



Government
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WPD- Nepal

Rights and Economic Development for Nepal's Empowered Women (RENEW) PROJECT BRIEF – Year 2



Empowering women and transforming lives- RENEW Women, Makkari, Makwanpur

Introduction

The living condition of Dalit's and most vulnerable groups of Nepal are socially, economically and politically marginalized. The state has declared the country as gender equality in all aspects but in practice it has not been followed. In the society, inequality between men and women and gender discrimination still exists. However, it is important to empower poor and marginalized women socially and economically to reduce gender discrimination and inequality between women and men.

RENEW is a fully gender equality four years project which aims to enhance the socio-economic empowerment of women and girls, especially from Dalit and most vulnerable groups of Makwanpur and Nuwakot districts. The 5 major components of RENEW are climate change adaptation, micro- small enterprises, cooperative education, social inclusion and women leadership, human rights and gender equality. The ultimate outcome of the project will be achieved by bringing a human rights- based approach (HRBA) to economic and social growth – focusing on climate change adaptation (CCA), enhanced performance of micro/small-scale enterprises, increased access to the products and services required by these enterprises, as well as on the social empowerment of women and girls enabling them to effectively engage in their communities. The HRBA helps to promote a strong sense of community inclusion and sisterhood, which will boost women's and girls' aspirations, confidence, decision-making autonomy and leadership, and as a result women and girls can enjoy their human rights (HR). Furthermore, capacity building will enable to increase women's and girls' participation and leadership in community decision-making while better promoting and advancing human rights (HR) and gender equality.

Goal: To enhance social and economic empowerment of the women and girls particularly Dalit and most vulnerable groups in Makwanpur and Nuwakot, Nepal.



Annual discussion meeting with local authorities of Shivapuri RM, Nuwakot (Left) and Manahari RM, Makwanpur (Middle), Street Drama, Makkari Makwanpur (Right)

Objectives:

- To improve economic status of women and girls, particularly from Dalit and most vulnerable groups.
- To increase participation and leadership in community decision- making by women, particularly by Dalit and most vulnerable groups.
- To enhance exercising of human rights by women and girls, particularly from Dalit and most vulnerable groups.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Improved Knowledge and skills for climate change adaptation (CCA) through sustainable agriculture and environmental management among women smallholder farmers.
2. Enhanced capacity for micro and small- scale enterprise management by women and girls.
3. Strengthened skills of village women's groups to support the social and economic empowerment of women and girls.
4. Enhanced capacity among local partner NGOs to advance the social and economic empowerment of women and girls.
5. Increased community knowledge and understanding human rights issues affecting women and girls.
6. Increased agency of most vulnerable women and girls to advocate for their own human rights.

Target Area: 15 communities of Nuwakot and 15 communities of Makwanpur districts of Central Development Region (CDR).



Leadership training, Nuwakot (Left), Annual discussion meeting with Shivapuri RM, Nuwakot (Middle) Monthly meeting Makwanpur women (Right)

Direct Beneficiaries:

- Total 900 Dalit and most vulnerable women and girls, 450 from Nuwakot and 450 from Makwanpur districts.
- Men and boys of the same households as the targeted women and girls
- Local stakeholders (Rural Municipality, ward members, teachers, women and youth associations)

Indirect Beneficiaries:

- The other community members from Makwanpur and Nuwakot districts
- NGOs, and community organizations
- Private sector



Annual discussion meeting with Shivapuri RM, Nuwakot (Left), Monitoring visit, Makwanpur (Right)

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact the lives and livelihoods of communities in Makwanpur and Nuwakot. Restrictions on movement have limited ability for communities to gather in person for training, meetings, and community decision-making. The lockdowns and restrictions have especially created challenges for women engaged in the informal sector which has been interrupted due to lack of access to markets and less access to inputs.

The most notable impact on programming has been the delay in the facilitation of financial activities which require the Village Women's Group (VWG) members to meet together and establish protocols for their savings and credit schemes. Fortunately, by the last quarter of 2021, the movement restrictions relaxed enough to enable movement between communities in the region, which has facilitated our ability to implement in-person activities and has also enabled community members, including our participating VWG members, to scale up their economic activities.

With two years of managing with COVID-19 impacts, we have observed that participating VWG members have developed their digital literacy and communities overall have become more digital friendly. Our ability to communicate with local mobilizers and VWGs has improved in this year which contributed to our ability to make progress on results despite continued limitations on in-person meetings.

Updates to Gender Analysis

Nepal continues to have one of the highest rates of child marriage in Asia, with 33 percent of girls marrying before 18 years and 8 percent married by age 15. Among boys, 9 percent marry before the age of 18. This situation worsened during the pandemic, as children were pushed out of education and families faced increased poverty. Reported cases of rape continued to sharply increase in 2021, but the police were often reluctant to register cases and investigations were

frequently ineffective, resulting in widespread impunity for sexual violence. Following Nepal’s Universal Period Review, the government began consultations to update the criminal code to better safeguard the recognized right to abortion.

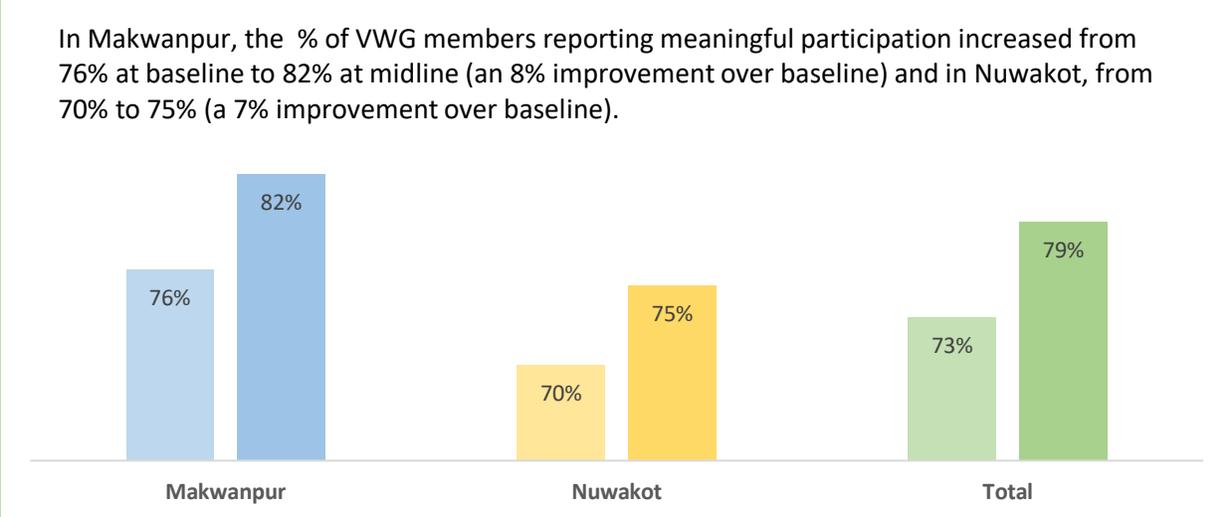
In relation to RENEW, this highlights the importance of continued focus on education and sensitization for Human Rights, especially for sexual and gender-based violence. In section 2 below we share updates on the progress made in regard to Village Women’s Group members gaining knowledge about their rights and developing capacity to advocate for their rights.

