

RAP 3
RURAL ACCESS
PROGRAMME 3



Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), Rural Access Programme 3 (RAP 3)

Direct Beneficiaries' Feedback Report

Listening to the voices of RAP participants

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Submitted by Itad

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------|---|
| DDC | District Development Committee |
| DFID | UK Department for International Development |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GoN | Government of Nepal |
| HH | Household |
| LRN | Local Roads Network |
| MEL | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Component of RAP3 |
| NPR | Nepali Rupee (currency of Nepal) |
| PM | RAP3 Programme Manager |
| RAP3 | Rural Access Programme 3 |
| RBG | Road Building Group |
| RMG | Road Maintenance Group |
| SC | Supervision Consultant (sub-contracted by RAP3) |
| SED | RAP3 Social and Economic Development Component |
| TOC | Theory of Change |

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a Beneficiary Feedback process conducted by the Independent Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) component of RAP3. This process set out to capture feedback directly from RAP beneficiaries employed in the Road Building Groups (RBGs) and Road Maintenance Groups (RMGs). The areas of enquiry include the experience of working on RAP, the benefits accrued, and satisfaction with RAP processes.

Our findings are that beneficiaries are generally satisfied with RAP and have a high level of trust and appreciation for the programme. However there are a number of issues that consistently emerge throughout this report, many of which are also corroborated by previous MEL studies.

Most beneficiaries involved in RBG and RMG works are generally satisfied with their pay, the value of an additional stream of income, and the training and equipment provided. People are generally satisfied with the skills learnt in participating in RAP and there is demand for more days of work and extra training opportunities. There are no issues with attendance recording (a large factor in how pay is distributed among groups).

Nearly all beneficiaries are properly equipped with the right basic safety equipment and whilst there are issues surrounding the comfort of some of the wearable gear, most people understand the usefulness and utility of each piece of equipment related to RAP work. RAP work is generally safe in that there are very few reported injuries, and when injuries do arise, they are normally relatively minor. Related to this is the sometimes overlooked but important aspect of first aid kits. First aid kits are not replenished frequently, which increases the chances of people not having simple medical gear available in the likelihood of an injury that requires first aid. Insurance processes are not completely understood.

People see the importance of road works. This is most evident in the road building districts, where involvement in RAP goes beyond just earning an income and there appears to be some spill-over effects. One of the biggest positives of working on RAP is that the regularity of income provides security in the short term and increases people's credit worthiness in the medium term. In addition it allows people the choice of working in their own communities close to family for at least a few seasons. However people are generally not able to save any money from RAP income.

There appears to be a general dissatisfaction with the measurement of the RAP works by supervision consultants. In many cases people do not fully understand the measurement process and feel that this is a reason they may not be paid fully. In extreme cases, as in Mugu, there is outright resentment and frustration at the way work is measured: people feel that they are being exploited because they are working to fix sections of roads that are excluded from measurement by RAP supervision consultants. This is a highly localised issue but indicates that the approaches of supervision consultants may not always be encouraging and could lead to discord.

The findings from this study, taken together with other available studies by MEL and others, should be jointly looked at in order to inform RAP programme planning going forward. There are a number of assumptions in the RAP theory of change about expected benefits to direct beneficiaries. This report

highlights some issues can be dealt with directly by the programme to improve RAP processes, whilst other issues highlight the importance of the dependencies developed by the proliferation of short-term projects like RAP and the limited longer term benefits for direct beneficiaries.

यो प्रतिबेदनमा ग्रामिण पहुँच कार्यक्रम का कामदार हरु संग गरिएको अन्तरक्रिया को नतिजाहरु समावेश गरिएको छ । अन्तरक्रिया बिशेष गरेर कामदार हरुको काम प्रतिको सन्तुस्तीमा केन्द्रित थियो । यो अध्यन ग्रामिण पहुँच कार्यक्रम अन्तर्गत रहेको स्वतन्त्र अनुगमन तथा सिकाई निकाय (Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Component) ले गरेको हो ।

नतिजाहरुको आधारमा हामी भन्न सक्छौं कि कामदारहरु समग्रमा ग्रामिण पहुँच कार्यक्रम प्रति सन्तुस्त छन् । कार्यक्रम प्रति धेरै विश्वास रहेको पाइयो साथ साथै कार्यक्रमलाई धेरै रुचाइएको पनि पाइयो । तर कतिपय नरुचाइएको अथवा भनौ कार्यक्रम प्रतिको गुनासाहरु पनि पाइयो । येस्ता बिषयहरु लाई एस प्रतिबेदनमा स-विस्तार समाबेस गरिएको छ ।

सडक बनाउने र सडक मर्मत गर्ने दुवै थरि कामदार हरु कार्यक्रमले उपलब्ध गरिदिएको अतिरिक्त आयस्रोत प्रति सन्तुस्त रहेको पाइयो । कार्यक्रम ले दिलाएको तालिम र औजार हरु प्रति पनि खासै गुनासा रहेको पाइएन । कामको सिलसिलामा सिकेका सिपहरु लाई पनि कामदारहरुले मनपराएको पाइयो तर कामदारहरुले कामको दिन बडाइनु पर्ने तथा अतिरिक्त तालिमहरु आयोजना गरिनु पर्ने माग राखे । हाजिर राख्ने तरिकामा केहि गुनासो हरु पाइएन (जुन समूहमा ज्याला वितरण गर्ने आधार हो)

लगभग सबै कामदारहरुले न्युनतम सुरक्षा साधनहरु प्रयोग गर्ने गरेको पाइयो तर कामदारहरुले साधन प्रयोग गर्न रहेका केहि अप्ठ्याराहरु पनि उलेख गरे । लगभग सबै कामदारहरुले विभिन्न साधनहरुको उपयोगिता तथा महत्व बारे राम्रो संग बुझेको पाइयो । ग्रामिण पहुँच कार्यक्रमका कामहरु सुरक्षित छन किनभने एकदमै कम कामदारहरुले मात्र काम गर्दा चोटपटक लागेको थियो भनि उलेख गरेका छन् । यदि लागिहालेमा पनि त्यो एकदमै सामान्य किसिमको थियो । यसै संग सम्बन्धित तर कहिलेकाहीं ध्यान नदिइएको बिषय प्राथमिक उपचार किट को उपलब्धता बारे छ । उक्त किट को समानहरु समय मा नै थप नगरिएको पाइयो । जसले गर्दा भबिष्यमा यदि कसैलाई चोटपटक लागेको खण्डमा सामान्य उपचार पनि पाउन नसक्ने अवस्था रहन्छ । बीमा सम्बन्धि प्रक्रिया पनि राम्रो संग बुझेको पाइएन ।

मानिसहरुले सडक खन्ने कामलाई महत्वको साथ हेरेको पाइयो । येस्तो धारणा सडक खन्ने जिल्लामा अजै धेरै रहेको पाइयो किनभने यी जिल्लाहरु मा ग्रामिण पहुँच कार्यक्रमका गतिबिधिहरु सडक खन्ना मात्र सिमित नरहेर अन्य क्षेत्रमा समेत फाइदा पुर्याइरहेको छ । ग्रामिण पहुँच कार्यक्रमको एउटा सबै भन्दा राम्रो पक्ष के भने यस कार्यक्रमले दिने महिनावारी ज्यालाले कामदारहरुको हातमा पैसा पुगेको छ र कामदारहरुको साख पनि बाढाउन मधत गरेको छ । एसको साथै मानिसहरु लाई आफ्नो गाउँ घरमै परिवार संग बसेर कम गर्ने मौका दिएको छ । येधपि यो केहि समयको लागि मात्र किन नहोस । तर मानिस हरुले ज्याला बाट खासै बचत भने गरेको पाइएन ।

कामदारहरु ले आफुले गरेको काम मापन गर्ने तरिका प्रति भने धेरै गुनासाहरु रहेको बताए । कतिपय ठाउं मा त मापन गर्ने तरिकानै नबुझेको पनि पाइयो जसले गर्दा कामदारहरु आफ्नो ज्याला कम भएको ठान्दथे । मुगु जिल्ला येस्तो अपबाद हो जहाँ कामदारहरु काम को मापन प्रति धेरै नै असंतुस्त छन् । कामदारहरु काम मापन गर्ने तरिका नमिलेको ले नै आफु हरुले धेरै काम गर्नु परेको गुनासो गर्छन ।

ग्रामिण पहुँच कार्यक्रम ले आफ्नो कार्यक्रम तर्जुमा गर्दा कामदारहरु लाई पुग्ने केहि फाइदा हरु उलेख गरेको छ । यो प्रतिबेदनले येस्ता केहि कुराहरु लाई उजागर गरेको छ जुन कार्यक्रमले आगामी दिनहरु मा आफ्नो कार्यक्रम लाई परिमार्जन गरि सुधार गर्न सक्दछ र कार्यक्रम को लक्ष्य प्राप्ति गर्न सक्दछ । तर अन्य केहि येस्ता बिषयहरु उजागर भएका छन् जुन येस्ता खालका अल्पकालीन कार्यक्रमहरु ले ग्रामिण जनताको परनिर्भरता बढाउने संग सम्बन्धित छ ।

A. Introduction

The objective of the Rural Access Programme 3 (RAP3) is to reduce poverty in Western Nepal. The programme aims to deliver economic benefits to the poor through rural road access and increased connectivity. Sustainable access to markets is expected to stimulate the local economy along the road network, whilst direct employment of poor and vulnerable groups in road construction and maintenance will also reduce poverty. RAP3 is a labour-intensive infrastructure project that targets the poor and vulnerable for inclusion on road works and maintenance. The emphasis of targeting the poor and vulnerable for work is to accrue maximum poverty-reducing benefits for people of the Mid and Far West of Nepal.

To date, there have been several studies conducted by the independent Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) of RAP3, some of which have included feedback from direct beneficiaries. MEL has now instituted a more regular (annual) process of beneficiary feedback to find out the experiences of poor and vulnerable targeted and employed by RAP to carry out road works (the intended 'direct beneficiaries' of RAP).

The findings from the feedback process are presented in this report. The report is divided into four main parts: a) Introduction, b) Methodology, c) Findings and d) Theory of Change. The findings section is divided into seven main sub-sections: section 1 covers who the RAP beneficiaries are, including a breakdown of the surveyed participants; section 2 covers motivations of people for working on RAP; section 3 covers findings from what people gain from RAP in terms of skills and knowledge; section 4 also covers what people gain from RAP but specifically focused on the wages from RAP; section 5 covers how RAP beneficiaries manage their expenses and the importance of RAP wages as well as savings and use of banking facilities; section 6 covers RAP health and safety and insurance issues; section 7 concludes by presenting findings on areas of decision making, empowerment and accountability. Each main sub-section contains a summary of the main findings. The final part of this report takes findings that are relevant to the RAP theory of change and assesses how each part of the theory of change related to direct beneficiaries holds up.

A final note – the authors of this report recognise that the term 'beneficiary' to describe the targeted poor and vulnerable individuals employed in RAP road building and maintenance groups to be unsuitable. The term beneficiary can be seen as a passive term which describes individuals as lacking agency. It is also passive in the sense that individuals simply 'receive' benefits by virtue of being on the project. In reality, individuals in RAP groups are 'participants' who actively participate in RAP works and are active *because* they are involved in the construction and maintenance of RAP roads, and hence work for the cash they receive. However, for the purposes of this report, the term beneficiary is used to avoid confusion over the terms used to describe individuals in RAP groups. The authors recommend that DFID, RAP and MEL review the use of the term 'beneficiary'.

B. Methodology

This section covers an overview of the methodology used for the RAP Direct Beneficiaries Feedback process. It covers the study process, sample size calculation, sampling method, survey tools and details of the feedback processes.

