Research into the Long Term Impact of Development Interventions in the Koshi Hills of Nepal

SUMMARY REPORT

Commissioned by
Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission and UK Government’s Department for International Development

GRM International Ltd. in association with Effective Development Group and Foundation for Development Management
September 2013
Introduction

• Assess the impact of development interventions over the past 40 years in Koshi Hill region, eastern Nepal, encompassing an overall period since 1970s

• A range of actors: government of Nepal, donors, non-governmental organisations and private sector

• Cumulative impact on change in key socio-economic conditions of local communities
Research Methods

Research Questions

• What were the socio-economic changes that occurred in Koshi hills during the study research period?
• What were the enablers and drivers of these changes?
• What were the consequences of these changes on the lives of community members in Koshi hills?
• What was the contribution of aid within this process?
Research Approaches

- Koshi hills: four districts
- Associated districts
  i. Koshi Tarai districts
  ii. Neighbour districts
Independent Research Studies

In order to develop an overall ‘hypothesis of change’, outlining the major socio-economic changes in the Koshi hills area

- Documentary review
- Spatial mapping analysis: GIS based
- Quantitative analysis
  - Economic
  - District-level poverty
- Qualitative analysis - reality checks approach
- Two consultative workshops at KH districts
- Field surveys
- Two brainstorming sessions
Analytical Approach

• Developed analytical approach in structure to a ‘Theory of Change’ framework, based on five individual research studies
  – Causal process mapping
  – Key node analysis
    – Cumulative causation
    – Differential impacts
    – Strength of evidence assessment
Causal process mapping

Economic growth
Poverty reduction

Better quality of life (household level)
- Cooking fuel
- Sanitation
- Shelter
- Water
- Electricity
- Assets

Better quality of life (individual level)
- Education
- Health

Opportunity in Koshi Hills
- Alternative livelihoods

Opportunity beyond Koshi Hills
- Migration

The Long Term Impact of Development Interventions in the Koshi Hills Region of Nepal

Development Interventions
- AID / DONOR INVESTMENT
- PRIVATE SECTOR & SELF INVESTMENT
- GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Contextual Factors
- POPULATION GROWTH/LAND PRESSURE
- OTHER KEY FACTORS
  - Globalization
  - Relationship with neighbors
  - Conflict
Key Nodal Analysis: Opportunities within Koshi hills

- Ag means of generating income diversified
- Non-agr. jobs increased
- Increased personal networks
Key nodal analysis: Opportunities within Koshi hills

- Ag means of generating income diversified
- Increased personal networks
- The export/import capacity of the region was increased – increased trade
- Increased demand
- Improved access to internal markets – increased trade
- Non-ag jobs increased
- Manufacturing/alternative industry/service sector developed/increased
- Agri-business/forestry products increased

LEGEND:
- Key Change
- Socio-economic change
Key nodal analysis: Opportunities within Koshi hills

LEGEND:

Key Change
Socio-economic change

Key nodes:

Social development
Agriculture, industry and resource management
Migration
Infrastructure

Ag means of generating income diversified
Permanent Migration
New or increased agricultural inputs
Increased access to information
Agri-business/forestry products increased
Private innovation

Commercial initiative
Non-ag jobs increased
Manufacturing/alternative industry/service sector developed/increased
The export/import capacity of the region was increased—increased trade
New roads & bridges
Improved access to internal markets—increased trade
Increased demand
Increased personal networks
Remittances

Improved access to information
Increased demand
Increased personal networks
Key nodal analysis:
Opportunities within Koshi hills

- **Ag means of generating income diversified**
  - Agri-business/forestry products increased
  - Private innovation
  - New or increased agricultural inputs
  - Increased access to information

- **Non-ag jobs increased**
  - New roads & bridges
  - Remittances
  - Improved access to internal markets – increased trade
  - Increased demand

- **Manufacturing/alternative industry/service sector developed/increased**
  - The export/import capacity of the region was increased – increased trade

- **Increased personal networks**
  - Increased access to information

LEGEND:
- Strong evidence
- Weak evidence

Key nodes:
- Social development
- Agriculture, industry and resource management
- Migration
- Infrastructure

Socio-economic change

Key Change
Key nodal analysis: Opportunities within Koshi hills

Key nodes:
- Agri-business, forestry products increased
- New or increased agricultural inputs
- Remittances
- Increased access to information
- Improved access to internal markets – increased trade
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- New roads & bridges
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- Commercial initiative

