

November 2021, Nepal

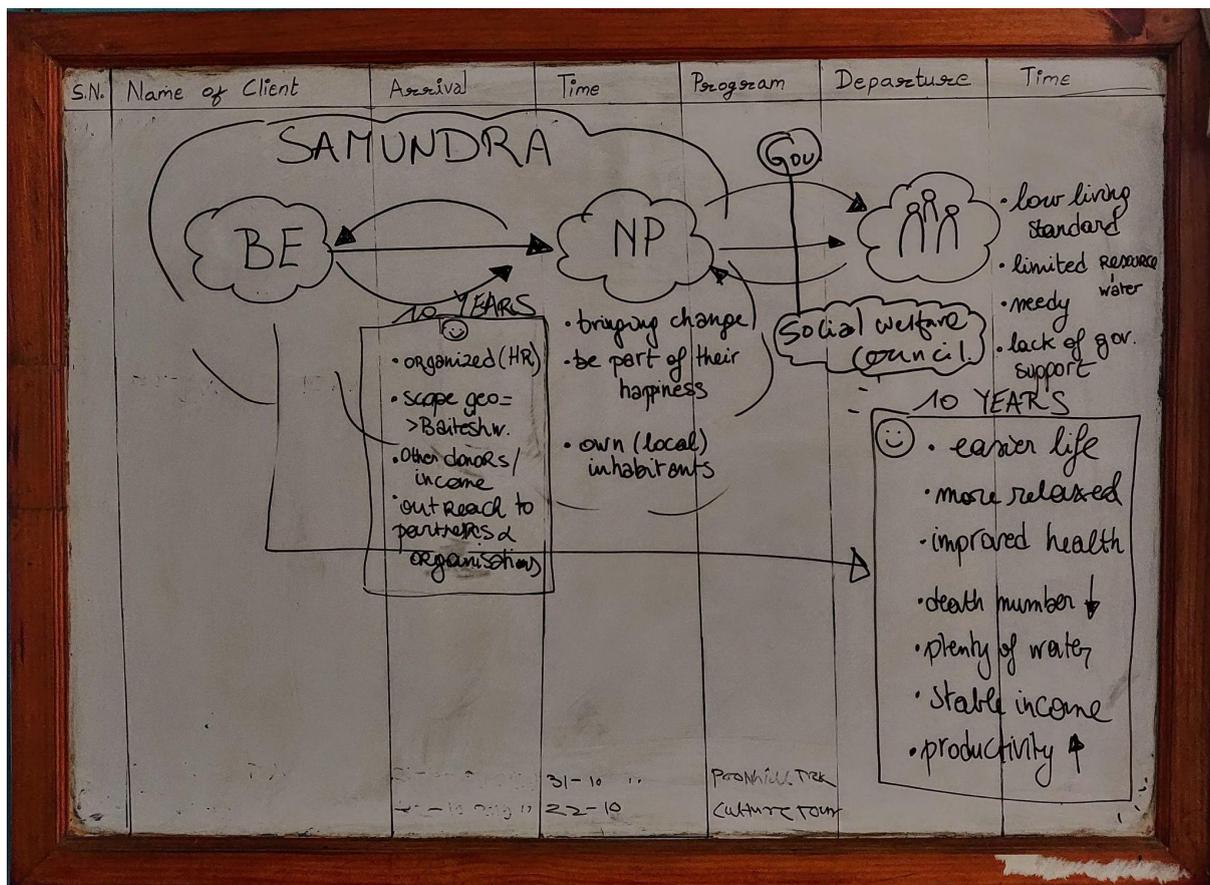
Journey report (day by day)

Saturday November 6 | Bhai Tika

Reception with Jagat and family. It is a holiday: the sisters bless their brothers and vice versa. There is plenty of food and drinks and it is a full house over here.

Sunday 7 November | Samundra Nepal board meeting

Pleasant meeting in which both Belgium and Nepal investigated the 'why' of Samundra. Everyone was involved and especially Ramesh has presented himself as a skilled force who knows what he's talking about.



After lunch Ramesh, Jagat, Neesha and I made some practical agreements (how to set up Google Drive, when we will have our regular status update meetings, delegating financial tasks in team Nepal).

They agreed to make a new website for Samundra Nepal, to document projects since 2018 in it and to mention the both teams correctly (not like earlier on HCH, where Sprokkel and Niels are listed as hospital managers or something similar).

