

HPC Report October 2012 - March 2013
Photo Gallery - Surkhet



Left - Phase 2 of HPC's "Building Household and Community Reliance" project started with their first Permaculture Design Course held at Baragaun Resource Centre. Here the Web of Life game

Right - the PDC combines elements of techniques with process. Here participants play a game to build the highest tower using just newspaper and tape, but in silence. This is great for analysing roles in groups and methods of communication, and lots of laughs too!



Above - PDC participants learn to make and use an A-frame to mark slope contours, as part of strategies for soil improvement. The marked contours can become terraces or ditches to slow run-off of water and nutrients, thus conserving them on-site. Meanwhile - *right* - looking at how HPC improves traditional composting in the easiest and low-cost way possible, by aerating the heaps of muck with branches to create faster breakdown into useful organic compost.



Right - During the PDC participants form teams to practice a design exercise on a nearby plot of land and with the plot owner, or client, aiming to create a low-input high output integrated system using the skills learned on the course. As they build up the design using a step-by-step design process, how it will be implemented and maintained must also be realistically thought out. Finally, at the end of the course each team gets to present the design and its sequence of implementation to the other groups, and get feedback from tutors, peers and the client.



Left - At the end of the course participants receive a certificate, becoming a “trainee permaculture designer”. This is an internationally recognised certificate, but only the beginning in terms of permaculture education - follow-up and future support and mentoring is crucial to further develop the skills of design.



Above - HPC trainers on a farmers’ training role-play pest insects attacking crops, with course participants around playing different companion plants and other pest management strategies to keep them under control.

Left - Office manager Deepak Buddha builds up a tower of hollow mud bricks (inset) to create a chimney for the smokeless stove at the Resource Centre. The holes for the pots can be seen in the foreground. The arrow shows position of the firebox, where firewood is introduced.

Right - Ms Sumitra Gurung teaches mulching on a vegetable bed to farmers at a mobile training held at *Pakhapani* village, for *Jana Jyoti* group. Behind her is a newly made hot bed for growing seedlings in winter.

Below - volunteers help to re-cover the greenhouse at Baragaun Resource Centre in October, trapping the residual warmth and moisture of the monsoon before the onset of cooler and drier weather, to give the best start for winter cropping. The plastic was purchased last season, and with careful use and storage over the hot season it can last for many years.



Right - women from HPC groups learn grafting on a farmers training. Using these skills farmers grafted over **3,500 fruit seedlings** in Surkhet and Humla this winter. The areas have a rich resource of root stock - wild varieties of apple, pear, plum, peach, apricot, almonds and walnut, on which improved high yielding varieties can be grafted and top worked. Meanwhile nurseries contain a further **15,700** rootstock growing for next year's grafting.

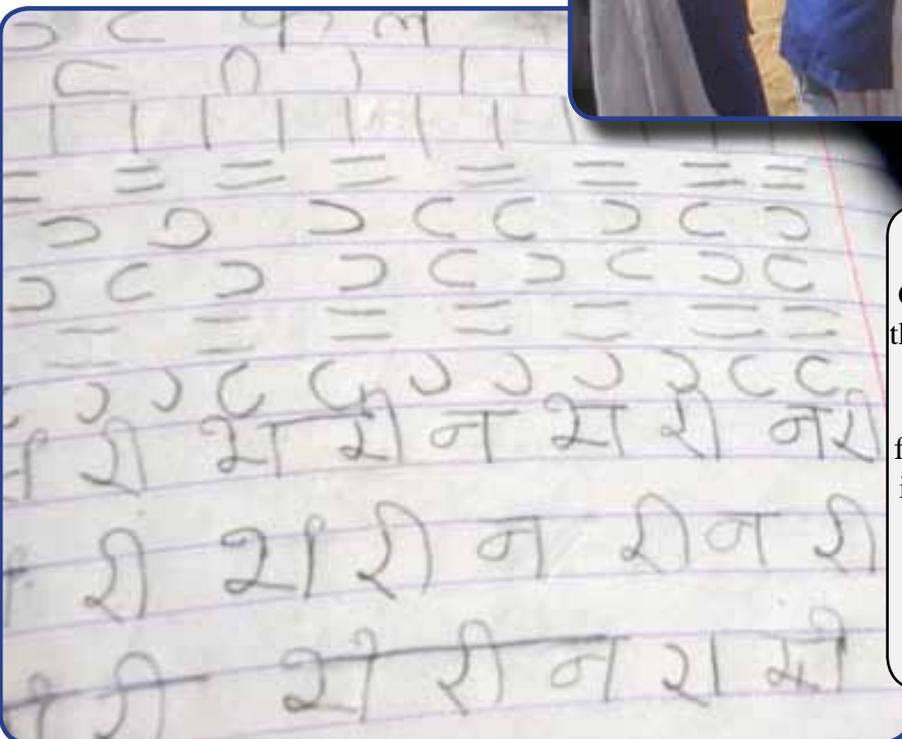


Left - participants on a farmers' training held at Baragaun Resource Centre build a frame over a hot bed in December. With spring approaching HPC prioritises such techniques that allow fast, off-season production of seedlings for planting early. The bed is underlaid with a 6 inch layer of raw manure that produces heat for seed to germinate in the soil above, and covered with plastic to reduce the heat loss.

