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Discovering Peace through Livelihood

Human Stories from the Field



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November 2011



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Foreword

Recovery from conflict is essential to sustain peace in a country like Nepal that is passing through a historical transition. Experiences from around the world have shown that relapsing into conflict is more likely when peace dividends do not reach the people, especially those who are at the receiving end.

There is a promising sign that Nepal's peace process is making some headway at the center. There are some positive developments on the ground too where the marginalised communities are beginning to understand the historical causes of marginalization and organise themselves better to echo their priorities. These communities feel stronger today than they did before. Building peace from grassroots is possible when the marginalized communities benefit from some form of tangible peace dividends which could be their increased livelihood assets and opportunities for employment. UNDP's Livelihood Recovery for Peace (LRP) project has done exactly that in the three central Tarai districts of Mahottari, Sarlahi and Rautahat since late 2009.

As poverty, conflict and natural disasters have largely hindered the development of these districts, LRP's integrated approach to livelihood improvement with a focus on peace building and conflict prevention has indeed brought about remarkable changes to people's lives. The stories documented here are examples of these changes that have brought back hope and new energy to the communities. They could be of interest to development practitioners to cross-fertilise lessons learned for social and economic empowerment of women and marginalised groups through conflict-sensitive approaches.



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Acknowledgements

It is my pleasure to present this publication “Discovering Peace Through Livelihoods” that captures some of the success stories from the past two years of implementation of the Livelihood Recovery for Peace (LRP) Project. Despite the challenging context of Central Tarai, we believe that LRP has managed to bring peace and livelihood opportunities to the vulnerable, excluded and economically deprived communities. It is our conviction that the conflict-sensitive, gender and social inclusion responsive, and integrated approach to livelihood that LRP applies has led to social and economic empowerment of beneficiary households and communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed in bringing positive changes to the communities where LRP is working. The close partnership with the District Development Committees (DDCs) of all three programme districts—Mahottari, Sarlahi, and Rautahat—has been critical in providing technical and financial support especially in the areas of community infrastructure and energy services. I am particularly grateful to the Local Development officers of the three districts and colleagues in the Local Development Office and the District Energy and Environment Units. I am also grateful to the Women and Children Office (WCO) of all three districts for its technical support in implementing LRP’s activities in the area of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Guidance, advice, and support received from the Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, and Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation through their representation in LRP’s Project Board is highly appreciated.

I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of our NGO partners and youth clubs who have been delivering services in the areas of social

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