

Family Farming in Nepal

Hosting 60 percent of the world's population and 70 percent of its family farmers, the Asia-Pacific region is the global home of small-scale family farmers. Producing 80 percent of the region's food, family farmers ensure the future of Asia-Pacific and are at the heart of food security and sustainable food systems. The United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF 2019- 2028) aims at unleashing the potential of family farmers as key agents of change to transform food systems world-wide. Within this framework, the Comdev Asia communication initiative implements a regional campaign to raise awareness on the UNDF and promote improved communication capacities and services for family farming in Asia & The Pacific.

KEY FIGURES

Nepal is an agrarian country where the majority of people lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for their food source, income, and livelihood. Agriculture contributes 27 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. Nepal is richly endowed with agro-biodiversity where farmers grow diversified crops to hedge against erratic and uncertain weather and other unfavourable conditions. Rice, maize, millet, wheat, barley, and buckwheat are the major staple food crops.

Family farming is a dominant practice of food production in Nepal. Around 70 percent (3 831 093) of households are involved (directly or indirectly) in family farming (Kaini, 2016). Most of the farmers of Nepal are smallholder farmers with 52.7 percent households having less than 0.5 hectare of land holding (CBS, 2011) and about 70 percent of landholdings is less than 1.0 ha size.

Until the 1980s, over 90 percent of the total farming population depended on family farms for their livelihood and agriculture contributed 75 percent of national GDP. Although the current share of GDP from agriculture has reduced to 27 percent (MoF, 2019), the proportion of the family farming to total agriculture is about the same as the previous decade (Kaini, 2016).



UNDF in Action

Nepal has formulated various policies, strategies, and programs such as National Agriculture Policy 2004, [Agriculture Development Strategy 2014](#), and many other commodity specific and cross cutting policies in order to strengthen and uplift the national economy through development of agriculture sector. Emphasis has been given to smallholder farmers, women, youths, and marginalized groups and set objectives to alleviate poverty and raise the livelihood of rural community. Nepal has developed a National Action Plan to implement the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF) partnering with civil society organizations. In particular, Nepal has formed steering committee, advisory committee and implementation committee for the promotion of family farming in the country. These different committees consist of various personnel from government (including Minister and secretaries to representatives of NGOs and Farmers Organizations).

The UNDF has defined seven pillars for all-round development of family farming. In reference to these pillars, various action plans and policies are set for strengthening family farming in Nepalese context. These include:

- Enhance political and financial commitment and public awareness to support diverse and multi-layered contributions of family farming by raising awareness and improving understanding of family farming and ensuring political and financial engagement of different stakeholders.

- Increase rural employment and reduce rural to urban migration of youths by adopting inclusive mechanisms to promote youth participation in decision making processes.
- Improve capacity of young farmers on innovative practices interconnected with the traditional ones by developing new technical skills.
- Progressive recognition of rural women and increased access to resources (e.g. loans, training and information) by formulating policies improving access, control and security of women.
- Increase capacity of family farmers and their organizations on technical advocacy and leadership enhancing their participation in policy-making processes.
- Increase cooperation between various stakeholders in rural areas and strengthen agreements between consumers, farmers, rural organizations, and research centers by improving access of family farmers to quality agro-inputs suppliers and resources.
- Improve access to resources for youth, women, indigenous and landless people thanks to public policies and legal frameworks.
- Improve access of rural family farmers to comparatively profitable agricultural practices and guaranteed markets.
- Increase sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices that contribute to the preservation of the ecosystem, strengthening our ability to adapt to climate change.
- Strengthen diverse functions of family farming promoting social innovation and diversification of employment opportunities through public programs



Contribution to sustainable food systems

Nepalese family farming is a key factor in establishing and maintaining organic agriculture. The family farming resembles organic farming as the farmer integrates livestock, vegetables, fruits, and cereals (Kaini, 2016) from shed, home-garden to farmland. Many Hilly and Himalayan farmlands managed by family farming are organic lands by default, as the farmers use very low or no chemical fertilizers and pesticides and are mainly based on farmyard manure. The farm comprises livestock which is a major source of manure or nutrient for the crops. Therefore, family farming is the medium for organic and sustainable agriculture.



Bibliography

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Nepal- a family farming story

In Nepal, the Laliguras Herbal Women Group (LHWG) runs a small-scale enterprise for processing herbal plants and extraction of essential oil called Chisapani Community Herbal Processing Industry (CCHPI). This enterprise is initially composed of 16 women members who have small areas of farmland ranging from 0.01-0.06 hectares including the land occupied by their house and home gardens. They formed this business to conserve and sustainably manage the forest, environment and biodiversity including and especially unused barren forest land within the Chisapani Community Forest Users Group (CFUG) and providing employment opportunities to improve the livelihoods of its members. To make the enterprise climate change resistance, CHPPI employed diversification of the natural resource base strategies (more aromatic plant options); engaging in economic business propositions (hiring out distillation equipment and investing in new business ventures), and establishing social support networks (new partnerships and customers). To know more about their story, read it [here](#).



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