



REALITY CHECK APPROACH BASELINE REPORT

Date: July 2014

Contribution to the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Component
supporting

RAP3

Mid and Far West Nepal



Acknowledgements:

The Reality Check Approach study has been made possible by the commitment, enthusiasm and teamwork of many. The Reality Check Approach (RCA) is an initiative of the Swedish Embassy in Bangladesh where it was first commissioned in 2007. This baseline RCA study was carried out as a contribution to the mixed methods approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning commissioned by DFID Nepal to complement and assist the routine monitoring and evaluation of the Rural Access Programme 3 in Mid and Far West Nepal. The study was undertaken by a team of Nepali researchers and led by an international team leader (see annex 1). The physical challenges to reach the villages and households where this study was carried out, especially Humla, were considerable and the efforts of the team members are appreciated and acknowledged.

The Reality Check Approach study was only possible thanks to the many families who opened their doors to the study team. We thank these families in all five locations for contributing their valuable time and allowing the team members to live with them and share their everyday experiences. We hope that the baseline report reflects accurately the views of the families, community members and local service providers.

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. METHODOLOGY	2
2.1. Reality Check Approach	2
2.2. Selection of locations	4
2.3. Selection of households:.....	5
2.4. Timing.....	5
2.5. RCA Methodological considerations: Offsetting bias	5
2.6. Study limitations	7
3. FINDINGS	8
3.1. POVERTY.....	8
3.2. MAKING A LIVING	16
3.3 RURAL ACCESS.....	18
3.4 ASPIRATIONS & ANTICIPATED CHANGE	20
4. BASELINE FOR PROJECT OUTCOMES	23
5. PROJECT PROCESSES	28
5.1. Road selection.....	28
6 . ANNEXES	31
6.1. Team members	31
6.2. Host Households	32
6.4. MEL Reality Check Approach: Areas for conversation and observation.....	39

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by Itad for the named client, for services specified in the Terms of Reference and contract of engagement. The information contained in this report shall not be disclosed to any other party, or used or disclosed in whole or in part without agreement from Itad. For reports that are formally put into the public domain, any use of the information in this report should include a citation that acknowledges Itad as the author of the report.

This confidentiality clause applies to all pages and information included in this report.

Glossary, Abbreviations, Acronyms

Brahmin	Higher caste Hindu (formerly regarded as priest caste)
chettri	Higher caste Hindu (formerly considered as warrior/ruler caste)
dalit	Lowest caste Hindu (formerly referred to as untouchable)
Dashain	15 day long national festival in Oct/Nov
DFID	Department for International Development, UK Aid
ECD	Early Childhood Development (centre)
FHH	Focal Households (i.e. neighbours of the HHH)
GON	Government of Nepal
HHH	Host Households; where members of the study team stayed with families
lakh	100,000
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NPR	Nepalese rupee
RAP	Rural Access Programme
RCA	Reality Check Approach
Terai	Southern plains of Nepal extending from west to east
VDC	Village Development Committee

Exchange rate:

1000 NPR: £6 UK pounds sterling (approximately, June 2014)

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the main findings of the baseline Reality Check Approach (RCA) study which was conducted in May 2014. The RCA study is the main qualitative element of the Independent third party monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) of the Rural Access Programme 3 (RAP3) which is supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

The RCA is part of a mixed methods approach to third party evaluation. As such it is fully integrated with the quantitative elements. A scoping RCA study conducted in December 2013 in Kalikhot and Dailekh was used to influence the quantitative survey and to provide insights into how the survey might be better conducted. The household survey of 3,200 HH was started in April 2014 and ran in parallel to the RCA.

This report is both a stand alone report but also serves as an annex of the synthesis report, which combines the information from both quantitative and qualitative study streams and results from the joint analysis of data generate by the combined qualitative and quantitative research teams.

The RCA baseline study was undertaken by a team of sixteen Nepali researchers under the guidance of the international team leader, who also undertook some field research directly (see annex 1). Overall management of the team, training of new researchers in RCA and logistic arrangements were undertaken by the Foundation for Development Management, Nepal.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Reality Check Approach

The Reality Check Approach (RCA) extends the tradition of listening studies and beneficiary assessments by combining elements of these approaches with actually living with people, usually those who are directly experiencing poverty. It could be likened to 'light touch' participant observation. Participant observation involves entering the lives of the subjects of research and both participating and observing in their normal everyday activities. It usually entails extensive and detailed research into behaviour, understanding peoples' perceptions and their actions over long periods of time. The Reality Check Approach is similar in that it requires participation in everyday life within people's own environment but differs by being comparatively quick and placing more emphasis on informal, relaxed and insightful conversations than observing behaviour and complexities of relationships.

Important characteristics of the RCA are

- **living** with rather than visiting (thereby meeting the family in their own environment, understanding family dynamics, how days and nights are spent)
- **conversations** rather than interviews (there is no note taking thereby putting people at ease and on an equal footing with the outsider)
- **learning** rather than finding out (suspending judgement, letting people who experience poverty take the lead in defining the agenda and what is important)
- **household** -centred ,interacting with families rather than users, communities, groups
- **experiential in** that researchers themselves take part in daily activities (collecting water, cooking, cultivation), accompany household members (to school, to market)
- **inclusion** of all members of households
- **private** space rather than public space disclosure (an emphasis on normal, ordinary lives)
- **multiple realities** rather than public consensus (gathering diversity of opinion, including 'smaller voices')

- **ordinary interaction** with front line service providers (accompanying host household members in their interactions with local service providers, meeting service providers as they go about their usual routines)
- **cross-sectoral** although each RCA may have a special focus, the enquiry is situated within the context of everyday life rather than simply (and arguably artificially) looking at one aspect of people's lives.
- **longitudinal** change- understanding how change happens over time

Training and orientation on this approach was provided in April, 2014 over five days and included a two-night immersion living with families living in poverty in villages east of Kathmandu. The training was led by Ansu Tumbafunge who had been a sub –teamleader for the DFID funded Koshi Hills RCA in 2012 with support from former RCA team members, Neha Koirala and Hritika Rana. The international teamleader provided training guidance, resources and two extensive skype sessions.



The emphasis on informal conversations and observation allows for openness and insights into the difference between what people say and what they do. The RCA team found that the families with whom they stayed were very accepting and quickly relaxed and felt at ease talking openly. RCA team members engaged all members of the family as well as neighbours (focal households (FHH)) in conversations and accompanied them to fields, school, market, water collection and assisted with household chores in order to minimise disruption in their daily routine and to ensure the most relaxed conditions for conversations. The RCA team members also interacted with local power holders (Village Development Committee secretaries, political party representatives and user committee members including some Road User Committee members) as well as local service providers (health workers, school teachers, religious leaders, shop and stall owners, transport operators, agricultural extension workers and police) through informal conversations (see annex 4 List of people met).



Each RCA team member left behind a ‘gift’ comprising rechargeable lights, some food items and stationery to the value of 1000 NPR for each family with whom they stayed discretely on **leaving** as compensation for any costs incurred by hosting the researcher. The

timing of this was important so that families did not feel that they were expected to provide better food for the RCA members or that they were being paid for their participation.

Each team member kept their own discrete field notes- never writing these in front of persons with whom they were conversing. In addition some joint visual analysis was facilitated with members of HHH on their incomes/expenditure (‘pile sorting’), seasonal and significant events (timelines) and with others to map the village and its resources. To illustrate the context of the village, photos were also taken with the consent of villagers. These narratives and visual records formed the basis of detailed de-briefing sessions held with each sub- team as soon as possible after finishing each round


of the study. A final whole team workshop was undertaken over one day to reflect on the findings in relation to project assumptions.

2.2. Selection of locations

The RCA study villages were selected purposively to illustrate different elements of the RAP3 project. Two districts represented 'new' areas where new road construction is planned (Humla and Bajura) while two other districts were old RAP1 and 2 areas where the emphasis is to ensure improved maintenance with small amount of upgrade work (Accham and Doti). The locations were selected using the same criteria as the quantitative survey. Purposive sampling resulted in study villages being selected along the road corridor and within 1.5 hours walk of the road corridor. Socio-economic development (SED) is planned for all areas. Table 1 provides information on the study locations with remoteness and type of RAP intervention key determinants for selection. The poverty scale on the left of the table was not pre-determined but has been assessed post study based on study observations. This ranking was made based on the study team's assessment of predominantly public poverty (as shown in table 3). It represents an assessment of access to services, perceived quality of services, remoteness, income diversity and extent of economic activity in the vicinity as well as levels of social capital. Four teams of researchers comprising members from each study location developed their own matrices to compare and rank these aspects of poverty and developed their own priority rankings which were then combined to produce the final ranking noted in this and subsequent tables. The locations are listed in this order to provide the reader with some pointers to interpreting findings.

The villages are not named in this report in order to protect the identity, anonymity and confidentiality of participants in what is intended to be a longitudinal study.

Table 1: Study locations

Poverty	VILLAGE CODE	LOCATION	REMOTENESS	ETHNIC MIX	RAP intervention
poorest	C	Humla	3.5 days trek from district town	Brahmin and Chettri (few dalits live segregated) Settlement= 64 HH across 4 wards)	New road- just started
	D1	Doti	2 hours walk from district town. RAP road access (1.5 hours)	Chettri and Brahmin with about 20% dallit Settlement= 90HH across 2 wards	RAP road built 10 years ago. Road upgrade- planned
	B1	Bajura	1.5 hours from sub district town but difficult access to VDC	All Chettri Settlement= 161 across 3 wards	New road – just started
	A	Accham	Along main road, thriving market area & growth centre for 6 VDCs .Some hamlets up to one hour walk to this sub district town.	Chettri majority – 20-40% dallit- some hamlets dallit majority. Settlement=160HH across 2 wards	RAP road built 5 years ago. Road upgrade, maintenance
	B2	Bajura	7 hours walk from sub district town town	Predominantly Brahmins Settlement= 75 HH across 2 wards	New road- just started
	D2	Doti	Small market town with VDC office and other government offices, 3 hours walk to district town.	Chettri & Brahmins majority in most villages. Some with equal number of dalits. Settlement= 200HH across 3 wards	RAP road built 10 years ago. Road upgrade- planned
	Least poor				

2.3. Selection of households:

All twenty five host households were identified by team members through discussions with villagers and the host households themselves. They were selected with a view to being representative of the kinds of households which RAP would directly target for their employment generation programmes. Care was taken to ensure that people understood the nature of the RCA and the importance of staying with **ordinary families** and not being afforded guest status. In a few cases, team members stayed with local teachers but have agreed to move to the homes of focal households in subsequent rounds of the study in order to get closer to the reality of ordinary people. These HHH nevertheless provided important insight as road users and into local aspirations. Where possible the researchers chose HHH which

- were comparatively poorer
- had different generations living in the house including school-age children

The team members entered villages independently on foot in order to keep the process 'low key'. The households selected by different members of the same team were at least 10 minutes walk away from each other and, where possible, were even further away to ensure interaction with a different constellation of focal households.

In addition to intense interaction (conversations and accompaniment) with the HHH, each team member also had extensive conversations with neighbours- usually at least four other households living in poverty (referred to as focal households) and opportunistic conversations with local service providers such as teachers, formal and informal health service providers, transport operators, small shopkeepers etc (see annex 4) . In total the research involved conversations with over 800 people and represents more than 1,200 hours of conversation.

2.4. Timing

The RCA study was conducted with three teams of five persons in five different sites as described in the following table during May 2014. May is relatively quiet for farmers in locations C, D and A as they were awaiting the rains to start planting rice. Unlike other parts of the Far west, migrants from locations A and D were generally on long term employment in India and so do not come back for planting season. However in locations B1 and B2 this was the busy harvesting season for wheat, when family members had come together to help out.

Table 2: Team coverage of locations

Team	First site	Second site
A	Accham	Doti
B	Bajura 1	Bajura 2
C	Humla (travel distances/time to this site precluded additional sites)	

Each team member stayed with their respective host household for four nights and four days.

2.5. RCA Methodological considerations: Offsetting bias

Like all research methods, RCA takes notes of and attempts to offset potential bias. The following is an analysis of the potentials for bias and the way RCA researchers and the approach itself seeks to minimise these.

