



Returnee Migrants/ Migrants' Family Members in Vocational Skills Training



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An estimated 3 million Nepalese, mostly from the rural areas are in foreign employment and send remittance to 55% of the rural households. A meagre 3.5% of the remittance is invested in capital formation, savings or business, and most of the money gets used to meet the family's daily needs. Therefore, upon return, the migrant workers are met with the same impoverished economic conditions that had compelled them into foreign employment in the first place, forcing them repeatedly to opt for it.



The sub-component 1.3 (Decent Jobs) of Rural Enterprise and Remittances Project (RERP)/ SAMRIDHHI has the objective of providing economically poor youth (which also includes returnee migrants and their families) with quality skills relevant to local employment and enterprise opportunities, to enable them to secure decent jobs and/or establish their own skills based rural micro and small enterprises (RMSEs) through vocational skills training and complimentary services. Where returnee migrants are concerned, the vocational skills thus imparted is expected to contribute to breaking the chain of foreign employment and/or capacitating those wishing to go for such opportunities with skills that ensures decent employment in foreign lands.

So that as many returnee migrants and their families benefit from the training opportunities (vocational skills training and apprenticeship) offered by the Project, the following measures are taken:

- ◆ The training and employment service providers (T&Es) are mandatorily required to increase their outreach to this target group. Their announcement of training opportunities must mention this target group. Likewise, the T&Es are required to report their outreach to this target group.
- ◆ 60% of those trained must be from the migrant households through the VST (Vocational Skills Training) and Leading to Apprenticeship Model (LAM) each.
- ◆ The training (VST and Apprenticeship) is complemented with networking opportunities with financial service providers for possible access to finance to start an enterprise; the trainees are provided with business plan development skills and relevant life skills and financial literacy skills. The aim is to find an economically viable use of the remittances.

- ◆ Outreach to this target group is built by collaborating with other components of the SAMRIDHHI Project and with the SDC's Safer Migration Project which has a good resource on migrant workers and their families also in the SAMRIDHHI's working areas. Likewise, the Project seeks support from the provincial and the local governments' and the FNCCI (Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry) to increase the outreach to this group of beneficiaries.

Achievement in reaching the migrants and their families

The Project has placed two indicators of success in reaching returnee migrants and their households through its vocational skills opportunities – 60% of the persons trained in different types of vocational courses (390 hours, level 1) are from migrant households; 60% of the persons trained in apprenticeship courses are from migrant households.

The result (data) for the year 2019/20 is based on the extrapolation of the results attained through six-month income verification as the application form and the database in the fiscal year did not include such information. In the procurement of training service in 2020/21, the application form and the database were revised to include such data.

Target	Achievement	
	2019/20	20/20/21
60% persons trained in different types of vocational courses (390 hours, level 1) are from migrant households	34%	21%
60% persons trained in different types of Apprenticeship courses are from migrant households	NA	10%

The above results show that the Project has to increase its effort in reaching this target group. Though 55% households in the country are said to receive remittance, with Province 1 and Madhesh Province being two of the seven Provinces with the maximum number of youths in foreign employment, from the results seen above the Project lags behind in reaching this target group.

The stories of the returnee migrants/families and their experience with the vocational skills training

The interaction of the Project with the returnee migrants shows that almost all of them had gone for foreign employment without the required skills. Working as unskilled workers, they did not earn as much as they had anticipated. Often times, their earning was just enough to clear the loan drawn to pay to go for foreign employment (payment to the consultancy, paperwork, air fare, etc.). Dissatisfied with the working conditions and the income, most returned with almost no savings, no employable skills, with the little that they earned was used to meet family needs. Despite the time and effort spend abroad, when they returned, they struggled to eke out a living. They are of the opinion that the vocational skills offered by the Project are very useful. Those interviewed said that they were making a decent amount which was better than what they made while working as migrant labours and further questioned the need to go for foreign employment when better opportunities existed in the country itself. The stories of the returnee migrants/families and their experience with the training from the Project follows:

Netra Prasad Limbu is from Jirikhimti Municipality, of Tehrathum district. He is a returnee migrant worker skilled by the Project in masonry. Despite his stay in Malaysia for 5 years, he was unable to eke out a decent living except that he managed to clear the loan that he had taken to go to Malaysia. The small piece of land that he owned did not give him much in return. Upon completion of the masonry training, he has been working as a mason in his village and takes contractual work. Two skilled and one unskilled worker work under him. Netra Prasad earns as much as NPR. 35,000 a month.

Hari Bahadur Karki is from Triyuga Municipality, Ward No. 5, Bokse, Udaypur. A returnee migrant from Malaysia, he took furniture making training from the Project. Today, he earns up to NPR. 35,000 a month and works on a piecemeal basis. He is keen to take Level 2 training and hopes to open his own furniture shop in the near future.



Rupa Gurung is from Tarahara, Itahari -1, Sunsari. Rupa was married at a young age after her School Leaving Certificate. With her limited education, she feared being financially dependent on her family. Her husband is in foreign employment. Rupa took Cook Level 1 training and upon completion started her own business with NPR. 250,000 loan. She makes a profit of NPR. 20,000 to 25,000 a month and is considering calling her husband home.

Hasta Bahadur Adhikari is from Bagmati 5, Sarlahi. Hasta Bahadur worked as an office assistant in Kuwait for six years. He returned back home, but when unable to find a job, he tried to go back again. However, this time the manpower company refused to help him as he lacked the required skills. He took Plumber training from the Project and has no difficulty earning NPR. 900 per day.

Sangita Ale is from Kamlamai Municipality, Sindhuli. She went to Malaysia and was employed in unskilled jobs. Tired of the hardship and low income, she returned and soon after got married. She got the opportunity to train as Commis III and started a restaurant from a loan of NPR. 500,000 from her women's group that she is a member of. She is in the process of clearing her loan, employs one of her fellow graduates from the training and has been able to purchase a piece of land.

Challenges

One of the major challenges is the reach by the Project to returnee migrants and their families which so far is below target. The Project may have to encourage the implementing partners by tying results to this end with their payment. Seeking collaboration with the local governments' and the FNCCI which has prioritized economic engagement of returnee migrants especially after the onset of the pandemic, targeted messaging using the media, collaborating with other organizations inside of Helvetas Nepal and outside as well working in migration, etc. could be useful in helping the Project meet its target. Finder's fee was an instrument used by the Employment Fund, whereby the T&Es reached out to relevant groups, for instance, women's groups for inclusion of more women in its trainings. The women's group was awarded with a Finder's fee when they were able to bring a woman into a training. The T&Es could use similar instruments to bring as many returnee migrants as possible and their families to benefit from the training opportunities.