

## Brief Report - Norwegian Development Minister Visit in Bigu Rural Municipality, Dolakha

This is brief report on visit of Norwegian Development Minister (Hon. Mr Nikolai Astrup) and team of delegates to Bigu Rural Municipality, Dolakha District on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2018. The major objectives of the visit were to inaugurate the new school building of Devitar Basic School and interaction with new elected representative on the local governance issues.

### Welcome Program

Mr. Yudhisthir Khadka (Chairperson of Bigu Rural Municipality) and Mr. Prabin Khadka (Chairperson of the School Management Committee) welcomed the Development Minister and the team of Norwegian delegates. The guests were felicitated with flower garlands and waving national flags of Nepal as well as Norway by the school children and community people while traditional music was being played.



### School Opening Ceremony (Devitar Basic School)

Honorable Mr. Nikolai Astrup (Norwegian Minister of Development and Honorable Mr. Pashupati Chaulagain (Provincial Assembly Member) inaugurated the school building by opening the curtains and also observed the infrastructure by visiting the classrooms. Hon. Mr. Nikolai Astrup expressed that it was an inspiration to see the contribution of the community and steps towards



accountability in this project and said that the Norwegian School construction program will be continuing its support for quality education of children in future. Similarly, Hon. Mr. Pasupati Chaulagain conveyed his words of appreciation to the Norwegian Government for its support

and emphasized on the importance of their contribution during his speech. During the event, an interaction program was also organised with School Management Committee (SMC), Child Club, School Construction Committee and Parent Teacher Association (PTA).



During the earthquake, almost all school buildings in the area had collapsed and local children were forced to continue their education in unsafe and damaged buildings. Norwegian Embassy has been extending its support to construct 23 school building in Bigu and Kalinchok Rural Municipalities in cooperation with their local partners, CWIN Nepal and Tuki Sangh, Dolakha.

### **Local Governance Community Development Program (LGCDP)**

As a part of the objective of the visit, Hon. Development Minister of Norway also participated in an interaction programme with the new elected local representative of Bigu Rural Municipality. Hon. Mr. Pashupati Chaulagain (Provincial Assembly Member) gave the welcome speech followed by a brief introduction to the current political scenario of Nepal, its great achievement and progress of local government. Similarly, Rajkumar Dhungana (Governance Advisor, Norwegian Embassy) gave an introduction of the Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP). Yudhisthir Khadka (Chairperson of Bigu Rural Municipality), Nawaraj Oli (Chief Administrative Officer), Rukmini Bishunkhe (Women Ward Member) and Tara Nepali (Citizen Awareness Centre Member) also expressed their views regarding their experiences, opportunities and challenges as a local representatives after being elected. Similarly, CAC members gave a short presentation about the economic and social changes brought about by the CAC activities and discussed the issues and challenges that they faced in the process.





During the interaction he had asked some queries about revenue of local level, participation of marginalised people in the planning process, challenges and issues. He gave thanks to all local representatives and wishing for best. DCC chair of Dolakha, newly elected representative of Bigu and Kalinchok Rural Municipalities, CAC members and other related stakeholders were participated in interaction program. Vic-chairperson of Bigu Rural Municipality had closed the interaction programme giving few thankful words for visit in Bigu and support of Norwegian Embassy. At the end of programme Yudhisthir Khadka ( Chair Person) had provide the Nepali Khukuri as a love of token.

### **Speech of Chairperson of Bigu Rural Municipality- Yudhisthir Khadka**

Warm welcome to honourable Norwegian Development Minister Mr. Nikolai Astrup, member of provincial parliament Mr. Pashupati Chaulagain, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I sincerely thank, the Government of Norway for supporting Nepal in education and school reconstruction, and supporting the Local Governance Programme that has contributed to improving governance and effective service delivery at the local level.

Nepal's new constitution (promulgated in 2015) has established Nepal as a federal, democratic and republic state and restructured the country from over four thousand local units to 760 more powerful local governments including 7 provincial governments and 753 local level governments. Bigu Rural municipality is one of the 753 local governments of Nepal. In this changed context, we are facing many challenges.

This municipality is geographically very remote with 18 thousand people. In the north it is bordering Tibet and the Peoples Republic of China. Bigu municipality is a mixed culture community; with the majority of the population from the indigenous minority groups.

We were elected 7 months ago and are working in line with the new constitutional mandate. We have been establishing new systems, procedures and guidelines for good governance and

effective service delivery. The newly elected local government has made some good progress but is also facing many challenges.

### ***Progress of the Rural Municipality***

- Construction and maintenance of essential temporary office and ward office.
- Hired and mobilized an engineer, information technology officer, assistant sub-engineer, health staffs and temporary teachers.
- To make the operation of local government smooth and effective, this rural municipality has enforced important acts, laws and bylaws in line with the Model Laws provided by Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development; Financial law, Appropriation Act, Meeting Operating Scheme, and Audit Manual.

With the support from LGCDP programme, to increase transparency and accountability, this municipality has initiated e-governance system by setting up internet connections in the municipality office, ward offices, all secondary schools, health service centre, setting up website, digital notice board, e-attendance system and CCTV surveillance system in the municipality premises.

- Increasing road connectivity and improving road condition.
- Constructing temporary school buildings in earthquake affected areas and initiated child friendly education. The school language is English.
- Expediting the reconstruction of individual houses and public buildings.