Outcomes Achieved:

Enhanced social and economic empowerment of women and girls particularly Dalit and most vulnerable groups in Makwanpur and Nuwakot, Nepal

Progress towards our ultimate outcome is being realized through the combined impact of participation in VWGs, development of capacity for improved agricultural livelihoods and for understanding and advocating for human rights. Together, these strengthened capacities and increased community participation are supporting empowerment of VWG members within their households and communities.

Between baseline and midline, we have observed some positive changes in the % of participating women and girls reporting meaningful participation in decision-making.



Overall, we have exceeded our target of 75%/853 VWG members, exceeding that target by 7% in Makwanpur, and meeting the target in Nuwakot. We expect to see further improvement by project endline, reflecting progress towards the empowerment of women and girls in their households and communities.



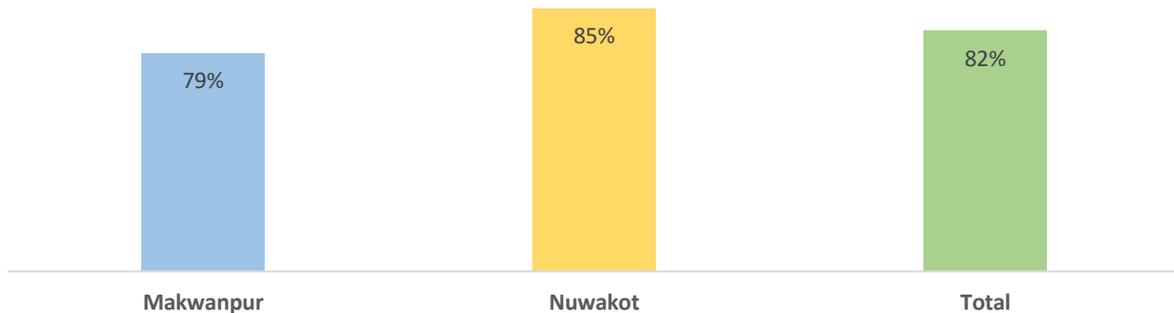
KAP Survey

Improved economic status of women and girls, particularly from Dalit and most vulnerable groups

Progress towards outcome is being realised through the investments in women’s capacity for economic participation and contribution to household livelihoods. This is being achieved through capacity for climate adaptive agriculture, diversification of economic activities and the establishment of VWG savings and loans cooperatives.

We have observed promising results in the % of women who have diversified economic activities, complementing their agricultural activities with micro-enterprises.

In Makwanpur, the % of VWG members with micro-enterprises in addition to farming is 79% while in Nuwakot it is 85%.



Overall, we have exceeded our target of 75% of VWG members by 7% which reflects exceeding target by 4% in Makwanpur and by 10% in Nuwakot. We expect to improve on these results by project end, extending results supporting the economic empowerment of women.



Sangita Gurung, Bandevi VWG (Left) Bimala Tamang, Duikanya VWG (Middle) Tulasa Pandey, Bandevi VWG(Right) Nuwakot



Sharmila Subedi, Kopila VWG(Left) Amrita Subedi, Godawari VWG (Right) Makwanpur

Activity wise immediate outcomes achieved:

Improved knowledge and skills for climate change adaptation (CCA) through sustainable agriculture and environmental management among women smallholder farmers

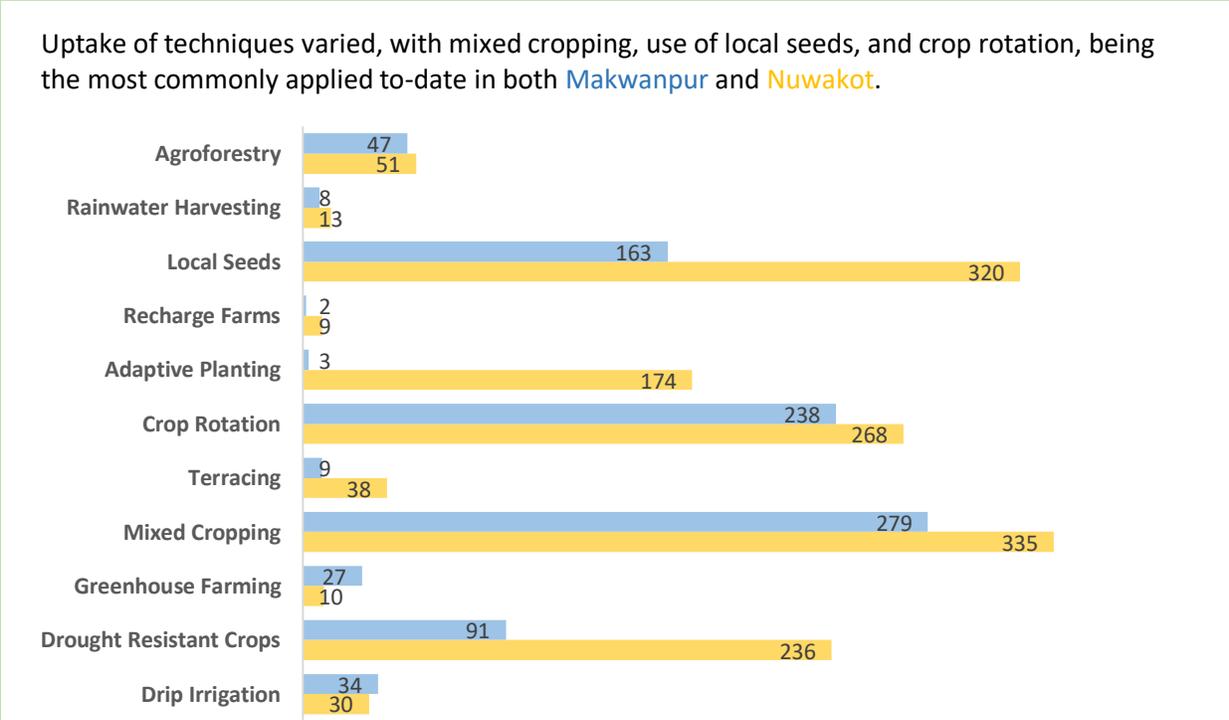
We have exceeded the target on the number of women trained. Also, women are continuing to meet online once in two weeks to share and discuss about their agriculture work; what works, and challenges faced. They shared the updated agricultural information and strategies to meet those challenges.

A total of 109 women (Nuwakot 40 and Makwanpur 69) participated in training sessions on agricultural services late last year. Also, local authorities participated in discussion sessions on Environment Management practices and CCA in Nuwakot and in Makwanpur. A total of 58 participants, 27 women members (Nuwakot 12 and Makwanpur 15), 20 local governments (Nuwakot 14 and Makwanpur 6) and 11 local stakeholders (Nuwakot 3 and Makwanpur 8)

participated in these discussions which not only contribute to increasing the knowledge base of these key actors but also to strengthening our project’s sustainability.

We are observing evidence of VWG members applying the knowledge gained for CCA through sustainable agriculture and environmental management.