Decisions/way forward

Read [☰ 2021.07.2021 - Samundra Nepal & Samundra Belgium - sharing visions](#)

Monday November 8 | travelling day KTM to Baiteshwor

10 people in a mini bus ;-) A lot of road improvements have been made so far since my first visit in 2016. But one part remains horror: sand pits for 2 hours. There is another way available, but this takes one more hour at least. I will insist on this road for the returning trip, but negotiating as a foreigner in Nepal is mostly not fruitful.

Upon arrival at the hospital, I was spontaneously given a tour by Manoj Bohora (lab technician). He was proud of everything that had improved since my last visit in February 2020: pavement (instead of sand), the interior is redesigned in a more logical way (e.g. dressing room moved to the ground floor), pharmacy is now in the annex, a dentist's cabinet has been added, an optometric cabinet has been installed, the reception counter is no longer under the stairs and the lab has even more equipment. Flagship: there is a digital (!) x-ray. Goes much faster, is much more detailed and above all: no more chemical waste needed in the development room!

I was amazed to see the decent upgrade. HCH has built a hospital in the first 6 years (since 2013), on which the government can now build on further health care. In my opinion, HCH's resources were too limited to grow any further, so I believe this handover is a good thing after all.

During the afternoon walk to the village center, I spoke with Dipendra (Jagat's son) about the hospital handover. We got the insight that Samundra can act as an '**incubator**' of projects and ideas. Once these projects are mature, Samundra Nepal can transfer them to a partner who will take care of them and allow them to grow further.

And afterwards, I had my annual appointment at the barber. Who also cut my hair this year.

Tuesday 9 November | Hospital & Higher Secondary School

FORMAL MEETING WITH THE HOSPITAL BOARD

Participants

- Chhabi Lama (Palika Chairperson, and chairperson of the Hospital Management)
- Rabi Chandra Acharya (Vice Chairperson)
- Dev Raj Khatri (Ward No 8 Member, and Hospital Manager)
- Dr. Biju Bajracharya (Doctor)
- Raj Kumar Dahal (Board Member)
- Rajan Dahal (Staff)
- Dipendra Dahal (Member of Samundra Nepal, executive body)
- Niels Visser (Representative, Samundra Belgium)
- Ramesh Dahal (Program Coordinator, Samundra Nepal)