### ***Challenges***

- Along with these achievements, we have been regularly facing other short-term and long-term challenges.
- Making disaster resilient community is a challenge. The 2015 earthquake not only devastated the livelihood of the inhabitants of the affected area, but also made this area more vulnerable from multiple risks, including outburst of Cho-Rolpa Glacier Lake in the neighboring Municipality.
- Limited income opportunities; lack of irrigation and road; access to health services and quality education.
- Get sufficient skilled human resources for earthquake reconstruction, education, health and other development activities.

### ***Opportunities***

Despite of many challenges, Bigu rural Municipality has many possibilities. Bigu Rural Municipality is rich in water resources, tourism and natural herbs. The Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower project of 456 Megawatt, which is in its final stages of completion, is a national priority project. Other small hydropower projects, including Singati Hydropower (25 MW), are in the process of construction.

Finally, Bigu Rural Municipality expects to get continued cooperation and support from the Government of Nepal, private sector, civil society and donors to make this rural municipality “a model rural municipality”. I am very grateful to the chief guest, Norwegian Development Minister Honourable Nikolai Astrup, as well as other prominent guests, employees, police administration, and all the present attendants in this historic event for making it more meaningful and significant.

Once again, thank you Honourable Minister Astrup for taking your time to visit this municipality. It is a great honour to receiving you here today.

Thank you.

### **Speech of Chief Administrative Officer of Bigu Municipality**

My name is Nawaraj Oli, the Chief Administrative Officer of this Municipality.



I would like to take this opportunity to inform you all about the administrative and financial situation of this Municipality. In the beginning, I would like to inform you about the financial situation.

Our internal income in 2017/18 so far is approximately US Dollar 87 thousand 5 hundred. The major sources of income are service

charges, revenues and others. Over 60% of the income is from land revenues. Our expenditures are over USD 1076 thousand, which is 40% of the total budget allocated for this fiscal year, an additional 20 percent spending is booked for this year.

In the new municipality set up, we have now 15 staff working in the municipality, 18 staff in our ward office, 41 staff in health service centres and we have 48 educational institutions.

### ***Support from Federal Government – LGCDP***

Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) is the key contact ministry for municipality offices. MoFALD, through Local Governance and Community Development Programme, has supported various governance related activities, like e-governance, training to elected representatives and civil servants, and supported community level groups like the Community Awareness Centers. Chair of this municipality has already highlighted the e-governance support, which is very useful for this municipality.

The rural municipality has also been using following systems for achieving fast and user-friendly services to geographically remoted area of this rural municipality. LGCDP support has helped

the municipality to introduce tools for transparency and accountability, like digital notice board, digital inquiry and service room, Information and technology officer, publish monthly expenses on the website, carry out public hearing, carry out public audit and installed citizen charter.

### ***Challenges and Opportunities***

Municipality has to do a lot to become financially self-sufficient. We can generate more income by using natural herbs, minerals, hydropower, stones, and sand and through tourism.

Capacity building of employees and other stakeholders, and internal and external coordination within and among other local level units are some of the major challenges as well as opportunities for this municipality.

Thank you

### **Speech of Member of the Municipality Assembly (Elected representative from Dalit Community)**

My Name is Ramila Bishunkhe.



I am happy to take this opportunity to share my views with very important persons like the Norwegian Development Minister and our senior leaders.

It is important to note that women population in Nepal is 51.5 percent, but they are not equally represented in decision-making positions. Dalit women are the most marginalized community in Nepal. The Constitution has guaranteed dalit women's representation in local level government and therefore almost all local governments have dalit representatives in Nepal.

Our mandate is to support disadvantaged community to participate in local planning process. Identify their needs and support and monitor development activities at the ward level. We shall also give support to prepare budget for local level projects, as well as monitoring and supervision of

the ward level programmes.

We are participating in decision-making processes at ward level, consulting with local people about their development needs; coordination, networking to the government and non-government organizations to address the issues of women and marginalize communities.

### ***Challenge and Opportunities***

Gender based violence, caste based discrimination, and lack of capacity and skills for effective engagement in local governance, are major challenges to fulfill our mandate. The newly elected dalit representatives are facing many challenges, as key position holders are not willing to delegate authority to the women representatives. Support for capacity building, inclusion in key decision-making and sharing of knowledge are still challenges. Despite these challenges, we are trying to play our role at all levels of local government.

We can help to have more meaningful participation of women and marginalized people in the planning and implementation phases of programmes and to have better services to the marginalized communities.

Thank you

### **Speech of Representative of Citizen Awareness Centre (CAC)**

My name is Tara Nepali, member of Citizen Awareness Centre (CAC), which was formed four years ago. In Nepal, there are over 4 thousand and seven hundred CACs like us in which nearly 120,000 members actively engaging in empowerment and income generation activities.



For your information, we have 25 members in the group, 15 women and 10 men. We have received approximately USD 2000 for empowerment lessons and livelihood activities. We have also received approx. USD 3000 for small infrastructure projects to support our livelihood activities.

With the help from series of empowerment lessons, livelihood support and small infrastructure projects, the group of each individual has been earning additional income of USD 150 to 300. The income gained from this support is used for health, education, and other income generation activities.

Gender based violence and discrimination are major challenges for members of this group and our community in general. We have very limited income generation opportunities, lack of skilled training, and have limited access to public and private services. The CAC has regular meetings to discuss social issues. CAC has contributed to social changes in the community, and

as a result, there is now less gender based violence; the enrolment at school has increased. We have also gained more knowledge about government services, such as how to obtain citizenship, social security allowance, birth registration, health services; increased participation in local development activities. Our work is recognized by government and other actors.

We request the municipality and the government of Nepal to continue their support to the CAC, so we can increase our income and empower the marginalized communities that we represent in our community.

Thank you.