

New VLRs and JLO couples. Fourteen new VLRs have been formed in Dang, Mahottari, Okhaldhunga and Siraha with more than 300 members. Altogether 35 couples from Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Mahottari and Udayapur have acquired Joint Land Ownership certificate.

Paralegal License for two DLRF activists in Mahottari



DLRF Activists Raj Kumar Basnet and Sarita Basnet with their license for paralegal service

Two activists from Mahottari, Raj Kumar Basnet and Sarita Basnet have successfully acquired the license for paralegal services from the district court, after passing on the written tests and completed all necessary legal formalities. This license will help enable them to provide support to couples willing to get a JLO as well as in other land related transactions in lesser and even no costs than hiring other paralegal

supporters. Their license numbers are 1173 and 1174, respectively.

DLRF Siraha concludes its Fifth Assembly¹. The Fifth Assembly of DLRF Siraha has formulated a 13 member committee in Chairmanship of Chandra Bahadur Moktan.

Highlights of the program:

- Lyam Bahadur Darji's re-enforcing speech on the history and background of land reform in Nepal which have been incomplete in nature, resulting to the contemporary inequalities and the need to lobby with all major political parties to forward in the policy revisions that are awaiting adoption, endorsement and implementation.
- Other major speakers were Saraswati Subba (General Secretary, NLRF), Tulsī Ram Paudel (Regional Administration Office), representatives from different political parties and CSOs. All of them stressed in the need of pro poor land policies and immediate implementation of land

¹ See full report in the **Latest Updates** section of www.csrcnepal.org

reform policies which are endorsed through papers and the National Gazette but have not otherwise implemented. The political party representatives also claimed the government attention to solve different issues arising for the landless, showing a readiness in providing all kinds of support.

- The Executive Director of the *Dalit Janakalyan Yuwa Club*, Binod Kumar Bisunkhe talked about land rights as being human rights. According to Bisunkhe, 'the landless Dalit population of Siraha reached around 80 per cent of the total, who are all agricultural labors still are land, and thus homeless'. He pointed the role of government as the problem solver and the only agency that can ensure dignified life to its people.

"I have to introduce myself as a landless. One of the groups still ignored by the government who are still fighting for their rights and yet nothing is to happen. The landless commission looks like a scam".
-Dukhu Sada, Govindapur, Siraha

- People who have had a long, consistent and significant in the contributions in the Land Right Movement from Siraha were felicitated in the program. Amongst them were Dukhi Ram (former chair of DLRF Saptari, Binod Kumar Bisunkhe (Dalit and Land Rights Activist) and Rikma Biswakarma (Former chair of DLRF Siraha).

More than 1200 participants were present in the inauguration ceremony, carrying banners and placards. A rickshaw and cycle rally was organized separately. The VLR front-line leaders took care of all the expenditure made in the event.

Reconstruction and land policy orientation in Sindhupalchok. Altogether 24 activists participated in an orientation program of the Guidelines on Land registration post earthquake and the policy reform in the National Gazette in August 2016. The activists were the main participants in the program facilitated by DLRF front-line leaders. The main objective of the program was to enable the activists to inform and the communities accurately.

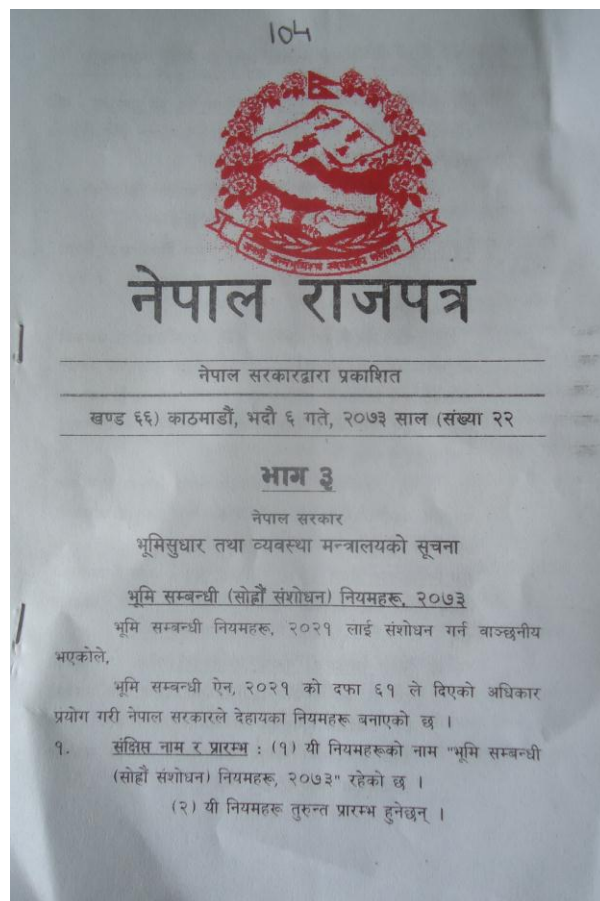
This program will also help in sharing information to the farmers who were otherwise left out in the process of relief support and recovery of the government and non government organizations, because of lack of identification proofs. This advocacy training will further help the landless farmers to claim their rights over land.