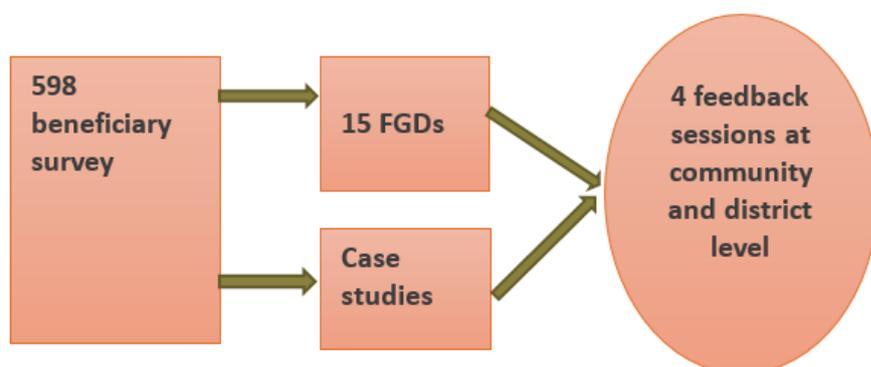
1. Study process

The enumeration process included a sample survey and 15 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). For the survey, a sample of 600 direct beneficiaries of RAP – from Road Building Groups (RBGs) and Road Maintenance Groups (RMGs) – was planned. Due to the monsoon rain, the field team was only able to complete the survey with 598 direct beneficiaries. The questions asked were qualitative in nature but were analysed from a statistical significance perspective. Questionnaires were administered using ODK-enabled smartphones. In addition a small number of individual interviews were conducted and collected as case studies.

The purpose of the combined methods was to provide two avenues for beneficiary feedback – individually and in groups. In addition, the combination of an individual survey and FGDs allowed for triangulation of findings and greater in-depth exploration on many of the issues also covered in the individual survey.

Findings from the survey were shared during the feedback sessions at the community and district level. The feedback sessions provided an opportunity for those present to provide explanations for certain results that were obtained – enabling beneficiaries to explain their responses and to clarify any responses that may not have been anticipated by the programme.

Figure 1: Study process



2. Survey Tools

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Individual interview | A structured questionnaire was developed for the individual survey. This survey sought to capture beneficiaries' individual views regarding their engagement and experience with RAP and their perspective on RAP or RAP-related processes. In some cases, audio recording were possible. |
| Focus Group Discussions (FGD) | FGDs were conducted using a list of key questions based on the individual survey. The questions were asked along similar lines as individual interview with a focus on seeking further details that may not have come through on the structured interview. |
| Case studies | A number of more detailed interviews were conducted with individual beneficiaries on specific issues, for example experience on insurance claims. |
| Key Informant Interviews | The team held 'feedback sessions' at the community level and RAP district office level. At the RAP district office level, feedback from the field was presented to RAP district teams and short interviews conducted in response to the feedback. |

Using smart phones for data collection for the individual survey helped to reduce the time lag between data collection and data analysis. A critical component of this process is that information collected at an aggregate was shared with beneficiaries and RAP staff (at the District and Central level). This was possible because data was uploaded in real time and fed to the central analysis team in Kathmandu, who were able to organise the data and guide certain FGD and feedback sessions based on specific findings from the surveys.

3. Sampling

Sampling was completed using a multistage sampling method. In the first stage, the districts were selected randomly from the construction and maintenance districts of RAP3. Four out of the eight core working districts of RAP3 were selected, with two from each of the construction and maintenance districts. The sample districts were as follows:

| Selected Districts | Type | Region |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Jumla | RMG | Mid-western |
| Achham | RMG | Far-Western |
| Mugu | RBG | Mid-western |
| Bajura | RBG | Far-Western |

While calculating the required sample size, a ± 4 percent of acceptable margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level was used. This translates to a total of 600 beneficiaries to be surveyed, with 180 beneficiaries from RMGs and 420 from RBGs, proportionate to the number of direct beneficiaries in each district. However, the total sample collected were 598 due to a reduced number of beneficiaries than anticipated in the working groups in Jumla.

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Acceptable margin of error | ±4% |
| Required confidence level | 95% |
| Required Sample Size | 546 |
| 10% non-response rate | 54 |
| Total sample size | 600 |
| Sample collected | 598 |

4. Selection of RBGs and RMGs

In the second stage of sampling, RBGs and RMGs in each district were selected using a simple random sampling method. Samples were distributed proportionately based on the proportion of direct beneficiaries in the sample districts. 25 percent of RBGs and 50 percent of RMGs were selected per district. The detail of the sample allocation is tabulated below. The names of selected RMGs and RBGs are included in the annex to this report.

| District | RMG | RBG | No of sample RMGs | Sample RMG beneficiaries | No of sample RBGs | Sample RBG beneficiaries |
|---|-----|-----|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Jumla | 12 | / | 7 | 48 | | |
| Acham | 24 | / | 13 | 121 | | |
| Mugu | / | 96 | | | 25 | 249 |
| Bajura | / | 71 | | | 18 | 180 |
| Total in districts | 36 | 167 | 20 | | 43 | |
| Total Sample Beneficiaries in RMG/RBGs | | | | 169 | | 429 |
| Final Sample Size | | | | | | 598 |

In the third stage, a systematic sampling method was used to select the sample of beneficiary workers using the beneficiary list. Since there is an average of seven beneficiaries per RMG, a census was carried out for RMGs – that is, all members of a sample RMG were interviewed. Meanwhile for RBGs, a systematic sampling method was used to select 10 beneficiaries in each RBG. Owing to the wider geographical disbursement of RMG beneficiaries across a maintenance district, the time taken to interview RMG beneficiaries was as lengthy as RBG beneficiaries who were generally clustered around one or two roads under construction in the build districts.

After selecting the RBGs and RMGs, every fourth RBG and RMG sampled was selected for the FGDs. In this way a total of 15 FGDs were conducted.

5. Quality Control

A group of two enumerators and one supervisor were assigned to each of the four districts. The supervisors were responsible for determining field assignments and locations for the interviews, reviewing the completed surveys and ensuring the quality of the data. Additionally, the research managers from the core team also visited and observed the Key Informant Interviews and conducted some of the feedback sessions. The survey teams were provided with guidance on the questionnaire if needed in real time by the research manager. Data sent by the enumerators was checked by the data analyst and feedback on the quality of the data was immediately provided to the field team.

6. Data Analysis and Reporting

Data received via ODK was compiled and analysed at regular intervals. The preliminary analysis was done to give feedback to the enumerators and supervisors following the start of the field work. The results from the first round of interviews was used to identify areas of focus for qualitative components of the survey and for the feedback sessions. Data was analysed using STATA.

C. Findings

Section 1: Who are the RAP beneficiaries and where do they work?

This section provides a breakdown of the direct beneficiaries that were surveyed and provides details on the demographics of the cohort as well as their education level. It then provides findings on work place details, including beneficiaries' feedback on how long it takes to travel to the RAP worksite. It concludes with findings on the general labour market and why they participated in the RAP work in the first place.

1.1 Demographic breakdown of RAP Direct Beneficiaries

A demographic, gender and caste breakdown of the surveyed RAP direct beneficiaries is presented in Table 1. Of the 598 RAP workers surveyed, 41.1 percent were female. In each district surveyed, the proportion of women workers was higher than the RAP group quota of 33 percent women. The literacy and educational level of respondents varied throughout the four districts. The majority of respondents (69.7 percent) belonged to the higher caste group (Brahmin, Chettri or Thakuri); 27.8 percent were Dalit, 0.7 percent Janajati and 1.8 percent were of another ethnicity (mainly *Giri* and *Nath* families who self-identified as 'others').

Table 1: Respondent Demographic

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Sex | | | | | |
| Male | 52.1 | 55.4 | 59.8 | 61.7 | 58.9 |
| Female | 47.9 | 44.6 | 40.2 | 38.3 | 41.1 |
| Level of Education | | | | | |
| Illiterate | 33.3 | 34.7 | 39.0 | 28.3 | 34.4 |
| Literate with informal schooling | 41.7 | 17.4 | 14.9 | 15.0 | 17.6 |
| Schooling years < 5 | 16.7 | 22.3 | 14.9 | 26.1 | 19.9 |
| Schooling years < 11 | 8.3 | 20.7 | 29.7 | 21.7 | 23.7 |
| Pre University | 0.0 | 5.0 | 1.6 | 8.3 | 4.2 |
| University Graduated | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.2 |
| Caste/Ethnicity | | | | | |
| Brahmin/Chettri/Thakuri | 83.3 | 55.4 | 62.7 | 85.6 | 69.7 |
| Janajati | 2.1 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| Dalit | 14.6 | 41.3 | 37.3 | 8.9 | 27.8 |
| Others | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 5.6 | 1.8 |

1.2 Where is the work and how long does it take to get there?

The survey asked respondents to report on the time required to reach their place of work and their perception regarding the acceptability of this travel time. The rationale for asking this question was to gauge whether workers found this manageable or burdensome. It can be assumed that the time taken to travel to places may not correspond to the actual time taken, as local perceptions of travel time is

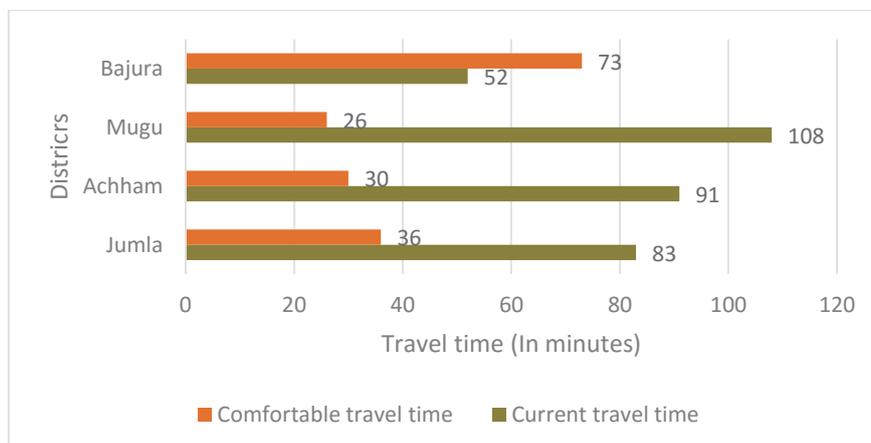
often vastly different to the actual time taken to travel. What matters here is the *perception* of the time it takes to travel to work and the amount of time they would *like* to spend travelling to the RAP worksite. When beneficiaries were asked what they thought a comfortable travel time would be, those in Mugu, Achham and Jumla identified a time significantly lower than their current travel time, around the half hour mark.



Photo 1: RAP road in Achham

Conversely, respondents in Bajura were willing, on average, to travel 21 minutes *more* than their current travel time. From the qualitative inquiry, the feedback team sought to understand *why* respondents in Bajura, a construction district, were willing to travel more in order to explain this outlier. Beneficiaries in one VDC explained that they wanted the road to extend further through their village and hence would be willing to walk longer on an extended road. The team raised this issue during the feedback session at the RAP office in Bajura. The RAP team responded by stating this was a misunderstanding on the workers' part as the road will connect to the end of the Chatara VDC as respondents hoped it will, and therefore this need not worry the workers.

Figure 1: Current distance to work and perception of comfortable distance to work (in minutes)



1.3 How do RAP beneficiaries travel to work?

Respondents were asked about how they travel to the RAP worksite. As Table 2 indicates, almost all respondents identified walking as the only method of travel to work. However 2 percent of respondents in Achham said that they also sometimes use a public bus or jeep for transport to work. In the case of maintenance groups, workers are supposed to get free rides on public vehicles during travel to work. During the feedback session in Achham, RAP staff told the Feedback team that their workers do not usually have to use vehicles because the work place is less than one hour's walk away. However, in the few days in a year when they have to travel 3 to 4 hours to get to the workplace, they are entitled to a free ride using public transport. RAP staff admitted that they have not oriented local transport authorities in this regard. This may play a significant role in beneficiary use of public vehicles as transportation to work in the future.

Table 2: Means of transportation and opinion about the distance to work

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|---|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Means of transportation | | | | | |
| Walk | 100 | 99 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Bicycle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Motorcycle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Public bus/jeep | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Opinion about the distance to work place | | | | | |
| Manageable | 68.8 | 48.8 | 34.5 | 81.7 | 54.3 |
| Too far away | 31.3 | 51.2 | 65.5 | 18.3 | 45.7 |

1.4 Previous work

The survey sought to gain insight into the type of work, if any, RAP beneficiaries had been engaged with before they enrolled. This assessment helps to understand typical work of those involved in RAP. Table 3 below presents findings on what beneficiaries had been engaged with prior to RAP and where this work was located (to determine whether people had been migrating prior to RAP).

