

**ORL-F&PI-08****Livelihood Improvement of Poor and Marginal Households through Promotion of Community Pond Fish Farming**

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Morang is one of the potential districts for aquaculture with abundance of ponds. The district has 4803 ponds with total water surface area of 875 hectares (ha) with average fish productivity of 5.49 mt/ha as of 1978/79. Local inhabitants are traditionally rearing fish in ponds, ditches and making their livelihoods. To enhance the economic status of poor and marginal households, community fish farming was introduced in selected villages in the district from 2007-2012 through the FORWARD Nepal-Plan Partnership project.

Community fish farming was promoted among 142 households of Amgachhi, Amardaha, Amahibariyati, Babiabirta, and Nocha Village Development Committees (VDCs) in Morang district. The community groups were capacitated to manage 11 unused ponds of a total water surface area of 10.7 ha belonging to the community, schools, and VDCs. The process consisted of identifying underutilized ponds, selecting poor, marginal, and interested community members, and repairing and maintaining ponds. Selected farmers were trained on improved practices on fish farming including fish breeds, feeding management and pond management. Project provided 100 percent support in fish seeds and other inputs in the first year. However, the support was reduced in subsequent years to 75, 50, 15, and 0 percentages in the second, third, fourth, and fifth years respectively to ensure group sustainability. From the fifth year onwards, the community fully managed the ponds with only technical support from the project. The community was committed to contributing 15% of income from fish sale to the concerned VDC or School, and 75% of income was used by beneficiary households (HH) to meet their expenses.

In the community managed ponds, fingerlings of Common carp, Bighead carp, Rohu, Silver carp, and Grass carp were supported by the project. District Agriculture Development Office (DADO)

Morang provided aerators, fishing nets and technical assistance to the farmers. Continuous implementation of these activities has created technical and managerial confidence among the fish growers. As a result, farmers of Babiabirta and other VDCs have leased in ponds due to enhanced income through community fish farming. The project beneficiary HHs were able to get an average annual income of NPR 38,500/HH. from fish sale. In addition to community fish farming, FORWARD Nepal has promoted kitchen pond fish farming in selected Kalika VDC of Chitwan, Makwanpur, Saptari, and Rautahat districts mainly to support household nutrition among smallholder farmers.



Figure: Fish harvesting from community managed ponds, Morang district