'Bias from being researched'

The RCA benefits from being low key and unobtrusive. It seeks to provide the best possible conditions to listen, experience and observe ordinary daily lives and deliberately seeks to reduce the biases created by external research presence. The RCA team members take time to get to know the families with whom they stay, work alongside them and adapt to their pace and way of life. Ideally they seek to listen to family conversations and interactions rather than engage in lengthy question and answer sessions. Considerable effort is put in to ensure families with whom they RCA team members stay feel comfortable and at ease so they tell their own stories, explain their reality on their terms and in their own way. This goes some way to ensuring that the families do not feel their answers should be filtered, measured or in any way influenced by the presence of the outsiders. The RCA team members actively suspend judgment. Considerable effort is made in training of RCA team members to make them aware of their own attitudes and behaviour which are conducive/obstructive to openness and trust among those they interact with.

'Bias from location'

At least three RCA team members stayed in each VDC, each living with a different family living in poverty. The locations were selected to ensure that one house was at the centre of the village and others were at the periphery or at the miits of the zone of influence of the project. All homes were at least 10 minutes walking distance from one another (and most were considerably more than this) so that each team member could maximise the number of unique interactions with community people and service providers and avoid duplication with other team members.

'Researcher bias'

A minimum of three researchers were allocated to each village but worked independently of each other thus allowing for some confidence in corroboration of data. Each village team underwent a day long de-briefing to review information and findings emerging from each location immediately after completion of the immersion. This enabled a high level of interrogation of the observations, experiences and responses and reduced the possibility of individual researcher bias. Furthermore, following completion of the entire baseline RCA, a validation workshop was held with the entire RCA team to analyse and confirm the main findings and ensure that both specificity and diversity in the findings were captured along with more generalizable findings.

Evaluation framework bias

Rather than using research questions which may suffer from normative bias, the RCA team uses a broader thematic checklist of areas of enquiry. These are summarised in annex 5 and provide the basis for conversation topics but do not prescribe the questions. The RCA team members engaged with family members and others at appropriate times on these issues e.g. while cooking the meal, there may be opportunities to discuss what they usually eat , when and who takes what; accompanying farmers to the field provides an opportunity to discuss production, challenges, aspirations around farming.

Triangulation

An integral part of RCA methodology is the continuous triangulation which ensues. Conversations are held at different times of the day and night allowing unfinished conversations or ambiguous findings to be explored further. Conversations are held with different generations separately and together in order to gather a complete picture of an issue. Conversations are complemented by direct experience (e.g. the long distance to and long wait for health services, accompanying children to school and waiting for teachers to arrive etc.) and observation (e.g. hygiene practices). Cross

checking for understanding is also carried out with neighbours, service providers (e.g. traditional birth attendants, community health workers, school teachers, teashop owners) and power holders

(informal and elected authorities). Conversations are at times complemented with visuals- e.g. jointly reviewing baby record books, labels for medicine and agricultural inputs, school books as well as drawing maps of the village, crops, assets etc. In the course of four intensive days and nights of interaction on all these different levels, some amount of confidence can be afforded to findings.

Confidentiality, anonymity and continuing non-bias in project activities

The RCA locations are referred to by code only and the RCA team is at pains to ensure that both the report and other documentary evidence, such as photos, does not reveal the locations nor details of the host households. Faces of householders and images which reveal the location are either not retained in the photo archive or identities are digitally removed. This is partly to preserve the good research practice of confidentiality but also has the benefit of ensuring that special measures or consideration will be given to these locations or households in the course of the programme.

2.6. Study limitations

Most of the study HHH were representative of RAP target groups except the shop owners and teachers (which comprise 7/25 HHH). Where HHH outside of the target group were used, this was compensated for by interaction with focal households who in most cases fulfilled RAP target group criteria. In two cases, the researchers will move to alternative houses (former FHH) in subsequent rounds of the RCA study in order to have deeper contact and interaction with those intended to benefit from the development aspects of the road construction and maintenance (ie through RBGs and RMGs)

Of the 18 HHH who would be categorised as potential RAP direct beneficiaries, these were all poor families as determined by conversations in the villages. Their asset- holdings, livelihood basis and family structures confirm this. If the team exercised any bias it was in favour of poorer households, but triangulating findings including review of both HHH and FHH suggests that the host households were representative of RAP target groups.

The study was conducted in May before rice planting season had really got underway (people were waiting for rain in locations A and D) but where wheat harvest was in full swing in location B, and so only provides the team with observations during this period. Households in Locations C, D and A were not busy at this time and much time was spent in relaxed conversations but the team recognises that this is not the case at peak planting (June) and harvesting (October/November) seasons. Unlike the situation in Dailekh and to some extent Kalikhot where the scoping study was conducted, migrant men had not returned nor intended to return from India for the planting season in locations A and D. This highlights another limitation which was the lack of interaction with migrants themselves. This was somewhat mitigated by interactions with a few who were visiting their families, past migrants and talking at length with family members about migration.

The study used both the RAP Theory of Change and the People's Theory of Change (developed following the RCA Scoping Study (December 2013) as tools to develop the 'areas of enquiry' for the study (annex 5). The RAP ToC and supporting Logical framework emphasises economic poverty over social poverty. The report has therefore focused on this but other elements of social poverty (access to health services, education, water and sanitation) are also discussed. Political and psychological poverty (feelings of marginalisation, neglect by state, inability to raise complaints/demands, rights and entitlements) have also been noted but may appear less emphasised in the way the report is structured. This should not imply that these are less **important**.

3. FINDINGS

The findings are reported under issues directly related with the Theory of Change developed for RAP 3 in collaboration with the MEL component. The first section therefore looks at how poverty is experienced and perceived in the different locations taking a multi-dimensional view of poverty. The second section examines the way people make a living currently (with a view to understanding how short term waged labour opportunities provided by RAP 3 fit into the mix as well as the current level of diversified income opportunities and constraints to further diversification). The third section focuses on the intended RAP outcomes related to better physical access by provision of new and better maintained roads as well as the upgrade to all weather roads to extend the usability of roads. The fourth section focuses on how people view change, their aspirations and how this change may come about. The fifth section provides a summary of the baseline with regard to RAP intended outcomes.

Whilst the study concentrated on the twenty five host households, researchers interacted with more than one hundred additional focal households and gathered information about the village as a whole through conversations with others including frontline service providers and researcher observations. The triangulated findings are therefore somewhat representative of the locations rather than just the small number of HHH.

3.1. POVERTY

The villages included in the study have different characteristics of poverty and, in fact, the team had difficulty ranking them according to poverty¹ because of the different dimensions of poverty manifest in each, as well as the lack of homogeneity among wards of the same village.

The Humla village (location C) posed the greatest conundrum in terms of manifestations of poverty. Here, unlike all the other study locations, there was very **high public poverty** and **low personal poverty**. People were relatively 'cash rich' but had very poor access to quality public facilities or opportunities to raise their concerns and voice. They felt neglected by the Government and remote and cut off. Personal family cash incomes were relatively good and better than other study villages. People had cash incomes, mostly from cross border trade with China. They indicated that they did not need to migrate to India to look for work and this practice has largely stopped in recent years. They own relatively large numbers of livestock. They invest in gold as savings (with much evidence of this wealth in the jewellery worn by women and the gold dealers situated in the village). They were more food secure than other areas² with many indicating that they did not have to purchase food at all throughout the year. Bottled alcohol consumption was high with families saying they spent an average of NPR 15,000 per month. Interestingly, they referred to cash in US dollar exchange rate terms rather than in Nepalese rupees. Incomes from selling herbs and medicinal plants were estimated at NPR 70,000 to one lakh for just 2 months work. This is supplemented by lucrative portering including the use of pack animals. According to the only two local shopkeepers, 'there is a lot of money in this place'.

Others noted the inappropriateness of food aid as the inhabitants have not been food insecure and there is concern among some that the village is becoming aid dependent. While not income or food insecure, they **are extremely** deprived in terms of public poverty. These villages are remote isolated places with very poor services and institutions. Access to **markets is** some 2-3 days trek away, there **are no** roads at all and there **is poor** access to quality health and education although the infrastructure was largely in place. Furthermore, the team **observed (and** this was confirmed by service providers who were not local to the area) that people **demonstrated traditional** and antiquated social **norms which** reinforced caste and ethnic divisions and

¹ Other RCA studies have been able to provide a ranking to assist the reader in understanding the findings

² They queried why they were eligible for food aid when they grow sufficient for their consumption needs.

patriarchy in ways largely abandoned in other less remote areas³. Villagers regarded themselves as neglected by the state. During the Conflict they had had no security forces to protect them and currently do not expect anything from the Government. Even the VDC officials do not reside in the villages.

The other four study locations (in Bajura (2 locations), Accham and Doti) were more typical of the region, in that personal poverty could be correlated to conventional income sources, mostly migrant work supplemented by subsistence farming together with a typical mix of salaried government work (e.g. local teachers and health workers). Differences in household assets and income across these villages varied little except in relation to the proximity of the market centre. However, public poverty was a clearer determinant of relative poverty between the locations.


3.1.1. Public poverty

Table 3 summarises the **public assets** in each of the villages. Those locations which are shaded in the table are former RAP locations where roads were constructed 5-8 years ago. The differences in poverty within village D (on a RAP road) were so great that it has been categorised as two different locations (D1 and D2). D2 is a market and administrative centre and D1 is a village some 1 hour walk away but still located on the RAP road.

Access to water (not included in the table) was quite good in all the villages with communal taps either very close to homes or a matter of 5 minutes walk away. However in parts of location B1, the water flow was unreliable. In Humla (location C) water resources were a source of tension and inter-household fights as the water pressure was always low. There were no differences in access by ethnic groups except in village C (Humla) where the dalit community is quite segregated and clearly fares less well than others in terms of access, not just to water but to other public facilities. In B1 there was a sense that dalits, whose own tap was in need of maintenance, should not use the tap near to the Brahmin homes.

³ E.g. marginalisation and stigmatisation of dalits – including having separated *de facto* school for dalits only (because Brahmins withdrew their children), extreme enforcement of seclusion during menstruation for girls, male dominated decision making and authority etc.

Table 3: Public resources

poverty	Village	Education	Health	Markets	Agricultural services	Electricity
<p>poorest</p>  <p>Least poor</p>	C	X2 GON primary (ECD-6) one very poorly resourced (no desks) X1 GON (8-10) de facto dalit only ⁴ X1 GON (6-12) includes a hostel and serves x4 VDCs JTA recently established & well resourced	X1 new health post but no medicines and always locked (no birthing centre) . Nearest health facilities 3.5 days walk No medicines for sale in village.	Very expensive bulk goods portered in (3.5 days) X2 general stores X2 gold shops Trade with China	none	No, rely on solar panels but have difficulty maintaining and get repaired because of remoteness
	D1	X1 GON pre-school-10	Health post 45mins but low staff attendance. Unofficial medicine provider in village	Three roadside general stores only- 1 or 2 hr to better markets. Effectively no outward trade	1hr away	Most houses have national grid but supply only 1-2hr/day
	B1	X2 GON primary (1-5) Very old GON 1-8 GON 10+2	Health post built 7yrs ago, good condition but inaccessible because up mountain. Private medicine shop preferred	Small market town (25 shops) 1.5 hrs away. No outward trade	Yes, but like Health Post difficult to access. Fertilisers/pesticides available from private sellers 1.5 hrs walk away	No electricity supply-use solar power
	B2	X1 GON (1-10) X1 primary recently closed	20 yr old Health Post, well frequented by population & seemingly well functioning No medicine shops	Seven small shops Small market town 7 hrs away	None	Most houses connected to hydro power from Accham-disputes mean this is often disrupted
	A	X1 GON primary (1-5) X1 GON class 1-10 X1 boarding (1-5)	20yr old GON basic health post with birth centre. 3hrs to nearest health facility for serious cases. X3 medicine shops Ambulance availability Regular family planning mobile satellite clinics (since road)	Good local market for purchases. Rare trips to more major market for bulk purchase. No banks (nearest 4hrs). No outward trade	Yes but 1.5 hrs at not very accessible VDC	Most houses have good electricity supply (5-6hrs/day) from micro-hydro power station
	D2	X1 GON 10+2 school X1 primary (1-6) X1 boarding (1-6)	5yr old, well equipped health post Medicine shops Ambulance but often unavailable	Good local market, making further trips largely unnecessary. No outward trade	Yes in village	Most have very good (often 24 hr) electricity supplied by national grid though some still waiting connection

⁴ This situation is an outlier and the study team was concerned to find this. It is a ‘dalit -only ‘school *de facto* as it serves a predominantly dalit community. The Brahmins living in the area choose to send their children to another school and have created this distinction, referring to this school in derogatory terms. As discussed further in the report, the attitudes and behaviour of the villagers in location C were outdated. Stigmatisation of dalits and patriarchal attitudes persist in this remote location (and only here among the study sites to this level) in a way reminiscent prevalent several decades ago in other areas of Nepal but no longer practiced.