We monitor the progress in the % of VWG members trained who are applying new sustainable agriculture and environmental management techniques. The techniques being applied, per the training provided, include drip irrigation, drought resistant crops, greenhouse farming, mixed cropping, terracing for erosion control, crop rotation, adapting planting schedule based on changing rainfall patterns, recharge farms, use of local seeds, rainwater harvesting, and agroforestry. While uptake of these different sustainable practices varied, **99.5%/853 VWG members at midline reported applying at least one (1) new technique for sustainable agriculture and land management for CCA, exceeding our target of 90%/total.** This is a very promising result which we expect to see improve by endline through increased application of multiple techniques which will improve the resilience of women’s agricultural activities in the context of climate change, thus further supporting their economic empowerment.



Some VWG members are also using other alternative techniques, influenced by the training. For example, Sanu Dangol, a motivator from the Gaira Bari VWG has started using Jholmol, a homemade biofertilizer instead of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in order to grow organic vegetables. Similarly, after receiving training on climate change adaptation, the women members

of Makkari community have become environment friendly. Sanumaya Blon, Srijana Khadka, Som Laxmi Praja of Ghaiya Danda VWG, Sanumaya lo, Amrita Mainali, Sarda Lamichhane of Ram mandir VWG and Bisnumaya Synagtang, Sabita Theeng and Srijana Moktan of Krishna mandir VWG have started to collect cattle urine to use as organic fertilizer in their kitchen garden to increase productivity.



Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Training Nuwakot (Left) and Makwanpur (Right)

Enhanced capacity for micro and small-scale enterprise management by women and girls

Market readiness trainings (including market information and higher quality production) to micro and small-scale enterprises managed by women and girls were conducted in Makwanpur and in Nuwakot. A total of 54 (32 Makwanpur and 22 Nuwakot) women participated in the first training while 79 women (32 Makwanpur and 47 Nuwakot) participated in the second one.

Apart from the training which was offered to the VWGs of Makwanpur and Nuwakot as well as virtual orientation on SIYB which was provided to motivators and field supervisors, a manual on SIYB was developed and a survey form was disseminated to the target women of Makwanpur and Nuwakot to collect information on business selection. Finally, training in the coffee and moringa value markets were given to 58 women (Nuwakot 27 and Makwanpur 31).

The training manual on Financial Literacy "Paishako Jagerna " was developed with the help of 60 women members of four VWGs, namely Bandevi, Laxit, Jun Tara and Bhimsenthan (Nuwakot) who participated in its pretest. Furthermore, ToT (training of Trainers) on financial literacy was offered to the motivators and field supervisors. Afterwards, a 2 days training on financial literacy was conducted in 8 VWGs of Makwanpur and 2 VWGs of Nuwakot. A total of 280 women members (Makwanpur 240 and Nuwakot 40) participated. Moreover, during their monthly meetings, the cooperative trainer facilitated learning sessions to target women on group loan management and saving credit mobilization. On another note, group monitoring and supervision was done in 15 VWGs of Makwanpur (483) in order to establish mentorship relationships. This activity contributes to the overall goal of empowering women and girls in micro and small-scale enterprises.

The primary indicator we are using for tracking results are the % of VWGs with improved knowledge of micro and small-scale enterprise management and the % of VWG members with access to the financial services needed for investing in their micro and small-scale enterprises.

To-date, a total of 54 women (32 Makwanpur and 22 Nuwakot) participated in the first part of the training which was conducted in Makwanpur on April 16-17, 2021 and in Nuwakot on July 12-13, 2021. The 2nd event on market readiness was conducted in Makwanpur on December 18-19, 2021 and in Nuwakot on December 24-26, 2021. A total of 79 women (32 Makwanpur and 47 Nuwakot) participated in the training for financial literacy and market readiness, strengthening their knowledge and skills for managing micro and small-scale enterprises. While women came to training with varying backgrounds and capacity, the trainings were designed to meet them where they are and to build on their collective knowledge such that 100% of these women trained left the training experience with increased knowledge to apply to their economic activities. Further, as above, 82% of VWG members are already applying this knowledge to the establishment of micro and small enterprises to diversify their economic activities.

We have observed early signs that these enterprises/diversified activities are yielding results. Especially promising is the observed participation of Dalit women and other particularly marginalized women in economic diversification for financial growth outside of their traditional roles. It has also been interesting to observe how women with high burdens of household responsibilities are exploring income generating enterprises in handicrafts which are highly flexible and allow for production at home and during downtime in their daily activities. Some examples include Mithu Sunar of Gurans VWG who makes beaded necklaces earning Rs.100 daily in addition to her work in animal husbandry raising buffaloes and Sabitri Shah, also from Gurans VWG, who makes laces for vehicles earning Rs.5000 monthly which she uses for her personal needs (evidence of decision-making authority over her own income) and for investing in group savings.

We have also observed that in communities where the savings and loans groups are already established and functional, women are using loans to invest in their economic activities. For example, Sabita Chepand, member of Namuna VWG, started a pig farm by taking a Rs. 13,000 loan from a group fund. Later she sold the pigs for Rs. 40,000, allowing her to repay the loan and use the profit to invest in a goat rearing enterprise. Another excellent example is Ambika Thapaliya of Thanapati VWG took a loan of Rs. 300000 from Jagarukh cooperative and bought 3 buffaloes. She now reports earning Rs. 16,000 monthly by selling the milk. The money she earned is used for household expenses, buying medicine, and to pay her interest and loan repayments on schedule.

Promisingly, some of the VWG members are in the process of registering cooperatives to get access to subsidized loans from Government schemes and financial institutions. If successful in their registration, this will strengthen results by diversifying their access to financial services. It

will also contribute to strengthen the sustainability of these activities once the project has finished.



Cooperative Training Nuwakot



Financial Literacy Training, Makwanpur



Market Readiness Training, Makwanpur (Left) Nuwakot (Right)



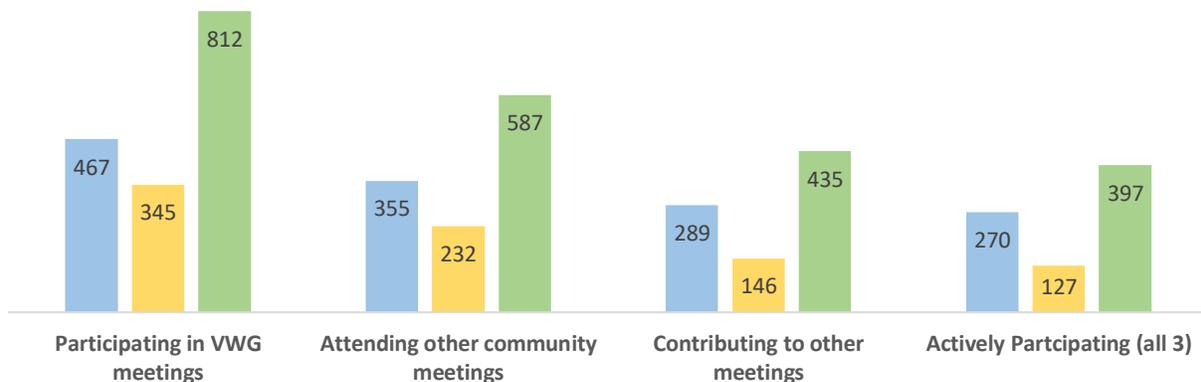
Moringa Training, Makwanpur (Left) and Coffee Training, Nuwakot (Right)

Increased participation and leadership in community decision-making by women, particularly by Dalit and most vulnerable groups

Progress towards this intermediate outcome is being achieved through fostering confidence in contributing to community dialogue in the safe spaces of VWGs and through support for women’s leadership in working collaboratively to address the social and economic needs of women in their communities.

