

Youth Empowerment for Green Job
By
Team for Nature and Wildlife (TNW)

Context

The country is facing problem related to youth unemployment which will become more acute in the next decade as the labor force in the region is also expected to grow by around 2.1 percent a year, warns the International Labor Organization (ILO). According to the report "Report on the Nepal Labor Force Survey" published by the Department of Statistics, Nepal in 2008, a large number of young people are semi unemployed and unemployed. In Nepal, more than 2 million youth are totally unemployed, according to studies. Nearly 49.9 percent urban youth and 32.2 percent rural youth are unemployed. In 2009, more than 2 million 52 thousand 8 hundred youth above the age of 15 are completely unemployed which is 42 percentages more than the previous year. Due to the lack of governmental policies and program to provide employment opportunities, more than 700 youth leave the country abroad in search of job. According to the statistics, at least half a million youth enter the labor market every year.

As the state fails to chalk out proper strategies to provide jobs, the problem is gaining urgency day by day. The increasing rate of unemployment has turned the youths into a frustrated lot. This may even encourage them to engage in destructive activities like terrorism. They suffer low self-esteem, exclusion from mainstream society and impoverishment.

Youth are very important from the point of view of socio-economic productivity so they should be able to get decent jobs to end the vicious cycle of discrimination and poverty. Most of the rural youth who hail from poor households enter the towns either in search of job opportunities or for further studies upon completion of school education. Some youth do not get job despite their strong effort. When young women and young men do not have an opportunity to find a job, they are more likely to feel excluded from society and lose their individual sense of self-esteem. Youth who enter the labor market in depressed circumstances are more likely to have difficulties throughout their working life. These factors can lead to crime and unrest. Therefore, there is a need of an initiative to empower the youth for personal and social economic development to avoid possible conflict.

Likewise, the country has also experienced massive environmental degradation. Nepal has experienced the worst deforestation (around 82,794 hectares of forests) in the last three decades. This has led water resource depletion, species extinction, carbon emission and put the human security at risk due to natural disasters too. The excessive use of pesticides had led to land degradation and food insecurity. Of the total vegetable farmers, 92 percent use chemical pesticide. It is equally important to address the environmental problems while addressing the youth poverty and unemployment. The youth can play important role in the development of ecologically sustainable community if the unemployed youth are made environmentally aware and empowered with environmental management skills too at a time when they are empowered for economic development

with technical education and vocational training courses. Therefore, there is a need of youth empowerment for economy and ecology both so that the youth will consider and save environment while carrying out income generation activity or engaging in enterprise.

Taking these issues into serious consideration, Team for Nature and Wildlife (TNW), a youth led environmental organization has launched the project titled "*Youth Empowerment for Green Job*".

Objectives:

The basic objectives of the project are to address youth related poverty or youth unemployment by inspiring and enabling the youth to create self employment and employment for more youths being responsible towards environment.

The following are the specific objectives and methodology:

1. To encourage the unemployed youth and build their confidence on self employment and entrepreneurship in Nepal through "Appreciative Inquiry" course
2. To enable the youth to develop the business products like candle, bio-briquette, organic compost, organic vegetables, flowers, honey, handmade products etc. with higher economical and ecological value through technical education and vocational training courses
3. To make the youth environmentally conscious and responsible through environmental education during the training session
4. To develop the entrepreneurship skill on youth through courses and workshop on Entrepreneurship and cooperative development
5. To enable the youth to form small scale industry through guideline courses on cottage and small scale industry registration, formation and management
6. To encourage the urban youth to migrate back to their own rural village for agro business
7. To help each trainee/youth to start and run the small scale business with seed capital up to 1.5 lakh without collateral along with an experienced Business Mentor
8. To monitor and evaluate the trainees after the training phase through Field Visit and Follow up on the last Saturday of each month
9. To scale up their effort by providing further assistance to the trainees after monitoring, evaluation and progress report
10. To inspire young people in sustainable green entrepreneurship through "TNW Young Entrepreneurship Award" worth NRs.20, 000.00 along with a certificate on the International Youth Day

Beneficiaries:

Unemployed youth (18 to 35 years) - 50% female and 50% male

Time Duration:

18 months(six months-pre training, six months-training and six months-post training)

Processes:

A.Pre-training Phase:

1. Information dissemination about the project through publicity in the targeted communities and relevant media
2. Distribution of application form
3. Final selection of the trainees through indirect inquiry and personal interview
4. Orientation workshop about the project

B. Training Phase:

1. Appreciative Inquiry(AI) Course for motivation, positive thought, self employment, team work and management and entrepreneurship
2. Technical education and vocational training
3. Environment Education for youth/trainees
4. Entrepreneurship and cooperative development course and workshop
5. Interaction based talk shows by highly successful and prominent business entrepreneurs of the country
6. Small industries registration, formation and management course

C. Post Training Phase

1. Helping the youth/trainees to set up an enterprise group/team, start small scale industry, form cooperatives and in market linkage
2. Field visit for monitoring and evaluation on last Saturday of each month
3. Taking monthly progress report of each trainee during the field visit
4. Providing proper guidance, counseling and necessary technical assistance to the trainee on the basis of their needs and progress report
5. Management of seed capital up to 1.5 lakh in the form of collateral free loan to start or scale up the enterprise, with the help of Nepal Youth Business Foundation (NYBF)/FNCCI
6. Management of a Business Mentor to each trainee with the help of NYBF, Rotary International-Nepal, Kathmandu University, Tribhuvan University and Pokhara University
7. Recognition to the trainees after one year

8. Publication of booklet "Struggling and success stories of emerging Young Green Entrepreneurs"

Description of the pilot project-Youth Empowerment for Green Job

Project for urban youth-funded by UN-HABITAT Youth Fund:

TNW received grant from the UN HABITAT Youth Fund to launch the pilot project in urban areas in Kathmandu valley. TNW targeted at least 75 percent unemployed youth from slum areas as beneficiaries of the project.

Before the training phase, the targeted communities were informed about the launch of the project through pamphlets and mouth publicity using highly influential social activists and local slum organization, Child Development Youth Network (CDYN) Nepal. In total, 100 youth were selected out of 167 applications from urban area or Kathmandu valley especially from slum areas. The trainee selection was done by making an inquiry about the trainees' discipline with the help of local social activists and slum organizations, their entrepreneurship interest and planning and personal interview. After the selection, they were given orientation workshop to provide in detail information about the whole project.

During the training phase, TNW took four steps. At first, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) course was conducted to motivate the trainees and enhance their confidence on self employment and entrepreneurship. Secondly, the trainees were made technically capable through vocational training on candle and bio-briquette production, organic compost and commercial organic vegetables farming, floriculture and Bee Keeping. During the training session, the trainees were also given education on environment conservation to make them environmentally aware youth and responsible people/business entrepreneurs. Thirdly, the trainees were given entrepreneurship skill and cooperative development courses to motivate and enable them to work in team for sustainable entrepreneurship. During the same session, they were also given guideline courses and resource materials on governmental procedures and assistances to form cottage and small industry. Fourthly, the trainees were further encouraged and empowered with entrepreneurship tips and skills by organizing an interaction with highly prominent social and business entrepreneurs of the country.

Immediately after one month of training phase, TNW takes 3 steps under the Post Training Phase. This activity will be of at least six months. Firstly, the TNW visits the trainees and conducts meeting and interaction at their own locality. TNW supports the trainees who are on the process to make an enterprise team/group, start small scale industry and form cooperatives. At the same time, the progress report of each trainee will

be kept in written form by filling out "**Post Training Evaluation Form**". This record keeping task will be done on the last Saturday of each month for two years. Secondly, the trainees will be offered proper guidance, counseling and technical assistance as per their needs and progress report. Thirdly, the trainees will be helped to have seed capital up to 1.5 lakh without collateral along with an experienced Business Mentor for the period of at least two years to start and run the business enterprise with the help of a partner organization-Nepal Youth Business Foundation (NYBF), a sister organization of Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI).