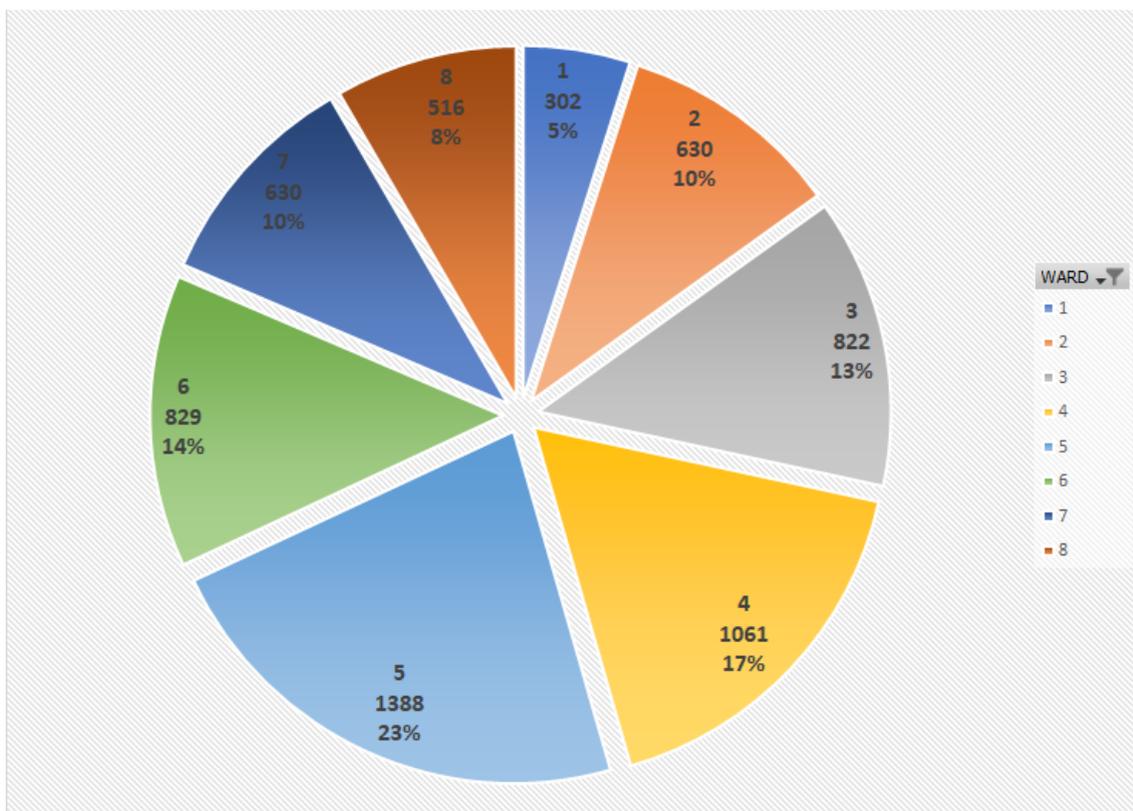
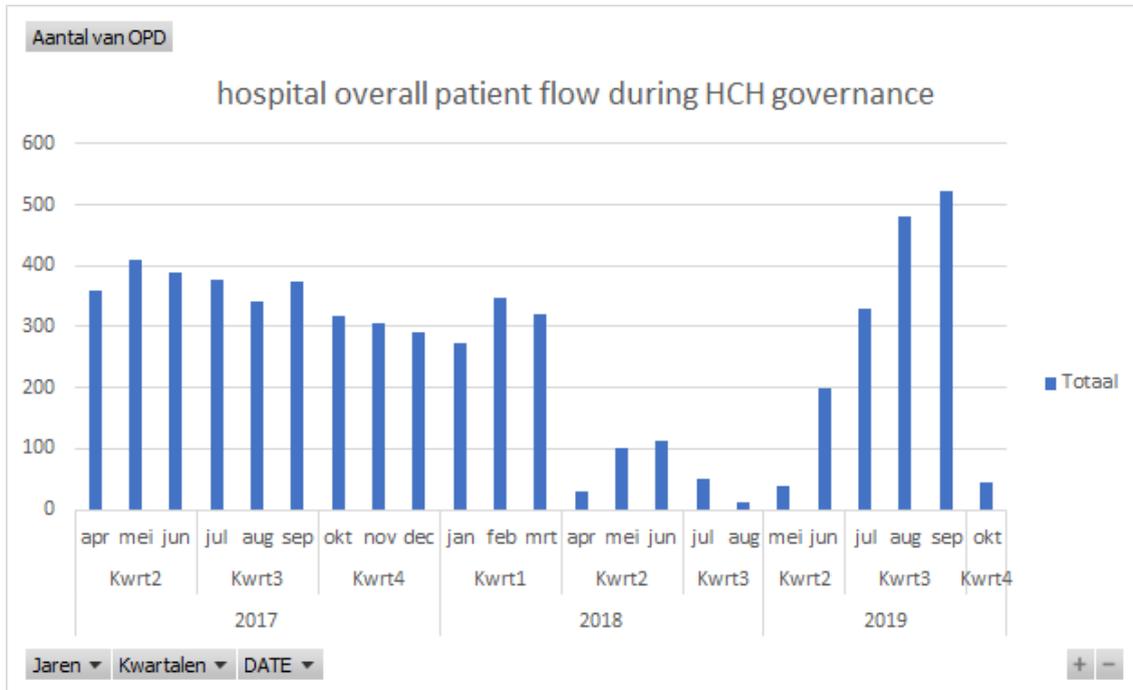
Observations

- Samundra Nepal briefed the working strategy and also highlighted that the meeting is organised objectively to confirm the 'area' to focus in the health camp. Also the chairperson (Chhabi Lama) and vice chairperson (Rabi Chandra Acharya) of the municipality were present. On the agenda: **health camps**.
- They decided to focus on uterine prolapse (**gynaecology**) and **ENT (children)**. They will discuss whether to combine both themes in one camp. The uterine prolapse is a hidden problem in Nepal. Although most of the households have women with uterine prolapse, it remains silent due to a kind of shyness in the community. Husband of the woman suffering with this problem also keeps quiet due to the fear of being neglected by friends. This is a reason why the Rural Municipality and the hospital want to cure through health camps.
- **Three strategic places** in the municipality (**Putali Kath** near Mirge, **Chhetrapa** and **Mainapokhari**) are being determined to organize these health camps, in order to make the camps accessible for all residents. I

understand that a one day health camp is not always sufficient. Last time, as per Chhabi Lama, residents even had to return without screening because it was 'full'. Therefore they need to organize a camp for at least two, or even three days.