The primary indicator we are using to monitor progress is the number of participating VWG members who self-report actively participating in community meetings. For the purpose of measuring progress, we have surveyed VWG members regarding their active participation in community dialogue at three levels: their participation in their respective VWGs, their attendance (participation) in other community meetings outside of their VWGs and their contribution (speaking up, sharing, voicing an opinion) and community meetings outside their VWG. Women who report doing all three are considered to be active participants in community meetings for the purpose of this indicator.

At midline, 397 of **total VWG members** (270 in **Makwanpur**, 127 in **Nuwakot**) are actively participating in community meetings, representing 45% of respondents (56% in Makwanpur, 34% in



We still have some progress to make to achieve our target of 75%/total. However, these early results are promising that our theory of change is holding true in that women who develop ease and confidence in actively participating in and contributing to their VWGs will be able to leverage that confidence to increase participation and, even leadership, at the broader community level. This is an important step to facilitate their advocating for their rights and accessing the services and support they need to succeed in their economic activities.



RENEW women of Makkari volunteering at Ambulance distribution (left) and participated in mineral block training organized by Manahari RM, Makwanpur (right)

Strengthened skills of village women's groups to support the social and economic empowerment of women and girls (disaggregated by age and caste)

Between 836 and 853 women participate in monthly meetings in Nuwakot and Makwanpur. This high attendance demonstrates the usefulness of these gatherings (in terms of topics shared, learning opportunities, etc.) but also contributes to increasing one's confidence, honing leadership skills or even reinforcing sisterhood and inclusivity amongst the women. As an example of the former, the awareness program on COVID-19 and its impact on Gender was conducted in all 30 women groups with the participation of local stakeholders including local authorities. On another note, the radio is still one of the best mediums to share information in rural areas. Radio PSA was created and broadcasted in the target communities of Makwanpur and Nuwakot to raise awareness on COVID- 19 preventive measures. The PSA was broadcasted in Nuwakot from Radio Gajabko and in Makwanpur from Radio Thahasanchar during one month in each locality. Other mediums utilized were a new online platform called "COVID bujhau" created on Facebook which is a public forum where the latest information regarding COVID-19 is being shared to raise awareness. Finally, this year, RENEW team is very proud to have marked the 16 days of activism against GBV; an awareness program was conducted in all 30 VWGs in December. A total of 552 women (Makwanpur 347 and Nuwakot 205), local authorities and local stakeholders participated in the program.

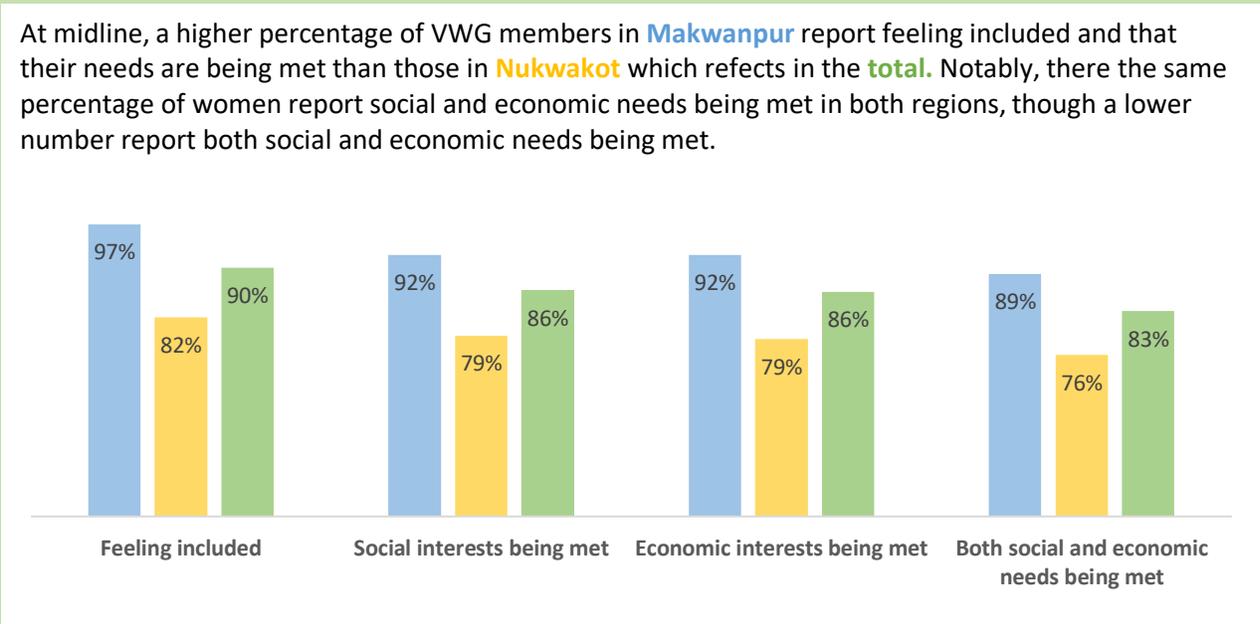
COVID-19 impacted the ability of women to meet in person during April to September 2021, they, thus, met online every two 2 weeks. However, as mentioned earlier, these meetings are crucial to empowering women and girls as they share their own transformation stories, challenges they face as well as their ideas on how to overcome them.

Annual discussions on issues of social inclusion were conducted in Makwanpur and Nuwakot. 667 (Makwanpur 338 and Nuwakot 329) women participated in the program. One of the key activities of these discussions was to identify strategies that reinforce the social economic empowerment of women. A total of 30 women (Nuwakot 15 and Makwanpur 15) participated in the event. Finally, an experience and knowledge on social and economic empowerment workshop was conducted in 15 VWGs of Makwanpur in which 448 women members and field supervisors participated. The cornerstone training was conducted in all 30 women groups from November 26, 2020 to March 6, 2021. 836 (Nuwakot 356 and Makwanpur 480) targeted women and 58 men (Nuwakot 36 and Makwanpur 22) along with local authorities and local stakeholders participated in the training. The workshop was conducted at Dhulikhel on December 30, 2021. Total 49 participants from RENEW partners, WPD staff, motivators and field supervisors from 30 VWGs of Makwanpur and Nuwakot participated in the program. During April 1, 2021- September 30, 2021. During the period the women met online once in 2 weeks. They updated about the group and shared about the situation in the target communities. They also shared their feed back and learning after receiving different training or workshops and transformation stories on how women have been applying the knowledge gained and lessons learned in the community. Besides this, they also shared problems or challenges faced due to domestic violence or gender-based violence and shared their ideas and experiences how to overcome those challenges. During October 1, 2021- March 31, 2022 WPD was primarily meeting online with the motivators and field supervisors to take updates from the field. RENEW team visited Makwanpur on November 11-15,2021 and monitored 15 VWG and visited Nuwakot district on November 17-21,2021 to monitor 15 VWGs and CCA training. The leadership training was conducted in 15 VWGs of Makwanpur on August 21- 30, 2021 and 8 VWGs of Nuwakot on September 2-3, 2021. 3 events in Makwanpur and 1 event in Nuwakot have been completed. Total 63 (Makwanpur 37 and Nuwakot 26) women members participated in the training. During the reporting period (October,2021- March,2022) the training was conducted in 7 VWGs of Nuwakot on December 9-10,2021. Total 35 women participated in the training. Annual discussions on issues of social inclusion was conducted in Makwanpur on February 19- March 6,2022 and Nuwakot on March 9-14,2022. Total 667 (Makwanpur 338 and Nuwakot 329) women participated in the program. Further, an activity to identify the strategies to reinforce the social economic empowerment of women was conducted in Nuwakot on December 6, 2021 and Makwanpur on December 17,2021. Total 30 women (Nuwakot 15 and Makwanpur 15) participated in the event.The experience and knowledge sharing workshop was conducted in 15 VWGs of Makwanpur on December 17-20,2021. Total 448 women members and field supervisor had participated in the program.