The definition of a job was understood as work where participants received a regular waged income. Of those surveyed, a little over half said that said work on RAP was their first ever job (80.1 percent of female respondents compared to 40.6 percent of male respondents). This indicates a higher likelihood that women employed on RAP were not previously involved in any waged work, particularly construction work. When examining closely the correlation between previous work experience in construction and non-construction related work and its usefulness to RAP work, the data shows that those with construction related experience find it highly useful for RAP works, whilst those who have not had prior construction related work experience, they find this either not very useful or only useful to some extent in the RAP job.

The Feedback team asked why people would choose RAP wage labour over a salaried job. This question was raised in FGD and the feedback sessions. From the FGDs, most people said that salaried jobs referred to security guard jobs in India. Discussing further, people said that they chose RAP work because it provided an opportunity to work in their own village and community and allowed them to be closer to their families and contribute to the development of their own communities.

Table 3: Beneficiaries prior job experience

| | Group Type | | Sex | | Total |
|---|------------|------|------|--------|-------------|
| | RBG | RMG | Male | Female | |
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| RAP work is a first job | 49.3 | 76.2 | 40.6 | 80.1 | 56.9 |
| Main involvement prior to RAP | | | | | |
| Daily wage Labor | 55.1 | 47.5 | 51.7 | 63.3 | 53.9 |
| Salary (please put types-e.g. India,...??) | 26.2 | 47.5 | 34.5 | 8.2 | 29.5 |
| Owned a small business | 4.6 | 0 | 4.3 | 2 | 3.9 |
| Agricultural work | 14.2 | 5 | 9.6 | 26.5 | 12.8 |
| Location of prior job | | | | | |
| Within district | 68.4 | 52.5 | 58.9 | 95.9 | 65.9 |
| Outside district | 3.7 | 2.5 | 3.8 | 2 | 3.5 |
| Outside country | 28 | 45 | 37.3 | 2 | 30.6 |
| Nature of the previous job | | | | | |
| Construction related | 40.8 | 57.5 | 43.1 | 44.9 | 43.4 |
| Agriculture | 26.2 | 5 | 19.6 | 36.7 | 22.9 |
| Services (what are they??) | 28 | 22.5 | 30.1 | 14.3 | 27.1 |
| Other | 5.1 | 15 | 7.2 | 4.1 | 6.6 |
| Extent to which prior experience helpful for the RAP job | | | | | |
| Very much | 21.6 | 47.5 | 26.8 | 20.4 | 25.6 |
| To some extent | 54.1 | 20 | 44 | 69.4 | 48.8 |
| Not at all | 24.3 | 32.5 | 29.2 | 10.2 | 25.6 |

1.5 Selection of group members

The Feedback team used the FGD sessions to explore the selection process of RBGs and RMGs and to discuss their satisfaction with this process. There was no strong dissatisfaction over the selection process. Participants observed that the selection of group members followed a participatory process where all eligible to be involved were consulted. In the case of the RBGs, participants mentioned that no eligible household was excluded from being approached to be part of a RBG. In the case of Mugu, some groups even had several representatives from a single household. In the case of RMGs, the selection process was voluntary – that is, those who wanted the job were considered. From the FGDs, people mentioned that this list of ‘volunteers’ would be later approved by a panel including local leaders of various political parties.

Summary:

- Most RAP beneficiaries are not educated or have a very low level of education. When broken down by gender, women are much more likely to be illiterate than men.
- It is more likely for women than men that RAP is the first waged job they have ever had. If women ever had a job it is likely that it was located within their own village, whereas for men it is more likely to have been outside of Nepal. This strongly correlates with the pattern that men are likely to have migrated abroad (to India and elsewhere).

- Nearly all beneficiaries walk to the RAP worksite, and almost all feel that the time taken to travel is not a comfortable distance.
- Whilst earning additional income is a strong factor, choosing RAP work is also connected to the feeling of 'recognition' and being connected - people want their village to be connected to a road and this is a strong motivating factor, particularly in new construction areas. People also choose RAP because it provides work in their own village and community and allows them to be closer to their families and contribute to the development of their own communities. These findings have filtered through in other MEL studies including multiple RCA studies corroborating their findings – spending a season in one's own community is a strong motivating factor.

Section 2: Why do people choose to work on RAP?

This section focuses on why people choose to work on RAP, what alternative employment options exist and their overall satisfaction with RAP. It also looks at what people think they would do if RAP didn't exist and also what they will likely be engaged with after RAP finishes.

2.1 Prevailing work opportunities

Beneficiaries were asked what other types of job opportunities are available in their village. This was a multiple answer question. The overwhelming majority of respondents (72.9 percent) stated that seasonal work in agriculture is available, and more than half said an alternative part-time job in construction is available.

Table 4: Reasons for choosing RAP job, and respondents' involvement in absence of RAP job

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|---|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Job opportunities available in the village | | | | | |
| Seasonal job in agriculture | 68.8 | 49.6 | 79.5 | 80.6 | 72.9 |
| Part time in construction | 64.6 | 43.8 | 51.8 | 63.9 | 54.9 |
| Other similarly skill | 0.0 | 7.4 | 4.0 | 16.1 | 8.0 |
| None | 0.0 | 25.6 | 1.2 | 11.1 | 9.0 |
| Others | 8.3 | 3.3 | 5.2 | 8.3 | 6.0 |
| Reasons for choosing RAP job | | | | | |
| Because RAP job is better paid | 35.4 | 15.7 | 31.7 | 87.2 | 45.5 |
| There is no alternative | 83.3 | 55.4 | 90.4 | 32.8 | 65.4 |
| RAP job is close to my home | 66.7 | 49.6 | 32.9 | 63.3 | 48.2 |
| More appropriate to the skills I have | 4.2 | 3.3 | 8.4 | 3.3 | 5.5 |
| Better working conditions | 10.4 | 4.1 | 38.6 | 47.2 | 31.9 |
| Contract ended in other jobs | 2.1 | 2.5 | 3.2 | 1.1 | 2.3 |
| Flexibility | 0.0 | 1.7 | 26.5 | 1.1 | 11.7 |
| Others | 4.2 | 4.1 | 5.2 | 22.2 | 10.0 |

2.2 Choosing RAP

When asked about the reasons for choosing RAP, surveyed beneficiaries were not limited to a single answer and were allowed to give as many replies as deemed appropriate. The majority of respondents (65.4 percent) surveyed said that they chose to work on RAP because there was no other alternative option for work, while 45.5 percent also said the RAP job is better paid than alternatives, as the above table shows. Other significant drivers included the proximity of the work to people's homes, better working conditions and flexibility.

Beneficiaries were also asked whether they would leave RAP for another job, with only 4% of responders saying that they would. The Feedback team used the FGDs to triangulate the above findings from the surveys. When asked about what work they preferred, RAP beneficiaries expressed a preference for RAP work because it was longer term compared to the available alternatives, particularly in comparison to other construction related work. During the FGDs, beneficiaries were

further asked to discuss in detail why they were not willing to leave RAP for other work opportunities. A number of reasons emerged from the FGDs:

- a) **Trust in RAP:** beneficiaries are confident that they will eventually get paid for their work even when pay is delayed. They went on to say that working in other construction related work is risky because contractors are not transparent about pay rates and that they don't receive full payment regularly. However, respondents believed this was not the case with RAP.
- b) **The wage rate in other construction jobs is lower** than what they were getting from RAP. The wage given by RAP is a district wage rate, which in theory is also applied to all Government administered construction work. However people cited that the actual pay never matches the district pay on other work, whereas pay on RAP is predictable and at the level promised.
- c) **People felt that the RAP job is flexible.** In the case of RMG groups, members work only 12 days a month so it is up to them to decide which days to work and what time to work. They are given the flexibility to work in their own field as well and do other activities depending on need. In the case of RBGs, they have the time and convenience of working in their field in the harvesting season because road construction is stopped due to the monsoon rains.
- d) **People felt that their own credit worthiness increased** as a result of their wage-earning participation on RAP. Respondents mentioned the ease with which they are able to borrow money because lenders are confident that they can repay such loans. Also they easily get items (food and other items) on credit if they are not paid in time, because of this credit worthiness they have developed as a result of their RAP job. People expressed this as a reason to not leave RAP.



Photo 2: Birds-eye view of road building corridor in Bajura

2.3 What will people do when RAP finishes?

Beneficiaries were asked what they thought they would be doing after the RAP job. Half of respondents thought they would likely work on their fields after the RAP job ended. These results indicate that people will be left to work in their own agriculture in absence of RAP.

Table 5: Employment after RAP

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|---------------------------------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| What after RAP job | | | | | |
| Find another job in the village | 0.0 | 24.0 | 4.8 | 8.3 | 9.4 |
| Start my own business | 8.3 | 9.1 | 17.3 | 17.2 | 14.9 |
| Don't know yet | 25.0 | 33.1 | 7.2 | 11.7 | 15.2 |
| Work on my field | 60.4 | 24.0 | 65.9 | 48.3 | 51.7 |
| Find job outside the district | 2.1 | 0.0 | 1.6 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| Go abroad | 4.2 | 9.9 | 3.2 | 13.3 | 7.7 |

Summary:

- RAP work is seen positively: beneficiaries are happy with the work and trust RAP. In the absence of RAP, people would revert back to engaging with work they were previously engaged with, whether that is migrating for work or working in agriculture, as there is a lack of other stable income earning opportunities available locally. People are unlikely to start their own business, particularly in their own village. The proportion of people who would consider leaving RAP for a job abroad is low, which highlights the importance people attach to well-paid work within their own community.
- In the build district, there are other construction ('cash for works') projects and work available. However when asked what they would prefer, RAP beneficiaries express a preference for RAP work because it is longer term (whilst still being short-term and finite overall) than other construction work alternatives. RAP provides strong security of regular income (as expressed in later sections of this report) and this is another factor in choosing RAP work.
- People are unwilling to leave RAP for many reasons; an important reason cited is that RAP work increases their credit-worthiness locally and the ease with which they can borrow money. This is strongly corroborated in later sections of this report and is in line with MEL findings in previous studies.

Section 3: Participation on RAP – what do people gain?

The previous section focused on why people choose to work on RAP. This section reports on findings relating to what beneficiaries feel they gain from participating in RAP.

3.1 Acquisition of skills

Defining ‘skill’ was not a simple task because of the vast range of possible technical competencies and definitions it could cover. In the survey, skill simply refers to broad areas of technical work that all beneficiaries are either involved in or exposed to. The Feedback team used the FGDs as an opportunity to explore further the understanding of skills and the applicability of said skills.