Past RAP investments had made access to shops easier in both villages A and D (people explained the impact of the road mostly in terms of the concomitant establishment of local shops serving the consumption needs of the community). These villages were well served by electricity and had relatively well functioning health posts but also private sector health provision through well frequented privately owned medicine shops. Many mothers in all locations say they prefer giving birth at home because it is more comfortable, friendly and ‘free’ and are concerned about long distances to health centres (locations B1 and B2) and, in places with road access (locations A and D) ambulance availability is unreliable at best but also uncomfortable on the poor roads. Those who live near to health posts are more likely to say they prefer to give birth at the health centre. The Government incentive for institutional birth delivery was mentioned frequently and unprompted as a reason for this preference.

Location C (Humla) demonstrates the worst in terms of public poverty due mostly to its remoteness and extreme winter weather. Although schools, health centres have been recently constructed and these are relatively well equipped the quality of services are poor. The health post remained locked throughout the study and has been for many months as there are no medicines⁵. Distances to porter goods in or access services are a major constraint taking over 3 days on trails only.

Access to schools to class 10 is relatively good in all the study locations and for all ethnic groups (except Humla location C where , as noted elsewhere, the poorer resourced school has become de facto ‘for dalits’) but problems lie with the quality of education and learning contact times. The more remote schools suffer from severe teacher shortages which is mitigated by employment of community teachers for whom local contributions have to be raised. This means that the villages most likely to be poor due to remoteness are also the ones most likely to have to pay more for teachers. Furthermore, formal/informal supervision in schools which are not in market centres is less evident and contact times were observed to be very short- late morning start times and early finish times (e.g. in D1 students were actually in class for no more than 3 hours per day). The study team did not hear anyone mention literacy training for adults despite talking at length about different types of education.

3.1.2. Personal poverty

Note: RAP 3 takes a largely income poverty alleviation position and so this report focuses on this rather than other aspects of personal poverty. People’s own perception of personal poverty is also prioritised and this too is intrinsically linked to food security and income.

‘Someone is poor when they cannot grow or cannot eat enough food’ (woman village A)

Personal poverty is defined by people first and foremost as their food security, followed by their household income (expenses- often discussed in relation to the burden of education costs), asset ownership, and opportunities to earn (often expressed in terms of the strength of their networks and connectedness). Poverty is also linked to capacity to work. So families comprising young women with small children living on their own with their husbands working in India, families with elderly, incapacitated family members or with members who are *‘often drunk’* were considered more poor, as they could not avail opportunities for cash income earning. Those with large debts and who gamble are considered particularly poor. Those with large families were also considered poor. Others noted that it was not enough to satisfy basic needs and that to get out of poverty also meant better access to consumer goods , *‘to be like Kathmandu where there are things to buy’* (village A). Teachers⁶ and others with salaried work were considered better off. *‘Those who have already managed to move away’* (men village D2) (implying those who have a good job) are considered better off.

⁵ HHH asked the C team to leave any medicines they had behind. This is an indicator of the severe shortage they experience.

⁶ Our observations are that teachers may earn considerably less than migrant workers but it seems the predictability and reliability of the income is what others envy.

Of the 25 HHH included in the study, the majority (11) described themselves as farmers but they are subsistence farmers who do not have surplus to sell and have all been former migrant workers. Among the others, three are small shopowners, four teachers, four exclusively migrant workers, two make a living from portering and one NGO worker. Annex 3 provides a summary of each host household (HHH) in terms of personal poverty (number of dependents, livelihoods, assets)

Most host households had enough food from their own land for 4-6 months and some for the entire year. The demand for cash to purchase food (half year), pay for education⁷, buy snacks, clothes and medicines makes subsistence farming by itself untenable.



Typically most study households had sufficient home produce to last 4-6 months

Households ate rice (own or bought) and some kind of vegetables most days, although at some times of the year, they said, they only eat bread made from buckwheat/barley flour. The vegetables eaten during our stay with HHH tended to be simple mixtures of spring garlic, chilli and salt, occasionally supplemented by kitchen garden produce. As many households had one cow, they drank milk. In location A, families could eat fish caught in the river a few times per week. Meat eating is confined to festivals only when the meat is shared among several households. Most took meals only twice per day (midday and early evening) although some HHH took chapatis and tea in the morning.

The 'snacking culture' is pervasive and affects household expenditure significantly with many families feeling pressured by their children⁸ to buy noodles and biscuits, spending at least (and often more) NPR 20 per day per child. There was slightly less pressure in location C where there were less snacks to buy but even here, one of the study HHH young boys was selling rice he took

from home in order to buy noodles. Alcohol consumption in location A was very high. Despite suggestions that location D was 'alcohol free', this was clearly not the case⁹ and several shops prospered from selling alcohol albeit discretely. Only in location B1 and C was alcohol consumption less conspicuous. Gambling is strongly associated with alcohol consumption and was therefore noticeable in locations A, D and B2. Cigarette purchase was also high among older men in all areas, especially in location C.

Many of the study HHH parents were either uneducated or had completed primary education only but they all were prepared to spend considerable portions of their incomes on education of their children.

Education costs were generally around 35% of income with some rising to 60-70%. Costs are higher for higher education. People talked about keeping the size of their families small so they could afford education.

⁷ All schools had recruited community teachers to make up the Government of Nepal deficit and these were mostly paid for by contributions from households (around 300 NPR per month). Persistent demands for snacks, especially noodles, to eat at break time add a further hidden cost of education and were not included in these computations but can amount to substantial sums per month e.g. NPR 5000 per child per year. In Bajura, boys repaid the credit accrued by them at local shops for their snacks and educational resources through portering for the shopkeepers. In D1 children as young as 8 years old collect and roll *ganja* to sell to boys who come up from the town, to pay for their snacks.

⁸ Sometimes referred to as 'pester power', this phenomenon has been observed during RCA studies to be pervasive in Bangladesh and Indonesia, where it also significantly impacts on household expenditure.

⁹ The team observed drinking behaviour, large quantities of discarded bottles and were told of the problems families face with drunk husbands.

Table 4; difference in average family size by generation

Location	Average Family Size		
	Grandparents were one of how many?	How many children did they have?	How many children do their grandchildren have?
C	5	4	3
B	5	5	2
A	5	4	3
D	5	5	3

Table 5: indicative education costs

Location	Primary school (costs in NPR)	Secondary school (costs in NPR)
C	NGO sponsorship programme covers uniform, snacks, stationery, bag, shoes (if they contribute NPR 365) Non- sponsored children have to pay 2000 per year stationery 400 admission fee 2500 per year coaching Snacks provided at school (NGO sponsored)	GoN 3-4000 /year uniform ¹⁰ 2000/year stationery ¹¹ Mostly take own snacks 500 admission fee
D	GoN school 1-1500 per year uniform 400 admission fee 1000 /year stationery costs 300/month contribution to community teachers 300 contribution for Special days Private school 5000 enrolment fee 1000 yearly admission fee 600 per month fees i.e. 6000/year	GoN 1-1500/year uniform 2500-3000/year stationery Snacks 30-50 per day = 7000-11,000/year 500 admission fee Boarding costs during national exams (3000/year)
B	GoN 800-1000 per year uniform 400 admission fee 1000/year Stationery Snacks provided by school	GoN 1200-1500/year uniform 1200-2400/year stationery 2-300/month contribution to teachers' salaries 500 Admission fee Snacks 20/day= 4600/year
A	GoN 1000 per year uniform 400 admission fee 1000/year stationery 300 for Special functions Snack provided by school	GoN 1000/year uniform Snacks 20 per day=4600/year 500 Admission fee

A family with three children, two in primary and one in secondary school would expect education related costs to amount to a basic NPR 20,000 per year but would also expect additional costs such a contributions to community teachers salaries, special events and exam fees. Much bigger costs are associated with education

¹⁰ The SMC has introduced a system where the uniform changes each year and requires the students to purchase new through them at this rather high rate.

¹¹ Notebooks in location C are double the price in Kathmandu e.g. NPR 15 notebook costs NPR 30

above class 10 and families with older children were expecting to pay a minimum of NPR 20,000 per year in fees and either boarding costs or contributions to food if they are to stay with relatives. Costs associated with higher level education were quoted at around NPR 8000-10,000 per month. It is at this level that parents make choices about which child to invest in further and the choice is based, they tell us, on the child's aptitude, potential and motivation not on gender.

Most host households¹² had very little cash incomes (between 5,000 and 60,000¹³ NPR per month, but with most household **combined incomes** stated to be in the region of 10,000 -20,000 NPR/month¹⁴). These primarily comprised income from remittances from relatives working abroad but also included day wages, sale of milk, livestock (occasional and seasonal), old age allowances and pensions, sale of medicinal plants (Humla only) , portering (primarily Humla) , small shop trading and local teachers salaries and stipends. Humla (location C) cash incomes, as noted above, were among the highest. The team was frequently told that the cash incomes in Humla are purposely hidden to outsiders (e.g. *'people here are really smart because they are earning well and living comfortably but want to show to outsiders that they don't'* (School principal, location C))

Most families seemed to just break even in terms of their family income/expenditure but several had large debts to service, especially those supporting children in higher education. As traditionally landless, dalits have always needed employment and have been working in India for generations. Many shared with us that have accumulated savings and have purchased land and houses, especially from others in the village who have left for the terai. This study indicates that often they had assets such as TVs and mobile phones when their Chettri or Brahmin neighbours did not. In village A, they were in a position to be the main money lenders in the village, especially where large loans were required (e.g. to service broker and transport costs for overseas migration to Japan or Korea). Most of the dalits with whom the study team stayed or interacted with did not see themselves as poorer than others in the village (except in village C, Humla, where the difference was acute). Some had been able to set up shops (e.g. location A and D) and were making good livings but the majority were continuing the tradition of migration for work.

In location C (Humla) people regarded themselves as 'fit' and proudly noted they spent little on health e.g. *'I have not spent a single penny on health the whole year'* (man, location C). Generally, in other locations health costs were anyway considered quite low but most people adopt a 'wait and see' approach to curative health and resort to medical intervention only where conditions are considered serious. In these circumstances they can raise loans from relatives. In Humla these costs may be quite huge e.g. costs in hiring helicopters to transport sick family members. But some families indicated they can raise even these high amounts through extensive family networks and provided examples of this in the last few years.

Formal loans were only apparent among those with salaried jobs (e.g. teachers, nurses) or those with political connections while other depended on relatives or neighbours to provide mostly small scale income smoothing loans.

3.1.3. Personal Assets

Land ownership is considered problematic as an indicator of poverty. The better off host households had often sold land to set up shops or send their children to school (e.g. in terai). Land is often left unused and is therefore only a capital asset. Many families aspire to own land in the terai and many already have small plots

¹² All households comprised between 4-10 persons with an average of 6 persons

¹³ These higher incomes were found in Humla resulting from medicinal herbs collection and portering with mules and horses, one other household in Accham matched this income and they owned two shops (clothing and medicine) beside the RAP 2 road.

¹⁴ These include combined and average monthly incomes for the entire household. RCA studies by their nature often reveal higher incomes than conventional studies because people include the full range of incomes, both formal and informal , short and long term.

there. These holdings were often not shared with researchers early in discussions with researchers which suggest that household survey information may under account for this non local land holding.