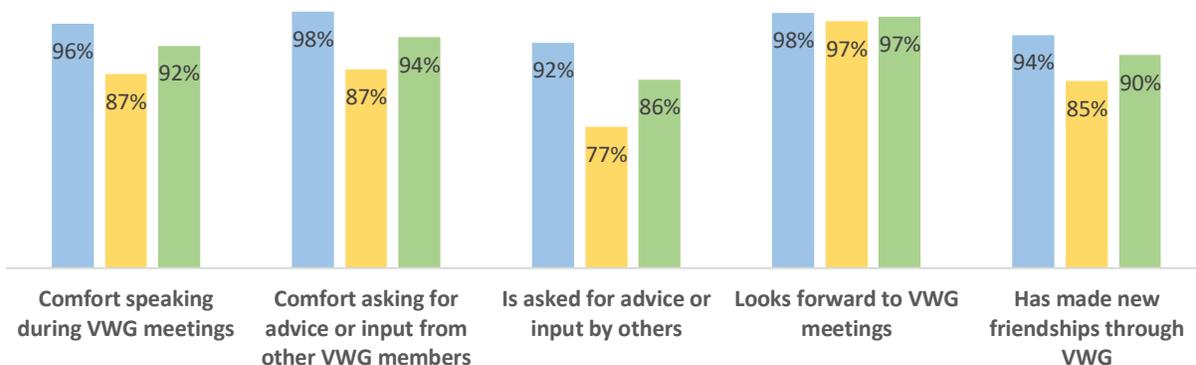
We are measuring progress using two indicators which together give us an understanding of the effectiveness of VWGs in achieving social inclusion through demonstrated success in meeting the needs of diverse women, especially Dalit and most marginalized. First we are looking at the %/total VWG members who report feeling included in their VWGs and second we are looking at the %/total of VWG members who report that their social and economic interests are being met. This second indicator is crucial to ensuring that VWGs are not only safe spaces for sharing and seeking support regarding social issues and personal challenges but are also effective mechanisms for advancing women’s economic empowerment.

Interestingly, while **90%/853 responding VWG members (97% in Makwanpur, 82% in Nuwakot) indicate feeling included, 83% (89% in Makwanpur, 76% in Nuwakot) report that both their social and economic interests are being met.** This is an interesting result as it demonstrates the effectiveness of VWG model in functionally meeting the interests of members even if some cultural norms about inclusion of marginalized groups persists. In both cases, we are on track to achieve or exceed our target of 90% by project endline.

Feelings of inclusion as reflected above and against the indicator is a roll up of VWG members responses to a series of questions related to their comfort level within the VWG, their relationships with other VWG members from a sharing and support perspective and whether they have positive feelings towards the VWG experience overall. Women who responded favourably to four of the five questions (80%) are considered to feel included.



Again, the results for **Makwanpur** are stronger at midline than in **Nuwakot** which is reflected in the **total %/852 VWG members** in the project.



It is interesting to note that the percentage who feel comfortable asking for advice and input is significantly higher in both regions than the percentage how report that they are asked for advice and input by others. This suggests that while the strong majority are feeling included and are finding VWGs helpful, leadership is still vested in a smaller subset of members. We expect to see this improve by project endline as younger and more marginalized members further develop their confidence and have successes from their economic activities to share with their peers.



Knowledge sharing workshop, Makwanpur



Review and Sharing meeting, Dhulikhel



Leadership Training, Nuwakot (left) and Socioeconomic Empowerment of women discussion, Makwanpur (right)

Enhanced capacity among local partner NGOs to advance the social and economic empowerment of women and girls

This result has been achieved as 3 IEC tools have already been created (radio broadcast, street drama, Newsletter (Project brief, pamphlet, news bulletin). The awareness pamphlet on COVID-19 and its impacts on gender was developed as well as a project brief on RENEW Year 1. The street drama in Makwanpur was well attended as a total of 160 women, men, motivators, field supervisor, local authorities, teachers, and school children watched. Finally, an agricultural news bulletin booklet was disseminated in 30 VWGs of Nuwakot and Makwanpur (Nuwakot 370, Makwanpur 483).

5 annual knowledge sharing workshops on successful empowerment stories, challenges faced, ways to improve collaboration with local partners were conducted in Makwanpur and two in Nuwakot during which a total of 210 women (Makwanpur 150, Nuwakot 60) participated. Moreover, an annual discussion meeting on social and economic empowerment of women and girls with VWGs, local partners local government and other civil society organizations was conducted in Makwanpur and one in Nuwakot. A total of 56 participants, 25 motivators of VWGs, 17 local authorities (Nuwakot 11, Makwanpur 6) and 14 CSOs (Nuwakot 6, Makwanpur 8) participated in the discussion. These activities are key to the success of our project and demonstrate the impact it is having on the key stakeholders as they are not only willing to share on these topics but also include the lessons learned so as to improve its overall quality.



Annual discussion meeting on social and economic empowerment of women with local authorities of Shivapuri RM, Nuwakot



Annual discussion meeting on social and economic empowerment of women with local authorities of Manahari RM, Makwanpur (Left) and Meeting with Chairperson of Ward no 8, Nuwakot (Right)



Discussion program on Climate Change Adaptation with local authorities of Manahari RM, Makwanpur



Street Drama, Makkari, Makwanpur



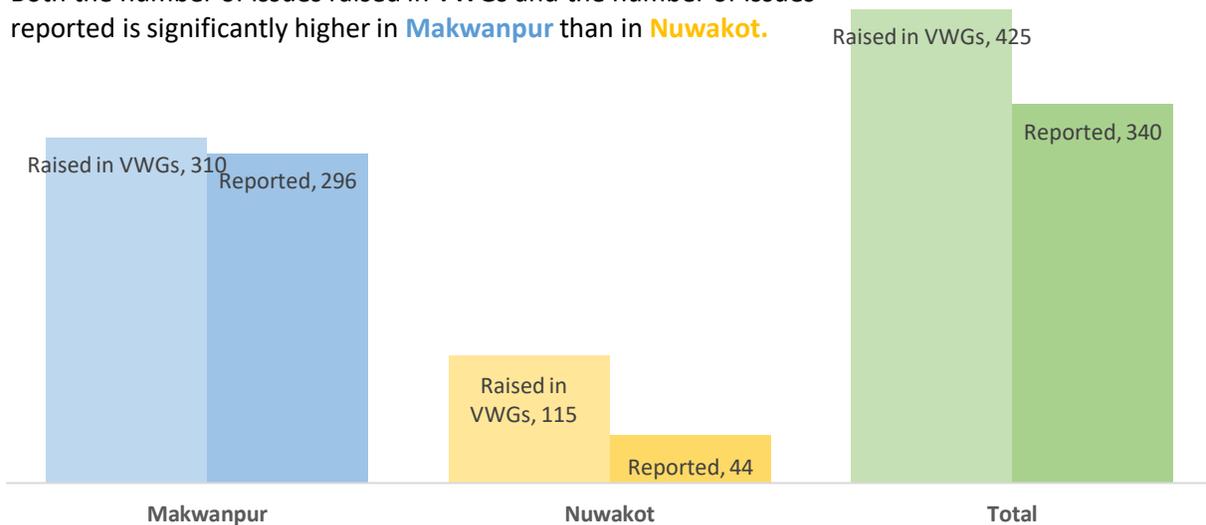
IEC materials distribution and discussion during the VWGs monthly meeting, Makwanpur