Table 6: Acquisition of skills through RAP job and utilization for other purposes

| | Construction | | Gender | | Total |
|--|--------------|-------|--------|--------|-------------|
| | RBG | RMG | Male | Female | |
| Most important skill learnt through RAP job | % | % | % | % | % |
| Use of first aid kit | 0.23 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 |
| Knowledge to ensure safety in construction work | 1.16 | 14.29 | 4.3 | 5.7 | 4.9 |
| Gabion wire weaving | 11.16 | 0.6 | 12.8 | 1.6 | 8.2 |
| Construction related skills | 86.51 | 83.33 | 81.5 | 91.5 | 85.6 |
| Managerial skills | 0.7 | 1.19 | 1.1 | 0.4 | 0.8 |
| Conducting social/public audits | 0.23 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| Able to use skills outside RAP | 95.6 | 85.71 | 94.6 | 90.2 | 92.8 |
| Skills are used in: | | | | | |
| Household level | 31.6 | 48.21 | 36.9 | 35.4 | 36.3 |
| Livelihood promotion | 0.93 | 1.19 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 1.0 |
| Similar construction work | 27.21 | 29.17 | 34.9 | 17.5 | 27.8 |
| Not used yet | 40 | 21.43 | 27.0 | 45.9 | 34.8 |
| Other | 0.23 | 0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Which skill is used outside the RAP job | | | | | |
| Use of first aid kit | 2.92 | 21.53 | 5.7 | 10.8 | 7.8 |
| Knowledge to ensure safety in construction work | 20.68 | 47.92 | 29.7 | 24.8 | 27.8 |
| Gabion wire weaving | 32.36 | 0 | 37.5 | 3.6 | 24.0 |
| Construction related skills | 98.54 | 92.36 | 97.6 | 96.0 | 96.9 |
| Managerial skills | 4.87 | 0 | 4.5 | 2.3 | 3.6 |
| Conducting social/public audits | 1.95 | 1.39 | 2.4 | 0.9 | 1.8 |
| Would have learnt skill in absence of RAP | 16.7 | 12.5 | 21.9 | 6.5 | 15.6 |

As Table 6 shows, the majority (85.6 percent) of respondents cited construction related skills as the most important skill they had acquired through the RAP job. When asked whether they could use these skills outside of RAP, an overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they could. Only a small percentage (15.6 percent) of respondents said that would have learnt the skills in the absence of the RAP job, which suggests that RAP plays a useful role in imparting new skills/knowledge that people find useful outside of immediate RAP work. This was further explored through the FGDs to

understand what *specific construction* related skills they had learnt. This produced the following findings:

- a) **Levelling while constructing walls, stone stacking for walls** - this was specific to the beneficiaries of RBGs who now know how to level supporting wall structures. The importance of stacking stones while constructing a wall is another important skill they have learnt.
- b) **Filling pits or potholes with rocks (commonly known as stone soiling)** - beneficiaries said they were unaware of the simple yet effective techniques used to fill potholes with stones and mud prior to the RAP job.
- c) **Slope design for road drainage system** - designing road drains requires skills so that water flows in the desired direction. This knowledge was also learnt through the RAP job.
- d) **Assembling Gabion baskets** - the gabion wire comes in pieces and workers have to assemble these into an enclosed box shape that hold the stones in place.
- e) **Earth cutting** and alignment techniques to prevent landslides.



Photo 3: Gabion wire basket assembling in Bajura

In the FGDs, people explained that these skills were not only used in construction work, but also for general repair and improvement works at household and community level. They found these skills helpful in managing their land, building walls and constructing basic drains to stop soil erosion around their property, and for the maintenance of their own house. A few mentioned that they had received paid work for basic construction work of their neighbour's house and directly attributed this to the skills gained on RAP and that others also recognised this.

Case Study: Recognition through RAP

A Dalit woman in Jumla described the changes that she felt after working with RAP. She was selected in the RMG because she was poor and from the Dalit community. Before working on RAP she had hardly earned any cash income. She worked as a potter to earn cash but that was limited only to 2 or 3 days in a month. After she started working in RAP she could earn an average of NPR 6,600 per month. This has helped her to manage monthly household expenditure on food and education for her children. In addition to generating income, she said she was able to learn skills like using first aid kits, which was important to her and she could use those skills in her community where there is a lack of people having such skills.

She further added that she is now working as the treasurer of the group even though she is Dalit. She felt no caste discrimination in the group and also in the community. She further revealed that the group needs her to sign off in order to draw money out from the bank and also her role in decision making and planning in the group made her feel empowered.

Dalit Woman from Grajyangkot VDC, Jumla

3.2. Participation in training

The Feedback team used the survey to explore whether direct beneficiaries had participated in any formal training. As Table 7 shows, only half of respondents said they had participated in any type of training from RAP. Of those that had attended RAP training, a significant proportion found the training adequate. Further analysis shows that those with previous experience in construction related works have a higher demand (63%) for further training compared to those who have never had prior construction work experience (53%). Those with less construction experience also state that training is adequate whilst those with some experience and a higher demand for training feel that it is not adequate. This seems to suggest that those who are more experienced want further training that is better suited to their skill level, compared to others who less experienced and feel the training is fine.

The Feedback team used the FGDs to dive deeper into the findings and found that the reason why only half of the respondents had participated in any formal training was because only 2 workers from each working group (RBG or RMG) are selected for the training. After this, those trained are required to train everyone else. As the RMG groups are typically much smaller than RBG groups, it is unsurprising that a higher proportion of RMG members have been trained.

Furthermore, beneficiaries seemed to be satisfied with the process where typically it was the steering committee members who were selected. It was mentioned however that while selecting training participants, there was a preference for people with prior experience and knowledge in construction related work. Some beneficiaries also went on to say that they were happy not being selected for the training because the pay during the training is half of what they could make while working. Beneficiaries in the building groups in Bajura and Mugu felt that the effectiveness of their work was limited because of insufficient skills training and felt that they could deliver the work better and faster if there were more trained workers or opportunities for training.

This issue was raised during the feedback session in the RAP district offices and they were uniform in saying that training all beneficiaries is never possible, and that knowledge has to be transferred from

trained to untrained workers because of the logistics of arranging training for all participants. In addition to this training modality, they also learn skills during supervision visits by RAP staff and the supervision consultants. Thus, they argued training all group members is not possible and the nature of the job implies a greater focus on on-the-job training.

Table 7 Beneficiary Participation and Perception of Training

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|---|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Participated in the training | 95.8 | 91.7 | 41.4 | 31.7 | 53.0 |
| Nature of the training: | | | | | |
| Construction related trainings | 100.0 | 97.3 | 74.8 | 54.4 | 82.7 |
| Health and Safety | 91.3 | 90.1 | 73.8 | 45.6 | 77.0 |
| Managerial trainings | 19.6 | 3.6 | 15.5 | 15.8 | 12.0 |
| Others | 0.0 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 28.1 | 5.7 |
| Adequacy of the training | | | | | |
| Adequate | 56.5 | 79.3 | 58.3 | 35.1 | 61.2 |
| Inadequate | 43.5 | 20.7 | 41.7 | 64.9 | 38.8 |
| Confidence to utilize the skills in work | | | | | |
| Very confident | 35.4 | 59.5 | 24.5 | 20.6 | 31.3 |
| Confident | 56.3 | 38.8 | 74.3 | 72.8 | 65.2 |
| Somewhat Confident but may need retraining | 6.3 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 6.1 | 2.8 |
| Not confident need retraining | 2.1 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.7 |

Table 8 presents data on when respondents were last trained and the duration of the training. It shows that most people were trained over a year ago and shows a mixed picture of the duration of training. Evidently many people want more training.

Table 8: Training adequacy and need for refresher and more training

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|---|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Timing of training | | | | | |
| Recently (defined as within last few months) | 0.0 | 23.4 | 1.0 | 21.1 | 12.3 |
| Less than 6 months | 13.0 | 16.2 | 18.4 | 8.8 | 15.1 |
| Less than a year | 32.6 | 6.3 | 5.8 | 12.3 | 11.0 |
| More than a year | 54.3 | 54.1 | 74.8 | 57.9 | 61.5 |
| Adequacy of the training duration | | | | | |
| Duration of the training was fine | 41.3 | 64.9 | 43.7 | 36.8 | 49.5 |
| Duration should be longer | 54.3 | 9.9 | 50.5 | 43.9 | 35.6 |
| Duration should be shorter | 4.3 | 25.2 | 5.8 | 19.3 | 14.8 |
| Had refresher training | 28.3 | 73.9 | 24.3 | 14.0 | 40.4 |
| Wants more training | 93.8 | 39.7 | 51.4 | 75.6 | 59.7 |

Summary:

- People are generally satisfied with the skills learnt in participating on RAP. However not all people are trained, and it is assumed that knowledge from training will automatically pass down to individuals in groups. For RMGs this is usually not as problematic because the groups are small, compared to RBGs. However, more importantly skills are often learnt on-the-job.
- Whilst the picture of training adequacy appears mixed, there does seem to be a demand for more training. People recognise the importance of general construction skills and knowledge. Given the multitude of other construction related work available (even if it is less well paid than RAP) there is a recognition that the skills can be used elsewhere. There has been some, albeit minor, spill-over effects with people using skills on construction gained from RAP to improve structures around their home or at the community level.

Section 4: Wages from RAP

This section covers a range of issues concerning the primary benefit for the direct beneficiaries working on RAP – the wage or cash payment for work on construction and maintenance. It covers understanding of attendance records (on which payments are based), performance issues, and timing of wage payments.

4.1 Attendance

The survey asked a number of questions to gauge workers' understanding of attendance recording. Table 9 below presents data related to beneficiary worker attendance and how it is recorded. Nearly all respondents said that their attendance was recorded daily and that they had access to the records.

Table 9: Details of attendance recording

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| How is attendance recorded | | | | | |
| Daily | 100.0 | 99.2 | 99.6 | 100.0 | 99.7 |
| Don't know | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Who records the attendance | | | | | |
| Social mobilizer | 2.1 | 0.0 | 74.5 | 1.7 | 31.6 |
| Supervision consultant | 0.0 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 1.2 |
| Chairperson of the group | 97.9 | 96.7 | 25.1 | 51.1 | 53.3 |
| Others | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 45.6 | 13.9 |
| Don't know | | | | | |
| Has access to attendance? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 99.6 | 98.9 | 99.5 |

The average number of paid days per month was reported at 10 days for RMGs and 26 days for RBGs. The qualitative findings from the FGDs suggest there was no issue on the number of days paid in the case of building groups. However, in case of maintenance groups there was strong demand to increase the paid days to at least 15 days per month. Respondents were then asked whether they are aware why they are paid for 10 days. Beneficiaries generally understood that days are allocated based on the work volume so paid days cannot be increased unless there is additional work. Demand to increase paid days was based on RMG workers' expectation to have more work rather than being unable to deliver the work in the stipulated time.

| क्रम | नाम वार | १ | २ | ३ |
|------|----------------------|----|----|---|
| १ | उमर अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| २ | दात अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| ३ | का अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| ४ | जमता देवी अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| ५ | सेर अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| ६ | कलाउवाहाडु अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| ७ | दौल्ला देवी अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| ८ | केत्रामालि देवी अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| ९ | रुप्या देवी अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| १० | गन्दा देवी अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| ११ | लपेसु अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| १२ | धिरेंद्र वाहाडु अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| १३ | रुठु अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| १४ | राफिका कु अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| १५ | तुली देवी वापा | १ | १ | १ |
| १६ | अमरा करुपाला | १ | १ | १ |
| १७ | प्रेम रापरा | १ | १ | १ |
| १८ | धामिन्द्र पाछामप | १ | १ | १ |
| १९ | लाला अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| २० | ओल्ला देवी अमठी | १ | १ | १ |
| | | १९ | १६ | |

Photo 4: Timesheets kept by RAP group

road inspection from the RAP district team. Whilst these findings may not be generalisable across all RAP groups, it highlights the range of issues that beneficiaries feel should be addressed.

Table 10: Wage payment details

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|---|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Has designated pay day (Yes or No) | 95.8 | 10.7 | 18.9 | 12.2 | 21.4 |
| Salary is paid on | | | | | |
| First week following work month | 0.0 | 47.9 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 10.2 |
| End of the every week | 0.0 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| After Every two weeks | 89.6 | 2.5 | 4.0 | 3.3 | 10.4 |
| End of the month | 2.1 | 45.5 | 0.0 | 66.7 | 29.4 |
| Random day in a month | 8.3 | 2.5 | 96.0 | 27.8 | 49.5 |
| Other | | | | | |
| Desired frequency of pay | | | | | |
| Daily | 2.1 | 0.8 | 1.2 | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| Weekly | 6.3 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 0.6 | 1.7 |
| Twice in a month | 0.0 | 2.5 | 4.4 | 3.9 | 3.5 |
| Monthly | 91.7 | 95.0 | 92.8 | 93.9 | 93.5 |
| Amount of pay in last two months were same | 100.0 | 91.7 | 87.1 | 58.9 | 80.6 |
| Knows why monthly pay is different | | 0.0 | 37.5 | 66.2 | 52.6 |
| Had been explained regarding pay calculation | 95.8 | 78.5 | 37.8 | 50.0 | 54.3 |
| Who explained | | | | | |

4.2 Understanding payment

Most beneficiaries want to be paid on a monthly basis but how this is actually paid differs between districts, with some paid every two weeks and others once at the end of the month. Generally most people report that they are not underpaid. Most also report that there is no variation in their pay month-to-month. Where variations were reported, a number of reasons were cited in the feedback sessions. These included (i) because their attendance was lower (absenteeism); (ii) because of the nature of the work they were assigned - stone cutting work pays less and earthen work paid more because this work can be completed faster; (iii) hard earthen work is measured as soft earthen work; hence the work is slower and members are not able to receive the same pay because of the slower completion rate which was cited as unfair; (iv) the long distance to work meant they had less time to work per day.