Research report in Kathmandu. The draft of a Baseline Study Report for Strengthening Economic and Social Rights for Dignifies Life of Marginalized Farmers has been shared with the core CSRC staffs for feedback and review. The study has helped the program staffs in unpacking and internalizing the program log frame and linking to the M&E framework. In addition, the study gives an orientation on the technical and procedural aspects and on the importance of taking ownership of the process and product for the successive use, monitoring and evaluation. The report has carried out an analysis of the baseline data at the local and central levels with aim of furnishing the program's overall results based

M&E framework. In addition, it prepared localized results based M&E framework specific to all districts through both the deductive and inductive processes.

Progressing with the Policies. The guidelines and regulations for the 6th Amendment of the 1964 Land Reform Act were finally passed 3rd week of July 2016. These have been published in the Nepal Gazette in August. The amendment was made in October 2015, and aims to secure the land rights of registered tenants. This marks a victory for tenants, who can now claim half of the land that they till as their own; landowners, meanwhile, will retain half. According to government data, there are 119,685 registered tenants, many of whom have been tilling their land for generations. These tenants can now apply to acquire legal rights over their land, granting them tenure security and freedom from fear of evictions from their landlords. This is a major accomplishment for the land rights movement, which has struggled hard for the said amendment and regulations.

Community Self-reliance Centre (CSRC) and National Land Rights Forum (NLRF) have been at the forefront, intensively lobbying with political parties and the then Prime Minister. The passage of the guidelines and regulations will positively affect tenants' status, while strengthening the land rights movement.



Land Rights as Human Rights: a workshop in Kathmandu. CSRC, ILC and ANGOC jointly had organized an Interaction Program under the theme *Land Rights as Human Rights*. The program saw a participation of 41 participants from different government and non- government as well as regional organizations (SAARC and ANGOC) working for issues related to land and the policy front. Professor LayaUpreti made a research presentation emphasizing on SAARC's role in the policy front to establish policies and introduce reformative and pro poor, farmer friendly policies. His presentation focused on the role of state to formulate a legal framework in a progressive realization of land rights as human rights.

Representative from SAARC, M.H. Zaved (Bangladesh) reminded the audience of the country's affiliation to 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), five of which are directly related to land issues. He re-asserted the indispensable relation of human and land rights. According to him, South Asia is a region

which has 40 per cent of the world's poor and this poverty is directly related to land rights. SAARC is a public organization which is working hand-in-hand with the GoN. Concluding his insightful speech, Zaved pledged to coordinate and liaise with line agencies working for land issues.

Similarly Don Marcus from ANGOE pointed out on why land issues relate directly to human rights. For claiming any kind of right, the social system which is designed as such asks for proof. Example, the basic identification proof document is citizen certificate which is required claiming every kinds of assets.

He recommended all agencies working for landless to liaise all frontline leaders and activists who work at the community to the human rights networks. This can scale up the real issues arising from the community till stakeholders. Additionally he focused on the importance of increasing involvement academic institutions and think tanks to study and research about issues pertaining to land, the issues thus coordinating to priority books of regional organizations like SAARC.

"Rights inevitably involve 'showing of proofs', which is why it relates directly to human rights."

-Don, ANGOE

Submission of memorandum to NRA by DLRF Rasuwa. A delegation of frontline representatives of DLRF Rasuwa led the submission process to the Regional Office in Nuwakot. Narayan Prasad Sapkota from NRA thus pledged a support by forwarding recommendations at the national level.

The issue raised in the memorandum were the reforming the new guidelines, pertaining to *Birta* and *Guthi* land.



The CSRC team of Talamarang have collaborated with Radio Sindhu and Radio Melamchi to air a radio show disseminating information on the issues of landless communities, integrated settlements and the reconstruction process. This show is named 'Naya Basti' and will be aired for thirty minutes, twice a week.

District Program Launch: A workshop in Sindhupalchok. The Livelihood Recovery Program (Palchok, Dubachaur, Baskhaka, Lagarche, Tauthali and Piskar) implemented through UNDP was launched in

Sindhupalchok in 17 August, 2016. The program's main objectives were to introduce the program, its expected outcomes, modality, budget and implementing strategies to the stakeholders.



Jagat Deuja, the ED of CSRC making a presentation in the program

This program saw an attention of team leaders of CSRC and UNDP, district and community level stakeholders.