Enhanced exercising of human rights by women and girls, particularly from Dalit and most vulnerable groups

Progress towards this intermediate outcome is being realized through direct training for VWGs on human rights, sexual and gender-violence and opportunities and mechanisms supporting their ability to advocate for their rights. This is supported through the engagement and training of men and boys and civil society organizations in communities on human rights of women and girls and the important role they play in protecting and promoting those rights.

The primary indicator we are using to monitor progress towards this result is the %/total human rights issues raised within VWGs that are being reported to local authorities or service providers. At this stage of the project, we had expected to see an increasing number of human rights issues being raised and discussed within VWGs, and that by project end we would see evidence that VWG members were feeling empowered to advocate for their rights through their beginning to report those through official channels to seek recourse. We have achieved this result much earlier than expected. **At midline, 80%/total of the human rights issues raised in VWGs are being reported to authorities already significantly exceeding our target of 50%/total.** However, there is a significant discrepancy in this result between VWGs in Makwanpur where 95% are reported and Nuwakot where only 38% issued raised in VWGs are currently being reported.

Both the number of issues raised in VWGs and the number of issues reported is significantly higher in **Makwanpur** than in **Nuwakot**.



This could be explained by the fact that we have begun our quarterly dialogues on Human Rights and Gender based Violence between Local government bodies and women and girls in Makwanpur in which the local government of Manahari RM, child club, women members and human rights group members participated. We expect that moving forward VWGs will continue to voice their HR issues to local authorities and feel stronger to do so as VWGs from Makwanpur and Nuwakot learn from one another and support one another.



Public hearing Program, Nuwakot (Left) and Makwanpur (Right)

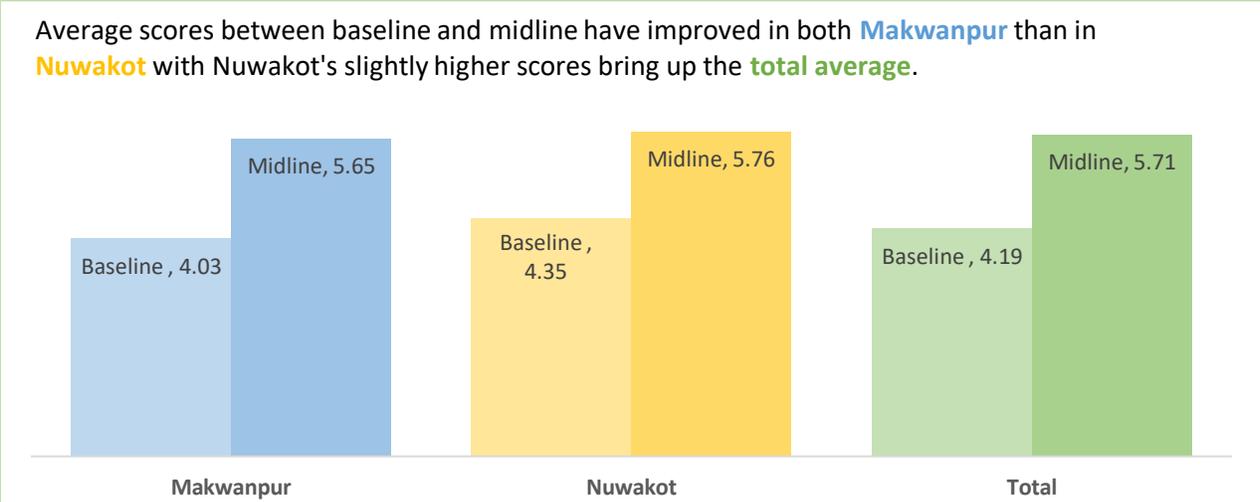
Increased community knowledge and understanding of human rights issues affecting most vulnerable women and girls

A total of eleven workshops to identify HR issues affecting most vulnerable women and girls were conducted in Nuwakot and in Makwanpur. 362 community members (F: 335, M: 27) members, along with the local authorities and local stakeholders attended.

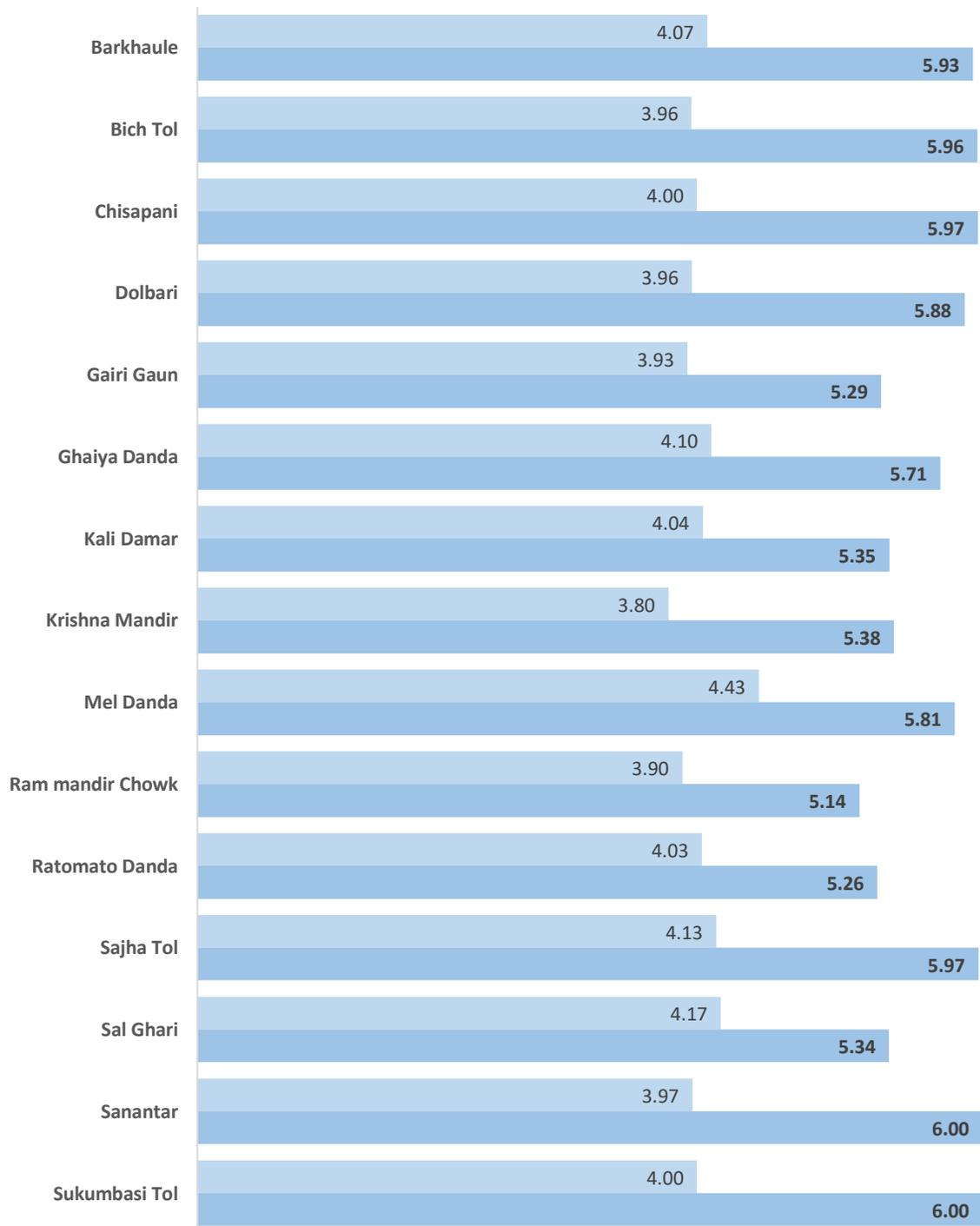
28 men and boys in Makwanpur and 25 in Nuwakot received training on HR and GBV. Also, five public hearings on Human Rights Violations (HRV), GBV in the community between service users and service providers were conducted this year in both Nuwakot and Makwanpur. Not only women and men from elected representatives participated but also ward members, government officials from health, education and housing, reconstruction unit chiefs and motivators. A total of 176 women and 71 men participated.