A general feeling from the feedback sessions was that people felt a lack of clarity on the method of work volume measurement and some were sceptical about how supervision consultants conducted this process. People feel they are underpaid due to a lack of regular

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|--|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Social mobilizer | 4.4 | 3.2 | 21.3 | 6.7 | 9.5 |
| Supervision consultant | 34.8 | 15.8 | 55.3 | 23.3 | 32.0 |
| Chairperson of the group | 65.2 | 6.3 | 47.9 | 63.3 | 42.5 |
| RAP staff | 93.5 | 82.1 | 74.5 | 37.8 | 69.2 |
| Other group member | 2.2 | 2.1 | 4.3 | 12.2 | 5.5 |
| NGO staff | 2.2 | 0.0 | 25.5 | 2.2 | 8.3 |
| Government official | 2.2 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Level of understanding of the explanation | | | | | |
| Fully | 39.1 | 37.9 | 6.4 | 33.3 | 27.7 |
| Partly | 60.9 | 34.7 | 81.9 | 61.1 | 59.4 |
| Not at all | 0.0 | 27.4 | 11.7 | 5.6 | 12.9 |
| Ever underpaid | 2.1 | 4.1 | 47.4 | 8.3 | 23.2 |
| Of which, don't know why they were unpaid | 100.0 | 40.0 | 56.8 | 20.0 | 52.5 |
| Paid less because of non-compliance | 4.2 | 0.0 | 14.5 | 7.2 | 8.5 |

4.3 The case of Mugu

As noted, most people don't feel they have been underpaid but there is an outlier in Mugu, where nearly half of respondents reported they have been underpaid whereby underpaid was understood as a late payment. The feedback team explored these findings in a selection of FGDs. From the people the team spoke to in Mugu it emerged that it took between 5 to 6 months to receive payments in each year over the last 3 years, though people explained that they accepted this as they trusted RAP and were confident that they would eventually get paid. Further investigation by the feedback team at the district level unearthed that a total of 11 payments had been made over the last 3 years, however not all groups had been paid in those 11 instalments. A table in the Annex is provided to verify this. Beneficiaries said that payments was infrequent because of delays in measuring the completed work. They explained that if an RBG collectively fails to complete the assigned work by the 21st day of every month, the section of work is not measured by RAP and is rolled over to the 21st of the subsequent month.

Of greater concern was that delays meant increasing the likelihood that landslides will damage the roads they had constructed, meaning that their work didn't get measured. As a result they said that they have to repair the section affected by the rain and landslide in time for the next measurement, without additional pay. There were multiple examples in Mugu (and one case in Bajura) where beneficiaries said that the RAP team demolished a portion of a constructed side wall that had already been approved by a supervision consultant. Respondents felt that has also led to more work for the same equivalent pay. The issue on rejecting the work approved by a supervision consultant was presented to the RAP district team in Mugu during the feedback session. The team strongly argued that it is reasonable to do so if it does not meet design criteria.

Summary:

- There is no major issue in attendance recording and almost all beneficiaries have access to their attendance record. Whilst feelings of being underpaid are apparent in some cases, this is largely not attributed to worker attendance records which people are generally satisfied with. There is a general demand for more work and paid days. Across all districts people generally would like to be paid every month.
- Generally people do not fully understand the way work is *measured* by supervision consultants. However there is significant dissatisfaction in Mugu where there has only been 6 payment instalments over the last 3 years. Many beneficiaries here are unhappy with the supervision consultant. This feeling of dissatisfaction in Mugu comes across strongly throughout the Feedback findings. People are generally not content with the approach taken by the supervision consultant which seems out of line compared to other districts.
- The arbitrariness of a 21st date (which matches with RAP' requirement for reporting data from the district to the central level) is causing confusion and further dissatisfaction in Mugu where many people are aggrieved that they are doing additional work when they need to go back to incomplete sections that were not considered by supervision consultants and repair these from further damage.

Section 5: Managing expenses, use of savings and access to financial institutions

This section presents findings on how direct beneficiaries of RAP manage their regular household expenses and whether they have savings or access to any form of finance.

5.1 Income and expenses

Table 14 below presents information regarding income and expenses. Beneficiaries were also asked how they would normally manage their expenses in the absence of RAP work. These questions were asked in order to explore the significance of RAP wages. As the data shows, the majority of RAP beneficiaries cited RAP as the main source of income for managing their household expenses. When asked how they manage their expenses if they are not paid on time (hypothetically or in reality), the majority either build up debt until they receive pay, or borrow money.

Table 11: Income and Expenses

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|--|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Ways of managing expenses | | | | | |
| Wage from RAP job | 97.9 | 79.3 | 91.2 | 91.7 | 89.5 |
| Daily wage from another job | 0.0 | 2.5 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| Earnings from other family members | 0.0 | 5.0 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.0 |
| Sale of agriculture products | 2.1 | 10.7 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 4.0 |
| Other | 0.0 | 2.5 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.8 |
| Managing expenses if not paid on time | | | | | |
| From savings | 2.1 | 5.0 | 3.2 | 11.7 | 6.0 |
| I borrow money | 29.2 | 43.8 | 18.9 | 35.0 | 29.6 |
| Earnings of other family members | 2.1 | 9.9 | 4.4 | 11.7 | 7.5 |
| From sale of Agriculture products/Livestock | 8.3 | 9.1 | 14.1 | 12.2 | 12.0 |
| No expense | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.2 |
| Build up debt until I receive pay | 58.3 | 32.2 | 59.4 | 28.9 | 44.6 |
| Main use of wage | | | | | |
| Food | 87.5 | 76.9 | 95.6 | 65.6 | 82.1 |
| Children's school fee | 12.5 | 20.7 | 2.8 | 30.0 | 15.4 |
| Medicine | 0.0 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| Clothes | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Others | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 4.4 | 1.7 |
| Would it be possible to finance these expense in absence of RAP job | | | | | |
| Yes fully | 2.1 | 8.3 | 4.4 | 12.8 | 7.5 |
| To some extent | 85.4 | 74.4 | 87.6 | 72.8 | 80.3 |
| Not at all | 12.5 | 17.4 | 8.0 | 14.4 | 12.2 |

5.2 Use of savings and access to finance

Beneficiaries were asked whether they had savings and, if they did, where they saved and for what purpose. The survey did *not* attempt to ask beneficiaries how much they saved. As Table 15 shows, close to half of all surveyed beneficiaries said they did not have any savings. In total, three-quarters of respondents claimed to have a bank account with a financial institution. This proportion was higher in Bajura and Mugu (above 90 percent), due to RBG savings groups. If RBG savings groups are discounted (this is compulsory savings by RAP) then only 28% of direct beneficiaries, mostly all in maintenance districts, have accounts with commercial or development banks for savings (whether savings are made or not).

Table 12: Savings and use of bank

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Use of savings | | | | | |
| No savings | 41.7 | 66.1 | 32.1 | 38.9 | 41.8 |
| Accumulate savings at home | 31.3 | 22.3 | 40.2 | 27.8 | 32.1 |
| Accumulate savings at MFIs/Banks | 16.7 | 8.3 | 19.7 | 9.4 | 14.0 |
| Accumulate savings at RBG saving Groups | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.6 | 16.1 | 6.4 |
| Lend for interest | 8.3 | 0.0 | 2.4 | 5.0 | 3.2 |
| Other | 2.1 | 3.3 | 2.0 | 2.8 | 2.5 |
| Purpose of saving | | | | | |
| To acquire land | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 11.4 | 3.2 |
| Capital investment for foreign employment | 0.0 | 1.3 | 2.5 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| For kids' education | 75.0 | 50.0 | 51.3 | 50.0 | 52.4 |
| To pay loans | 15.0 | 21.3 | 3.8 | 12.9 | 12.8 |
| Lend for interest | 5.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.3 | 1.6 |
| To start IGAs | 0.0 | 15.0 | 36.3 | 4.3 | 17.6 |
| Others | 5.0 | 12.5 | 6.3 | 15.7 | 10.8 |
| Has bank account with financial institution | 58.3 | 19.8 | 93.6 | 96.7 | 76.8 |
| What type of financial institution? | | | | | |
| Commercial banks | 57.1 | 12.5 | 18.9 | 5.2 | 15.7 |
| Development banks/MFIs | 39.3 | 70.8 | 7.3 | 5.7 | 12.0 |
| Cooperatives | 0.0 | 16.7 | 0.4 | 12.1 | 5.7 |
| RBG saving groups | 3.6 | 0.0 | 73.4 | 77.0 | 66.7 |
| Reasons for not having a bank account | | | | | |
| Bank is too far away | 65.0 | 33.0 | 0.0 | 16.7 | 33.1 |
| I don't trust bank | 0.0 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.4 |
| I don't know about banks | 10.0 | 24.7 | 31.3 | 83.3 | 25.9 |
| Others | 25.0 | 40.2 | 68.8 | 0.0 | 39.6 |
| Taken loan from a RBG saving group | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.9 | 46.7 | 22.9 |
| For what purpose | | | | | |
| Food expenses | 0.0 | 0.0 | 17.3 | 26.2 | 22.6 |
| Child's education | 0.0 | 0.0 | 9.6 | 27.4 | 20.4 |
| Medical expenses | 0.0 | 0.0 | 19.2 | 7.1 | 11.7 |
| For income generating activity | 0.0 | 0.0 | 46.2 | 21.4 | 31.4 |
| Others | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.7 | 17.9 | 13.9 |

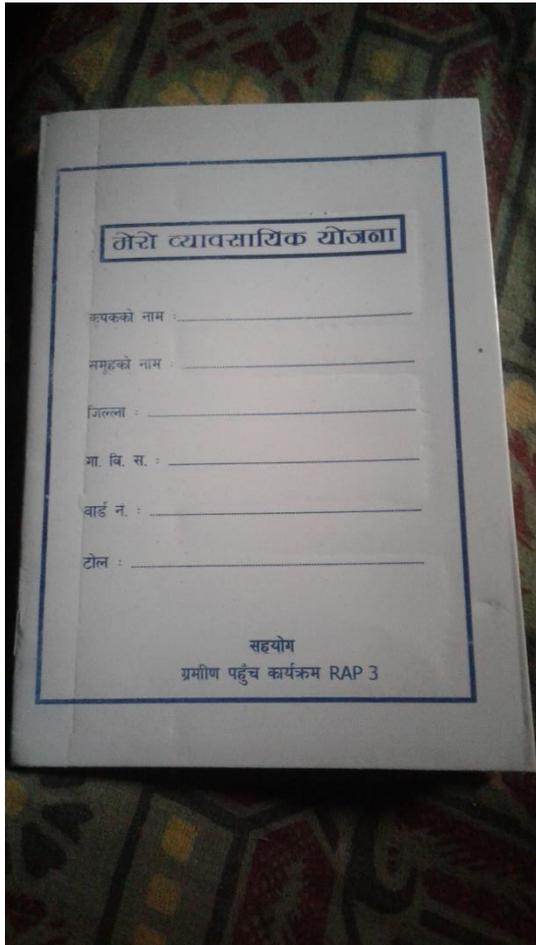


Photo 5: RAP savings passbook for RBG members

During the feedback sessions, the issue of what ‘other’ reasons for not having a bank account was explored and the lack of any financial institutions and financial illiteracy were some of the main explanations. Steering committee members of RAP groups also added that it would not be feasible or realistic to put individual payments directly into bank accounts. In the case of RMGs, beneficiaries talked about the difficulties they faced while collecting their group’s monthly payments. The major risk identified by participants was the insecurity in bringing large amounts of money with them and also the opportunity cost associated with this. For example in Jumla, in some groups all the members go to the district headquarters just to collect monthly payments. The possibility of transfers of payments through bank accounts was discussed in the district level feedback sessions. From the feedback session with RAP staff, they said that there is still no scope for payments through bank accounts except in Jumla. In Jumla, RAP district staff suggested that it is possible to transfer payments through financial institutions in a few of the road corridors where financial institutions have started their operations. For example, in Narakot VDC it may be possible to pay through banks from the adjoining Dadeldhura district.

