

Project Title: Conflict to Co-Existence: Empowering Local Communities to Reduce Human-Elephant Conflict in Far-West Nepal

Project no: 40414-2

May- 2025 UPDATE

Strengthening Community-Based Response and Livelihoods

Based on community feedback and recommendations, targeted training and resource support were provided to strengthen the Rapid Response Mechanism within the project area. Three Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) were established—one each under the Shuklaphanta, Bedkot, and Trishakti Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs). Each RRT comprises six members responsible for responding to and deterring elephant-related conflict incidents. A series of seminars were organized to build the capacity of RRT members in understanding elephant behavior, the causes of conflict, response strategies, and effective mitigation measures. These teams play a critical role in providing immediate deterrence and in supporting communities experiencing distress and trauma during human-elephant conflict incidents. To facilitate their operations, the RRTs were equipped with basic deterrent tools, including handheld torches.



Photos: Training provided to the Rapid Response Team (RRT) and distribution of resource materials to Bedkot, Trishakti, and Shuklaphanta User Committees

Livelihood Opportunities Training

To support conflict-affected communities, livelihood training programs were initiated. A total of 67 individuals—including user committee members and conflict-affected residents—were selected to participate in the training across the three Buffer Zone User Committees: Bedkot, Shuklaphanta, and Trishakti.

Bedkot Buffer Zone User Committee

Each user committee hosted an alternative farming training session aimed at promoting sustainable and less conflict-prone livelihood options. The training was facilitated by Mr. Purushottam Wagle (Conservation Officer, Shuklaphanta National Park), Mr. Laxmi Raj Joshi (Chief Conservation Officer, NTNC/Shuklaphanta Conservation Programme), Dr. Balram Awasthi (Program Coordinator), former president Mr. Arjun Singh Kadayat, and President Mrs. Bhanmati Khadayat. The facilitators discussed potential mitigation measures and emphasized the importance of alternative livelihood strategies, including the cultivation of less palatable crops to reduce crop-raiding by elephants. A total of 25 individuals participated in the program, with priority given to indigenous communities and women to ensure inclusivity and equitable benefit-sharing. The training focused on climate-resilient and eco-friendly farming practices, including vegetable cultivation and medicinal plant farming. These alternative livelihood options provide stable income opportunities while reducing reliance on forest resources. By promoting household food security and empowering local communities, the program contributes to enhanced resilience against human-wildlife conflict.



Photo: Presentations on Interaction for alternative livelihood by Mr. Laxmi Raj Joshi & Mr. Purushottam Wagle with guests and other participants.

Shuklaphant Buffer Zone User Committee

A similar alternative livelihood training was conducted for the Shuklaphanta User Committee. Each user group hosted an alternative farming training session aimed at promoting sustainable and less conflict-prone livelihood options. A total of 31 local people participated in the program, with priority given to indigenous communities and women. The training was facilitated by Mr. Purushottam Wagle (Conservation Officer, Shuklaphanta National Park), Mr. Laxmi Raj Joshi (Chief Conservation Officer, National Trust for Nature Conservation/Shuklaphanta Conservation Programme), and Dr. Balram Awasthi (Program Coordinator). Mr. Lab Bista, President of the Bufferzone Management Committee (BZMC), and Dr. Gaj Ram Damai, Campus Chief of Siddhanath Science Campus, also participated in the event.





Photos: Community Interaction and RRT support and National and local media coverage of the Interaction program and resource material support to local communities; <https://www.nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/165908/2025-04-24>; <https://esudurdarpan.com/2025/04/24/52615/>

Trishakti Buffer Zone User Committee

The alternative livelihood training for the Trishakti Buffer Zone User Committee was led by Dr. Balram Awasthi and Mr. Daman Bahadur Chand, President of the Trishakti User Committee. Each user group organized an alternative farming training session to promote sustainable and less conflict-prone livelihood options for local communities. A total of 12 participants, including community members and families affected by human-elephant conflict, attended the program. The session focused on practical, eco-friendly agricultural practices aimed at reducing conflict, particularly in areas near wildlife habitats.

At the end of the training, vegetable seeds were handed over to the user group committee for distribution to 60 families. In accordance with the user group management rules, priority will be given to families that have experienced elephant conflict, enabling them to adopt alternative farming practices that enhance food security and support conservation-friendly livelihoods.



Photo: Community Interaction and RRT support and Alternative Livelihood Support Program in Trishakti Buser Committee Office

Relief Support Activities under the Project

As part of the project's community empowerment objectives, targeted relief assistance was extended to families directly affected by human-elephant conflict. As part of this initiative, cash support of NPR 10,000, along with educational materials, was provided to the family of the late Mr. Ram Dal Rana, who tragically lost his life in a sugarcane field due to an elephant attack on the night of Sept 28, 2024. The relief support was formally handed over to his wife, Mrs. Chandrawati Rana and his son Mr. Ram Kishan Rana. The event was attended by Dr. Balram Awasthi, along with community members, local leaders, and journalists. The distribution was documented with signatures of the attendees and official confirmation of the receipt.



Similarly, another relief event was held at the residence of the late Mr. Umesh Chaudhary, who lost his life in an elephant attack in Maunaha Jungle, Belauri

Municipality Ward No. 5. Under the same project, cash support of NPR 10,000, along with educational materials, was provided to his family. The support was formally handed over and acknowledged through signatures and official documentation. These activities reflect the project's continued commitment to supporting affected families, mitigating the impacts of human-elephant conflict and fostering coexistence strategies.



**सुदूर दर्पण**
जलतामा अपर्णा

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Photos: Relief support activities and Local media coverage for Relief Support Activities under the Project; <https://esudurdarpan.com/2025/04/26/52678/> ;
<https://hamrokalapanikhabar.com/archives/31060>

Support for Undergraduate Thesis Research

As part of the project's broader educational and capacity-building goals, two Bachelor of Science students—Ms. Sarita Bhatt and Ms. Ayushma Upadhyay—received support to undertake their undergraduate thesis research. Their study, titled "Perceptions of Local Communities toward Human-Elephant Conflict in the Buffer Zone of Shuklaphanta National Park, Nepal," aims to assess the attitudes, experiences, and coping strategies of local residents affected by human-elephant interactions—an increasingly pressing issue in the region. Fieldwork was carried out across multiple user groups, through household surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. Data analysis is currently in progress, and the findings are expected to contribute to a better understanding of local perspectives and help inform community-based mitigation strategies and conservation policies around Shuklaphanta National Park.

Photo@Balram Awasthi & Suraj Joshi, Gorakh Saud, Sarita Bhatt, Susila Awasthi