The presence/absence of household toilets are increasingly problematic as proxy indicators of relative wealth as local governments have conducted 'open defaecation free' campaigns and linked this to a variety of conditional support e.g. In village D1 pensions are to be withheld if households do not comply with the directive to install toilets, in other villages, investment in community projects are contingent on 100% toilet coverage¹⁵. All but one of our study HHH had toilets and were typical of the villages at large. Toilets were mostly water sealed (a few pit toilets) but without flush and have mostly been installed in the last three years. The one HHH exception was currently constructing a toilet to be shared with their brother's family in village D1, where universal coverage was anticipated by the end of the year. In location C they all had toilets but half did not actually use them, partly because of the water shortage.



Pockets of HH in villages sometimes lack electricity (in this map marked with black dots) because they could not afford the connection fee several years ago.

Since nearly all households have mobile phones (despite poor server coverage), these too are not a reliable indicator of relative wealth. Mobiles are largely used to stay in touch with family members and to connect with employers and employment networks but may also be used to order goods to be delivered to the village. Teenage children often have their own mobiles, especially for games and music. Ownership of TVs appear to be linked to relative wealth (the shopkeepers, teachers and a few migrant households had these) but can also be misleading as they are not purchased where signals are poor and are often gifts from employers (in India) or relatives. Village mapping exercises suggested that houses with thatch rather than corrugated iron roofs tended to be poorer but no correlation could be discerned between the materials used for the walls and relative poverty. Construction materials were correlated to the local availability of stone, flint or earth rather than any other consideration. Some households in villages where electricity was

available but were not themselves connected were also poorer, mainly because they had not been able to afford the connection fee at the time of installation. Use of low energy bulbs was more prevalent among better off families. All households used firewood for cooking irrespective of socio-economic status. As no household was interested in expanding their agricultural activities (see below 3.4) they all only had basic agricultural equipment. Nearly all had reduced their livestock in recent years as women or elderly relatives have been left to look after them while exclusively men have migrated to India for long term work.

In most of the villages dalits were not assumed to be poor by other villagers or the dalits themselves. For example, in villages A and D they were actively buying land and houses and moving from previously cramped conditions. There were jealousies aired in villages A and D that dalits were getting preferential treatment in government and non-government programmes as well as through customary community practices such as the provision of 'khala'¹⁶. And their condition running profitable shops and services these days did not warrant this. In village D some of the larger houses were owned by dalits.

3.1.4. Connectedness

The reliance on remittances in all the study villages except Village C (Humla) means people emphasise the special importance of networks and connectedness in securing good jobs, particularly in India. Who one knows and where they are based is regarded as a key determinant of the kind of job one can hope to access. Phones,

¹⁵ This drive has provided another source of income for dalits. In D1 there is enough construction work for more than one year to fulfil the obligation of 100% toilet coverage.

¹⁶ *Khala* is traditional practice of Chettri and Brahmin castes to provide dalits with a proportion of the harvest. Dalits will even sell this khala for profit as they do not need for their own consumption.

better road access and opportunities to make 'contacts' are all considered important in boosting the chances of getting well paid work abroad.

3.2. MAKING A LIVING

In all but location C (Humla) the main source of income was from remittances. These were mostly sent by migrant workers living in India, with very few in Malaysia, Qatar, South Africa, Korea and Japan. Village mapping exercise done during the course of the study indicate that most households either had at least one migrant worker currently working abroad or had recently had one. Contrary to the experience in Dailekh¹⁷ the majority of migrants leave for long term employment, usually a minimum of two to three years and often much more. Migration was almost exclusively by men and mostly in the age range 20-45¹⁸ years. They use the well-functioning networks developed over generations to secure jobs as security guards, unskilled construction work, hotel work (including cooks), car washing or work in textile factories primarily in Mumbai, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. They have their own Indian based cooperatives which function as savings and credit organisations but also provide welfare support when migrants face difficulties. Almost all migrant workers are men. Nepali workers, we were told, are regarded as trustworthy and hardworking and they are in demand in India. While in the villages we were made aware of telephone calls to recall valued workers to their workplaces in India. Some men had worked for between 15-25 years in India and had since retired, often opening small businesses (shops, teashops) with their savings. The only variation to this was found in Accham (village A2) where men practice seasonal migration returning during the agricultural season. This system is made possible by 'job sharing' with Nepalis more permanently based in India.



This village map drawn by villages shows among other things the HH where there is currently a migrant worker (green dots). Over 70% of HH have at least one migrant worker .

Migrant worker incomes are said to be in the range of 12,000 – 15,000 Indian rupees /month ('But 5000 indian rupees is worth 8000 nepali rupees – so this is a good living'¹⁹ man D1). However, people indicated that workers conceal their real incomes²⁰. Accommodation in India is generally shared and cheap and transport costs are minimal. Furthermore, there are no passport requirements or restrictions on employment for Nepalis in India making access, people say, to these jobs very easy. Remittances are generally carried by those returning on visits rather than through money transfer agencies so families do not necessarily receive regular payments²¹. Returning migrants also bring goods for the family as well as to sell. On the whole families could not put a monetary value on these goods. There is some concern in some communities that returning migrants squander

¹⁷ Where the scoping RCA study was conducted at the end of 2013

¹⁸ People told us they start migration when they 'get married and start a family' and continue until their children are educated and leave home. Some older men were still practising migration but told us they were keen to stop and remain at home.

¹⁹ This means purchasing power of equivalent of 19,200- 24,000 NPR . Compare this to a GON teacher's salary of 15,000 NPR per month .

²⁰ Observation of assets and purchasing suggests that these may be underestimates as proxy indicators show e.g. one HHH recently spent 200,000 NPR on a marriage ceremony, others purchase TVs and dish, pay for education and hostel accommodation for their children (5-8000NPR /month) and buy land.

²¹ This was a reason why women, in particular said they appreciated cash income earning opportunities as they feel vulnerable to the uncertainty of remittance payments.

their earnings on return, especially at Dashain, by *'throwing their money around', 'showing off', 'drinking and gambling'*. As a result, in village A1 they frequently have to take loans to pay for return transport to India.

Migrant workers to other countries (other than India) and their families were much more vague about the jobs they undertake and the wages they make. Families are often not told what work their relative has and people shared with us that this may be because of the low status of jobs abroad or the dubious legal position of some jobs (e.g. working on student visas to Japan) but it may also be because they want to hide their true income to avoid demands in the village.

Eleven of our 25 HHH now consider themselves farmers but all have been recent migrants or have another income source (construction work, widow of priest, army pensions). They do not see farming as *'making a living'* but as a means to feed the family. Everyone left at home is involved in farming. They grow traditional crops; rice, wheat, maize and millet and some grow small amounts of vegetables for home consumption. Only two households have small surplus grains to sell/barter. Others, which include those relying on current migrant incomes, local teachers, local health workers and shop keepers may continue to farm land for family consumption only but some have either sold their land or leave it uncultivated and buy in food. Most of the HHH had sufficient production to feed the family for four to six months and six HHH had sufficient for the entire year. Farm work is a joint family activity but is regarded as the work of mothers and wives for migrating men (*'of course my wife farms when I am away. This is what she does'* (man, D1).



Women do most of the farming in locations A and D and have done for several generations as men typically migrate to India for long periods of time not just short seasons.

Livestock ownership has decreased, people say, because there is nobody at home to look after them. Children, who traditionally took care of them in the past, are all at school though still take the goats, buffalos and cows for grazing in the afternoons after school. Otherwise the chore mostly falls on the elderly and women left on their own. Typically village HH have a buffalo and /or cow for milk, ox for ploughing and a couple of goats. Only two of our HHH had larger stocks and these were small herds of goats (6-11) which they raised to sell. There is some trade particularly at Dashain when traders come to the villages and purchase livestock en masse but generally this is not a means of livelihood. Very few chickens were kept in any of the villages because *'of birds and foxes taking them'* and in some areas *'because meat is readily available in markets'* (woman D2).

In village A about 50 households have shifted closer to the new RAP road to set up shops which appear to be thriving. In B1 also small shops (snacks, alcohol) have been recently set up specifically targeted towards labourers working on the new RAP roads Former farmers or dallit artisans, they indicate that they

appreciate the cash income they now earn which has allowed them to invest money in their children's education and consumer goods.

In Humla (village C) people indicate that they are subsistence farmers and that this is their main livelihood but this does not explain their income status. They were reluctant to talk about the trade activities with China but benefit from Chinese tradespersons coming to them to buy a range of at least six different medicinal herbs, which formerly they had traded at lower prices through Nepalganj. Paying a very small fee to the Community Forest Committee, entire families gather herbs over a period of 1-2 months and can make up to NPR 1 lakh profit. The team observed extensive opium cultivation also. It was very difficult to engage in conversation around this as it was clearly sensitive but the cultivation was not hidden and other conversations suggest the trade routes through China which are used for other commodities are being used for this too. People explained that they used to migrate for seasonal work to India but the income earning possibilities through herb collection and anticipated work with the many NGOs due to start-up operations in the area has largely curtailed this practice. Another lucrative livelihood is portering with mules which has really only taken off in the last two

years as the village has become connected with Mugu. A single mule can carry a load at a rate of 2,500 NPR²² from the district town for local hirers and more for outsiders providing a typical monthly income per mule of NPR 10-15,000. Tree nurseries (apple and walnut) have also been established to sell saplings to an NGO for distribution.

The need for cash especially for mobile phone credit, snacks (and alcohol) has fuelled child 'entrepreneurship'. For example school boys in location B1 porter good to shops to pay off their debts to the shopkeepers, young children (as young as 8years old) in location D1 supply *ganja* for boys from town, young boys in location C 'stole' rice from their families to sell and day wage labour is available for all ages

3.3 RURAL ACCESS

Villages in A and D locations are served by roads built by RAP in previous phases. Their access to markets is clearly better than villages located in B and significantly better than villages in C. 'We want markets, markets, markets' (man, location A) typifies the general feeling in these areas of the importance of consumerism. Clothing, electrical goods and, thirdly, bulk food purchases were the stated priorities. But people also sought diversity of goods to buy and a good market is defined on the basis of the **range of products available**. Transport has increased in villages A and D but the demand is for goods to be brought into the community not exported out. For example in location D, some dozen or so tractors plied the road daily, bringing goods up from town (1-2 hours drive) but returned largely empty. These goods were bought by retailers in the small town making trips to the



Tractors come from the main town up the mountain loaded but return empty in location D but typical of other areas.

Conversations suggested this was the norm year round as people do not sell or transport goods out of the community.

District town by consumers 'unnecessary'. Shopkeepers typically telephone their orders which get dropped off at their shops. School feeding programme supplies (USAID) were also delivered by tractor.

In location B1 where a new RAP 3 road is planned, people are confused as, to be fully functional, the road requires bridges over the river to link it to the main road into town. People say there are no plans for the bridges and so no vehicles will be able to ply the new road except by crossing the river, technically possible by tractors only in the dry season. Like locations A and D, inhabitants of location B1 do not envisage using roads for export of goods but rather to bring consumer goods closer to them. Access to the VDC, health centre and agricultural office in location B1 is not enhanced by the road as all these facilities are perched on a peak high above the VDC villages, equidistant from villages it serves but inaccessible to all (at least one hour climb for each).

²² The rates per kg are five times those in other areas e.g. 35NPR/kg compared with 7-8 NPR/kg in Bajura.



Along the RAP road in location D, there are numerous small shops and teastalls. The small shops 'bring the market to us' and sell a wide range of everyday goods so

people no longer have to walk into town.

Location B2 is more remote and goods sold in the few local shops are portered in from the town (7hour trek). In location C, accessibility is extremely limited and involves a 3.5 day trek from the main town over precipitous landscape with few delineated paths. The proposed road does not link the villages to any growth centre or market at present and people were concerned that they were not consulted and did not understand the rationale behind the construction. *'This road is useless.... But still we thank the UK government as it will push the Government of Nepal to build the rest'* (man, location C). Currently they porter in essentials such as government subsidised salt, soap, oil but otherwise rely on locally grown produce. Clothes and household items are bought in Mugu because this is easier to access.