Summary:

- The majority of RAP beneficiaries state that RAP is their main source of income. In the absence of RAP, it appears most people would borrow money or build up debt to manage household expenses until they can repay later. Other MEL studies also corroborate these findings. The regularity of cash income (usually every month) means that people can afford to pay expenses immediately. This may strongly factor into the reason that people prefer wage payments to be every month as mentioned in Section 4. Related to this, people recognise that having regular cash income increases their credit worthiness and they are able to more easily borrow money than they otherwise would be able to.
- People are not able to save money. In the case of RBGs there is mandatory savings, which accounts for higher levels of reported savings. Where people are able to save they are doing so largely to help finance their children’s education. An impediment to using financial institutions is the lack of financial literacy.

Section 6: Health and safety, insurance and work site facilities

This section covers understanding of the use of safety equipment provided by RAP, including first aid kits. It also explores understanding of insurance claim processes as people's views on the adequacy of work site facilities. This area was explored to see how well protocol stacks up against actual field realities.

6.1. Safety Equipment

Beneficiaries were asked to state which safety gear they had received from RAP (Table 16). Most respondents had received a helmet, mask and boots. Various issues related to safety gear like timely replacement, usefulness, and quality were discussed during the FGDs and issues emerging from the field were taken to feedback sessions in the respective districts. The following issues emerged:

- a) **Ensuring the use of safety gear:** The use of safety gear has been made mandatory by RAP and was well received by beneficiaries as well. Most workers discussed that they were using the required safety gear while working, especially when field teams visited them. Some working groups in Jumla had been imposed a penalty for not using safety gear. They would be recorded absent if they are found working without required safety gear.
- b) **Timely replacement of safety gear:** There have been some problems in replacing safety equipment in a timely manner. In Achham, the replacement of worn and damaged safety gear was slow. Only two members out of six in one group in Achham had boots and members were observed to be working without boots by the field team. When asked why they weren't wearing boots, they stated that the boots had torn and that it had already been more than six months since they requested a replacement. Safety equipment has not been provided for replacement workers and for a newly formed group (within 1 month) in Achham. This issue was raised in the feedback session in Achham and the RAP team responded that they are aware of the issue and have already placed orders for these items.
- c) **Size and use of boots:** the size of boots is not compatible for women workers who discussed that they find the boots supplied difficult to use. Women also expressed that it was impossible for them to wear 5kg heavy boots during the summer heat.

Case Studies on safety gear:

"My safety boots have been torn for the past 5-6 months and I informed the Supervision Consultant about this but the RAP office hasn't replaced my boots yet. It has become very difficult for me to work not having work boots because it usually rains in the monsoon season. I am also scared of snake bites and getting my foot crushed by rocks while working. The raincoat provided by RAP 3 doesn't provide full protection from rain and I get soaked on the inside while working which makes working very difficult. Having said that, the technician reprimands us for not wearing proper safety gear."

Male Beneficiary from Achham

"My only concern regarding safety gear is that the boots provided by RAP are too big for me because they are large sized boots for men."

Female beneficiary in Achham



Photo 6: Beneficiary's broken boots from case study

Table 13: Ownership of safety gears

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|---------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Safety gears | | | | | |
| Flag | 97.9 | 86.0 | 6.8 | 0.6 | 28.3 |
| Vest | 93.8 | 5.0 | 5.2 | 0.6 | 10.9 |
| Helmet | 100.0 | 94.2 | 100.0 | 92.8 | 96.7 |
| Mask | 89.6 | 90.1 | 93.6 | 88.3 | 91.0 |
| Boot | 95.8 | 76.0 | 99.2 | 92.8 | 92.3 |
| Raincoat | 87.5 | 95.9 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 26.6 |
| Gloves | 91.7 | 100.0 | 78.3 | 45.0 | 73.7 |
| Visibility vest | 91.7 | 95.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 26.9 |
| Ear protector | 0.0 | 2.5 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| Goggles | 83.3 | 46.3 | 67.1 | 34.4 | 54.3 |

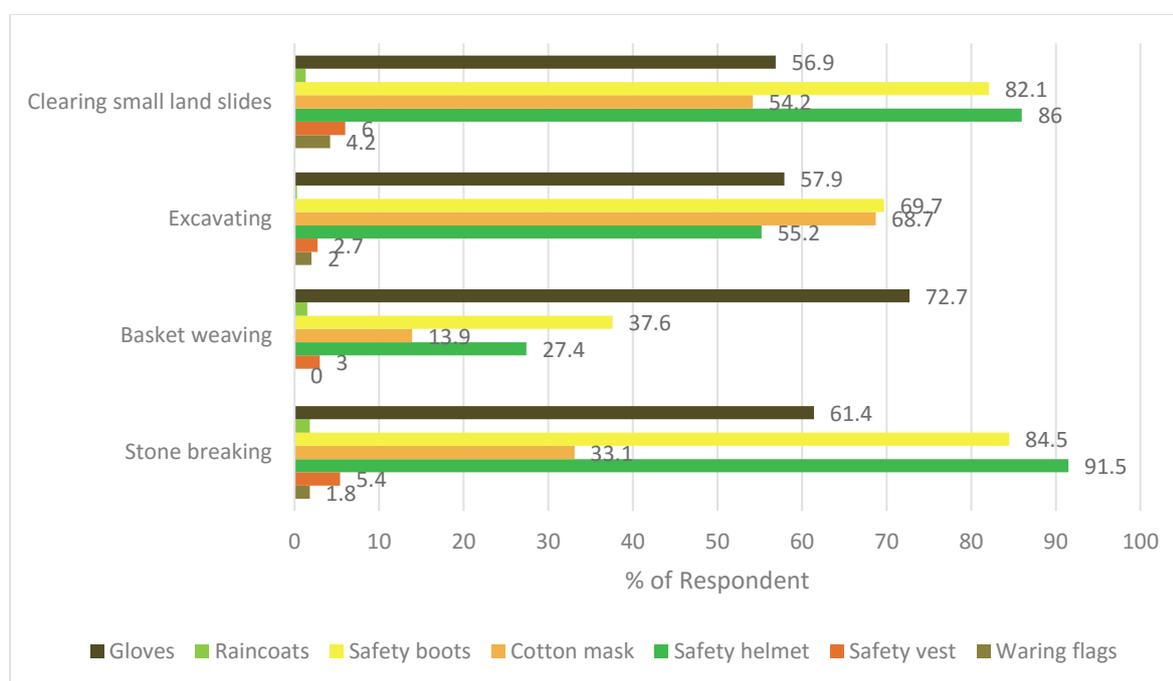
6.2 How important are specific safety equipment in RAP works

Beneficiaries were asked what safety equipment they believed to be important for four different RAP activities: stone breaking, basket weaving (using gabion wires), soil excavating and clearing small landslides. The rationale for asking what safety equipment was most useful for each task was to test how well beneficiaries understood the applicability of each equipment for each specific RAP task. It was assumed that there was no 'right' or 'wrong' answer per se, but that asking these questions would provide some insight on beneficiaries' view of the usefulness of the equipment provided.

Table 17 shows the results from the survey. The results appear intuitive and where one would expect a higher level of importance (e.g. gloves for basket weaving, or helmets and boots for clearing small landslides), this generally holds up with how beneficiaries themselves assign the importance of each

piece of equipment. Warning flags, safety vest and raincoats appear to have the least utility for each of the tasks (although this does not mean they are not important overall).

Table 14: Beneficiaries perception about the most useful safety gears for different purposes



6.3 Use of First Aid Kits

Beneficiaries were also asked about their knowledge and confidence in using first aid kits that are supplied to each RBG and RMG. Across all districts, most groups claimed to have a first aid kit in the group, with almost all saying that someone in their group had been trained in its use. In sites like Mugu where the availability of first aid kits was low, this issue was raised with the community in feedback sessions where it was explained that those who claimed not to have a first aid kit had said so because the contents of the first aid kits had not been replenished. Hence, rather than not receiving a first aid kit, they were expressing that the first aid kits had become empty. In other districts during the FGDs, people also complained of delayed replenishment of first aid kit supplies. Hence, having a first aid kit, and having a *well-stocked* first aid kit seem to differ. It is worth noting here that MEL’s Beneficiary Reality Check Approach (RCA) study in 2015 also highlighted that first aid kits were replenished only once a year.

Table 15: Availability of first aid kit, training to use it, confidence to use and location of the kit

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|--|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Has first aid kit in a group | 97.9 | 100.0 | 68.7 | 92.2 | 84.4 |
| Anyone in a group was trained to use safety kit | 95.8 | 96.7 | 96.8 | 93.9 | 95.8 |
| When was the last training | | | | | |
| Last month | 0.0 | 62.4 | 2.1 | 39.6 | 25.3 |
| Within the last 6 months | 21.7 | 20.5 | 24.9 | 4.1 | 17.6 |
| 1 year ago | 45.7 | 5.1 | 6.2 | 5.9 | 9.1 |

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|--|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| More than a year ago | 28.3 | 9.4 | 43.2 | 36.1 | 33.0 |
| Don't know | 4.3 | 2.6 | 23.7 | 14.2 | 15.0 |
| Confident to use in case of an accident | | | | | |
| Fully confident | 35.4 | 71.1 | 11.2 | 41.1 | 34.3 |
| To some extent | 54.2 | 28.1 | 69.9 | 51.7 | 54.7 |
| Not at all | 10.4 | 0.8 | 18.9 | 7.2 | 11.0 |
| Understood first aid kit is located: | | | | | |
| Within the RAP work site | 100.0 | 99.2 | 95.3 | 91.6 | 95.4 |
| In chairperson's house | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.0 | 2.0 |
| Other group members house | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 0.8 |
| Don't know | 0.0 | 0.8 | 2.3 | 0.6 | 1.2 |
| Others | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 0.6 |



Photo 7: Half-empty first aid kit in Mugu district

6.4 Understanding insurance: coverage and claims

Overall there are very few injuries or accidents related to RAP work. Only a small number of people have reported injury and then gone on to claim insurance. Through the FGDs, beneficiaries were asked to elaborate on their understanding of the insurance policy. Respondents seem to have understood the policy. They are aware that insurance coverage compensation varies with respect to death, broken bones, permanent eye damage or other body parts, and were able to give specific values for

compensation offered for each body part). They are also aware that they are not eligible for insurance coverage if they are not wearing the required safety gear while working.

Table 16: Insurance coverage and details of the accidents and compensation claims

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|--|-------|--------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Has accidental insurance coverage | 97.9 | 95.9 | 93.2 | 85.6 | 91.8 |
| Have had accident while working | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.8 | 7.2 | 4.2 |
| Consequence of the accident: (Number of people) | | | | | |
| Minor cuts | n/a | n/a | 75.0 (9) | 53.8 (7) | 64.0 (16) |
| Major cuts | n/a | n/a | 16.7 (2) | 15.4 (2) | 16.0 (4) |
| Broken bones | n/a | n/a | 8.3 (1) | 7.7 (1) | 8.0 (2) |
| Others | n/a | n/a | 0.0 | 23.1 (3) | 12.0 (3) |
| Made insurance claim following the accident | n/a | n/a | 25.0 (3) | 38.5 (5) | 32.0 (8) |
| Reason for not submitting a claim: | | | | | |
| Accident was minor | n/a | n/a | 100.0 (9) | 50.0 (4) | 76.5 (13) |
| Don't understand claim process | n/a | n/a | 0.0 | 25.0 (2) | 11.8 (2) |
| Other | n/a | n/a | 0.0 | 25.0 (2) | 11.8 (2) |
| Received compensation | | | | | |
| Yes | | | 33.3 (1) | 40.0 (2) | 37.5 (3) |
| In process | | | 66.7 (2) | 40.0 (2) | 50.0 (4) |
| No | | | 0.0 | 20.0 (1) | 12.5 (1) |
| Risk of injuries while: | | | | | |
| Rock drilling/splitting | 20.8 | 9.1 | 20.9 | 40.0 | 24.2 |
| Retaining wall construction | 2.1 | 0.0 | 6.0 | 1.1 | 3.0 |
| Rock Excavation | 35.4 | 73.6 | 35.3 | 36.1 | 43.3 |
| Elevated work | 0.0 | 13.2 | 2.4 | 1.1 | 4.0 |
| Excavation (general soil) | 29.2 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 8.3 | 6.0 |
| Blasting | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.1 | 0.0 | 8.4 |
| Work in trench/ cutting | 10.4 | 2.5 | 12.4 | 13.3 | 10.5 |
| Work in live traffic | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Other | 2.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 |

6.5 Work Site facilities

Case study of injury and insurance claim in Achham

A woman fell down while cutting bushes from the side of the road and sustained a hand injury. She was then taken to the local hospital which offers a free service. The only expense was NPR 2,500 for a hired vehicle to be transported there. She has not been able to go back to work after the incident. She is a single woman with two children. She said she has no other source of income and is building debts in local retail shops to sustain her livelihood. To date she has not received any compensation from RAP. *“I feel as though I should be compensated for the total money which has been spent as the result of my injury she added.”*

RAP district officials said she could not be compensated given the nature of the incident because the insurance policy does not cover minor injuries as in her case.