Progress is being monitored through comparing responses to a knowledge and attitudes survey administered at baseline and again at midline to assess whether VWG members have improved their understanding and are beginning to shift their attitudes towards their rights. A similar knowledge and attitudes survey was conducted among men and boys at baseline and will be repeated at endline to determine whether similar shifts in understanding and attitudes are taking place among male household members.

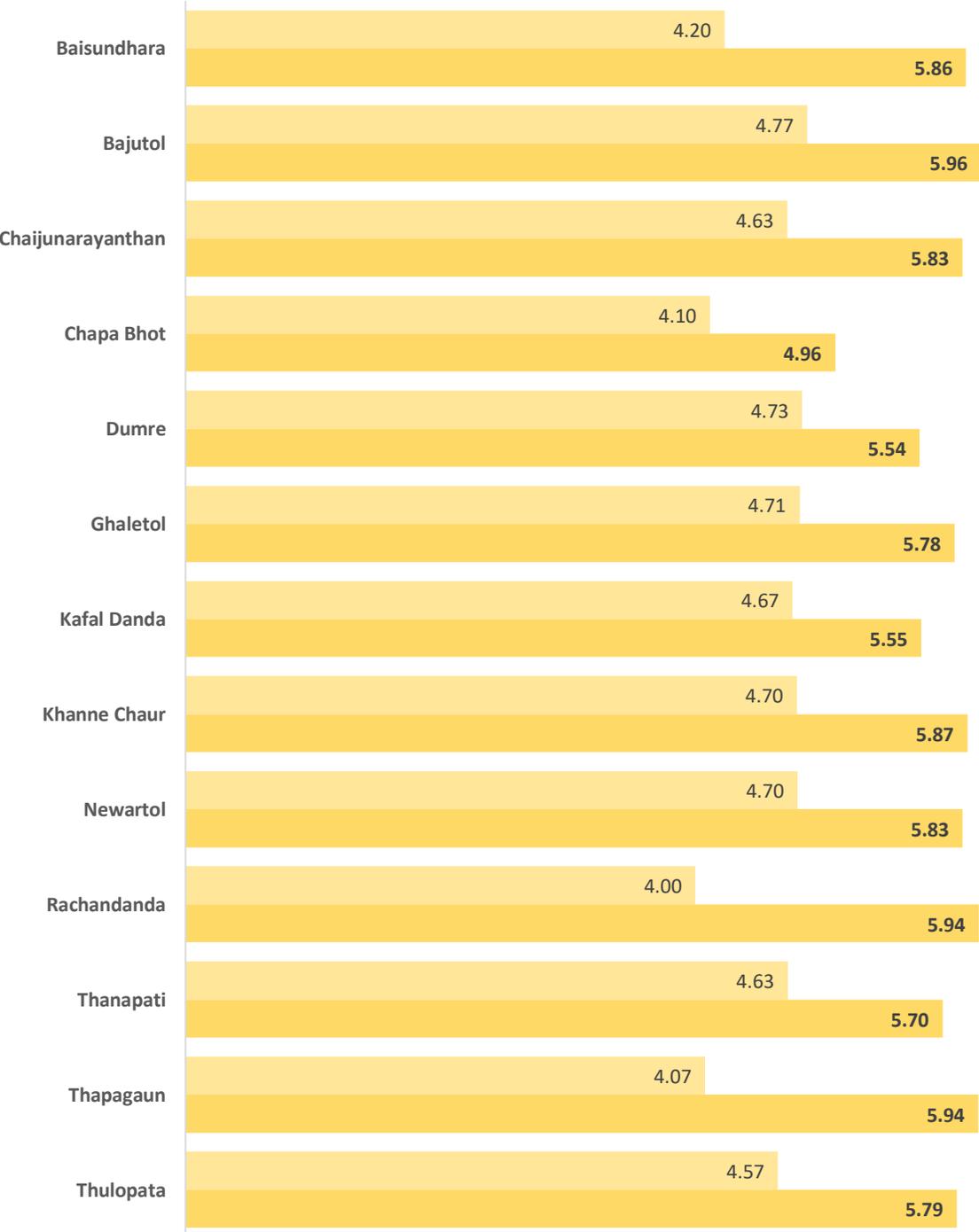
At midline, we are observing an increased in the average knowledge and attitudes score, based on responses to a series of six (6) questions about common rights issues at the household and community level, including related to rights of women in marital relationships.



Average scores for knowledge and attitudes for human rights issues impacting women and girls among VWGs in Makwanpur have improved across the board from baseline to **midline**.



Average scores for knowledge and attitudes for human rights issues impacting women and girls among VWGs in Nuwakot have also improved across the board from baseline to **midline**.