LEGEND:
- Key Change
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- Strong evidence
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- Infrastructure
Methodological Limitations

• Three methodological limitations:
  – data availability (disaggregated level)
  – data comparability and quality
  – strength of long term evidence

• Methodology paper on strengths and weaknesses to be developed
MAIN FINDINGS
Key message – Koshi hills is better now than in the 1970s

• Quality of life has improved
Key message –
Koshi hills is better now than in the 1970s

- Living standards have increased

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhojpur</td>
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Key message –
Koshi hills is better now than in the 1970s

- Living standards have increased

**Table 1: Literacy rates in per cent, 2011 (Aged 5 +) (Source: Population Census, 2011)**

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**Figure 8: Proportion of malnourished children (low weight) of age below three years in Koshi hills and Koshi Tarai, 1996 to 2009 (documentary review)**
Key message –
Koshi hills is better now than in the 1970s

- Poverty has reduced
Key message – Koshi hills is better now than in the 1970s

- Economy has grown
What contributed to improvements?

- Relationship between the level of poverty and economic growth & changes in resource levels in Koshi Hills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant contributors to poverty reduction (PR) and economic growth (EG)</th>
<th>% impact on Poverty Reduction</th>
<th>% impact on Economic Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Investment and Resource flow to Koshi Hills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid/donors</td>
<td>-0.031**</td>
<td>0.030***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private investment</td>
<td>0.180</td>
<td>0.398*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government investment</td>
<td>-0.345*</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remittances</td>
<td>-0.328***</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population as Human Resources</td>
<td>3.599*</td>
<td>0.071***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: economic analysis

*Significant at 0.01 level
** Significant at 0.05 level
*** Significant at 0.1 level
What contributed to improvements?

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<tr>
<th>Poverty Reduction</th>
<th>Economic Growth</th>
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<td>• Government investment</td>
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<td>• Remittances</td>
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<td></td>
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• *Population growth had a negative contribution*

Data source: economic analysis
## Long term changes associated with impact

### New economic opportunities
- **within Koshi hills**
  - Commercial agriculture
  - Non-agriculture-based commerce and industry
- **outside of Koshi hills**
  - Permanent migration

### Better quality of life
- **at an individual level**
  - Health and education
- **at a household level**
  - Basic needs provision
Opportunities within Koshi hills

**Key nodes:**
- Social development
- Agriculture, industry and resource management
- Migration
- Infrastructure

**LEGEND:**
- **Key Change**
  - Strong evidence
  - Weak evidence

**Ag means of generating income diversified**
- Increased personal networks
- Private innovation
- Remittances
- Increased access to information
- New or increased agricultural inputs
- Agri-business/forestry products increased
- Permanent Migration
- New roads & bridges

**Non-ag jobs increased**
- Improved access to internal markets – increased trade
- Increased demand
- Commercial initiative
- Increased access to information
- The export/import capacity of the region was increased – increased trade
- Manufacturing/alternative industry/service sector developed/increased

**Increased personal networks**
- Increased demand
- Improved access to internal markets – increased trade
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**Increased**
- Non-ag jobs
- Remittances
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**Social development**
- Agriculture, industry and resource management
- Migration
- Infrastructure

**Manufacturing/alternative industry/service sector developed/increased**
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Opportunities within Koshi hills

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- Agri-business, forestry products increased
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LEGEND:
- Key Change
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- Strong evidence
- Weak evidence

Key nodes:
- Agriculture, industry and resource management
- Migration
- Infrastructure
- Social development
Opportunities outside of Koshi hills

LEGEND:
- Key Change
- Socio-economic change

Strong evidence

Weak evidence

Key nodes:
- Social development
- Agriculture, industry and resource management
- Migration
- Infrastructure

- New roads & bridges
- Increased personal networks
- Shared info and community decision making
- Permanent migration
- Increased awareness / education
- Increased access to information
- Cyclical / seasonal migration
- Supplementary / diversified livelihood strategies
- Schools + health centres
- Increased assets / wealth
- Increase in remittances
- New wealth & investment capacity
- Improved access to diversified credit
- Finance
- Increased education
Opportunities outside of Koshi hills

LEGEND:

Key Change
Socio-economic change

Strong evidence
Weak evidence

Key nodes:

Social development
Agriculture, industry and resource management
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Infrastructure

Increased personal networks
Increased awareness / education
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Permanent migration
Cyclical / seasonal migration
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New roads & bridges
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Increased assets / wealth
Increased remittances
Supplementary / diversified livelihood strategies
New roads & bridges
Finance