Beneficiaries were asked about the provision of two basic work site facilities: toilets and child care centres. In the construction districts of Bajura and Mugu RAP has made a provision of having toilets and child care centres. However, only 15 percent of surveyed respondents in these two districts said they had a toilet facility while none of the respondents said they had a child care centre. When asked why they didn't have toilets the beneficiaries responded that toilets are a temporary structure so they get damaged quite easily and therefore they did not use them. In the case of child care centres, RAP officials expressed that this is not required at all because they do not allow pregnant or lactating women to work on the RAP roads. In one isolated case in Bajura, the Feedback team observed a woman putting her child inside a gabion wire basket while she was working, in order to keep the child enclosed and manageable while she completed her work.



Photo 8: Worksite toilet

Summary:

- Nearly all beneficiaries are properly equipped with basic safety equipment (hats, gloves and boots). However not all beneficiaries have every piece of safety equipment and some other essential items like goggles are not available for everyone. Not everyone is always comfortable wearing boots or hats and in some cases are penalised for not using them.
- Whilst almost all groups said they had a first aid kit, there was a difference between having a first aid kit and having a fully stocked/replenished one. In many cases first aid kits were not properly replenished. In previous MEL studies (RCA) the issue of first aid kits being replenished only once a

year was highlighted. It appears adequately checking the first aid kit is not done thoroughly in all places.

- There are very few accidents across RAP working districts, and whenever there are these are usually 'minor' injuries. Of greater importance is the lack of understanding of insurance claim processes for those who have been injured and tried to claim. This process is not well understood and seems mired in heavy bureaucracy with people stating they do not understand why they have to fill out so much paperwork.
- There are no child care facilities available for people in the new construction districts, yet it is sometimes possible for women to bring their children to work sites.

Section 7: Decision making, empowerment and accountability

This final section groups together a few key areas of inquiry that loosely cover perceptions over decision making and empowerment and accountability. Whilst gender disaggregation is provided throughout the report, this section includes some feedback from women-only FGDs to highlight specific concerns of women participating in RAP.

7.1 Perceptions of RAP work

The survey asked beneficiaries two questions regarding how they felt others viewed their participation on RAP works. One focused on their perception of their own family members and the second on the wider community. It is important to note here that asking perception-related questions through surveys may not yield entirely accurate results. However, this was an attempt to gauge across the sample whether people felt any difference since joining RAP. From the FGD discussions, beneficiaries felt their credibility had increased as a result of the RAP job, which had provided them with the option of borrowing money or being provided goods on credit.

Table 17: Family and community perception after RAP job by construction type, gender and ethnicity

| | Construction | | Gender | | Caste/Ethnicity | | | | Total |
|--|--------------|------|--------|--------|------------------|---------|-------|--------|-------------|
| | RBG | RMG | Male | Female | Brahmin /Chhetri | Janjati | Dalit | Others | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | |
| Perception of family members after the RAP job | | | | | | | | | |
| More respect | 56.3 | 92.3 | 68.5 | 63.4 | 62.1 | 100.0 | 77.1 | 54.6 | 66.4 |
| Same | 43.5 | 6.6 | 30.7 | 36.6 | 37.4 | 0.0 | 22.3 | 45.5 | 33.1 |
| Less respect | 0.2 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| Perception of community members after the RAP job | | | | | | | | | |
| More respect | 49.3 | 79.2 | 60.5 | 53.7 | 54.4 | 75.0 | 65.1 | 63.6 | 57.7 |
| Same | 49.5 | 14.3 | 36.7 | 43.9 | 42.5 | 25.0 | 33.1 | 36.4 | 39.6 |
| Less respect | 1.2 | 6.6 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 0.0 | 2.7 |

7.2 Decision in regard to income expenditure

Beneficiaries were asked who in their households are the main decision makers regarding deciding how to spend income received from RAP work. This decision making power is presented in Table 22 below and is also disaggregated by ethnicity and education level.

Table 18: Decision makers for the use of income from RAP job

| | Self | Spouse | Joint | Other family members |
|------------------------|------|--------|-------|----------------------|
| Sex | | | | |
| Male | 31.8 | 6.3 | 52.8 | 9.1 |
| Female | 41.9 | 6.9 | 45.1 | 6.1 |
| Caste/Ethnicity | | | | |
| Brahmin/Chhetri | 37.2 | 6.7 | 47.0 | 9.1 |
| Janjati | 50.0 | 0.0 | 50.0 | 0.0 |
| Dalit | 31.9 | 5.4 | 57.8 | 4.8 |
| Others | 45.5 | 18.2 | 27.3 | 9.1 |

7.3 Gender and caste issues

As RAP groups are mostly mixed, this question was included to get a sense of how each sex viewed the work of the other sex. All respondents were asked to state who they felt worked harder within their groups. It is recognised that asking gender and perception related questions could result in potential confirmation bias. The Feedback team asked participants in FGDs to specifically discuss these issues and most thought that mixed groups were an efficient way to work, that there was no implication on their wage rate and that women were as equally hard-working as men. However in person, some male beneficiaries complained that variation in their pay in their last two months was because women took longer to complete stone breaking tasks which slowed down the group progress, resulting in less work completed and lower pay.

The Feedback team conducted 15 FGDs across 4 districts and conducted 2 women-only FGDs. They found that generally women and Dalits had an increased sense of pride and empowerment. Some added that working alongside men to some extent was able to change misbeliefs about menstruation. At the same time working in heterogeneous groups helped to reduce the custom of untouchability. Most of the women who were involved in the FGDs expressed that they were more engaged in decision making at the household level than before and felt empowered as they had an increased role in decision making. In particular, women were more likely to be vocal of husband's drinking and gambling habits. Generally women also felt secure because of the income they have earned from the RAP work and the ability to make decisions on the income they have earned.



Photo 9: Women RMG members at work in Achham

Table 19: Beneficiaries perception about male and female effort while working

| | Construction | | Gender | | Total |
|---|--------------|------|--------|--------|-------------|
| | RBG | RMG | Male | Female | |
| Men and woman are equally hard working | | | | | |
| Equally | 61.9 | 66.7 | 55.1 | 74.8 | 63.2 |
| Men work harder than women | 37.4 | 33.3 | 44.3 | 24.8 | 36.3 |
| Women work harder than men | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Do you think your group would be more efficient with | | | | | |
| Only female members | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Only male members | 6.1 | 6.6 | 10.2 | 0.4 | 6.2 |
| Mixed | 93.7 | 92.3 | 89.2 | 99.2 | 93.3 |
| Don't know | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 |

7.4 Supervision and transparency

Finally, beneficiaries were asked about their interaction with supervision consultants who are the main contact people for direct beneficiaries. The survey results are presented in Table 24 below. Participants in the FGDs expressed that the reason they don't all interact with the supervision consultant is because there was not always a reason for everyone to do so and only one or two workers needed to interact with them. In Mugug, issues were raised during the FGDs by beneficiaries who felt that there was lack of coordination between the field team and the district supervision team. Beneficiaries in Mugu expressed grievance regarding the method of measurement of the road section they constructed. However there is transparency in that beneficiaries were provided with the details of the completed work and their wage calculation, even though most did not understand this. When this issue was raised during the feedback session at the district level, RAP district staff described it as a lack of understanding of the volume based payment system and a general desire for greater income.

Table 20: Interaction details with the supervision consultants

| | Construction | | Gender | | Total |
|---|--------------|------|--------|--------|-------------|
| | RBG | RMG | Male | Female | |
| Interaction with supervision consultant on work related issues | 59.3 | 67.9 | 73.9 | 44.3 | 61.7 |
| Frequency of interaction | | | | | |
| Everyday | 29.8 | 0.9 | 23.1 | 15.6 | 20.9 |
| Once in a week | 34.1 | 20.2 | 29.2 | 31.2 | 29.8 |
| Once in a month | 21.6 | 56.1 | 31.2 | 34.9 | 32.3 |
| Seldom | 14.5 | 22.8 | 16.5 | 18.4 | 17.1 |
| Reasons for interacting with the supervision consultant | | | | | |
| Technical issues | 72.9 | 82.5 | 75.4 | 77.1 | 75.9 |
| Discuss problems while working | 93.7 | 85.1 | 90.4 | 92.7 | 91.1 |
| Other | 3.5 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 1.8 | 2.4 |
| Learnt new skills and working techniques by interacting | 82.4 | 83.3 | 84.6 | 78.0 | 82.7 |
| Discussion with the supervision consultant was: | | | | | |
| Very helpful | 15.7 | 13.2 | 17.3 | 9.2 | 14.9 |
| Helpful | 81.6 | 86.0 | 80.4 | 89.0 | 82.9 |
| Not helpful | 2.8 | 0.9 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 2.2 |

7.5 Grievance mechanisms

The survey included a few questions on grievance mechanisms and repeated a set of questions from a Radio Outreach survey conducted by MEL earlier in 2016. Beneficiaries were asked about whether they had heard of 'Bikash ko bato', a RAP supported radio programme on development issues where listeners can call in. The results are broadly in-line with the Radio Outreach survey.

Table 21: Bikas ko bato and public audit

| | Jumla | Achham | Mugu | Bajura | Total |
|---|-------|--------|------|--------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Heard about "Bikas ko Bato" | 25.0 | 9.9 | 23.3 | 23.9 | 20.9 |
| Heard of the Toll free number of Bikask ko bato | 4.2 | 3.3 | 2.8 | 13.9 | 6.4 |
| Have you ever recorded your concerns | 0.0 | 0.0 | 14.3 | 4.0 | 5.3 |
| Public audit was conducted after last payment | 100.0 | 90.1 | 95.2 | 98.3 | 95.5 |
| Raised voices and spoke during public/social audits? | | | | | |
| Regularly | 20.8 | 6.6 | 12.0 | 10.6 | 11.2 |
| Sometimes | 70.8 | 60.3 | 58.2 | 35.0 | 52.7 |
| Not at all | 8.3 | 33.1 | 29.7 | 54.4 | 36.1 |
| Voice was heard | | | | | |
| Yes fully | 4.5 | 33.3 | 2.9 | 28.0 | 14.9 |
| Yes to some extent | 93.2 | 59.3 | 90.3 | 67.1 | 79.1 |
| Not at all | 2.3 | 7.4 | 6.9 | 4.9 | 6.0 |
| Ever requested a social/public audit outside of the RAP work | 6.3 | 3.3 | 11.6 | 11.1 | 9.4 |
| Mechanism to raise grievances is in place | 41.7 | 81.8 | 33.7 | 39.4 | 45.8 |
| Ever raised grievances? | 79.2 | 65.3 | 67.1 | 62.2 | 66.2 |
| Who would you go to raise your grievance | | | | | |
| Supervision consultant | 20.8 | 28.9 | 44.2 | 13.9 | 30.1 |
| Committee member of group | 56.3 | 62.0 | 47.8 | 71.1 | 58.4 |
| Other member of group | 8.3 | 8.3 | 3.2 | 62.2 | 22.4 |
| RAP staff | 89.6 | 24.8 | 49.0 | 19.4 | 38.5 |
| Social mobilizer | 4.2 | 0.8 | 57.0 | 8.3 | 26.8 |
| Other | 4.2 | 6.6 | 3.2 | 12.2 | 6.7 |
| Comfortable to raise grievance | | | | | |
| Very comfortable | 8.3 | 43.0 | 17.7 | 40.0 | 28.8 |
| Moderately Comfortable | 79.2 | 52.1 | 68.7 | 53.3 | 61.5 |
| Not comfortable at all | 12.5 | 5.0 | 13.7 | 6.7 | 9.7 |
| Why not raise grievance | | | | | |
| No issues to raise | 100.0 | 71.4 | 52.4 | 83.8 | 69.3 |
| Don't understand the process | 0.0 | 9.5 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 3.0 |
| Don't feel comfortable | 0.0 | 7.1 | 45.1 | 14.7 | 24.8 |
| Fear of losing job | 0.0 | 11.9 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 3.0 |

Summary:

- Mixed groups are generally well received by men and women, although there are some reservations by men about women's ability to undertake particular tasks. In few instances, men attribute slower work to the involvement of women. Whilst these findings may not be generalised, more research is required on the longer term impact of gendered division of work.

