

THE LINK BETWEEN ENERGY AND PROGRESS WOULD BECOME MUCH MORE OBVIOUS AS PEOPLE BEGAN TO LIVE IN LARGER, MORE CONCENTRATED COMMUNITIES – Paul Roberts

TRAINING OF NEW TECHNICAL OFFICERS

Every year, Rural Energy Development Programme organizes an in-service training to new Technical Officers (TOs) as a "good practice" to build up their technical capacity to suit the programme needs. This year, the in-service training has been conducted from 17 to 24 October 2008 at the Dhulikhel Training Centre of Kavre district. Altogether 28 TOs had participated in the training programme. Participants were provided with both the theoretical and practical classes to build up the skills in conducting survey and preparing detail design of a micro hydro system. Field trip was organized to Bhumidanda VDC of Kavre district where the participants have carried out the survey works as learned in the classes. For this, the participants were divided into four groups. They worked to measure the flow, identify and design layout of intake and headrace canal, prepare penstock profile and determine the powerhouse at different locations of the Roshi Khola river. Services of qualified experts were hired as resources persons to deliver theoretical classes on different aspect of MH system. Besides, session was also conducted on the operation of software package on MH design. In short, the training has been designed to provide a complete package on MH survey and design to the participants. The training would be fruitful for better outputs from TOs in the coming days. *(Based on information provided by REA Ms. Tara Shrestha)*



NEED FOR THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD APPROACH IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

At both the policy and programme levels, the energy sector of Nepal is currently considered in isolation from livelihoods. The 9th 5-year plan (1997-2002) presents sectoral policies and programmes. It does not, however, present the policies and programmes for an 'energy sector' - in which all sources of energy might be addressed. Instead, the plan presents components of the energy sector under headings of 'Infrastructure', 'Electricity' and 'Science and Technology and Alternative Energy'. Only about 15% of the population has access to electricity and the government recognizes consumption as an indicator of economic development. While electricity is considered in terms of infrastructure, however, other sources of energy are treated separately. Firewood, agricultural residue and biogas, for example, are linked with 'Science and Technology', concentrating on technical aspects and potentially missing the fact that the magnitude and manner of their use is also a development indicator. At the programme level too, there is little evidence that energy is considered in a holistic way. There is no focus, for example, on developing the energy sector in order to improve incomes and well-being, protect the environment, conserve resources or reduce vulnerability. In the complex web of factors that sustain life, energy plays a profound and vital role. The Sustainable Livelihood approach would, therefore, view it as imperative for policies and programmes to consider energy as one of the key elements contributing to sustainable livelihoods in a community. It should not be considered in isolation from other such elements. During the process of collection, management and use of traditional energy resources or during the planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of modern energy services, there are inevitably impacts on livelihoods in a society. The contention is that adopting an Sustainable Livelihood approach helps ensure that a greater proportion of such impacts are positive. *(Source: Sustainable Livelihood Case Study, ITDG, ITC, 2002)*

PROMOTING RURAL ENERGY SERVICES TO SUPPORT GROWTH AND EQUITY

UNDP's activities to promote access to rural energy services focus on meeting people's cooking and heating needs and providing electricity and mechanical power for household and productive uses. This is accomplished through promotion of energy efficient options, conventional energy sources and renewable energy. UNDP pays particular attention to the critical role energy services play in supporting income-generating activities in rural areas, and to the distinct needs of women, who are disproportionately impacted by lack of access to modern energy services. This experience has shown that the energy needs, concerns of rural, and disadvantaged communities are not always considered a priority in local and national development planning. As such, UNDP has worked to raise the profile of energy development in these areas through a variety of survey, audits, workshops and pilot projects, in close collaboration with local, municipal and national authorities.

The Nepal Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP), supported by UNDP provides a workable example for attending sustainable energy services in remote areas by promoting micro hydro schemes, solar power and improved cooking stove. REDP applied a holistic approach to rural development, emphasizing community mobilization and empowerment. As of 2004, REDP had helped develop over 130 micro hydro schemes in rural Nepal. *(Source: UN-Energy, <http://esa.un.org/un-energy>)*