.org/nepal

Mr Deep Rana
National Project Coordinator
E: ranad@ilquest.org

Ms Bina Kunwar Thapa
Senior Programme Officer
E: bina@ilo.org

 ilo.nepal
 ILOAsiaPacific
 ILOTV
 @ILO_Nepal
 iloinfo