- The rural area that Baiteshwor occupies is immense. It is **not obvious to visit 3 health camps in different places in 5 days**. The logistics for that are too heavy. Most of the settlements are remote in terms of all weathered roads.
- Ramesh was delighted with the atmosphere of this meeting. He has had many meetings with governments. In this meeting, **everyone was involved, listened to each other and took part in discussion** objectively to find solutions related to the health issues. They put their genuine concerns. The government took responsibility and **focused on one item**: health camps. In many other cases there is a greedy grab for extra money, but that was definitely not the case here.
- The doctor was asked to present data on the patient flow history since this handover: today an average of 700 medical consults a month.
 - The first graph below shows the patient flow during management by HCH (with a data gap of one year) with a monthly average of 360. **The number of consultations has been doubled.**
 - The second graph shows the geographical spread of patients in the Baiteshwor municipality. Most people come from ward n°5, where the hospital is located. Therefore, it is important to **have health camps in the other areas.**
- The **behaviour of the locals has been changed** as presented by the doctor. Previously, people used to take any kind of medicine from the pharmacy at Maina bazar in any quantity. Now, the awareness of the people has been increased so they are practising to visit the doctor at the hospital.
- The palika has **zero covid cases** as said by hospital personnel. Also, the initiatives made for COVID cure remain effective.
- Government is adding an **additional 15 bedded hospital building** at the back of the current building. This seems more sustainable and will be built according to the WHO standards. Hospital is providing government supplied free medicine to the patients. Additional departments **(ENT) have been added in hospital services**. Doctor seems enthusiastic to install software to **keep the database of the patients.**

- The meeting briefed that they have only one ambulance. The single ambulance is insufficient sometimes to give emergency services. **A second ambulance is under negotiation.**



Decisions/way forward

- Health Camp will be focused on **uterine prolapse**. Technical matters (budget, logistics, date, types of doctors etc.) will be decided after discussion. Ramesh and Dr. Bajracharya and Dev Raj Khatrai will be in close contact to get all work done.
- The meeting agreed that the **hospital will be the owner of the Health Camp Project**. It will also mobilise its staff during health camp. All the data will be the property of the hospital.
- Resource sharing for the health camp has been confirmed:
 - Samundra Belgium: Financial resources
 - Samundra Nepal: Coordination
 - Hospital: Ownership, medication, human resource (available at hospital)
 - Palika: Data collection of women suffering from Uterine prolapse

HANUMATESWHOR HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Participants

- Sita Ram Dahal: Vice Head Master
- Dipendra Dahal: Board Member, Samundra Nepal
- Niels Visser: Representative, Samundra Belgium
- Ramesh Dahal: Program Coordinator, Samundra Nepal

Observations

- Our afternoon appointment was with principal Gopal Shresta. Unfortunately he was not at the appointment due to personal medical reasons (Gopal was in Kathmandu). **We spoke to the Vice headmaster about the two projects Marieke Meelen and Peter Soons have with the school.** On behalf of the Headmaster, Vice Headmaster took part in the meeting.
- **School fund:** we got numbers and names of the students who received a 'scholarship' and what they do after their secondary studies. Half of the interest is also reinvested in the fund, which now generates a higher interest each year. Current balance of the fund: NRS 5.00.000/-, about **24 students** received an allowance from this, in total NRS 1.21.200/-.
- We realised that students from deprived communities have also received the scholarship. Some of the students who were benefited with the

support now over their study from Hanumante and joined the college in Kathmandu. Three students are now working as an ON THE JOB TRAINEE (OJT) with construction companies.

- The fund is **managed correctly and soundly**, according to the oral report. But **Marieke does not receive any proper or detailed report** about it.

Ramesh shared his personal story: through a similar fund he was given the opportunity to start studies abroad. Today, he still has a warm and familiar contact with his donors. His message to the school was sharp: "Show respect to these donors by keeping them properly informed about the project details. It is very often the personal hard earned money of these donors that they invest in charities to give children the necessary opportunities. If you take care of these donors, then there may be opportunities for these students to go abroad in the future."

