

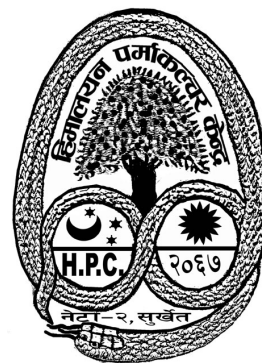
# Himalayan Permaculture Centre

[www.himalayanpermaculture.com](http://www.himalayanpermaculture.com)

*Building Livelihoods for Household and Community Resilience*

6-month Report

April 2018



## Introduction and background

This report describes activities and outputs of the period November 2017 to April 2018 of the **Building Livelihoods for Household and Community Resilience** program run by HPC and its member groups in Surkhet and Humla districts of western Nepal. This program is itself the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of a longer-term initiative started in 2012 with an overall aim of increasing the resilience and productivity of communities through integrated activities of food security, health, education, livelihoods and capacity building. These activities are also aimed at being a model for wider replication and application of HPC's working methods and approaches.

## Working Areas

An updated summary of groups' names, locations and demographics is given below.

		Households	Women	Men	Total
<b>Surkhet</b>	2 Municipalities, 10 villages	167	504	597	1101
<b>Humla</b>	3 Municipalities, 11 villages	276	775	823	1598
<b>Total</b>	5 Municipalities, 21 villages	443	1279	1420	2699

These figures represent the demographics of the villages that have been registered with HPC as participating villages. They do not include the new villages that have requested participation, where HPC staff and barefoot consultants have started to work.

Details of the new villages are as follows:

		Households	Women	Men	Total
<b>Surkhet</b>	2 Municipalities, 4 villages	98	264	311	575
<b>Humla</b>	1 Municipalities, 7 villages	309	887	892	1779
<b>Total</b>	5 Municipalities s, 11 villages	407	1151	1203	2354

All areas total

<b>Total</b>	5 Municipalities s, 32 villages	850	2430	2623	5053
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## Activities

### FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

#### Resource Centers

HPC manages 2 Resources Centres (RCs) in Surkhet (Baragaun village) and Humla (Dapka village) districts, where it carries out demonstration, training and resource production/distribution functions. In addition, it is partnered with Sunrise Farm in Kathmandu where similar functions are enacted.

#### RC production – Surkhet & Humla

At HPC head resource farm in Baragaun village of Surkhet, over **70kg of vegetables** have been produced over the winter period. In the same period **410kg of fodder** and **105kg firewood** have been harvested from the 1-acre plot. From its nurseries **183 grafted fruit trees** have been distributed to local farmers and a further 70 have been successfully grafted for next year's distribution, and **274 mulberry cuttings** have been made for summer distribution.

At the Dapka RC in Humla, comprising 7 small farms (total area of 2Ha) a total of **194kg** of vegetables have been produced, 36 grafted fruit trees and 65 multi-purpose shrubs have been distributed.

### Sunrise Farm

At Sunrise Farm, meanwhile, a tiny island of productive farm, training centre and meeting place within the Kathmandu metropolis, **114kg of 19 varieties of vegetables** have been produced in the past 6 months, the cow and poultry have provided **850 litres of milk** and **850 eggs** (510 chicken and 340 duck) respectively, and **66 volunteers** hailing from **19 different nations** have visited and/or stayed at the farm.

### Farmers' demonstrations

The introduction of Ground Apple – Yacon, *Smallanthus sonchifolius* has been successful and many groups have started to plant tubers of this highly nutritious and tasty plant from South America, that is easy to grow and has been propagated at the Surkhet RC over the past year. Yacon is native to Colombia and Ecuador and is a hardy, attractive herbaceous perennial that yields a large harvest of tubers. The tubers have an appealing crunchy crispness that is a cross between apple and watermelon, with overtones of sugarcane. As a member of the sunflower family, yacon can grow to 2 metres in height with small, daisy-like yellow flowers. When growing it is similar in appearance to Jerusalem artichokes but is not invasive in the same way.