Key nodes:
Better quality of life for individuals

LEGEND:

- **Key Change**
- **Increased access to Social services**
- **Socio-economic change**
- **Strong evidence**
- **Weak evidence**
- **Key nodes:**
  - **Social development**
  - **Agriculture, industry and resource management**
  - **Migration**
  - **Infrastructure**

Better quality of life

- **Improved food security**
- **Agricultural yield increased**
- **Increased assets/wealth**
- **Supplementary / diversified livelihood strategies**
- **Agricultural innovation**
- **Commercial initiative**
- **Community organization and participation**
- **Shared info and community decision making**
- **Increased awareness/education/new ideas**
- **New roads & bridges**
- **Schools + health centres**
- **New policies targeting social change**
- **Changes in attitudes and values - education - health**
- **Increased food security**
- **Agricultural yield increased**
- **More disposable income – being spent on Social Services**
- **New or increased agricultural inputs**

**Strong evidence**

**Weak evidence**
Better quality of life for individuals

LEGEND:

Key Change

Socio-economic change

Strong evidence

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Key nodes:

Social development
Agriculture, industry and resource management
Migration
Infrastructure

Better quality of life

Agricultural yield increased
Increased food security

Increased assets/wealth

Agricultural innovation

Supplementary/diversified livelihood strategies

Commercial initiative

New or increased agricultural inputs

More disposable income – being spent on Social Services

Improved food security

Increased access to Social services

New roads & bridges

Increased access to information

Schools + health centres

New policies targeting social change

Changes in attitudes and values - education - health

Increased awareness/education/new ideas

Community organization and participation

Shared info and community decision making

LEGEND:

Key nodes:
Better quality of life for households

**Key nodes:**
- Social development
- Agriculture, industry and resource management
- Migration
- Infrastructure

**LEGEND:**
- **Key Change**
- Socio-economic change
- **Strong evidence**
- **Weak evidence**

**The export/import capacity of the region was increased – increased trade**

**Access to new goods/markets**

**Migration**

**New roads & bridges**

**Agricultural innovation**

**New or increased agricultural inputs**

**Shared info and community decision making**

**Increased awareness/education/new ideas**

**New wealth & investment capacity**

- Increased assets/wealth
- Commercial initiative

**Improved access to diversified credit**

**Increase in remittances**

**Supplementary/ diversified livelihood strategies**

**New or increased agricultural inputs**

**Increased access to diversified credit**

**Finance**

**Strong evidence**

**Weak evidence**
Better quality of life for households

Key nodes:

- Access to new goods/markets
- New roads & bridges
- Increased awareness/education/new ideas
- Improved access to diversified credit
- Supplementary/diversified livelihood strategies
- Commercial initiative
- Shared info and community decision making
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- Access to information
- Increased remittances
- Finance
- New or increased agricultural inputs
- New roads & bridges
- Increased access to diversified credit
- Agricultural innovation

LEGEND:

- Key Change
- Socio-economic change
- Strong evidence
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Drivers of long term impact

• Infrastructure – transport, health, education
• New technology & information
• Migration and remittances
• Private innovation
Impact of roads on economic opportunities

- New roads and bridges drove intended and unintended changes
Impact of roads on economic opportunities

Cardamom growth mapped to road construction

D-D road completed (1985)


Bhoj  Dhan  San  Ter  KH  KT  Ilam  Khotang
Voices of the poor

'I think the road is the most important development. Without a road, people have to carry their goods and this increases costs and reduces profits.

When there are vehicles running around, it is easier and more profitable.'

(RCA man, 30s, Siddheshwor-Bhojpur)
Improved access through infrastructure

Figure 23: Number of schools in the Koshi hills

Table 2: Access of people (potential) to roads and health facility locations, KH

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<tr>
<th>Buffer Class (km)</th>
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<td>3 – 5</td>
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Voices of the poor

‘We grew up with the tools of agriculture, but our grandchildren grow up with pencil and book.’
(RCA grandmother, Chainpur-Sankhuwasabha)

‘If farming was the form of employment before, education is the new form of employment now.’
(RCA man, 60, Jorpati-Dhankuta)
Impact of new technology & information

• Cash crops
• Animal breeding
• Extension services

Technology transfers most adopted had widespread applicability and high priority for food concerns
Voices of the poor

‘We got mobile phones 5 to 6 years ago and with so many people working as migrant workers, these are very important.’