- **ICT project:** Previously provided money has been utilised to install the projectors. This made the school well equipped during COVID time. When asked whether laptops are needed, there turned out to be a **negative answer**. Niels informs them they must **urgently get in touch with Peter and Marieke**, because they are clearly not aware of this plan (or the lack of a plan). The resources that Peter managed to collect through the Swiss authorities may still be available, but they must immediately communicate a clear plan to Peter.

Decisions/way forward

- The **Vice Headmaster will report** all the concerns raised at the meeting to the Headmaster. Regular updates will be provided to the donors. At least, the donors will be able to know how the money is changing the situation of the students.
- The ICT project seemed irrelevant due to not having a need. **School shall report to Peter and Marieke.**

Wednesday 10 November | hiking in Baiteshwor Municipality

Participants

- Dipendra Dahal
- Niels Visser

- Ramesh Dahal

Activities/Observations

- Hiking in the rural area with Ramesh and Dipendra started at 10 and ended at 3pm. We start our tour from Mainapokhari Bazaar (the village center).
- On the way, we found that Maina Bazar is **rapidly changing into urbanization**. The Health and Hygiene of the bazaar is not as it should be. **Garbage has been thrown elsewhere in spite of having a dustbin.**
- On the way, Ramesh showed the lower and upper belt of Baiteshwor. The lower belt is the best land for paddy production and vegetable production. If we could **support the farmers** from 'Majuwa' nearby Mirge, they could supply vegetables to Maina bazar. This will **increase the income** of local farmers and also the people get fresh vegetables to eat. The upper belt is good for keeping cattle as having jungle for grass and grazing.
- On the way to the ridge we pass a water source. The water source is being encroached by a local by building a temple, planting unsuitable tree (Banana), and building. Large quantity of **water is being wasted** while many people have no water to drink.
Ramesh talks to the owner of the land named Dipak Basnet. Afterwards he shares his opinion: **a water source should be public**, not private. If this source can be made public, about 100 households could benefit from this resource.
- In Deurali, Ramesh briefed the proximate and underlying causes of **soil erosion** in Nepal and also in Baiteshwor RM. This is caused by
 - Bulldozer constructed road
 - Unmanaged sewage system
 - Landslide
 - Floods
 - Traditional agricultural practicesThe soil erosion is degrading agricultural land to negatively impact food production. This can be a project in our long list.
- On the ridge (Deurali, Nepali for 'viewpoint') we have a beautiful view of Gauri Shankar (mountain top 7100m) and the other side of the Baiteshwor municipality. We look directly below at Chhatrapa, one of the three venues for a health camp. We enjoy the view and Ramesh is already

doing field work: he counts the number of rooftops to estimate the number of households in Chhatrapa in order to estimate the number of women (as the target group for the health camp). A very rough count lets us know that there are 350 households.

Rough estimate: (Based on census, 2011 data)

- 350 HHs X 5.5 persons/HHs = 1.925 persons
- 51% women = 982 women
- 50% women above 20 years = 490 persons
- 40% diagnosed with U. Prolapse = **200 women in Chhatrapa** (very rough estimation)

- The walk goes through the woods and provides us with further beautiful views. We get a view of Dolakha (neighboring municipality) and Charikot (the capital of the district). We saw Kalinchok RM, Gaurishankar RM, Bhimeshwor Municipality, Sailungeshwor RM, part of Melung RM and Tamakoshi RM from a single place. Jiri municipality could not be seen from there.

- Along deserted fields we talk to a farmer who no longer has irrigation on his land. Ramesh asks if he has spoken to the council yet. The answer to that is unclear, Ramesh indicates.

The agricultural field of this farmer (name Rishi Raj Neupane) is abandoned due to the **lack of irrigation**. While part of the land having soil moisture is used to produce millet and local types of vegetables. In response to a question, the farmer said that in this year, he has sold the surplus vegetable for NRS 2.000/-.