HPC supplies various basic tools to farmers' groups enabling them to implement activities in their villages. These include grafting knives, secateurs, irrigation pipe, sprinklers and plastic for hot beds and small polytunnels.

As a result of demonstrations at the RCs and in farmers' fields, and various training opportunities at the RCs and in situ in the villages (see below 1.3), groups are involved in implementing various types of practical work in their houses and fields to increase household self-reliance. A summary of all practical work carried out in the groups from November to April is as follows:

Practical Activities	Nov 2017-April 2018		
	Surkhet	Humla	Total
<b>No: households implementing</b>	265	584	<b>849</b>
House hygiene	263	421	<b>684</b>
Stove	23	470	<b>493</b>
Toilet	23	570	<b>593</b>
Grinder	262	372	<b>634</b>
Water pot	261	450	<b>711</b>
Hay box	3	1	<b>4</b>
Sweepings	87	330	<b>417</b>
Waste water management	120	442	<b>562</b>

Plate/pot rack	84	324	<b>408</b>
Compost	76	0	<b>76</b>
Fodder trough	4	0	<b>4</b>
Salt lick	46	38	<b>84</b>
Kitchen garden/vegetables	215	51	<b>266</b>
Mulching	26	3	<b>29</b>
Liquid manure	52	26	<b>78</b>
hot bed	54	34	<b>88</b>
Leaf pots	50	2	<b>52</b>
Home nursery	101	0	<b>101</b>
Fruit nursery	54	97	<b>151</b>
Air nursery	10	3	<b>13</b>
Off season onions	9	43	<b>52</b>
Grafting	55	69	<b>124</b>
Budding	0	0	<b>0</b>
Top grafting	36	22	<b>58</b>
Air layering	67	6	<b>73</b>
Pot irrigation	37	43	<b>80</b>
Orchard	31	89	<b>120</b>
Agro-forestry	33	8	<b>41</b>
SRI	0	0	<b>0</b>
Green manures	1	0	<b>1</b>
No till	3	0	<b>3</b>
Bamboo cuttings	2	0	<b>2</b>
Improved plough	253	23	<b>276</b>
Fruit tree Pruning	99	190	<b>289</b>
Greenhouse	2	15	<b>17</b>
Biomass compost	17	8	<b>25</b>
Double digging	39	0	<b>39</b>
Urine collection & use	29	13	<b>42</b>
Seed production	112	18	<b>130</b>
Fruit tree planting	86	141	<b>227</b>
Filter Use	234	276	<b>510</b>

Most of these activities are illustrated in the [Farmers' Handbook](#), a key training tool used by HPC.

### **Demonstration farmers**

Demonstration farmers, that are implementing the techniques listed above, are divided into 3 categories. In the 1<sup>st</sup> level farmers have attained the following:

- Taken Farmers' Training
- Taken PDC
- Taken ToT (Trainers' Training)
- Competent at grafting and fruit nursery management
- Able to make smokeless stoves
- Have planted at least 15 fruit trees on their land, and be competent at pruning
- Have planted at least 60 multi-purpose trees and shrubs of at least 10 different varieties in an agro-forestry design on their land
- Are using SRI in paddy areas

- Are growing vegetables and saving vegetable seeds
- Are able to manage greenhouse production
- Are using at least 25 other techniques from the Farmers' Handbook
- Can provide training in any of the above

There are currently 31 farmers in this level, of whom 7 are HPC staff. The remainder qualify as “Barefoot Consultants”. The criteria for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> levels are similar, but to a lesser degree. All farmers need to have passed through the basic farmers’ training and be implementing techniques on their own land. Some are just starting. The current distribution of the top 3 categories of demonstration farmer is as follows:

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total
Humla	10	23	38	71
Surkhet	21	40	56	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>188</b>

### Fruit and multi-purpose tree production

The winter dormant season is traditionally time for grafting of fruit tree seedlings including top working onto wild-growing rootstock around farmers’ fields. In addition, pruning is done of apples and other fruit trees to improve form and remove injured or diseased branches. Winter is also the time for planting of fruit trees, in particular deciduous varieties such as apple, pear, plum, walnut, peach, etc. As Spring breaks, air layering is also done of types including citrus, guava and pomegranate.