Training on Human rights issues in Makwanpur (Left) and Nuwakot (Right)

Increased community knowledge and understanding of how to advocate for human rights

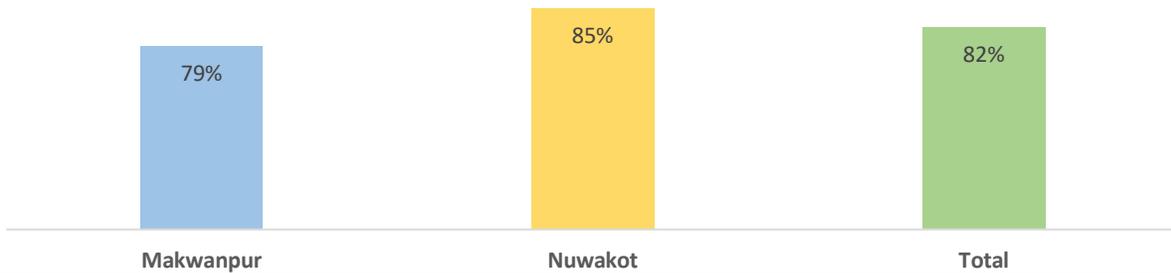
One one-day workshop to create a referral system by mapping public and community institutions was conducted in Nuwakot. 22 women members of 3 VWGs participated. Later that same month a one-day training workshop on the Human Rights Referral systems was conducted. 38 women members from 3 VWGs participated. In Makwanpur, a quarterly dialogue on Human Rights and gender-based violence between Local government bodies and women and girls was conducted with 45 participants (Female: 36, Male: 9) from the local government of Manahari RM, Child club, women members and human rights group members. A training manual on sexual and gender-based violence was also created. Furthermore, two training sessions on HR, Sexual and GBV for local authorities took place in Makwanpur and in Nuwakot. 108 (Female: 51, Male: 57) from Rural municipalities, Vice chairperson and Ward members from Manahari RM and Shivapuri RM participated in the training.

Three radio PSA related to COVID-19 mitigation plan and awareness about gender-based violence were broadcasted from two radio stations of Makwanpur and Nuwakot. A one-day workshop on advocacy on problem identification, act referral mapping and lobby advocacy was conducted in Nuwakot during which 26 women members and motivators participated in the program. RENEW's public hearing programs "Sarbanjanik Sarokar" episodes 1- 4 were also broadcasted from two radio stations of Shivapuri Rural municipality of Nuwakot and Manahari rural Municipality of Makwanpur. These programs tackle public service delivery issues, economic, social and cultural rights issues and gender-based violence.

Progress against this outcome for VWG members is monitored based on the %/total who are willing to advocate for their own human rights. We are measuring this based on their responses to a series of questions regarding actions they would take if they were experiencing human rights violations, such as gender-based violence within their households, and what action, if any, they would be willing to take to support a peer VWG members in advocating for themselves if they experienced a rights violation. VWG members responding positively, indicating a willingness to act in three scenarios, are deemed as willing to advocate for their rights. At this point in the

project, we expected to see some progress in willingness to advocate for rights, but we did not expect to see this level of action so early.

At midline, 87% of **total VWG members** indicate a willingness to advocate for their rights. Again, results are slightly stronger in **Makwanpur** than in **Nuwakot**).



Training on HR and Gender-based Violence to local authorities in Makwanpur (Left) and Nuwakot (Right)

Story of Change: Sushmita Subedi



“I felt my voice was not welcomed in decision-making in my household as only my husband and in-laws participated in the discussions and have been making all the decisions. Now, though, my husband, is supporting me while doing household chores and in the field. Moreover, he has registered our land in my name”.

My name is Sushmita Subedi. There are six members in my family members: my husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law and two daughters. My in-laws are involved in agricultural farming. My husband is a lawyer and a professor. I work as a motivator of Newarpani VWG (in Makwanpur). I spend my day doing household work like cooking, taking care of the children, sending them to school, washing clothes and so on. As my in-laws are busy with agricultural farming, I have to take care of all the household chores by myself. In 2022, one son was added to the family.

She feels that a woman faces challenges in every step of her life. A married woman is bound with many responsibilities and no one fully supports her to move ahead. Society makes women feel that her first priority must be her responsibility towards her house more than anything else. If she wants to do anything or needs to go anywhere, she has to first finish all the household chores. She needs to spare time if she wants to do anything.



She hopes to see women taking leadership, having jobs, and taking participation in decision making. She also hopes to see women having access to financial institutions and being capacitated on micro-credit and cooperatives.

During the interview, she added that *“women are becoming more open to their problems. They are also supported by men in their household work. My husband, though he is a lawyer, has been supporting me while doing household chores as well as in the*

field. Moreover, he has also registered our land in my name”.

“My husband and I take the household expenses decisions together. I also participate in the community meetings and gatherings where the local stakeholders appreciate my opinions and suggestions and I feel recognized, and my voice welcomed”.

RENEW has given me an opportunity to lead a women group as a senior motivator. I am able to conduct group meetings and group discussions. Hence, I hope to work harder to build trust, confidence and capacity in women to show that we women are not less than men in any aspect.

Finally, *“I hope to see changes in the attitudes and thinking of society towards women, that women are also equally capable as men. I also want to see more participation and involvement of women in the economic and legal part. For example: I would like to see more women having lands registered in their names”*.

Story of Change: Nanu Pathak

In the future, *“I hope to see women having work and being busy so that no one has time to talk negatively about others”*. Now, *“the members of our VWG are more united and supportive to one another. People also have started to respect my son who is differently abled and to respect his rights to live. This has enhanced my confidence to share my experiences and ideas with other members.”*



Nanu Pathak, of Godawari VWG (in Nuwakot) tells us that there are four members in her family member: her husband and their two sons. One of her sons is physically disabled. He receives Rs 3000 monthly as a health allowance from the Nepal Government. The major source of income in her family is agriculture.

“Every day I do my household work and look after my son. I have to take care of my son all day as he is physically disabled. One of us has to be in the house every time to take care of my son, most of the

time I am inside the house looking after my son. A woman’s life is hard to live as people talk about negative and bad things behind their back in my community. It is even more difficult when a woman is disempowered and has no capacity to deal with such people.”

She shares:” I lack confidence to share my decisions or views with my family. In the future, *“I hope to see women having work and being busy so that no one has time to talk negatively about others”*.

Two years later (April 2022), Nanu Pathak has started to work on my farm to generate income. Now, *“I work at home and look after my child who is differently abled. After RENEW was introduced in our community and when the Godawari VWG was formed my husband encouraged me to join the group. My husband takes care of our son when I have to attend group meetings and training”*.

After being a member of the women’s group, the members are more united and supportive to one another. The women share and learn during the group meetings and so do I. The RENEW has enhanced my knowledge and skill. People also have started to respect my son who is differently abled and to respect his rights to live. This has enhanced my confidence to share my experiences and ideas with other members.

“I feel my voice is welcomed in decision-making in my household as my husband supports and encourages me a lot to move ahead. I also receive similar support and strength from my women

group which makes me feel that my voice is welcomed in decision making in my community. By participating in RENEW, “I hope to be financially independent having access to financial institutions for small scale enterprises and also be equipped with knowledge of human rights, CCA and GESI”.

At last, I hope that, in my community, I will “see women having access to financial institutions and getting loans with low interest to initiate IGAs. I feel that being independent is one of the core factors for women empowerment, hence I want to see more women being self-dependent and self-reliant”.

Partners / collaborators / consultants

International partners

- Government of Canada (GAC)
- World Accord (WA)

Local partners

- Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal (WPD- Nepal)
- Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC)
- Rural Self- reliance Development Centre (RSDC)
- Microfinance and Cooperative Consultant, Bishnu K. Shrestha
- Environmental Management and Climate Change -Trainer, Sudesh Subedi
- Information Technology – Consultant, Hempal Shrestha

Collaborators / Advisor

- Shivapuri Rural Municipality, Nuwakot
- Manahari Rural Municipality, Makwanpur
- Hetauda Sub Metropolitan City, Makwanpur
- Raj Babu Pandey, local stakeholder, Nuwakot

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