- We pass the house of Ramesh himself and take a selfie.
- This walk gave Niels new insights into the geographical situation of the municipality. Until now I hadn't realized how big this area really was. Around 3 pm, Niels went to bed with a migraine.
- During the walk we jointly suggest ideas such as:
 - Labeling projects with 'effort vs impact'
 - building a project library (there are really many possibilities on which we can have an impact: water distribution to households, irrigation, school)
 - we will never support on an individual basis, only community groups
 - creating impact to slow down soil erosion, the soil shifts too easily by Bulldozer building roads - additional vegetation is needed

- the idea of a fund, maintained by a local cooperative, in which residents 'invest' for the use of a resource (e.g. a water well); the interest can be used to pay for the maintenance of the well

Decisions/way forward

- A **private water source** is in degrading condition. This can be added as a **project proposal to the government and the owner**. To be issued on the project long list by Ramesh.
- Concepts of **cooperative fund and ground lease** have to be investigated according to the Nepalese standards and regulations
- **Landfill** on Deurali: issue on the project long list, DOKO can be partner
- On villages with **lack of education** (starting from secondary school), a project can be issued on the long list

Thursday 11 November | agriculture & local ward government

MEETING WITH DB DAHAL, A PROFESSIONAL FARMER AND AGRICULTURIST AND OBSERVATION OF HIS GARDEN

Participants

- DB Dahal
- Dipendra Dahal
- Niels Visser
- Ramesh Dahal

Observation/Activities

- DB supervised Peter's tree project (600 items) and advised the residents on maintenance of the plants (in order to generate proper harvesting).
- We admire his botanical garden: an arboretum with a mix of as many Nepalese fruits and vegetables as possible. Really impressive.
- Ramesh asks what is needed in the immediate area when it comes to agriculture. DB Dahal replies that he can provide training, but that infrastructure is needed (irrigation equipment, greenhouses and tools).
- Ramesh will create a project proposal to involve the community (eg through a fund)

- DB has enough ideas for starting modern agricultural works in Baiteshwor RM. Modern agricultural works may involve horticulture of fruit and vegetable species. His works can motivate local farmers and also the researchers, students and interested one. DB showed his commitment to support the farmers by providing class room training, field demonstration or coaching.
- BD can be a very good resource for Samundra Nepal in future to implement projects related to citrus fruits, Kiwi, and some other local fruits farming in the lower belt of Baiteshwor RM. We can get avocado, kiwi, gwava, Japanese and local species of lemon, pomegranate, nuts, Japanese and local species of oranges.
- DB has a couple of pieces of Kiwi plants in his garden which are giving good fruits. He has kept RCC pillars to support the kiwi plants which are costly (NRS 5000 per pillar). Niels suggested using wood or bamboo instead of RCC pillar on which DB responded that keeping wooden pillars will last for two years (not sustainable). Also while replacing it can harm kiwi plants.
- BD showed his agricultural modality. Community farming by forming a group of 5-10 households can be done in Baiteshwor. A common nursery can serve as a training spot from where farmers can learn with DB and also can hire agricultural tools.

Decisions/way forward

- Trained **human resource is available** in Baiteshwor Municipality
- DB can be a **potential asset** of Samundra Nepal in future to implement modern agriculture projects in Baiteshwor RM.
- DB's garden revealed to us that projects related to **citrus fruits and kiwi are feasible** in ward no 5 of Baiteshwor RM.
- **'Group based cash crop'** is feasible in the area. Project based on learning by doing is also a potential area to explore further.

MEETING WITH THE WARD-5 OFFICE

Participants

- Ram Kaji Dahal- Ward Secretary
- Janaki Khadka (Khatri), Assistant Computer Operator
- Bhoj Bahadur Basnet, Office Assistant

- Dipendra Dahal-Board Member, Samundra Nepal
- Niels Visser, representative of Samundra Belgium
- Ramesh Dahal, Program Coordinator, Samundra Nepal

Observation/Activities

- Ramesh enlightens [Samundra Nepal's Strategy in Baiteshwor Municipality](#) and discusses how we intend to collaborate with partners, including the government. Afterwards, Ramesh indicates this was a fruitful conversation as well: we gain insight into priorities and what the local government can contribute on. There are eg. volunteer health workers who visit households. They help women with childbirth and basic health care. Every month they report in the local government building. This data can be used at health camps.
- We realised that Samundra Nepal's Strategy in Baiteshwor Municipality has been acknowledged by Ward No 5.
- The local government certainly also wants to help with investments in irrigation: their higher goal is job creation, so that people can stay in their own village to work. However, they feel a dire need of irrigation.
- The Ward Chairperson and his colleagues took part in the discussion. They actively talked about the projects forwarded by the locals. General observation of the Ward No 5 is that they have fallow land (land abandoned) due to people leaving the land.
- Participants remarked that Uterine prolapse is the best focus for health camp. This problem is recommended by other stakeholders. The ward secretary advised to request the Palika health incharge to collect the data of the women suffering from uterine prolapse through community health workers. His point is that the community health workers have strong connections at the local level and being women, it will be easy for them to gather information. Collecting data with the help of women can provide us with almost accurate information.
- The ward No 5 recommended us to organise the health camp in ward no 5 so that the women can also take health services from the hospital.