Table 6: Costs of 1 kg sugar

location	Price (NPR)/kg
C	160
D1	80
B1	100
B2	105
A	N/A
D2	80

Table 6 shows the cost variation of one commodity (sugar) as an indicator of differentials in transport costs. Our HHH bought sugar primarily for tea but it is not an essential and in location C they rarely drank tea.

Roads bring medicine shops. The only places which did not have privately run medicine shops were Locations B2 and C (no roads). People like medicine shops because they can pick up medicines easily

and quickly, the shops are open long hours and are well stocked. The owners are referred to as *doctors* and the reliability of opening times and availability for providing advice gives value over government health posts. There is also seemingly comparative better access to family planning in locations A and D. In the former, government health workers hold quarterly sessions and there is high awareness of what is available. People say that the visits are more frequent and more reliable since the road was constructed. There was more family planning awareness and uptake in village B1 than the more remote village B2.

In location C there is excitement about the road even though it *'goes nowhere'*. The team was told, *'you have grown up with roads, you have no idea how important this is for us. How can roads be anything but good?'*

Where there were existing RAP roads, people told us they prefer not to use public transport vehicles because they were extremely uncomfortable on the poor roads, *'it takes the same time to walk or take transport, but if you take a car you will have pain for three days'* (young man, passing through D1). Transport can also be expensive. Four wheel drive vehicles (Indian Boleros) plying from location D were charging 2-300 NPR per person one way for a 1.5 hour trip into town, sharing the space with 12-15 others. Most people estimated that walking down takes about the same time. A teacher told us he walks both ways each day as the fare is prohibitive and the timing unreliable. In location A people also said that they preferred to walk as transport was too expensive. Even migrant workers returning from India with large loads (luggage and gifts) prefer to hire porters than to take vehicles. To rent an entire tractor in D costs run into NPR 3-5000 and this is considered only by wealthy or shop keepers who can recoup the costs through their pricing.

Table 7; Transport costs

Location (poorest first)	Cost to transport good to nearest sub market	Fares for passengers to travel one way to nearest sub market
C	35 NPR/kg (each mule carries approx. 70 kg)	No transportation available
D1	16 tractors operate charging NPR 3-4000 (approx. 3-4 NPR/kg)	NPR 200/per person
B1	Very close to sub market, only shopkeepers use mules/porters. 10-12 NPR/kg by porter, 7-8 NPR/kg per mule)	No transportation available
A	Have to reserve jeep/tractors in advance because of competition for transport (no mules since 2001) Tractor load costs NPR 5000 (approx. 5 NPR/kg)	NPR 600 /per person to travel by tractor. Tractor takes long route (2 hrs) so people prefer to walk
B2	10-12 NPR/kg (porter) 7-8 NPR/kg (mules)	No transportation available
D2	As D1, but most tractors come directly to D2 primarily at request of shopowners NPR 4-5000 (approx. 4-5 NPR/kg)	NPR 300/per person

The study team was aware of the possibility of transportation cartels which fix prices and in location A and D prices quoted were fixed but people did not mention or complain about cartels.

3.4 ASPIRATIONS & ANTICIPATED CHANGE

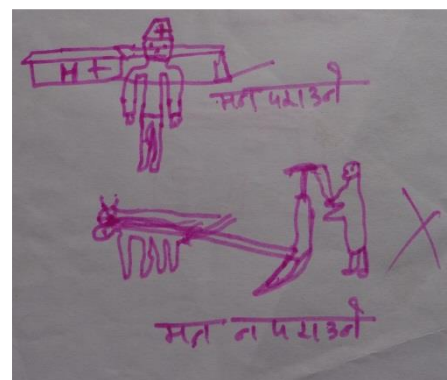
3.4.1 Education

'We want our children to be like you' parent, location D comparing with the researcher.

Families are highly motivated towards education and want to support their children as far as possible. There is a clear perceived link between education and job prospects and since none of the parents in the study considered farming as a future for their children (see 3.4.2.), education is highly valued. Aspirations are similar for boys and girls and parents were at pains to point out that there was no discrimination, although it was also felt by some parents that a well-educated girl would certainly *'get a good husband'*, if nothing else. The issue for parents was the aptitude of the child and they were prepared to invest in 'school minded' children irrespective of gender. However, it is also clear that families recognise that not all children can succeed and encouragement is given to boys to join migrant work early if they are not achieving at school. The youngest son is often expected to remain at home to look after parents and continue the farming. There is also frustration at the competition for salaried jobs for school graduates with people citing 1 in 300 chance succeeding in competitive interviews and examinations.

3.4.2. Agriculture

Farming is not an aspiration. Children of all ages see farming as hard work and not something they would do after finishing school. Even those who were obviously doing less well at school did not consider farming an option but talked about their preference for migrant work or waged employment. Some children said it would be *'embarrassing'* to be farmers, especially if they have studied to Class 10 *'we would rather be idle than be farmers'*²³. Some children are refusing to help with the family farm at all to avoid the potential to be labelled as farmers. Parents do not want this future for their children either as farming is *'hard life, laborious'* and they are investing in their children education to enable them to have a better life than they have. *'Why would I spend on education if I wanted them to be a farmer?'* (Father, D2) Some land is already being left barren but most people were of the opinion that farming for own consumption will continue (*'women will do'*) and that this is a way to spread the risk in case remittances are delayed, employment terminates, main wage earner is incapacitated etc. *'Farming is our tradition- if we leave the field barren outsiders will think we are lazy'*. It was clear from conversations and observations that houses and land were being sold or abandoned as people move on, mostly to the terai.



Boy's picture showing what he definitely does not want to be when he grows up (a farmer) and his aspiration to be a doctor. This is typical of other drawings and conversations with both children and their parents.

We tried to ascertain whether farming had got harder. While people complained that rains are less predictable both in terms of timing and intensity, there was not a sense that the fertility of the land had declined. Most are still able to use animal manure and human waste as fertilisers and many were proud of their organic approaches which had been endorsed by radio messages. Only in Bajura was there wide use of chemical fertilisers.

'We can't do at our age, I am already 76, I just stay home and chat a lot' (woman, D2)

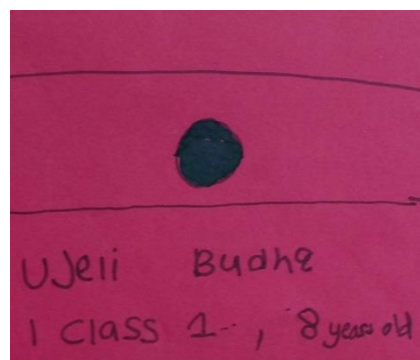
Kitchen gardening is minimal in most study locations. There are only a handful of examples of commercial farming in any of the villages covered by the study. In village B1 there was one commercial vegetable farmer growing bitter melon, tomatoes, potatoes, pumpkin, papaya and tomatoes and making a 'good living' which enables him to send his two children to school in the terai. In location D1 there is one person who has attended a large number²⁴ of GON and NGO sponsored vegetable growing training courses and grows organic vegetables and herbs but nearly all for his family's own consumption, the exception being limes which he sells making about NPR 20-25,000 profit per season. In location D2 there is one onion farmer, in location A1 another who grows potato and cabbage and in location A2 two dalit households growing chillies and onions. We asked all these why others did not copy their success and the answer was *'they don't want to learn', 'they are not interested/motivated- even when I give them the seeds', 'nobody wants to develop farming'*. Discussing this further with subsistence farmers suggests that these assertions are endorsed; there is no discernible interest in doing more farming e.g. *'it takes too long for fruit trees to grow', 'why do more hard work?'* (Young men, D1). A vegetable collection centre had been set up by an NGO in location D2 sometime ago but lies locked and empty; *'it was infested with insects and nobody used'* (man D2) and there were not enough vegetable farmers to make the system work. The handful of farmers who have surplus to sell, now sell locally through the shops. Furthermore, those in location D and B felt that the lack of irrigation would hinder potential. But the

²³ Youngest sons seem to be required to stay at home and look after the family farm when older siblings have a choice of careers. Those we met seemed quite depressed about this expectation and de-motivated about their education.

²⁴ He and his wife have attended more than ten over the last few years, receiving travel costs and allowances each time

constraints were not considered with much seriousness as in both locations A and D migration is considered 'tried and tested', earns reasonable income (better than farming) and is 'less risky'.

By contrast, in village C (Humla) some people, while having no current experience of commercial farming because there is no market access, seemed enthusiastic about the prospect of commercial farming which RAP has proposed. They see themselves growing vegetables on a commercial scale although raise concerns about accessing inputs such as insecticide and manure in sufficient quantities in view of the lack of roads and their remoteness. Considering the prohibitive costs of portage (goods portered in often cost x5 of the prices in town) the study team felt these ambitions may be unrealistic. Characteristic of more traditional thinking, one family indicated that their sons were assets for future farming but he was an exception and others talked about moving out of Humla 'anyhow', some indicating that they would move as soon as elderly members of their families passed on. It therefore seems that the prospect of RAP supported agricultural activities are regarded as means to make money and move on. The main drive in village C (Humla) was clearly 'to *make money*'



When a girl of 8 years in location C was asked to draw her aspirations she drew money (while others in other locations drew pictures of doctors and teachers)

3.4.3. Relocation

With the recognition that family investment in education was not geared to farming there is a general acceptance that offspring will move to find work. Although many indicated that they liked the peace, quiet, pace of life, fresh air and clean water that their rural homes provided, they felt that cash incomes can only be earned outside. Many made more positive assertions about preferring urban life where they felt life was 'less hard' and there was 'more to buy' and 'more to do'. Life in the terai, in particular, is valued for being more modern and easier.

It was clear from conversations and observations that houses and land were being sold or abandoned as people moved, mostly to the terai. For example, in part of location D1 five houses had recently been sold, houses and land often being purchased by dalit families, some of whom indicated that this too was a short term measure before also moving ultimately to the terai.

Children indicated their aspirations to become salaried workers especially in education and health and often added the caveat that they 'wanted to return to the village to serve' but in the context of other conversations with them this assertion was not very convincing. They wanted to have permanent jobs and the location was secondary.

4. BASELINE FOR PROJECT OUTCOMES

20,000 people lifted out of poverty	<p>Comments emerging from RCA study</p> <p>The baseline suggests that people’s aspirations lie with investing in education to ensure better future job prospects outside of the community for their children. The basic lack of interest in farming even with support seems to be a major challenge for the SED components and the assumption that increased access to markets for farm produce may contribute to poverty alleviation. People feel that livelihoods associated with development of market centres and transport provision are likely to be enhanced for some and people welcome development in terms of creating and expanding economic hubs. People living in poverty see such development as providing potential diversification of cash earning opportunities, especially day wages. People anticipate some jobs related to the RAP road construction such as tea/roksi shops for road workers. The contribution of temporary employment in road construction is seen largely as a substitution for a season of work in India and an opportunity to remain at home with family (for those who can leave their jobs in India), or where there is sufficient members of the household remaining and able to work, additional cash income for consumption and not anticipated as sufficient for savings and investment. Mostly people feel that the main potential beneficiaries of RAP are people able to speculate by buying strategic land or setting up small businesses in the enhanced market centres and not the poor, who will continue to migrate.</p>
7.5 million days of employment generated	<p>People are enthusiastic about the prospect of short term local earning opportunities on road construction but purely in terms of easing cash flow and servicing their ongoing consumption needs. There is no doubt that there is a real need for cash and that this need has increased over recent years. However, road construction employment is largely seen as a small supplementary income and a short term option only. Compulsory savings from the RAP programme for RBGs in village D2 in the past was noted as good because it forced the savings habit and the savings cooperative is still active but this impact not apparent in village A. According to people in locations A and B1 this short term income boost largely fuelled increased alcohol consumption and gambling. Some noted that where women earned their own cash they had control over the spending of this. However, in location C men have said that the work is too hard for women and have substituted for them in the RBGs currently working. In</p>

most locations RBG membership is by household (in line with other community projects) and as a result all households have the same opportunity for employment meeting equality but not equity outcomes.

In sum, the employment is currently viewed as a small cash flow assistance, but not enough to make any difference in the long term. Where men return from India to take up road construction, this work is regarded as substitute rather than new income earning opportunities. Of concern was that in location B2 men were angry that they had lost five months of their income earning opportunities in India on what they considered to be false promises of employment with RAP (they ended up with 12 days work only). Young men waiting for migrant jobs see construction work as an important opportunity to earn.