- As mentioned in Section 4 of this report, beneficiaries are sceptical about the way their work is measured by supervision consultants. There is transparency in the sense that details of work are generally shared. However, given the knowledge gap on the actual measurement of work, this causes confusion, and in some cases (as in Mugu), resentment. RAP district staff generally attribute this to a lack of understanding. In Mugu, beneficiaries are not comfortable in raising their voices on issues to RAP supervision consultants, which has led further resentment in this particular district, emphasising the importance of attitudes of those supervising, as in other districts there was generally no such issue.

D. Testing the RAP Theory of Change

The RAP theory of change covers a number of key areas of expected change by the programme with several key assumptions. One of the key areas in the theory of change concerns the pro-poor labour intensive works by RAP through targeting poor and vulnerable individuals to participate in RAP works in RBGs and RMGs (see Annex). This section of the theory of change details the expected benefits to these direct beneficiaries of RAP through their participation in road works. A number of changes are expected to occur both in the short and longer term (Outcomes).

The table below sets out each of the statements in the theory of change directly related to RBG and RMG beneficiaries and the expected benefits. Based on the Beneficiaries Feedback findings, a summary against each of these benefits is given. In summary, one of the biggest positives of working on RAP is that the regularity of income provides security in the short term and increases people's credit worthiness in the medium term. However people are generally not able to save any money from RAP income. This puts a question mark on the sustainability of gains that should be expected as a result of participating in RAP.

| Theory of Change | Beneficiaries Feedback |
|---|---|
| Skills and confidence | <p>Participation in RAP is leading to increased skills and knowledge, specifically related to construction work, with some minor applicability in other areas. Many beneficiaries have not worked in construction work before (especially women who are often excluded). With the proliferation of construction and public works programmes in the MFW districts, these skills could be useful to gain employment on other works programmes, but these works are not as desirable as RAP because of pay.</p> <p>People's confidence, especially of women and lower caste groups appears to be noticeably higher. Being recognised is important. How increased confidence may lead to further material gains is still unclear.</p> |
| Increased propensity and capacity to save and invest | <p>RAP beneficiaries are unable to save and invest because wages are not sufficient to be able to do so, despite RAP wages being higher than wages from other available work (of which there are few opportunities). It's clear that many people who save or want to save do so to fund longer term investments, specifically in their children's education. However not all are able to, and in addition it is unclear how this money on children's education is spent.</p> |
| Food and income security | <p>Many people express that they use RAP wages to purchase food. The increased availability of food items like rice on the local market means that people are not necessarily food insecure per se, but use the cash to purchase stocks. RAP wages seem to provide 'cash' security rather than income security – it is the regularity of income that appears most important and helps them plan and make decisions for their household and eases credit constraints.</p> |
| Purchase of assets | <p>It is clear that most beneficiaries do not purchase productive assets like livestock, or invest in setting up small businesses, despite a propensity to do so. This is likely to be because they are unable save to afford these.</p> |

| Theory of Change | Beneficiaries Feedback |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Ability to withstand shocks | It is unclear from the study if participating in RAP allows beneficiaries to better withstand shocks in the longer term. The regularity of cash income and easing of credit constraints allows people to use cash for the purchase of food, but it is unclear how 'resilient' people become over the long term because of RAP. The proliferation of public works programmes or 'cash for works' may cause longer term dependency. |

Annexes

Annex 1 – RBG and RMG group samples

| District | VDC | Group (RBG/RMG) |
|----------|----------------|--|
| Achham | Darna | Nawadurga Kha RMG |
| Achham | Dhamali | Shivastan |
| Achham | Dhungachalna | Bageshwori |
| Achham | Dhungachalna | Bandalimadu samuha |
| Achham | Ghodasain | Bageshwori |
| Achham | Ghodasain | Chakreshwori samuha |
| Achham | Jupu | Mangalasangine samuha |
| Achham | Kalika | Jalakadevi |
| Achham | Kuinka | Jalpadevei samuha |
| Achham | Malatikot | Malika |
| Achham | Mangalsen | Mangalakali |
| Achham | Safebagar | Bhagawati RMG |
| Achham | Toshi | Tripureshwori |
| Achham | Turmakhand | Ekata |
| Achham | Turmakhand | Kalika Pipal Chautare |
| Bajura | Chhatara | Bhugatola |
| Bajura | Chhatara | Chalnagada |
| Bajura | Chhatara | Saimandu |
| Bajura | Kailashmandu | Bademalika |
| Bajura | Kailashmandu | Basanta |
| Bajura | Kailashmandu | Budhiganga |
| Bajura | Kailashmandu | Hariyali |
| Bajura | Kailashmandu | Jaya Laxmi |
| Bajura | Kailashmandu | Lamagada |
| Bajura | Kailashmandu | Tribeni |
| Bajura | Toli | Bagwati |
| Bajura | Toli | Budhiganga |
| Bajura | Toli | Dhogdina |
| Bajura | Toli | Fulbari |
| Bajura | Toli | Jagriti |
| Bajura | Toli | Misrit |
| Bajura | Toli | Naulaghar |
| Bajura | Toli | Okhalpada |
| Jumla | Bumramadichaur | Upallo Rana Urthu Khali Road maintenance Group |
| Jumla | Chandanath | Garjyangkot Guthichaur Road Sudhar Samuha |
| Jumla | Deval Gaun | Garjyangkot Guthichaur Road Sudhar Samuha |
| Jumla | Dillichaur | Urthu Dilichour Road Marmat Samuha |
| Jumla | Gargyangkot | Garjyangkot Guthichaur Road Sudhar Samuha |
| Jumla | Patmara | 8b road maintenance group |
| Jumla | Patmara | 8c Road Maintenance Group |

| District | VDC | Group (RBG/RMG) |
|-----------------|------------|---|
| Jumla | Patmara | Jumla Urthu Badmamadichaur Road maintenance Group |
| Jumla | Patmara | Upallo Rana Urthu Khali Sadak Marmat Samuha |
| Jumla | Patrasi | Talfi Pare Salagad Road Samuha |
| Jumla | Sani Gnau | Aacharyalihi Dhitallihi Sanigaun |
| Mugu | Jima | Pardarshik |
| Mugu | Rara | Bijay group |
| Mugu | Rara | Himal |
| Mugu | Rara | Kachhekot |
| Mugu | Rara | Karnali dalit |
| Mugu | Rara | Nepal Dalit jagaran |
| Mugu | Rara | Rara |
| Mugu | Rara | Rara milan |
| Mugu | Ruga | Gurudev |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Aasal Chhimeki |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Chankhali |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Dalit |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Dalit masta samuha |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Jagriti |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Kalika |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Karnali |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Kuldev |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Mahadev |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Pargatishil |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Shanti Bikas group |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Talabada dalit samuha |
| Mugu | Shreenagar | Vume group |

Annex 2 – Theory of Change

Pro-poor Labour Intensive Approaches: In increasingly monetised local and regional economies the lack of employment or income generating opportunities contributes to poverty and vulnerability in the Mid and Far West of Nepal. The impetus to build rural infrastructure to address structural drivers of poverty supports the opportunity to adopt a targeted pro-poor labour intensive approach to asset management that *also* addresses income poverty by providing short-term waged ‘cash for works’ within RAP.

For RAP, members of RBG and RMGs typically earn in the range of 50-60,000 rupees per annum, a significantly high income for the region, supplementing household income. As long as members are employed in these groups they will earn this additional stable income over approximately 3 or 4 years. As a short-term job, members acquire new skills enhancing their productive potential and enable an increase in individual propensity and capacity to save and invest according to each’s need. In the long term the additional income and savings enables households to invest in assets (productive or non-productive) and food security. For KEP, the permutation of ‘x’ wages and ‘y’ days of employment results in an additional, albeit lower than RAP, waged income per annum for eligible households.

Output:

Pro-Poor labour intensive approach:

- 5,400 RBGs each earn 50,000 NPR/year + trained on road works
- 1,500 RMGs each earn 45,000 NPR/year + trained on road works
- 30,000 KEP HHs (@35 days/year/HH) receive 14,000 NPR/year + trained

Short-term Outcome:

Short-term RAP jobs (4-5 years):

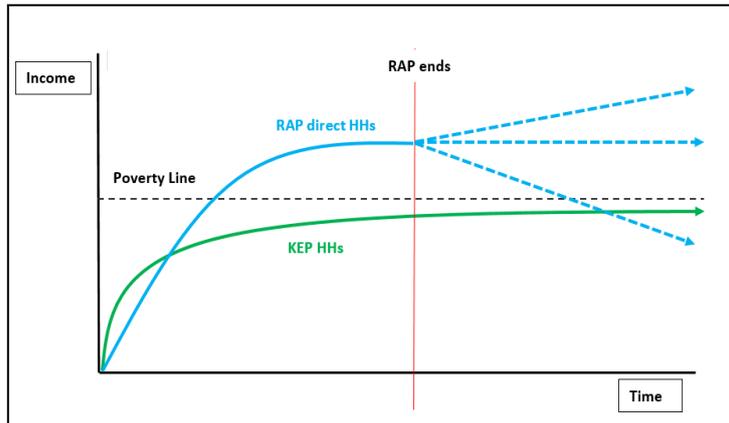
- Increased skills & confidence.
- Increased capacity & propensity to save & invest in prioritised areas for each HH (e.g. children’s education, small business, etc.)
- Diversified income source

Longer term outcome:

RAP: Successful conversion of % HH using short-term incomes for investment in food security, assets (productive or non-productive), education.

Waged labour benefits will be largely short term

- It is recognised that the programme is **not** explicitly concerned nor equipped to deal with ‘graduation’ for direct beneficiaries of RAP and KEP receiving cash for works. **See annex 3 for further commentary on graduation.** Income through wage labour will in most cases likely only result in short term (but valuable) gains for these households that translate to improvements such as household food and income security, acquisition of assets (both productive and non-productive), ability to withstand shocks.
- However, there is an assumption that would be interesting to test against any discernible change: that some of these households may be able to use this income to invest in securing improved longer term income security through purchase of assets, setting up small businesses, investing in education (children’s education was found to be a major priority and investment area from the RCA study)
- The RAP beneficiary HHs are more likely to be able to do this than the KEP HHs simply due to the higher wage days/income available to participating HHs. This assumes that the earnings are of sufficient amounts and over a sufficiently long period (four years) of reliable income to enable investment beyond normal consumption needs. There may be / should be some conversion from RBG to RMG works for households after construction.



- The above diagram is only intended to illustrate the wage or income effects for RAP and KEP direct beneficiaries and is also not intended to accurately capture income effects. Rather it is intended to help think through the level of support provided by RAP and KEP in terms of cash income and duration of support as well as the primary function of each project. The assumption is that when RAP ends direct beneficiaries will be better off due to the support during the project period. However it is recognised that ‘better off’ does not necessarily translate to poverty or vulnerability reduction in the long term. Without further support or linkages to other forms of support that can aid in sustaining gains (or even graduation) then in absence of further evidence, it should be assumed that gains will be eroded when RAP finishes.