The participants asserted the need of coordination between the district level stakeholders and CSRC to make the community livelihood recovery plans operational. Representative for DADO presented some unconventional farming options like mushroom, cardamom, ginger and tea in the upper belts of Sindhupalchok.

The team from UNDP on the other hand shared the learning of this program till two months of implementation. They appreciated the space for discussion the project has opened, promoting community harmony and solidarity and their leadership. Other speakers appreciated CSRC's model of local resources utilization and community led reconstruction processes.

NLRF becomes the chair of AFA². Mr. Lyam Bahadur Darji, Chairperson of the National Land Rights Forum (NLRF)³ is now the Chairperson for the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Development (AFA) for two years.



AFA is a regional alliance of 20 national federations and organizations with more than 20 million small holder farmers, land poor and producers from 16 countries in Asia. The Seventh General Assembly (GA) was held in Hanoi, Vietnam on August 1-7, 2016. Merely in his mid-50s, Mr. Darji has been actively campaigning for land rights and rights of small holder farmers for more than two decades now

As a chair of AFA, NLRF will represent at different high level forums like the World Rural Forum, Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture, Civil Society Mechanism and Committee on World Food Security. This is also an opportunity for NLRF to strengthen solidarity and knowledge exchange and cooperation among Asian Farmers.

³There are 55 different District Land Right Forums (DLRFs) and 2,843 Village Land Rights Forum (VLRf) in the country. NLRF has a total of 98,275 members (35,055 women, 42,237 Dalits, 22,967 Janajatis), reaching to over 600,000 population directly and many more landless, former *haliya*, kamaiya/kamalari, marginalized, deprived and small holder farmers indirectly. The forum has been spearheading the struggle for land and agrarian rights in Nepal [See <http://www.nlrfnepal.org/>].



Advocacy and Skill Development Training in Chitwan: Reconstruction Process and Land. The training was organized by CSRC with support from Oxfam to streamline a common vision about the issues involving land and reconstruction process. Twenty nine participants from 13 affected districts participated in the program. The main objective of the training were to familiarize and the participants with the works of LRFs, the impacts of the disaster to the landless and the issues thus arose and advocating about the policy level knowledge and changes that have taken over time. This training was facilitated by Nari Ram Lohar- Program Coordination and Jagat Deuja, the Executive Director of CSRC.

CSRC is organizing its Ninth Annual Social Audit in September 2016. The event will be held in Lainchour Banquet in Lainchour, Kathmandu.

To strengthen and institutionalize accountability and transparency at all levels, CSRC has been organizing Annual Social Audits of the land and agrarian rights campaigns for the past five years. In the event, an overall thematic and financial status of the programs are presented through stakeholders' perspectives, the impacts on lives of land deprived people, resource utilization and its challenges and learning including future plans. In the event this year, CSRC will include the disaster response projects as well.

Planning snapshot | September 2016

Primarily upholding the concerns of the VLRFs and the landless communities, the highlights of planned activities in the all the districts for September are-

The DLRF Mahottari has elaborate plans of forming two new VLRFs and strengthening four inactive VLRFs. the DLRF also plans to engage 10 VLRFs in progress marking exercises. Focusing on the campaigning activities for JLO, the DLRF set a target of 40 couples to acquire JLO certificate for the upcoming month. Further, it plans to conduct a half yearly review meeting.

In Dang, the DLRF plans to focus on organizing JLO Campaign, acquiring tilling and settlement certificates or at least recommendation from the VDC and formation of tenant farmer committees.

The DLRF Banke plans to organize a district level tenants meeting, approach the VDC for tenancy certificate , focus on campaigning for JLO and help some couples make the certificate and conduct trainings for frontline leaders and women farmers, separately. Complying focus on the same activity, the DLRF Bardiya also plans to conduct training for paralegal support, make plans on agro based entrepreneurship and focus on organizing local campaigns.

The DLRFs Okhaldhunga and Udayapur have prioritized campaigning for JLO, setting a target of 50 and 20 couples acquiring JLO, respectively. The DLRF Okhaldhunga is conducting training for the frontline leaders and campaign activists on monthly meeting, minute and record keeping and documentation.

Further both DLRFs, like others plan to focus on campaigning for land rights and conduct a training session each, on agro based entrepreneurship.

In Sindhupalchok, the DLRF plans to organize two JLO camps, conduct one Cooperative Account Keeping training and a VDC level interaction program to discuss the issues of landless in reconstruction, among others.

In Rauswa, the livelihood activities will proceed with distribution of vegetable seeds and training on onion farming as well as help farmers in marketing of vegetables and organize journalist visits in the fields. They will proceed with the movement activities in parallel.