Decisions/way forward

- **Irrigation projects** will be kept in project library
- Samundra Nepal will **collaborate ward no 5** for future project development, and implementation.

VISITING GAIRAGHAR (A DALIT COMMUNITY) AND KARKI GAUN

Participants

- Dipendra Dahal
- Niels Visser
- Ramesh Dahal

Observation/Activities

- In the afternoon we continue with yesterday's program: a walk to and through the village of Gairaghar, which has long been oppressed because of their class (caste). Since the current generation, things are going better: modern houses have been built (including toilets), the road infrastructure has been improved. We end with tea at a Shaman's house.
- This village used to be poor in terms of health and hygiene. The houses and periphery used to be worse compared to neighbouring settlements. People of this villages has long history of cast based discrimination.
- The people raise the voices in case of any discrimination based on the cast. They also have changed their way of living. Now, households have admitted their children at school (roughly 99%). All the houses have toilets but their cattles are kept near the house. Now, things have changed a lot.
- It was our thinking that they may need some support for WASH related projects but afterwards we came to a point to think that 'it is not so needed'.
- The visit in Karki gaun also became interesting to observe the change. For example, they have toilets, beautiful houses, and motorable roads on either side.
- A lady who left her husband requested support for the education of his son (around 5 years). The boy dropped out of the private school and was admitted to the government school. Note: Government schools are taken cheap in Nepal for poor education quality.

Decisions/way forward

- We changed our mind that supporting **WASH related projects in Gairaghar is not relevant** as people have constructed toilets and water tape etc. The Surroundings are clean which is fair and enough for now. They are aware of health and hygiene.
- The meeting at Rural Municipality let us know that **households** from this area are **interested in Kiwi**. So, we will explore the potential in the project library.
- **We support on a community base and not on an individual base.**

Friday 12 November | government meeting Baiteshwor

MEETING WITH THE (LARGE) CITY COUNCIL OF BAITESHWOR

Participants

- Bikram Karki, Officer
- Babu Lal Lama (Incharge Health Section)
- Hom Prasad Dahal (Officer, agriculture)
- Laxmi Acharya (Technical Assistant, Agriculture)
- Dipendra Dahal
- Niels Visser
- Ramesh Dahal

Observation/Activities

- The Chairperson announced that he would not be able to attend. Now we learn that the acting mayor isn't here either because we already discussed him and the vice chairperson in a meeting with hospital management. He has gone to attend a religious festival on the other side of the valley. That's how it goes here. Quote Ramesh: "Those political people do crazy things sometimes."
- We could still arrange a meeting with an officer of the municipality. Better than nothing.
- This officer turned out not to be that constructive and was humiliating: what exactly are you doing and how much money will you bring into this area? Ramesh got him on the same level as us: the giraffe has laid itself on the ground (Nepalese proverb). Afterwards, we spent an extra hour at

the agricultural department: a very fruitful (!) conversation. And then another fifteen minutes at the health department. This person also confirmed the announced plan for the health camp as discussed earlier in the hospital. Ramesh took a lot of notes and will present two detailed projects:

- an agricultural project around the cultivation of kiwi plants
- the health camp(s), spread over 3 locations in time, with a focus on uterine prolapse (a common problem)
- In general the meeting gave a very good basis for sustainable, local and cooperative projects in Baiteshwor. However, the participants were eager to know the project, budget size and the support from Samundra Nepal/Samundra Belgium. In response to the query we mentioned that we neither have money nor any readymade project but we were there to explore future possibilities. So, the discussion will support us to seek opportunity and the synergy in future.
- The meeting proposed to construct a health post building in 5 Wards (beside ward No 5, 2 and 7) which are running without proper building to run health post. Niels Visser response was that Samundra Belgium is not at that position to support building construction.

