HPC Report May - October 2015

Photo Gallery – Surkhet

A panoramic view down the *Cherkule Khola*, a valley that holds 5 of Surkhet's 10 groups. The scene is taken from Subbatol village at the eastern end of the valley near the source. Thus HPC is working in most of the villages in the watershed. Two of the 3 other villages in the watershed have requested programs in the coming year.

Improved compost outside a cow shed in Chaurgaun village. The stakes act as chimneys in the compost, preventing overheating and allowing air into the heap.

A comparison of Taro grown with (right) and without (left) mulch on the soil, showing clearly how well the crop is growing due to the mulch.

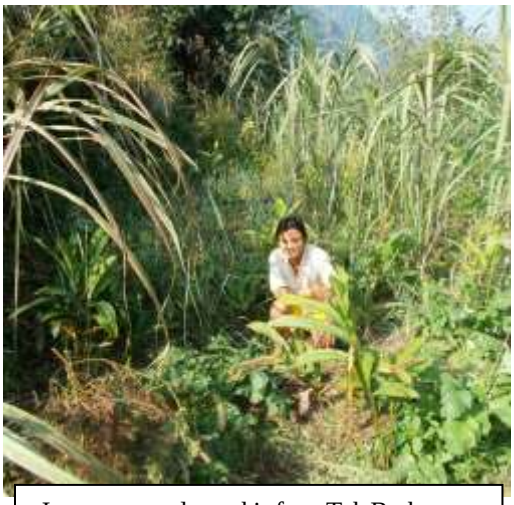
Zone 1 area (kitchen garden, near the house) of Chitra B. Pulami of Jagaran group, Khaltakura. Zone 1 is typically intensively gardened with vegetables, herbs and small fruit and biomas-producing plants. Systems include use of mulching, integrated pest management, liquid manure and polyculture vegetables. Chitra is one of HPC's Barefoot Consultants.

Nirmala Buddha, also of Jagaran group, in her zone 2 garden comprising perennial crops of ginger, taro and turmeric bordered by lemon grass (used as fodder) and interspersed with fruit trees of guava and citrus.

This is a relatively new agroforestry plot in Jagaran group, showing young mulberry trees inter-planted with Napier and Lemon grass. These act to provide fodder and biomass that locally sustain the fertility cycle for field crops.

Dhan Bahadur Buddha's zone 2 garden in Ghatutol, again showing a mix of perennial plants (cardamom, turmeric, ginger) mixed with annual chilli, radish and pumpkin, with orange trees and companion planting under-storey and sugar cane in the mid/background.

HPC's top barefoot consultant Tek Bahadur Pun in front of his zone 2 agroforestry edge planting of sugar cane, mulberry and cardamom, inside of which is more cardamom and fodder trees. He is also due to take on a long-term consultancy in earthquake hit villages in Eastern Nepal.



In a separate plot on his farm Tek B. shows a zone 1 vegetable bed integrated with medicinal herbs and surrounded by sugar cane and fodder/biomass producing shrubs.

Women from Himal group, Ghatutol village plant SRI rice in July. The big difference with conventional paddy planting is that SRI plants single seedlings that are very young – ideally still in the 2-leaf stage – and at wide spacing (25-30cm).

SRI plot of Bal Bahadur Sunard of Chargaun in early August, about 8 weeks after planting. Typically SRI plants don't put on much leaf growth for their first month as the roots develop, but then show dramatic growth and tillering with many shots bearing seed.

From Shanti group in Bhalim village Mrs Dilsara Buddha compares the roots of conventionally grown rice from 2-3 seedlings (right) with SRI rice from just 1 seedling (left), showing how root development is assisted by alternate wet and dry conditions and widely spaced seedlings, and which then supports massive plant growth and fruiting.

Krishna Gurung from Gurung Gaun, a new village, in his SRI plot in October close to harvest time. This is his first year trying SRI and he has been well supported by farmers that have been experimenting for 3 years now. He says that next year he will grow most of his paddies using the SRI method.

From across the valley, the land of Bam Bahadur Gurung in Subbatol village, Jana Sahayogi group, shows the whole farm application of HPC's principles and techniques, moving from the house (zone 0) with its stove, out to zone 1 with its livestock shed, compost, sweepings, waste water management and vegetables, out to zone 2 perennial vegetables, herbs and small-scale agro-forestry and beyond to grain-growing terraces with orchards/fruit trees and agro-forestry.

Technician Dhan Bahadur Nepali builds the chimney of an improved stove in Jagaran group, Khaltakura village. Last year HPC achieved 100% coverage of households building these stoves in Humla, and this year they have achieved over 95% in Surkhet as well.