200 economic infrastructure investments

No insights

600km of roads maintained per year for 4 years

Better maintained roads are anticipated by people to make a difference, mostly to the comfort and time taken for journeys using transport but they have no anticipation of changes to fares or costs of transport.

800,000 people benefiting from improved access

The most noted improvement resulting from better access is for goods (bringing the market to us) with convenience and goods diversity being the main elements. In location C there is anticipation of decreased prices for goods but this is not anticipated in other areas where prices may be expected to increase with the costs of vehicular transportation. Access to local facilities on the other hand may not be improved by the RAP roads as people often prefer to walk and are already accessing facilities regularly because they are already local. However, people indicated that the provision of government services such as family planning, more regular medicine supply and ambulances and posting of fully certified teachers in more remote schools might improve with better road access. People also noted that accessing local administration for citizen cards and other documentation had improved with better road access. In Location C there is optimism that they will be connected with new market chains through SED support but this is not mirrored in other areas. Another element which matters to people is psychological whereby remote places gain more status by being connected.

40,000 farmer's incomes up by GBP70 p.a.

Again the lack of interest in farming as a livelihood option is a challenge to the SED component. Those with potential, i.e. land and water have been targeted by SED and people dispute whether these are therefore programmes for the poor. Furthermore, people

expressed concern over the risks involved in developing their own enterprises and indicated that they thought migration a less risky option. Specifically, people do not see opportunities to increase goat husbandry as grazing land is short, labour is short and there is a lack of veterinary and JTA support. With regard to vegetable production, people indicated that there is insufficient fertile land, technical know how is lacking as well as insufficient storage facilities. Again people shared their aversion to risk (concern about pests, prices of inputs and produce, climate, need for good electricity supplies for some storage facilities) and indicated that more reliable (and with less personal risk) employment could be obtained in India. People also noted that they did not want to grow alternative crops on their own land since this was cultivated to produce food for the family. Growing spices and other cash crops seem to them risky. Younger generations indicated no interest at all in agricultural or livestock based employment. Furthermore the projected increased income is approximately half to one average month's family income and people indicated that this is relatively insignificant considering their increasing cash needs (it services the snacking expenditure for two children per year).

Project Assumptions

Diversified income opportunities

RAP road construction incomes are not greater than the incomes earned by migrant workers. For some they are regarded as a way to stay with family for a season but not a means to make savings.

In location A there is a high level of drinking behaviour and much was shared about the drinking culture during the RAP road construction some 5 years ago ' they drank vodka then but now have reverted to the local brews made by the Magar'

As noted above, the creation/enhancement of market hubs through improved road access is regarded as having potential to provide a greater variety of cash income earning opportunities. Enhanced local tourism is a potential in two of the sites but people think these are long term objectives which will take many years to come to fruition.

Conversion of short term income into investments

Nobody felt that RAP incomes were sufficient to make significant savings. Temporary boosts to cash income are seen income smoothing terms only.

More affordable market prices

The main assumption is that people have something to sell but the study finds that families are not interested in farming and there are currently no industries which require roads to move goods out of the villages. Market access is viewed by families in terms of consumption and convenience rather than affordability of access. Prices of goods transported to villages along the roads are higher than in town because of transport costs but savings in effort is valued

More participation/empowerment of women and marginalised

While women indicate that having an opportunity to earn cash (working on RAP roads) while their husbands were away 'put their minds at ease' to mitigate any interruption in remittance, those with small children or elderly relatives to care for indicate that they would not be able to participate. These are after all the same households which have reduced their livestock responsibilities because of the burden of additional work for families in the absence of male working members. In location B1 workers are required to be working from 10-4 pm and so mothers are not at home when their children return from school (we observed men who were at home cooking for the family). On the positive side, some suggested that working in RBGs may provide opportunities to interact with non-traditional and non-family groups.

Women have been family decision makers for several generations as long term migration of men has been a norm in these locations. Women have run farms and made health and education decisions and taken part in community life, so there is little anticipation of change in term so f day to day decision making resulting from the project. Decision making around capital investments is shared. People themselves did not indicate that women were less empowered than men but some people in these locations, especially more remote locations are reserved and suspicious irrespective of gender. The study did not include discussions around land ownership and registration of land.

In locations A and D there is evidence of women's entrepreneurship as a result of market hub development, in particular opening cosmetic and beauty product stalls (in A1 there are about eight new cosmetic shops all run by women)

Dalit households are often well integrated in the study communities and are not necessarily poorer than their non-dalit neighbours. In some locations they are regarded as relatively well off and are even money lenders. However, in village B2 there was evidence of discrimination where they were prevented from working on part of the RAP project on land which had formerly been owned by Brahmins. In location C, the dallit community living on the periphery of the main village was denied any work on the RAP road by the Chettri

majority. Dalits themselves and non-dalit neighbours noted their preference for larger families and this is often cited as a determinant for being less well off, if they appear to be so.

Decreased out migration

There is unlikely to be an impact in location C as they have largely ceased migration as they have good cash incomes from the cross border trade with China. In location B2 the poor experience in year 1 of the road construction means they say they will return to India and would not come back for future construction work. The pattern is different in location A where migration is more seasonal allowing road work and migration in a single year. Overall, people indicated in all areas that the opportunity for work on the road would not change the pattern of migration as incomes are better in India. If they return it is usually for personal reasons especially missing the family or they have worked away for many years and children are now educated and grown up or because of ill health.

Migration is a well-established livelihood and people do not feel that there will be sufficient alternatives in their village to absorb them post road construction. There is evidence of older migrants returning to set up shops in locations D and A but they have completed more than 12 years migrant work.

Increased food security and consumption

Families tend to retain their farm land to supply enough food typically for about 4-6 months and expect to buy food to cover the remaining months. At present their food consumption is considered relatively good, with most taking three meals per day even if breakfast is relatively small. There is no anticipation of different food habits as a result of the project, although access to snacks and convenience foods is expected to improve.

5. PROJECT PROCESSES

Many conversations were around the processes to construct existing RAP roads in locations A and D. These provide insights into the way RAP 3 has been designed to learn from these. As such we summarise the key points which people raised.

Location	Employment	Savings /other programmes	Unintended consequences
A	Selection was political – people were contacted directly by phone. Timely payments. Worked half days and got ‘good pay’ (NPR 3-400 per day) Those with several workers in one family earned well and could on loan to others. Liked to earn locally but many have since moved back to terai	Either did not mention savings or said it did not work well and withdrew their money (issues of trust and poor repayment) No other programmes	High alcohol consumption
D	Selection based on one person per house (fairness – local discretion) Every HH got about NPR 4000 and rice which lasted about 3mths.	No savings No other programmes	Concern for fairness trumped potential to help most needy. HH shared the job between them.

5.1. Road selection

In location C, people expressed two frustrations with regard to the project. The first is that a rural road has been identified ‘when *it is the main road into Simikot which is important for us*’. They understand that RAP is only involved in rural road construction but this does not assuage the dissatisfaction. The second is that green road technology (labour –intensive road building) will be used to build the road. As indicated earlier these people are not income poor but lack basic public services. For them, delay in provision of these by not using mechanical means of construction is disappointing ‘*by the time I die the road might connect*’ (man, C). Some also grumbled about the lack of compensation for land given up to road construction while others hope that land prices might increase. People in B1 also say they were not consulted about the road selection but believe it is connected to the potential to develop tourism in the area. There was also some discussion about the lack of compensation for land but most seem to accept this

In locations D1 and D2, people had heard that the road was to be upgraded but did not know how much of the road or the timing of this upgrade (gravelling)

The following are new initiatives connected to the RAP 3 programme

Project related	Own initiatives
one group of dalits have recently been helped to grow chillies , including provision of sprinkler systems and link to collection centre in the main town (A1) assistant nurse trained to provide vegetable seed training ‘ <i>but what does she know about vegetables, we know more than she does</i> ’ (B1) promised ginger farming training (C1) resident NGO staff planning spice , vegetables and goat rearing training in B1	small stalls erected at B1 to provide roksi and gambling opportunities for ‘ <i>tired workers</i> ’ on the RAP road apple trees planted in C1 in anticipation of new road

In location B1 people complained that they needed advice on their established potato crops which have recently been attacked by insects rather than a *'handful of people getting new vegetable training'* (describing the SED activity) The NGO staff based there explained that they are currently selecting participants who *'already have water resources and already able to grow vegetables'* and *'people who already have pasture and goats'* for the goat rearing training.

RAP 3 activities as identified by people

location	employment	Other programmes	Unintended consequences
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 RBGs created but no RBGs among the dalit community men objected to inclusion of more women (as required by RAP) as 'less able to do hard labour' unclear about payment amounts and process, only received advance to date proud of the helmets and other equipment they have been issued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> received basic training on road construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP rice aid stopped since RAP started
B1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 RBGs created on basis of quota per hamlet – this meant dalit community felt they lost out. One person per HH included- but substitutions and local interpretations of age restrictions. Very confused about payment system – feel underpaid and their complaints ignored All equipped with helmets, jackets, goggles etc but don't wear Feel work is hard compared to work in India and less well paid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory savings for RBGs Early evidence of SED activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers attracted away from hydro-electricity scheme which relied on community voluntary labour by offer of RAP work so hydro power project stalled

Reality Check Approach Baseline

location	employment	Other programmes	Unintended consequences
B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 14 RBGs (but 'not enough work to justify this') ● Workers returned from India especially for RAP work ● Waited weeks for employment and then only got 12 days ● Complain of unfair allocation of work ● Dalit community not allowed to work on ex-landowners land- so reduced income earning possibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No evidence of other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workers lost out on 5 months India work because of promise of RAP work.
D1/D2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rumours only about upgrading several miles of road ● No knowledge of maintenance activities but feel road badly needs maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No evidence of SED 	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No evidence of maintenance activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No evidence of SED 	

6 . ANNEXES

6.1. Team members

Team A (Accham)	Team Leader	Bhupadas Rajbhandari
	Members	Hritika Rana Prakash B.K Ram Chandra Adhikari Shalinta Sigdel
Team B (Bajura)	Team Leader	Ansu Tumbahangfe
	Members	Ashish Shrestha Bikram Sherchan Bom B. Rawal Pooja Koirala
Team C (Humla)	Team Leader	Neha Koirala
		Arya Sarad Gautam Bijay Kumar Shahi Subita Pradhan Toran Singh
Team D (Doti)	Team Leader	Dee Jupp
	Interpreter	Abijit Sharma
	Members	Bhupadas Rajbhandari Jhakka B. Bista Ram Chandra Adhikari Shalinta Sigdel

6.2. Host Households

HH code	family	House description	Assets; MoP	Assets: land	Assets: livestock	Assets; other	toilet	water	Fuel/light	mobiles
A1..s	5-Grandma (59) divorced, only son + Dil (both 32) x 2 sons (10 and 12) Only Christian in village (US missionary when son was 9 & went to lalitpur to study 2yrs in late teens)	3 storey wood/mud and slate tiles- x3 sleeping rooms, kitchen integral and livestock roamed all over.	General shop in market – best sale is clothing	3 pathi- furthest 30 mins walk- paddy, maize, millet, potato , onion – all consumption. Rice for 6 mths, wheat for 5 mths	X2 pigs value 15000-> 1 lak (after 2yr fattening- eat waste) unusual to keep but v high return.	X 2 TV (x 1 in shop and other in house not working))	Water bucket flushed toilet	Tap 5 mins away. Own connection to this in am only (1 hour)- conflict around this	Firewood- abundant X1 solar purchased 10 yrs ago for phone charging Mains hydro electricity 1 yr ago supply only 6-11pm , 4-6am	2
A1. H Might need to move next yr- suggest dallit FHH	Grandma (60s) , eldest son (35) & his wife (32) with s (12 cl5), d (1 yr). Another d of grandma (18 just to SLC) x4 other sis all married in Accham, another bro in KTM (learning japanese - went to Singapore before – deported & lost 3-4 lak – wife pregnant) 6 living here now Chettri	3 storey, slate roof, stone plastered. X4 rooms, x2 kitchen (only one used) inside, plus loft . low ceilings	Basic agric	Land in Tikapur earn 70,000 per yr from this. Other people farm it. Profit mostly used by boy in KTM. ‘one of the richest family’ Had surplus to sell from local land	X2 baby goats X1 chicken X2 ox (plough) X 2 cats	Sold radio becos use mobiles	X1 toilet – water sealed – first to have in area (3yrs ago) - stone and tin roof	Communal taps - 10 mns walk. Always available	Firewood, Electricity – meter but paying fixed rate at 100 rps per mth – supply only 6pm-11	2 X1 phone was gift
A2. B	4 live there - grandpa (63), eldest son (35) wife (32), elder son (14) daughter (12) but these not living here , boy (5) Chettri	2 storey, downstairs have med shop (CMA) and readymade/tailored clothes shop. X2 sleeping, kitchen cum sleeping room with grandpa Stone + mud	shops	None- moved to Tikhapur 10 yrs ago – and this is where bro and their daughter live – as soon as R road came moved to shop Rp20,000 income /day initially (because R activities- purchasing power) but this is down by 50% (20 % profit) preferred to ed boys & farming less profitable.	None now	X1 TV + dish	X1	All market area served by x3 taps.	Gas stove, improved stove (collect firewood) Electricity all time except 11am-4pm NPR 100-150 per month	2 skyphone