Yaku resident
Impact of community forestry

- Community ownership through collaboration of government, NGOs and local communities
Impact of community forestry

- Community ownership through collaboration of government, NGOs and local communities
Larger economic impact on households close to road

Figure 20: Land use change trend, Koshi Hills
Cardamom – the right mix of interventions
At the right time for individuals

Development interventions
- Infrastructure - road networks
- New technology - agricultural supports

Private innovation and initiatives
- Migration
- Dissemination
- Market structures in place

Figure 17: Cardamom holding areas (ha)
Voices of the poor

'Cardamom is our identity; no cardamom, no life.'

(RCA man, 20, Num-Sankhuwasabha)

Mon Singh Rai is credited with bringing cardamom from Ilam to Num in 1983. He grew it as an experiment on his own land and over the next 10 years the entire neighbourhood adopted the practices so that it is now the main income source.
Missed opportunities – Impact of remittances and migration

Number and percentage of out-migration in the Koshi hills and Koshi tarai, 1981-2011.

![Graph showing number and percentage of out-migration in the Koshi hills and Koshi tarai, 1981-2011.](image)
Missed opportunities – Impact of remittances and migration

Sector-wise contribution to GDP in Koshi hills

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Service
- Remittance
- Private Investment
Missed opportunities – Impact of remittances and migration

Sector-wise contribution to GDP in Koshi hills

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Service
- Remittance
- Private Investment
Voices of the poor

‘The eldest son of a dalit family is 34 and first went to Qatar for construction work in 2005. He managed to pay off the 1.5 lakh loan in about six to seven months.’

‘He sent money back for his father to buy bullocks. Later he spent a further five lakhs building a new two-storey house for his parents and his two children who live with them.’

(RCA Field Notes, Morahang-Terhathum)
Voices of the poor

'We used to eat ‘dhedo’... but this is poor people's food now'
(woman, Morahang- Terhathum).

The study participants further indicated an increasing trend to use alternative sources of income (primarily remittances) to buy food as a matter of *choice*, not necessity. Increased consumption of vegetables was also noted.
Changing definition of poverty

• Dynamic aspects and determinants of poverty
  • Though class, caste and ethnicity continue to play the major part in defining poverty, they are not the only determinants

• Inadequate analysis of the multi-dimensionality and its changing causes and manifestations
New social changes

- Abandoned elderly – children have migrated, left with land they cannot make productive

- Elderly left with grandchildren to bring up – intermittent & unreliable remittances

- Chronic sick - rise of incapacitating cancer, heart disease, respiratory ailments, liver disease (can’t work)

- Adult children left with burden of family land, elderly sick parents

- Feminisation of agriculture – increased burden of women
Key Conclusion: The main driver of change

- Ordinary men and women struggling to protect, maintain and enhance their livelihoods and improve the quality of their lives
  - Local investment & expenditure
  - Sources of innovations & catalysts for change in agriculture
  - Employment and other income generating opportunities
  - Improvements in their living standards and education
Key Conclusion: The main driver of change

Most effective development interventions were those that helped individuals to meet their desire for change, providing an enabling and supportive environment.

The most sustained changes were those that were driven by individuals according to their capabilities, resources and needs.
Implication of study findings: 
Role of development in Koshi Hills?

• Prioritise key interventions to create an enabling environment for development led by private investment and innovation
  • Infrastructure
  • Representative local government
  • Responsive “funds” for local development, girls’ education (and education more generally)
  • Encouragement for private initiatives

• Requires provision of a basic framework
  • Democratic, transparent and responsive government
  • Effective legislative structures
  • Accessible financial services
  • Infrastructure support to improve roads, telecommunication and education
Other implications of study findings for GoN and development partners

• Remittances will continue to play a role as a key driver of change
  • In 2009 Migrant Study, the largest type of expenditures were for food and clothing—consumption

• How can we get ahead of the curve?
  • Expanded technical skills training?
  • Support for local investment?
Other implications of study findings for GoN and development partners

- More integrated manner among development strategies
  - Government and all development partners
  - Cross-sector initiatives

- How to provide coordinated and community responsive services?
  - How to learn from previous attempts at integrated rural development?
  - How to weigh community-perceived needs with larger development initiatives?
  - How to plan for the transition of development partners?
Other implications of study findings for GoN and development partners

- A wider lens is needed that looks at the deeper, broader qualitative and quantitative changes

- Outcome level data must be more accessible on a 4-5 year horizon
  - Establishing better information systems
  - Better local research capacity

- Collaborative efforts for developing and implementing regular monitoring of implementation
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