### Grafting and top working and planting of fruit and multi-purpose trees and shrubs.

In total **7100 seedlings** have been grafted in village nurseries in Surkhet and Humla, and **54 top-worked** onto wild trees in farmers’ fields. A total of **566 plants** have been air-layered including various citrus varieties, guava and Kiwi fruit, and **2647 trees** have been pruned by farmers.

In total **3089 fruit trees** have been planted over winter. Species include apple, pear, peach, plum, walnut, avocado, guava, pomegranate, orange, lemon, lime, pineapple, apricot, almond, cherry, mango, hazel and damson. This reflects the diversity in climates in the region, allowing both sub-tropical and temperate zone fruit to thrive.

Aside from fruit many multi-purpose trees, shrubs and grasses have been planted around farmers’ fields, mainly in new and established agro-forestry systems. In this period **2839 plants** have been planted, including mulberry (for fodder), lemon grass, *Ficus* spp., napier grass, chiuri and bakaino (*Melia azedarach* - Indian bead tree/Persian lilac/chinaberry).

Meanwhile in stock for next season’s planting are over **28,000 fruit trees** in Humla, **3665 fruit and multi-purpose trees** in Surkhet, and **5890 cuttings** of mulberry, grape, willow, tree tomato, sugar cane and other varieties.

### Community Funds

This reporting period's audit is summarised below:

	Loans given	Expenses	Cash	Total NRs	GB£	No: H’holds
Humla	146,060	27,719	50,397	<b>224,176</b>	£1500	19
Surkhet	520,208	60,820	21,283	<b>602,311</b>	£4150	115

<b>Total</b>	666,268	88,539	71,680	<b>826,487</b>	£5650	134
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Loans are provided to group members for activities such as purchasing livestock, starting a small business, medical costs, and domestic needs. A small interest rate is charged, usually 1-2%. The fund is increased by monthly deposits of 10-50 rupees as well as interest charged. To date there is a 100% record of loan repayment in all groups.

### Farmers' Training

HPC has focussed on training in techniques and approaches that support household resilience, diversification and productivity. It offers residential courses at its RCs and in-situ courses in all working villages, in short single topic formats (e.g. grafting, stove building, cooking, etc.) as well as day long and multiple day formats involving multiple subjects in an integrated way.

A training summary is below:

<b>Surkhet</b>	<b>No: Trainings</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Participants</b>		
			<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
Residential Farmers' Training	2	10	19	17	<b>36</b>
Organisational Capacity training	1	4	2	16	<b>18</b>
Mobile Farmers' Training	5	15	18	48	<b>47</b>
Technical Trainings	16	11	104	152	<b>256</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>376</b>

<b>Humla</b>					
Residential Farmers' Training	1	5	8	10	<b>18</b>
Mobile Farmers' Training	6	11	47	34	<b>81</b>
Mobile Livestock training	2	6	27	15	<b>42</b>
Technical Trainings	6	29	219	287	<b>506</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>647</b>
<b>Total All Areas</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>1023</b>

### Slide and Film shows

During the current period **35 slide and video shows** have been shown at RCs and in the villages in Surkhet and Humla. A total of **609 villagers** attended viewings (365 women/girls and 244 men/boys) of slide shows such as erosion, soil management, Integrated pest management, orchard management, liquid manure, and videos produced by HPC including seed saving, agro-forestry, nutrition and women's health.

### Livestock

HPC runs a number of programs around livestock health and management as they are a crucial – and often costly – part of domestic farm productivity. The focus is on 3 areas: breed improvement, health and stall management and a key aim is to increase productivity from fewer animals, and to reduce inputs by better management of resources. Improved breeds of livestock, trainings, and health services are provided to meet that aim.