Members of Manakamana group in Baragaun village put the finishing touches to their irrigation tank, which collects spring water to then gravity feed water to grain growing areas. A15,000L tank full of water is enough to sprinkler irrigate 1 farmer's field as they take it in turns.

Participants at a mobile Women's Health Training during a class on nutrition, with various vegetables displayed for discussion on their nutritional benefits.

Participants from Jana Sahayogi group in Subbatol village during a Practical Literacy Class (PLC) learn to make and sow a vegetable nursery. They will have just learned to read and write the letters making up the word "nursery" during the PLC theory class, and now put the theory into action. A PLC will typically last for 9 months.

Teaching resources including books, seed, seedlings and posters are handed over to Subbatol Primary School by schools' permaculture educator Milan Khadka. Support has been provided to 6 schools in Surkhet.

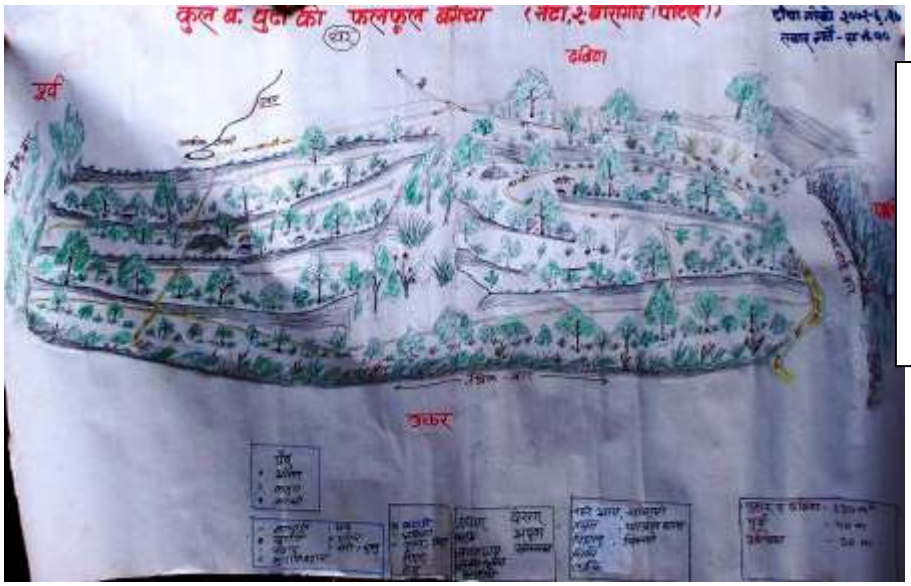
Kul Bahadur Pun of Bhalim village has been planting cardamom on his land since taking HPC's training 2 years ago. He's also been planting native alder as an overstorey. The cardamom started producing a few kilos of fruit this year.

Mrs Amrita Buddha of Himal Laligurans group in Baragaun learns how to tie comb onto a frame during a beekeeping training. After harvesting honey, empty combs can be replaced onto the frame which makes less work for the bees to rebuild the comb, so they can put more energy into collecting nectar.

The water-powered, multi-purpose mill in Pakhapani village, here using the oil expelling part of the machinery, under the auspices of group member Om Bahadur Olli. The mill also grinds corn and wheat flour, and hulls rice. The mill services 9 villages in (4 of HPC's villages and 5 from outside) comprising **436** households (**1550** men & women).

Participants in the second phase of the Permaculture Design Course (PDC) held in Baragaun in October in the design process stage, using cut-outs of different systems (e.g. agro-forestry, bee hives, waste water, compost, etc.) to place them in the most integrated way in a whole-farm design.

During the PDC participants take time out from the theory and practice of designing to partake in practical activities such as here making a hay-box, where food is partially cooked then placed in an insulated basket to keep cooking without the need for extra fuel.



One of the designs produced during the PDC of a farm in the village, showing how multi-layered agro-forestry has been integrated into the terraces along with access routes, water collection, storage and distribution systems and erosion control.

Participants from the PDC proudly show their course completion certificates. The 72-hour course is an internationally recognised certification, taught globally. The next step is to apply the principles and design process of the PDC on their own land and in their own communities.

HPC has reprinted 1000 copies of the booklet "Herbs for Women's Health" for distribution in its working areas. The booklet lists common ailments that women suffer from, and describes herbs and local remedies that can be used to treat them. There are also drawings and photos of the plants. The booklet will also be provided to like-minded organisations as required.