



SEED Initiative

promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable development

Founding Partners



GENDER EQUALITY WINNER 2014

The enterprise uses agricultural techniques, notably poly-tunnels and greenhouses, to grow and market organic vegetables in a climate where weather usually limits year-round production. The aim is to improve food security and nutrition while empowering marginalised women through job creation.



Women's Off-season Vegetable Production Group, Nepal

BUSINESS MODEL

The Women's Off-season Vegetable Production Group is a cooperative of women farmers who produce organic vegetables throughout the year. These are sold at farmers markets and to local businesses. Compost is produced to improve soil quality, reduce bio-waste and increase the product portfolio.

Traditionally in Humla District, vegetables are only produced during three months of the year. The enterprise saw the demand, and the need, for vegetable production during the agricultural off-season – especially because the local tourism industry is growing.

ENTERPRISE FAST FACTS

Location	Humla district
Year founded	2012
Sector	Agriculture (incl. aquaculture)
Product/Service	Vegetables produced during the off-season

Social impacts:

- Decreasing malnutrition by providing locals with steady access to affordable vegetables.
- Improved food security by using equipment like poly-tunnels that allows year-round vegetable production.
- Empowering women through job creation and by involving them in all aspects of the enterprise's running.

Environmental impacts:

- Improving local soil quality by creating a sustainable supply of compost, which also serves as a waste management solution for the community.
- Using organic pesticides which protect the environment.

Economic impacts:

- Providing farmers within the collective with a sustainable income, thus improving quality of life for them and their families.
- Lowering living costs -without the enterprise, community members would have to purchase expensive food that is imported from other regions.

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” The Women's Group has not only improved access to vegetables in Humla district. It's also establishing a sustainable livelihood for members and is a strong step towards women's empowerment in the district.

Scaling up activities:

- Increase revenues by 30 % over the coming year, by expanding market presence across Humla District.
- Recruit more farmers to the collective in order to increase production capacity and expand the types of vegetables grown.
- Acquire a donkey, mule, or horse to help transport goods to communities further from the enterprise's base, as there are no roads in Humla District and members currently take their produce by foot.
- Increase compost production by collecting food and animal waste from more households than just those of the farmers' households. Within the next year the enterprise aims to have compost as an additional product to sell.



” Women in Humla are still fighting to attain their rights and to see a women owned and led enterprise succeeding in a traditionally male dominated sector is very inspiring.



Partnership

• The **Women's Off Season Vegetable Group** is a collective of women farmers and workers from Thehe Village Development Committee in Nepal's Humla District. The group forms the enterprise's core workforce. As well as producing and selling the vegetables, members are involved in management and business development.

• **Foundation Nepal** provides support to the enterprise through training and capacity building exercises, in particular on the technical aspects of off-season vegetable production and on business plan development and business management.

• **Common Forum for Development (CFD)** is the local partner non-profit organisation of Foundation Nepal. It is involved with training and capacity-building, conducts on-going monitoring of the enterprise's progress and supports the women in conducting self-reflection.



The 2014 SEED Gender Equality Awards are supported by UN Women, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; and UNIDO, which promotes and accelerates inclusive and sustainable industrial development. Additional support is from the international law firm, Hogan Lovells.

About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs who while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion. SEED provides these entrepreneurs with know-how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making. For more information please write to info@seedinit.org or visit:

www.seedinit.org

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