A summary of treatment at **8 livestock health camps** run over the past 6 months is given below, showing that a total of **1413 livestock** have been treated (898 Surkhet, 515 Humla) and in addition a further **114 bulls and goats** have been castrated (96 Surkhet, 18 Humla).

Worms				External parasites				wounds				Digestive problem				Total
Sheep/goat	Cow	Buffalo	Horse/mule	Sheep/goat	Cow	Buffalo	Horse/mule	Sheep/goat	Cow	Buffalo	Horse/mule	Cow	Sheep/goat	Buffalo	Horse/mule	
289	735	67	17	54	204	8	1	6	6	0	3	17	5	0	1	1413

### Improved breeds of livestock

In this period 1 breeding billy goat has been provided to Ujwal Krishi group of Thulo Khaltakura.

### Irrigation

No systems have been completed in this period but pipes and silpaulin plastic have been acquired for systems in 7 villages.

### Appropriate Technology

This program aims to test and demonstrate various labour and resource-saving and/or product improving devices in its working area, with a view to further distribution when the technologies are seen to be appropriate. In this period a **sugarcane juicing machine**, 2 fruit cutting machines and 2 Juice and Jam making machines have been purchased and are being shipped to the villages in Surkhet and Humla for trials.

## HEALTH PROGRAM

### Women's Health Program (WHP)

The WHP comprises 3 main activities: training, health camp and Women's Health Network (WHN). Focus is on awareness raising of women's health issues, diagnosis and self-diagnosis of problems, counselling, and **preventative health** through integrated diet and hygiene programs.

### Women's Health Training (WHT)

Training is provided in different formats: residential trainings at the RC and mobile trainings in situ in the villages, and more recently, specific technical trainings as requested by women's groups. In this period 5 mobile trainings have been run in Humla for **93 women and 4 men**, while in Surkhet trainings have focussed on 2 topics: **cooking and preserving of nutritious foods**, and **sanitary pad making**. A total of **11 trainings** have been provide to **228 women and 8 men**.

### Women's Health Camp (WHC)

HPC has been providing support to the local health post in Baragaun, with materials and infrastructure support. In this period the Health Post has been able to provide health services to **299 villagers (169 female and 130 male)** for a range of issues from urinary tract infections and gastric ulcers to burns, skin parasites and pregnancy tests.

### Women's Health Network (WHN)

The WHN exists to support activities in the overall WHP and to carry awareness raised into the groups of any issues that affect women in the locality including domestic violence, preventative health, diagnosis and pre- and post-natal support. They also help in planning and

implementation of the health camps and trainings carried out under the WHP and help with participation in HPC programs overall.

### **Stretchers**

In villages far away from health services, there is difficulty to carry sick people to health centres due to lack of stretchers. For many years, farmers have been continuously demanding solutions for this so HPC has provided 10 stretchers to village groups in the Surkhet area and will provide to Humla in the next reporting period.

### **Drinking Water**

No systems have been completed in this period, while pipes and tanks have been acquired for systems in 2 villages and will be installed along with others during the next period. Drinking water filters have now been distributed in all villages in Surkhet and Humla.

### **Nutrition and Health Research**

In April nutrition expert Dr Anne-Marie Mayer from UK visited HPC to initiate research into the nutritional benefits of permaculture activities. This research is an initial case study to guide a longer programme of research. The aim of this present case study is to understand communities, pilot initial assessments and identify possible longer-term nutrition-related objectives. The overarching question is:

*How can Permaculture design systems (PDS) contribute to improved nutrition of rural communities in Nepal?*

Longer-term aims are to support nutrition improvement of the HPC communities, trial metrics and document the process for wider learning. Following stages of research will be expanded to wider topics (such as social, environment, livelihood dimensions) with wider collaborations.