Reality Check Approach Baseline

HH code	family	House description	Assets; MoP	Assets: land	Assets: livestock	Assets; other	toilet	water	Fuel/light	mobiles
A2.P	Fa(50) and wife (45) 3 s – 2 (21 & 15 studying) live there (1 in India for 4yrs as driver earning well – sends remittance and dil (21) with 8mth son, d (10 yr) 6 people Dallit – farmer	Slate roof, stonewall, 4 room, inl kitchen inside house,	Basic agric	6 ropani non – irrigated land and 3 ropnai of irrig land 6 mths food	X 2 ox X1 cow (milk) X6 chickens	TV dish (not working) radio	Toilet – good - water sealed - few mths Stone with tin roof	Nearby communal tap but tap not properly working- always avail (use waste water for veg)	Firewood Elect- from micro hydro 4-11 pm 30 rps /bulb	2
A2.R	8 live here (2 studying Tikhapur x BA and youngest d (18)), dad (60) =wife (57) with eldest son (28) + wife (25) both teachers in next VDC (2hrs away) + 3 child (eldest in tikhapur) , twins (x1 boy, x1 girl) (4), younger son (24) – clothing shop in Mujabagar daughter (20) – commerce college 2 hrs walk away. Chettri	3 storey stone roof, stone and mud. Shed for menustration on ground, x4 sleeping areas, Separate kitchen + sleeping area		17 rupani Self sufficient- surplus in wheat (exchange for onion) Are buying land – e.g. in Tikahpur 10 kata, and Bardya Want to move to terrai in future for better education	X1 buff, x1 ox No chicken	Laptop (eldest son) – watches TV serial	Toilet slippers	Piped to the yard , if probs 5 mins from source	Firewood Electricity (micro hydro)	X 3 mobiles x1 smartphone
D1.DA Ward 1	Widow (47) & sons (19, 14) & daughter (12). Husband died 18 months ago (56) & was a priest. Eldest son (22) teacher in another VDC Brahmin	Half of FIL's home shared with bro in law and his family. Mud , 2 storey with loft. Slate roof. Kitchen and animal shed on ground floor, upstairs divided into x3 areas with partition.	Basic farming equipment	3 ropani- enough wheat/rice for whole year. Situated near to the house. Small plot in Dhangadi- big enough for house only.	Goat + baby for selling (already sold the twin this yr) X1 buffalo (pregnant now) X1 ox (for ploughing)	X2 wood beds, x1 plastic chair, basic cooking utensils	Shared one with bro in law under construction (stone with deep stone lined pit)	Communal pipe with cement surround behind house. Water on x2 hrs am and x2 hrs pm	Electricity meter (shared , her costs 125 rps /month but sometimes much more) bulbs x4, mostly use for phone charging. On pm x1 hr (8-9)	X2

Reality Check Approach Baseline

HH code	family	House description	Assets; MoP	Assets: land	Assets: livestock	Assets; other	toilet	water	Fuel/light	mobiles
D1.R Ward 2	Grandma widow (76), dil widow (41), x3 sons (middle in Nepalganj), x1 dil (married to eldest(and x1 daughter (recently at SLC) 6 living there Eldest is community teacher – 1 yr (4-5000/mth) Brahmin	Slate roof with 2 storey, livestock below, living incl kitchen upstairs, mud	Basic agric.	9 ropani- enough for 6 mths, monkeys . wild boar affect yield	X6 goats, x2 buff (x1 milk) , x1 ox and x2 cows	torch	Water- sealed completely funded by Newa (Aus Aid NGO) 1 yr ago - most have in ward 2	Communal tap – nearby (also funded by Newa)	Firewood Electricity- meter- 6hrs off per day (80 rps/mth - plus 400 for gari to pay monthly)	X3
D2.B Ward 4	Father(48), wife (40) 3married daughters, x2 daughters (15, 12) and x1 son (10) He is 1y school teacher (social study) 17, 000/mth in ward 6 (10+2) 30 mins from home Brahmin	Live in part of grandpa house (stone, mud, slate roof)- kitchen, 1 room plus a separate small stone/mud thatch house.	Basic plough etc	8 pati – enough rice etc for 6mth (10 quintal)	X1 milk cow, x1 bull plough (shares another for ploughing)	X1 solar panel (7yrs old), dish, TV	Toilet –pit, stone with tin roof-(3 yrs)	Communal tap very near house-continuous 24h but tap	Firewood collected from forest (managed by CFUG) Electricity 24hr national grid (80rps/mth-meter)	X2 X1 sky phone
D.2.J Ward 6	Grandma (80) Father (60) , wife (56) eldest son in Nepal Army (married), his wife lives there (23), son (23) in Dhnagadi, son (17), daughter (20) in Dipalyal (5 actually live here) Farmer but his father had an Indian Army pension for his ma. Brahmin	2 houses- x1 with tin roof, x2 rooms - mud X1 is x2 storey with slate roof has x 2 rooms – this is part of family house shared by other memb of family (who has left the village)- mud	Basic agric.	10 pati- lasts all year - some–imes have to buy a little more e.g. if son returns	X2 cows x2 calves, x1 ox,	X1 Solar panel (4yrs)	Toilet- pit, mud /stone, tin roof	Communal tap nearby (3-4 mins) – always has water	Firewood Electric poles nearby but not yet connected (been promised in 2 mths)	X2
D.2.S Ward 1	Father(75) wife (77), dil (27) grandson (1yr) married to middle son (in Madras)- other grandson in Rajpur in hostel (step son 12 yr)- former wife ran away. (have x3 sons (x1 in Dhangadi x 1 Rajpur), x2 daughters) Former farmer- now rely on Madras income (in construction- 4yrs –sends remittanceregularly) Dil owns a shop (biscuits etc) but never opens it- because mil sends her farming Takuri	3 storey, mud and stone, tin roof, x1 kitchen ground floor, x2 rooms above and upper floor all storage.	Basic agric	43 naali (1= 4 mana) Half land is now barren- dil still can produce enough for yr	X2 goats, x2 milk cows	X 1 radio	Toilet shared by x3 HH- tin roof with poor door. Despite x2 buckets of water toilet always dirty- not used at night	Communal tap not working (2yrs- complained to VDC but no response). Have installed own housepipe a few mins away	Firewood from nearby forest. 80 rps / mth meter electricity	X1

Reality Check Approach Baseline

HH code	family	House description	Assets; MoP	Assets: land	Assets: livestock	Assets; other	toilet	water	Fuel/light	mobiles
B1aP	Fa (62) wife (61) 4d, 2 s, - but only youngest d (20unmarried BA at college). Grandson from eldest d (13 – cl6 stays there too because of family econ probs – so convenient to study here) Total 4 Farmers – formerly in India (15 yrs security guard) Chettri	2 storey stone and slate, - kitchen outside . 5 rooms , grills in window.	Basic	5-6 mth (wheat) 2-3 mths (rice)	X1 buffalo (milk) x2 goats (selling/fest)	none	Stone , slate toilet from 2yrs ago.	3 mns spring (drinking) , Tap 2mins above house (washing)	Solar panel 3yrs ago - private (900) = 3 bulbs No elect.	1
B1aA	Fa (40s away) , wife (40s) , x2 s (x1 away studying (19)) 14 in Cl 8. D (16) in cl 10 at college. Boards away 2 memb only Fa works in India (security – 3yrs this time – regular remittances covering all expenditures) Chettri	2 storey – 8 rooms, kitchen on top , stone and slate roof. Grills at window – like B1aA.	Basic	4-5 mths food	X1 buff (milk – used to sell but now own consumption), x2 goats (just have)	none	Stone/slate Clean 2-3 yrs ago ODF plastic pans orig. + pipes by NGO	Same as above	Solar panel No elect.	1
B1 c A	Fa (44), ma (31 – 3 rd wife, x1 died, other ran away) – s (14 cl 9) , d (9 cl4) , (x1 d died on way to treatment in India) d (7 cl 2) s (4 ,not in school yet) Farmer – but also daily construction, builds toilets, Has also been x4 times to India but never for longer than 8 mths . has constructed mill on river and paid by ground flour e.g kg wheat per day Giri	2 storey stone and mud with slate roof, tin kitchen sep, , x3 rooms.	Basic	4mths food production	X 1 buff (milk) X2 cows (milk- calf) X2 goats for sale.	none	Stone & slate – pan and pipes & cement provided by NGO – using plastic pans	Pipe 3mins away	Solar panel + battery 3000 rps	1 (son's)
B1bB	Grandma (70s one short leg), dil (40), s (17 cl 10) , his wife (14 cl 8), d (10 cl 3 in VP). X2 s in terai (studying) Son (41) in india as hotel security guard & car washing- 24 yrs – last back 4yrs ago) chettri	2 storey with loft, mud and stone with slate roof, x4 rooms, inside kitchen.	Basic agric	Terai – 10 kata looked after but share cropped out. 5mths	X1 buff (milk – baby) X 2 ox (own ploughing) X2 goats X1 cow	none	Stone and slate - not clear how supported. – poss VDC 3yrs ago	Spring for drinking, tap near home but not reg flow - blocked - communal- installed by community	Solar panel - supported	0 (not working- damage)

