

ALL I WANT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THAT MONEY DOESN'T BUY HAPPINESS – Joris Zwart

PROMOTING RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

REDP has shown a way for promoting energy entrepreneurship in Nepal by supporting micro-hydro, solar and biogas as entry points for the development of rural energy systems to reduce income inequalities and improve rural livelihoods. The programme focuses on integrated and decentralized management of energy services with emphasis on CBOs or private entrepreneurs to manage rural energy development. At the community level, the CBOs – like the MHFG – encourage their members to explore potential end uses appropriate to available skills and resources. Thus, the focus has been on promoting diversified end-use enterprises, including agro-processing mills such as rice hullers, grinders and oil expellers.

To take forward the benefits of REDP, the Government will need to consider a support package for rural energy based entrepreneurs, encompassing capacity building, information sharing and R&D. For this purpose, coordinated efforts of the Small and Cottage Industries Department (SCID), the Industrial Enterprise Development Institute (IEDI) the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and commercial institutions and MFIs are recommended. The support package for energy SMEs could include the following elements.

1. Promotion of information management and dissemination.
2. Creation of a platform for sharing international knowledge and experience through the UNDP, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and bilateral agreements to provide quality training to rural entrepreneurs.
3. Effective cooperation between programmes related to SMEs and national-level training organizations.
4. Promotion of the Government-SME partnerships that enhance the development impacts of energy projects.

(Source: Assessment of Rural Energy Development Programme, January 2008)

A REMOTE VDC ESTABLISHED COMMUNICATION CENTER THROUGH MICROHYDRO

The remote village of Parbat has established a Rural Communication Center in a remote Bachha VDC. Establishment of a communication center has eased the information and communication problems in the community. Community people of Bachha VDC were always backward due to lack of communication & information facility. The ambitious dream plan of community people has been possible only because of the availability of dependable electricity generated by the community managed 24 kW Bachha Khola Micro Hydro Scheme installed with the technical and financial supports of the REDP through Rural Energy and Environment Section (DEES) of the Parbat.

After establishment of Rural Communication Center, community people can access easily the e-mail, internet and telephone through computer. People are happy as they do not have to walk whole day to the district headquarter and spend lots of money for using these facilities. In short, the communication center has benefited Bachha, Pangtang and Barachaur VDCs of Parbat district.
(Information Based on Kantipur, 24 August, 2008)

RURAL ENERGY YEAR FY 2008/09

New Government of Nepal has accorded high priority for the promotion of rural energy technologies as the means of solving energy crisis in the country in its FY 2008/09 Budget presented by the Finance Minister Dr. Babu Ram Bhattarai to the Constituent Assembly on Friday 19 September 2008. The government has announced for the first time the much awaited plan of providing electricity to all villages and households of the country within the next ten years period.

Most importantly, the budget has stated to achieve economic, social and environmental enhancement through the rural (alternative) energy technologies. For this, efforts will be made for the wide scale promotion, awareness creation and people's participation. Among others, it is most heartening to note that the Budget has declared the FY 2008/09 as the "Rural (Alternative) Energy Year". Accordingly, the upper limit of micro hydro capacity will be raised upto 1,000 kW and the government subsidy will be increased. Likewise, the subsidy given to the biogas plant and improved water mills will also be increased.