Using Permaculture design, integrated systems that cross traditionally separate sectors can be used to build health and nutrition of communities in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way. There are several ways in which PDS can contribute to Food and Nutrition Security (FNS), for example:

- Building resilient and productive agriculture systems is the basis for FNS and for ensuring economic viability of rural Nepalese communities. This is the first objective of HPC. Poverty is one of the basic causes of malnutrition and addressing poverty is the first step to reducing malnutrition. Perennial food crops typifying permaculture systems also increase resilience by providing food and other resources during times of annual/arable crop failure.
- Dietary diversification is well recognised as an approach that ensures a range of foods are consumed that meet the nutrient requirements that each food alone cannot. Crop diversity, which is a feature of Permaculture systems (e.g. crop rotations, agroforestry, mixed farming systems) is linked to dietary diversity when the foods are consumed by the nutritionally vulnerable. Diversification also maintains and enhances ecosystems, which is the precondition for sustainable food security and nutrition. On the other hand, industrial agriculture tends to concentrate production on a few staple crops – such as wheat, maize and rice without the diversity of mixed agriculture systems.
- Indigenous knowledge and use of local indigenous foods and recipes has often been lost during the process of ‘industrialisation’ of food systems. This local knowledge often includes ways of growing foods in synergistic combination, the preparation of foods that enables better absorption or utilisation and the use of high nutrient berries, fruits, and other foods – all using local resources. Valuing Indigenous knowledge is a part of Permaculture design systems.

- Optimising the nutritional quality of foods may be achieved using a step by step approach from farm to fork. For example, by using traditional high nutrient varieties and growing practices, supporting soil fertility, using nutrient-enhancing processing and cooking. Preliminary research on the potential for this method showed that for rice it would be possible to approximately double the zinc content through a series of locally available changes: i) choice of local rice varieties, available to farmers, ii) the amount of zinc available in the soil, iii) the type of milling, and iv) the type of cooking (Mayer 2011).
- Improvements to agriculture and food systems are part of the solution for malnutrition, but there are also other considerations. For example an analysis in Zambia on Conservation Agriculture and Nutrition identified many previously unrecognised links to nutrition related to women's time and caring practices (Mayer, Mwanamwenge et al. 2016). The holistic approach of PC design means that women's time and workload considerations are taken into consideration.
- In addition, good health and nutrition go hand in hand, so health promotion and healthy environments, are part of the requirements for FNS. In practice, this means teaching and demonstration of health and nutrition practices, water and sanitation systems and safe management of waste, for example.

### **Objectives of the research**

- To understand the Food and Nutrition systems in the Nepal context, specifically HPC sites.
- To understand local community opportunities and challenges faced in achieving Food and Nutrition Security (FNS), including indigenous systems and Permaculture Design Systems.
- To work with communities to identify action plans to improve nutrition
- To specifically identify potential improvements for nutrition; particularly related to nutritional quality of rice grown using SRI using a 'field to fork' approach.
- To pilot metrics that can be used by communities to follow up their progress in meeting their nutrition goals

There will be full details of Dr Anne-Marie's visit in the next report.

## **EDUCATION PROGRAM**

### **Practical Literacy Classes (PLC)**

HPC runs PLCs for those adults wishing to learn literacy skills. Through linking this to practical/vocational skills' learning via the Farmers' Handbook, a compendium of best practice techniques written by farmers and staff of previous permaculture programs in Surkhet and Jajarkot districts. They are in easy to read formats with large lettering and lots of drawings and photos, so as PLC participants learn to read and write using Freirian literacy principles, they also learn technical practices such as compost making, grafting, stove building etc.

At present there are 3 PLCs running in the 2 districts with a total of **44 adults** attending (40 women and 4 men).

### **Schools' Program**

HPC works with primary schools in its working areas to provide infrastructure support such as furniture and roofing, as well as design and development of schools' grounds to make them more productive, and by providing practical training for school children in some of the



related techniques such as fruit nursery establishment and operation, hygiene, water management, composting and agro-forestry. In this period HPC has provided support in fence-building in Baragaun School. In Subbatol School, **14 fruit seedlings** including almond, pear and plum have been planted. In eight schools where HPC have been providing vocational classes, HPC staff have been meeting school teachers and students and have been monitoring permaculture activities in those schools.