Reality Check Approach Baseline

HH code	family	House description	Assets; MoP	Assets: land	Assets: livestock	Assets; other	toilet	water	Fuel/light	mobiles
B1 bBI	Fa (62) , wife (50- second as separated from 1 st – who lives nearby) s(32- English teacher at GON) wife (dil- 20s doing MA in Dhangadi), their s(3). Not living there- D Staff nurse in HP 5 pers chettri Farmer, wage labourer, committee memb for ward - formerly went to India more than 38 yrs ago (security guard)	2 storey stone and slate + loft , x4 rooms, outside hut kitchen with thatch ,	Basic	13 ropani – uses 4 because no water in other – no sharecropping because land not productive – 9 left barren	X1 cow 1x calf X2 goats with 1 st wife in old house	none	Beneath outside staircase- stone, ceramic pan	Tap nearby – also poor supply ‘ maybe cut off in hill’ Mostly use sprng water 4 mins away.	Solar panel 13.000 subsidy Battery replaced every 3 yrs .	2
B2 bA	Fa(48) ma (40) x1s , x3 d (19 in cl 10, 17 in cl 8, son 12 cl 6, d 9y cl3) Fa works in India (just back after yrs) Security guard - 36yrs ago (ran away there)	2 storey, x6 rooms, Stone & slate	Basic agri	Enough for 4-5 mths	X 1 buff, x1 ox (ploughing)	none	Stone perm – 2-3 yr (ODF)	Tap near	Elect line – fixed fee each mth	1
B2bB	Fa (28) wife (28) x2d (7Cl 2 and 5 cl 1) Farmer , livestock - main income working LGCDP as social mobiliser for 3mths before worked in Peacewin)	X4 rooms , 2 story with loft stone and slate roof	Basic agric	2 ropani - last family 4 mth	X2 cow - (each with x1 baby) X2 goat (+ 1 baby)	Old lap top	Stone – 4yrs	In front of home communal tap 4yrs	Elect -	2
B2bBi	Fa (59), ma (56 – slightly deaf 2 nd wife – 1 st no children since died) s (22 studying BEd in Maure) his wife (20 studying at college) and their daughter (1.5 yrs) , younger son (20) away studying and d (18, cl 8) 5 pers Farmers – had been to india x3 times - as Securty guard , factory, hotel helper – last time 1 yr ago usually going for short periods 6 mths	2 storey , stone, plastered, slate roof. Kitchen inside – in bro house (they have left to terai) Small house for menstrual but now using for store room	Basic agric	Official docs say 14 ropani Rice 2-3 mths Wheat 4-5 mths	X2 buff (milk) X3 ox X1 cow X11 goats (incl x4 kids)	none	X2 toilets with thatch	Communal tap nearby – line old for x3 HH so pety of water	Elect presently fixed rate of 50 rps – some people are installing meters.	1 or 2
B2 a P May need to change	Man (50) wife (47) d (26 married away), s (22 in KTM BA) d 18 BEd in KTM , s (17 in KTM) , d (14 studies in Prvati) Also nephew (12 in cl7, daughter of 26 yr old so she can go to school in cl 1 (6yrs old) Head master od Pravati school for 27 yrs. (temp out during conflict) Wife is member od womens samity	X2 stroey 5 rooms , x2 kitchens , mud, stone and Cl sheet roof Sparate room where P stayed.	Basic agri	Sustains 5-6 mth	X1 buff (milk)	1 Tv with dish home Radio Rice cooker X2 emergency lamps	X2 toilets - one very old by fa (Vice chair VDC) and 2 nd 4yrs ago (ODF) - one urine only . tap inside	Tap in toilet for d water	Meter - 230- 250 rps /mth	2

Reality Check Approach Baseline

HH code	family	House description	Assets; MoP	Assets: land	Assets: livestock	Assets; other	toilet	water	Fuel/light	mobiles
B2 a An May need to move	Man (uncle 96) with wife (56- dumb – only wanted a son) , his nephew (68) wife (60) with son (31, BEd in private school & wife (30, also teacher) d (6 in cl2,) s (4 in ECD) 2 nd son (28 – BA in KTM) D married 8 pers Teachers 68 yr only ver farmed	X 2 storey slate roof, stone and mud	Basic agric	Much left barren becos teachers- enough for 7 mths Small kitchen garden – spinach onions	X1 buff X8 goats Both up the mt in another property – so he stays up there except to eat.	X1 TV & dish (not working) Old radio Old unused printer	X1 toilet (another x5 close by)	Tap very close	Meter -	1
C1 A	Fa (48), ma (45) x2 s (19 passed intermed , waiting for JTA results, , 14) d (8 in cl1) 5 memb Agric takuri	Livestock below Big room with all family + kitchen . Eldest son on top	basic	Enough for 6 mths Also had uplands for maize / barley Seasonal veg – cabbage, cauli, toms, apple, peach , walnuts for own consumption	X2 ox (ploughing) X1 cow (x1 calf) X2 chicken X1 buff X1 dog	Radio – not working	X toilet – never used	5 mins walk to a pipe Down there is tap but not clean Another busy tap 20 mns away for d-water x5 times collect jerry can (usually girl got)	Firewood but have x2 improved stoves Have assigned HH parts of CF	Eldest son x1
C1 B	Fa (59) wife (45) x3 s (19, 14 (cl 7) , 13 (cl 6)) 19 had just failed in intermed, dil (16) with d (few months 7 members Bauns	Livestock below Big kitchen Upper room is eldest son-		Enough for 6 mths Roti from millet	X2 milk cows (x4 claves) X2 buff X 2 ox (plough) X 1 goat – improved goats with more babies (15000 rps) than trad	No radio	X toilet but never saw using - chupari	X3 communal taps nearby – one not reliable	X1 solar but stopped wrking and cat get distilled water which costs 400rps from Sim	1 but did not work well
C2 S	Grandpa (60s) grandma (53) – d married , x2 sons - both married , with d(6) s(3(, , second with s (2) another girl (6) living with them because no school in her area 10 people takuri	Livestock Several rooms Open roof – for store		3 ropani – enough for whole yr	X2 buff X2 calves X 1 chicken X1 cat X 1 foal (5000 but stolen if it had survived it would be worjt1.5 lak)	Radio Gun – recently bought - give birth to son fire x2 Dils dowry	X1 toilet – used	X2 tap 5 mins away but water pressure low so go to another Make x3 trips dil	X 1 solar panel (16,000)- mobiles to charge Improved stove	3 (2 broken)

Reality Check Approach Baseline

HH code	family	House description	Assets; MoP	Assets: land	Assets: livestock	Assets; other	toilet	water	Fuel/light	mobiles
C2 N	<p>Grandma (75) son (32) wife (28) eldest s (11 studies in KTM in hostel) , d (6 lower KG) , d (3 to nursery) Dumb man who sleeps outside and does chores for food 6 here Wife is ANM – 2days per wk – d Chairman of SMC – making money on resources coming to school & uniforms Mules portorage Takuri</p>	<p>As above – terrace of 4 houses – with access on ground floor, Kitchen on ground floor, terrace</p>	basic	<p>9 ropani – 3 ropani 1st to RAP (no compensation) 7-8 mths food</p>	<p>X2 horses (mare and foal – breeding) X6 mules for rent</p>	T V and dish but neither working	toilet	<p>tap 5 mins away and another not using beco of maoist connection</p>	<p>X solar X 1 smokeless stoves (di not work)</p>	2
C2 T	<p>Brahmin Fa (27) wife (24- BEd in Mugu and teaches in ECD – but with new baby) s(5yrs cl1, d 3yrs goes to ECD. X3 mules – portering from Mugu – earn well and not big family so ok so plans to give land elsewhere</p>	<p>5 house together Terrace upstairs etc</p>	basic	<p>6 plots – no longer cultivating fully</p>	<p>X 3 mules X 3 chickens</p>	No	Toilet in v bad condition	<p>X1 tap but very busy and fighting all the time</p>	<p>X1 solar Not using improved stove – too small so don't use - take too long</p>	1

6.4. MEL Reality Check Approach: Areas for conversation and observation

Please remember this is just for you as a memory jogger for conversations and observations, it **MUST NOT** be used as a list of questions

1. The household

Family tree- who lives here, relationships, ages, pwd etc, level of education.

Sketch aerial diagram of the house- no. of rooms, who stays where, key assets, building materials

Key assets; physical-bikes, motorbikes, solar panels, TV, mobiles, agricultural equipment etc.

Livestock – cows, goats, sheep, buffalo, chickens

Main and supplementary income sources

Arrangements for bathing, toilet, collecting water for washing, drinking

Cooking fuel- year round? Light source?

Distance from facilities such as school, market, health centre (walking time)

2. Making a living

What is the mix of ways to make living? Main work, subsidiary work, labour, remittance, temp migration. Relative importance of these to the family. Has this changed, will it change?

Farming: general sense of how people view farming? Is it something they want their children to do or do they have different aspirations? What do children want to do in future (dreams, what prevents reaching those dreams? (Encourage drawing)

What crops does the family produce, how much land, productivity, subsistence and surplus, involved in cash crops? (Proportions, estimates good enough)

Inputs: access and trends in costs of seeds, fertilisers, insecticides, finance, insurance- is it getting harder to farm? What are the emerging problems?

Livestock practice. What livestock services (vets, immunization, finance etc.) are available- what do they think about these services?

Markets for produce, agro-processing and storage arrangements. Where do they mostly go to buy/sell and why? What problems are there?

Gathering from wild; what products (herbs, mushrooms etc.), processing and selling, hunting (?), unofficial activities??

Non-farm activities: buying and selling, petty trade, renting land, craft, transport services, other services (tailoring, hairdressing, medicine shop, bar),

What do people think of working on road construction? Who can/can't work? Who wants/ does not want to work on the road? Why? How hard is the work? What are the benefits? What are the problems? Is there stigma/pride attached to working on road?

Aspirations- What stops people moving out of agriculture? Or moving away from work that is low paid?

3. Health

Main health problems and concerns of the family. Are there changing trends?

Nutrition and diet

Health service provision- what is there? What is their experience? Preferences for dharmy, private medicine shops, GON services or nothing? Distances to access. Time to get treatment. Costs (including unofficial and transport costs) quality of services including behaviour of service providers.

Birth- preference and practice for place and assistance at birth. Role of TBAs? Reasons for choice.

Health worries for the future- what are emerging concerns? What about is a road comes, does that have any health implications?

4. Education

Education levels of the family.

Nearest schools. How well resourced are these? Opinions of school and education. Positive and negative. Relevance of school. Quality of education at local school. Contact hours, class sizes.

Barriers to education at primary and subsequent levels. Access issues for students and teachers.

5. Roads and communication

Which roads are important and why? State and maintenance of these roads. Who is responsible for the roads? Who decided which roads should be upgraded? Do they have a say in deciding which roads need improving? Transport availability and costs. Has this changed? Why? What changes do they expect after the road is constructed/improved/better maintained? What negative effects of road improvement

Markets – accessibility, state and facilities, conditions of market

Mobile phones- ownership, network reliability, charging facilities, what do they use them for?

Media; radio (ownership, which stations do they prefer and why. What do they listen to?) TV access and control. Other means to receive information.

6. Energy

Fuel use- what is used year round for cooking? Where do they get it from?

Solar power- who has? Costs? How do people feel about it?

Lighting sources- use of kerosene lanterns, torches, solar etc. access and control.

7. Institutions and governance

What organisations operate in the village- which ones are useful/not and why? Which ones listen to you? Respond to issues/ feedback? Why? Which ones don't? Why?

Household level 'governance'- who makes decisions who controls what assets? Economic and social decision-making?

8. local perceptions of poverty

Who are the poorest/richest in the village- detailed descriptions and reasons why they are rich/poor? What gets people out of poverty? What holds them back?

What does it mean not to be poor anymore? What is their aspiration?

We need to establish what are the ways in which people themselves define poverty. What does it mean to be poor? What are the manifestations of being poor? This would include assets, access, behaviours, and opportunities. Our conversations can be around how they see recent change (are they better off/less well off now than before) how do they see themselves in relation to others in the village? Who is better off and why? Who is the worst off and why? Are particular people more likely to be poor? (E.g. people living on own, certain ethnic groups, occupation groups etc.). Are there particular times of the year when they are poorer? Within the HH who eats what and when? Do they know of people who do not eat enough? Why not?

Benefits * might include:-

- Cash
- New shops/markets near road (livelihoods & convenience)
- Banks/money transfer closer
- Time savings (what do people do with these?)
- Longer season access (significance of this)
- Increased number/frequency of incoming services (micro credit, agri extension, health extension)
- Increased attendance at ante-natal/post natal sessions, health post consultations
- Lower prices for goods coming in
- Lower costs for agri inputs.
- Easier access/lower costs for bringing in equipment e.g water tanks, pipes, CI sheet, tillers etc
- Lower costs for goods/produce going out
- Timely maintenance, preventive maintenance
- Networking & information sharing
- Skills development & future employability
- Community empowered to manage projects & raise issues in future (capacity & confidence)
- Women and disadvantaged groups self-employment through IGAs
- LINGO brokered access to transport, processing, advice, financial advice etc for IGA
- Easier access to out migration opportunities/less exploitive arrangements

9. Aspirational change

What do HHH want for their future, their children's future? What is good change? What is preventing this change now? What would make a difference to the process and speed of change? What difference would about £70 per year make to them as a family? What would they do with it?

Negative consequences might include:-

- Personal insecurity/threat from 'strangers' moving freely
- Access to snacks, alcohol, aerated drinks etc increase
- Increase in illegal activities
- Farm gate prices drop
- Inflated daily wages demanded
- Loss of portering work
- Diversion from traditional routes –loss of trade on those routes
- Earlier drop out from education-lure of low skilled paid employment
- Increased employability leads to abandonment of elderly, land etc