



INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (ICT4D) PROJECT: COLLABORATION WITH NEPAL COTTAGE AND SMALL INDUSTRY – BANKE

Banke District Overview

Banke District is located in Midwestern Nepal in Lumbini Province. The district covers an area of 2,337 km² (902 sq mi) with a population of 603,393 (female population 51%). To its south lies Uttar Pradesh State of India. There are three main cities in the district and one sub-metropolitan city, one municipality and eight rural municipalities. The total number of households in the district is 131, 920. According to National Agriculture Census of 2011-12, the total households involved in agriculture as an occupation is 61,443 with 10,362 holding less than 0.1 hectare of land.

Initiation of ICT4D Project

The COVID-19 situation had a severe impact on the poor, vulnerable, and socially excluded communities of the district working in formal and informal sectors, including the landless, daily wage earners, migrant returnees, and unskilled labor. Furthermore, the pandemic limited the vulnerable populations, including small scale farmers' access to market information, as well as to agricultural inputs supply and output market actors. The need for real-time market information and virtual access to market was felt to maintain their earning possibilities and meet their basic needs. It was anticipated that a digital platform would be able to connect them to market for production, inputs and marketing of products at competitive prices.

CARE Nepal, through *ICT4D Project* and in partnership with Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industry (FNCSI) Banke Chapter, National Federation of Group of Farmers (NFGF) and Local Women Entrepreneurs' Cooperative launched a digital mobile platform named 'Krishipath Mobile Application' in September 2020. The project was funded by CARE USDA - HT-COVID-19 Crisis Response Pooled Fund and was continued with support from CARE COVID-19 Response Pooled Fund till June 2022.

2,768 (42% women) active users including 2,276 farmers, 262 traders and 104 agro-vet service providers have conducted business worth over NRs.10 million (approx. \$85,000) through the app.

FNCSI implemented this initiative through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with CARE Nepal. The Krishipath mobile app helped sustain livelihood of small-scale farmers during COVID-19 lockdown when the supply chain was disrupted. It served as a one-stop digital solution for agriculture market, services, knowledge, information and bridged the supply-chain gap. The app also includes an agro meteorological advisory service aimed towards mitigating risk, and knowledge based features for disseminating information to improve agriculture practices leading to increase production for food security among small-scale farmers and women farmers.

Highlights of Krishipath Mobile App

- Key for sustaining livelihood of small-scale farmers during COVID-19 lockdown
- The agro meteorological advisory service to mitigate climate risk
- Knowledge based features to improve agriculture practices

The app has been successful in preparing foundation work for execution of digitalized agriculture input and output information with online market place in Banke.

"The farmers upload photos and price of their produce on the Krishipath app, which we also use to contact them to procure vegetables and fruits. It is very helpful as it saves time and money as I do not have to go around villages looking for vegetables and fruits. When I upload details in the app, customers also easily know where to get their vegetables and fruits at a reasonable rate. It has eliminated the middle-agent thus helping reduce the price for us as well as our customers." –

Parimita Rai, Businesswomen from a marginalized community in Banke District



"Krishipath app is helping us in many ways including information on weather, farming techniques, off-season farming, marketing of our produce and seed selection. We had planted paddy that was ready to be harvested. The app showed 90% chance of rain. I decided to hold harvesting which ultimately saved my paddy. We also produce mustard and I uploaded photos, quantity and price of mustard on the app. An entrepreneur approached me and I was able to sell it at a profitable rate than the local market which helped me profit NRs. 40,000 (approx. \$300)" - **Parash Singh, a farmer from a marginalized community in Banke District**