### **Education materials**

HPC has distributed 100 sets of the **Farmers' Handbook** to active members of its communities as well developed new publications for training and awareness raising purposes. In this period new posters have been produced on Women's Health and distributed during WHTs (see above 2.1)

## **LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM**

HPC's livelihoods program is based on the foundations built in its food security, health and education programs as described above. Only once these 3 crucial sectors are successful can the issue of livelihoods be addressed. After 4 years of building its own capacity and that of its working groups in Phases 1 and 2, HPC has focussed more on livelihoods in this, Phase 3.

### **Beekeeping**

Not only a direct source of livelihood, beekeeping is essential to farming for pollination essential for a wide range of agricultural crops, from fruit, to oil seeds. Much traditional knowledge exists about beekeeping and most villages will have traditional hives. HPC's interventions have been around using improved framed hives that are more efficient for bees to produce honey, and bee-friendly for managing the hives. HPC trains farmers in producing and using these hives. During this period, **2 hive making trainings** have been provided to 12 women and 19 men, and over **285kg of honey** harvested from **83 improved hives** in Surkhet.

### **Vegetable seed production**

The ability of farmers to produce their own vegetable seeds is not only a potential income source but also crucial in maintaining resilience in vegetable production where more and more seeds' production is becoming in the hands of fewer and fewer international corporations. HPC trains its farmers to save seeds and facilitates their trade amongst groups, with excess being made available to outside growers. In this period some **623kg of vegetable seed** has been produced in Surkhet and Humla, including coriander, broadleaf mustard, radish, broad bean, potato, onion, fenugreek, many types of bean, spinach, chilli, aubergine, Swiss chard and lettuce.

### **Cotton Growing & Processing**

Training in producing organic cotton was started in 2016 and by the end of that year 18 farmers had produced a small crop that provided seed for growing on in 2017. That season's crop was expanded and seeds saved that are to be sown in 2018 with plans to increase area and number of farmers producing cotton. Meanwhile HPC has been developing its weaving and textile development activities (see below 4.7) that will eventually use the cotton produced locally.

### **Mills**

A hydro-mill has been constructed in Salgadhi village (Pragatshil Krishak group) that is able to grind **100kg** of flour and de-husk **100kg** of rice per day for **13 households (94 people)** of the village, as well as for farmers from 3 surrounding villages.

### **Herbs development**

With an objective of processing locally grown herbs, in Rajena village, HPC along with another local NGO Anter Nirbhar Samaj Sukhet (ISS) and the local community have worked together to establishing a herbs distilling unit. The villagers are providing the site and all construction of the unit while HPC is supporting the roofing and materials. Discussion with the District Handicraft Development Office (HDO) has been going on to make available the herb processing machines (a distillation unit). It is hoped to power the plant using biogas or hydro power, and while the best system is being researched, firewood is the back-up source. But it is known that this reliance can deplete the resource so is just a stop-gap energy solution.

### **Weaving & Fibre Processing**

As reported, the weaving centre has been located and built in Salgadhi village (Pragatshil Krishak group). To date four hand looms have been made, various other materials acquired, and participants have been selected for training. The trainer will be from HDO, supported by experienced local weavers from Gumi village 3-4 hours away.

### **Juice/Jam making**

Two Juice and Jam machines have been bought in Surkhet for shipment to Humla and Surkhet working areas. There will be training on making of Juice and Jam in May, June and July.

### **Biogas**

The flexi-biogas plant installed by Biogas International (Kenya), under partnership with IFAD's ASHA (Adaptation for Smallholders in Hilly Areas) project and the government's Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) is working well at both Baragaun and Sunrise Farm. Meanwhile HPC has made a partnership with *Manikej Urja Surkhet* to pilot 15 Pit biogas systems in Neta and Rajena Municipalities of HPC's working area. These will be constructed in the next reporting period.