SEPARATE MEETING WITH HEALTH AND AGRICULTURAL SECTIONS

Meeting with health Section

- Separate meetings with the health section (Babu Lal Lama) helped us to understand more about the Uterine Prolapse. The incharge also acknowledged that uterine prolapse is a good selection for the health camp.
- He seemed so cooperative to support the health camp. He is ready to collect the data of the women from all wards through Community Health Workers.

Meeting with agriculture section

- Meeting with Hom Prasad Dahal (officer, agriculture) remained fruitful to identify the potentiality in agriculture. According to him Palika has announced pocket areas and allocated the budget accordingly.

Ward n° 1	Ward n° 5
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Citrus area Bee keeping Vegetable farming Kiwi	Unseasonal vegetable farming
Ward n° 2 Bee keeping Vegetable	Ward n° 6 (Megechaur) Mix farming
Ward n° 3 Potato Kiwi Vegetable	Ward n° 7 Coffee Rice production
Ward n° 4 Vegetable farming Tomato production	Ward n° 8 Mix crop in lower belt of ward no 8 Potato in upper belt of ward no 8

- The agriculture section forwarded its vision on Kiwi plantation. According to Bhoj Prasad Dahal, farmers have no issue to plant the Kiwi but construction of support for the kiwi is costly which is beyond the capacity of the farmers. The external support for the pillar construction came from outside, the livelihood of local people can change significantly.
- The agricultural section roughly calculated the total cost for 100 rapani of land (one ropani = 74ft X 74ft) is around NRS 40,00,000/-.
- Laxmi Acharya, newly appointed officer expressed her interest to work to finalise the project. So, Ramesh will be in close contact with her to explore possibilities.

Decisions/way forward

- Data of women potentially with Uterine prolapse will be available to Samundra Nepal till November 28, 2021. Health Incharge from RM will collect the information mobilising community health workers. **Ramesh is responsible to get the data from the municipality.**
- A **kiwi plant project** is the first concern of the agriculture department. Samundra Nepal will investigate in a start-up with 5-10 land units (~500m²/unit). If this is successful, the project can be scaled up to 100 land units.

- Ramesh and Laxmi Acharya will explore possibilities of agriculture other than KIWI in Baiteshwor.

After lunch, I walk along to Ramesh's house to make a portrait video. Rushes are available, Raf (Niels' friend) will edit this into a useful video.

Tonight: packing and farewell dinner. We'll be back in March 2022!

Saturday November 13

Return journey Baiteshwor to Kathmandu.

Sunday November 14

- Journey summary (sharing insights with executive body)
- Setting priorities
- Planning targets for the upcoming 4 months
- Suggestions on executive body: [2021.11.16 - journey report \(general\) \[EN\]](#)

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	* Size of projects ?			Care		report to hospital																				
	* Samundra BE's say on the selected projects.																									
	* Currently we have following projects to think.																									
	✓ ① Health camp			Desired 500k (€4k)																						
	? ② Irrigation (NRS)			≈ 30mil. Roughly (€240K)																						
	? ③ Kiwi (stand construction)			≈ Rs 4mil. (€32k)																						
	? (5-10 Ropani)																									
			31-10	Pro Mill. Tree																						
			22-10	Culture tour																						
						Ropani 74' 74'																				

General thoughts by Niels

- SN must place indicators per project: how do we want to measure the impact?
- Labeling SN projects: effort vs impact
- Ramesh is truly an exceptional asset!
 - He has arranged very meaningful meetings - especially useful for the work of Samundra Nepal itself.
 - He has written out the strategy (and conditions) under which Samundra Nepal wants to cooperate with the partners (government, community, hospital, other NGOs, ...)
 - He dares to go against authorities (has pointed out to the school management that they should communicate more carefully with their donor, they continue to receive funds)
 - experience in consultation and negotiation with governments in Nepal
- solar projects seem to have been lost: every household now has access to electricity and the power guarantee is 99% / good improvement compared to 5 years ago!
- This year demographic data will again be collected, as in 2011. One of the indicators in the survey is the situation of sanitary facilities (basically: toilets). Here too it seems that almost all households have their own toilet, next to or in the house. Halfway through 2022, the results of this 'census' known and we can also use to prioritize projects
- organize a mountain hike in Baiteshwor as an introduction to local life and development needs for tourists or donors