Outcomes

- The youth/trainees became technically capable to produce a wide variety of candles
- The youth/trainees became technically capable to produce bio-briquette
- The youth/trainees became technically capable to produce organic compost
- The youth/trainees became technically capable to do commercial organic vegetable farming
- The youth/trainees became technically capable to create a nursery
- The youth/trainees became capable to work as a gardener in the development of nursery
- The youth/trainees got technical knowledge and skills for organic honey production through bee keeping training
- The youth/trainees got knowledge on entrepreneurship, cooperative formation and governmental registration process and procedures of small scale business enterprise

Outputs

- The youth/trainees started making income by producing and selling the candle and bio-briquette
- The youth/trainees started vermi compost production
- The youth/trainees started commercial organic vegetable farming in team taking land on lease, with the technical support of Central Vegetable Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
- The youth/trainees formed 1 "Sankhamul Floriculture and Vegetable Farming Group" to run a sustainable enterprise related to flowers and organic vegetables- with the guidance and assistance of TNW
- The youth/trainees of "Sankhamul Floriculture and Vegetable Farming Group" created a Community Nursery in the barrel land of slum areas to produce seeds and seedlings of and to grow commercially high valued flowers and vegetables
- The youth/trainees formed 2 Cooperatives namely "Sunakhari Agro and Bee Keeping Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd." and "Himalayan Agro and Bee Keeping multipurpose Cooperative Ltd." with the guidance and assistance of TNW
- The youth/trainees formed 3 small scale industries namely "Pathivara Young Entrepreneur Group" "Nepalese Youth Organic Agro Enterprise" and " Solu

Brothers Vegetable Centre" that have been registered in the Department of cottage and small industries, Nepal Government, with the guidance and assistance of TNW

- Some youth/trainees returned back to their own village from Kathmandu to start agro enterprise-Urban to rural migration of youth
- Nepal Youth Business Foundation(NYBF), a sister wing of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) signed an agreement with TNW to provide collateral free loan up to 1.5 lakh along with a Business Mentor for each youth/trainee of TNW

Perspective and Impacts:

The successful implementation of the pilot project-"Youth Empowerment for Green Job" has been able to engage the unemployed youth on green entrepreneurship. The project has encouraged the youth to work for self employment and to create employment opportunities for more and more young people being an entrepreneur. Most of the youth who were supposed to work individually before the training has changed their mind and plan to work in a team. This has led the youth to form 2 agro cooperatives, 3 government registered cottage and small scale industries and 1 community agro group namely "Sankhamul Floriculture and Vegetable Farming Group" that has developed a community nursery.

The youth who were initially unaware and unconscious about the environmental issues have now started doing activities and advocacy related to environmental management and protection at their own community. The parents have also been happy and satisfied with the entrepreneurship activities of the young children who used to waste time on unproductive stuffs before the training. The most interesting impact that we have seen is some youth who were initially migrated from rural to urban areas in search of employment in Kathmandu have now migrated back to their own village to start and run agro business.

Problems and lessons learnt

Initially, we did not get the trainees as we expected despite we launched home to home publicity program. The fact is some organizations are found to have launched employment related training programs several times for the youth in the past. But the organizations are not found to have helped the trainees after the training to provide further proper guidance on entrepreneurship and seed capital to start the business. The youth became interested only after we informed them that TNW would help the youth/trainees to have seed capital up to 1.5 lakh along with a Business Mentor with the help of another partner organization Nepal Youth Business Foundation (NYBF). Then, a large number of youth filled the application. But we had been compelled to take only the number of applications as per the limitation of our project. For instance, we had resources only for 100 youth in the project that was carried out in urban area but we got more than

167 applications from the single small community. We had to screen the youths' applications for final selection through inquiries and personal interview.

We learnt that if the youth are empowered with relevant technical knowledge and skills along with proper guidance, counseling and adequate resources for entrepreneurship, the youth will be further inspired and energized to start an enterprise for self employment and creating job opportunities for more youth. Additionally, it is learnt that we can make the urban youth to return back to their respective rural village with such empowerment programs. This can address the urban youth related poverty and rural to urban migration of youth.

Project Stakeholders and their roles:

1. UN-HABITAT Urban Youth Fund, Nairobi, Kenya-Grant assistance
2. UN-HABITAT Nepal-Project Coordination
3. Child Development Youth Network (CDYN) Nepal-Trainees management
4. International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)-Field Visit coordination
5. Nepal Bee Keeping Central Cooperative Union-Marketing of organic honey and coordination in cooperative formation
6. Bee Development Centre-Resource materials on bee keeping
7. Nepal Youth Business Foundation/FNCCI- Management of collateral free loan up to 1.5 lakh along with a Business Mentor to each trainee
8. Central Vegetable Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative-Providing technical assistance on commercial organic vegetable farming to each trainee
9. National Appreciative Inquiry Network, Nepal-providing appreciative inquiry course to the trainees