### **Solar electric**

Completing the provision of solar lighting in Humla as described in the previous report, a further 36 systems have been installed in **36 households** of Maspur (18) and Tel Gaun (Sirupata, 18) villages of Tajakot Municipality.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM**

### **Organisational development**

Organizational development training has been completed in Surkhet. The training was facilitated by Sahakarmi Samaj and topics included review of HPC vision, aims and strategies, monitoring and evaluation of SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound), roles and responsibilities of staff and board committee, and of village groups.

### **Farmers Field trips**

In this period, 14 Farmers from Humla have visited HPC sites in Surkhet. They observed agro-forestry plots, biogas, fruit gardens, micro-enterprise activities, cardamom farming, improved mill, cash crops, building of group's house, Surkhet agriculture fair and other practical farming techniques. In addition, 12 farmers and staff from the Resilience Through Reconstruction (RTR) project in Nuwakot and Kavre districts in central Nepal visited HPC in

Surkhet and toured villages there as well as attended the festival. RTR is a post-earthquake resilience building project also using 2 BCs from Surkhet to train local villagers.

### **Farmer-Farmer extension**

There have been 5 meetings of lead farmers. The main topics of discussion were the upcoming proposal submission, planning for the HPC agricultural festival and farmers' field trip from Humla to Surkhet.

### **Barefoot Consultants' Workshop**

A workshop on theory of change has been conducted for HPC staffs and barefoot consultants (BCs). The workshop has been facilitated by Dr Anne-Marie Mayer visiting from UK. Barefoot consultants have been running various trainings, livestock health camps and herbal trainings. There are currently 4 BCs working outside of area, all in earthquake-affected villages.

### **Rice Breeding training**

Farmers have been selected for participating in paddy breed improvement training. The training will be taking place in Pokhara and will be conducted by Mr. Surkya Adhikari. This program was due to start in 2016 but due to illness of Mr Adhikari and inability to visit HPC for orientation has been delayed. In addition to this, farmers will also be visiting *Allo* (nettle) processing sites in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

### **Festival**

HPC has held its annual Surkhet Farmers Festival (*mela*) at its RC in Baragaun. There were over 900 men and women from HPC's villages in Surkhet who participated in the fair. There was exhibition of different hand made goods, farm products and traditional art and cultures, and different games and sports activities. Visitors came from Humla and from the RTR project near Kathmandu.

### **Video film making**

One refresher course on video making has been provided for HPC staff. They produced three videos from the training. The videos were showcased in IPC. The training was facilitated by Mr. Sidhi Bajracharya and Miss Renu Shakya.

### **Community contributions**

Community contributions to activities in Surkhet and Humla show a total contribution of **854 person-days** with a monetary value of **NRs 256,200/- (GB£ 1,770)**. Activities include maintaining community infrastructure (paths, bridges, water courses, mills, schools and community learning centres), firefighting, establishing tree plantations and direct contributions to HPC programs such as portage of equipment, and construction of PLC classrooms.

### **HPC Website**

HPC's website, [www.himalayanpermaculture.com](http://www.himalayanpermaculture.com) was created February 2009. Up to the time of this report (April 2018), over **186,500 hits** have been recorded.

### **Challenges during this period**

The main issue that has been affecting HPC for the past 6 months has been the seemingly endless elections and their results to form three tiers of government (local, provincial and Federal) held in May, November and December of 2017. These elections are all part of a paradigm shift in the way the state machinery functions and as such it is expected that over time the power will devolve from the traditional unitary system to the federal system in

which there will be several state governments and hundreds of local governments. Feedback from local Nepalese indicates that this all feels very new, but also very untested. So, while government aims are to devolve decision making and fiscal policy to local authorities, in practice the local level government has little existing capacity to manage the processes required at present. While HPC has been very successful in forging links over the past 2-3 years at local government authority and department level, especially with the health, agriculture and handicrafts offices as well as with local municipality councillors, there is still a lack of capacity in local authorities to take on regenerative governance systems that can meet the potential and opportunities presented. HPC's purpose will be to communicate clearly with new governance structures continue to create alliances, encourage village groups to draw down funds & other support to implement projects designed with HPC. Another effect of the elections are that health camps were banned for a period as they might be used for political gain!