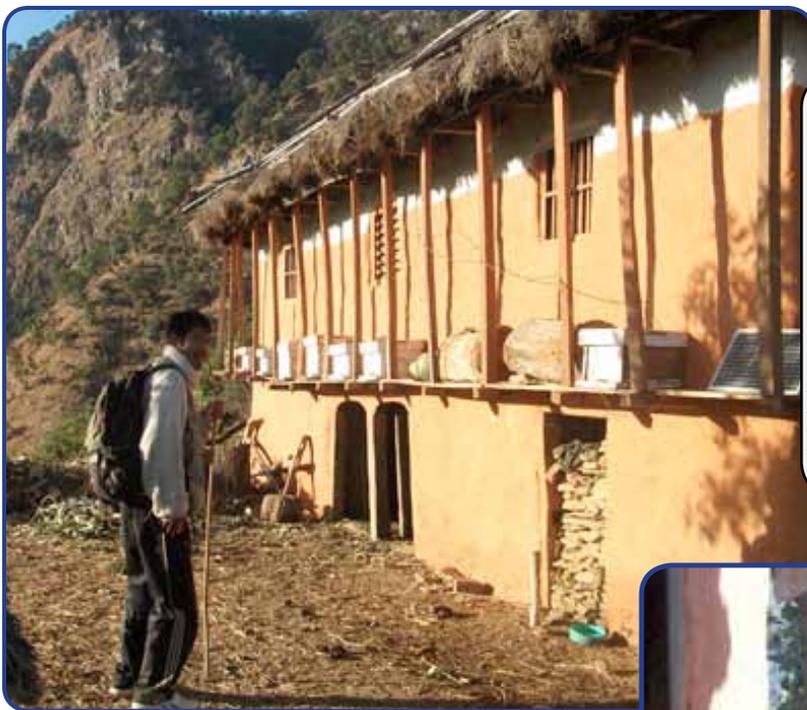
Right - members of Baragaun village provide community labour contribution to dig pipelines and digging tanks for an irrigation project in their village. HPC technicians design the system, provide pipe and pond liner for tanks (*below*) to store 32,000 litres of water, and build non-cement tanks to capture and divert springs



Right - pupils gather for an awareness-raising and training event at Baragaun school, where design of the school land has started with fruit nursery, fruit tree planting, compost making and top-grafting on wild pear trees. HPC will hold more vocational classes in the coming months, and next year hope to start education classes around community development and permaculture.



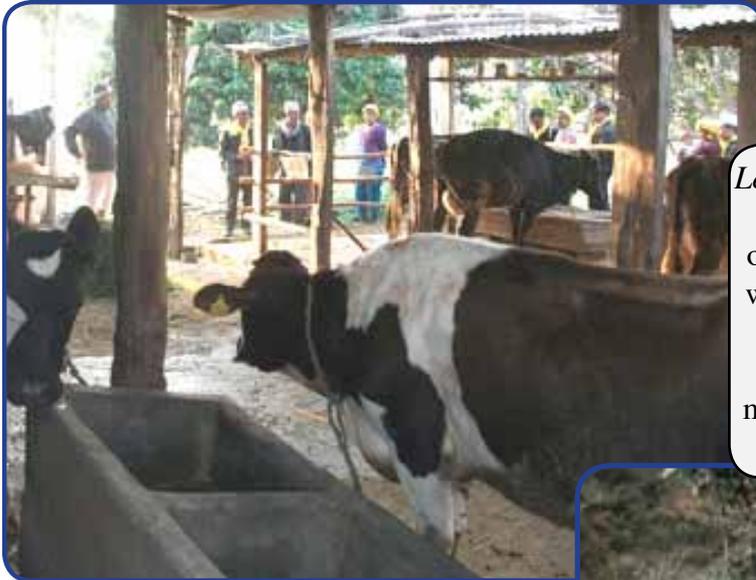
Left - participants on the Practical Literacy Classes (PLCs) learn how to write letters in the Devanagiri script of Nepali. These letters will go on to form their first words such as “nursery”, “stove”, “carrot” etc. that will further form part of their vocational training in skills for increased household productivity. These are 2 aims - literacy and food security, along with health, education and livelihoods that are integrated into HPC’s overall strategy.



Left - HPC chief technician and beekeeping master Kul Bahadur Buddha surveys beehives at a house in the area but as yet not aligned with HPC. He has been investigating the extent of bees, nectar sources, farmers' skills and productivity and their needs as a prelude to planning training and marketing activities. In this way HPC aims to support beekeepers to create secure livelihoods based on a sustainable resource base.



Right - Dhan Bahadur B.K. scrapes the caps off honeycombs prior to extracting the honey in the centrifugal extractor (on the right). This is November and the forests around his village are full of flowering Chiuri tree (*Aesandra butyracea*) that produces copious amounts of nectar for bees to make a delicious honey that can fetch top prices in the market.



Left - HPC lead-farmers from Humla on a trip to Surkhet view a dairy where cattle and buffaloes are stall fed as opposed to free-range - the latter is the norm in Humla, which means that apart from their fertility (dung) being lost, their random grazing prevents any sort of agro-forestry and orchard development. So HPC promotes more stall-feeding, releasing large areas of land to other forms of regeneration and development.

Right - Humli farmers in Surkhet visit HPC chief technician and beekeeper Kul Bahadur's forest farm in Baragaun. Here they view the terraces on his land where amongst fruit, fuel and fodder trees are understories of cardamom, ginger, asian pepper and other shrubs and bushes. The cardamom will also grow in Humla and so form part of an appropriate demonstration for these farms to gain inspiration from.





Left - continuing on their field trip, the farmers from Humla visit other villages in HPC's Surkhet working area. Here they are in *Bhalim* village where *Shanti* group members have constructed their own learning centre. A tour around 6 villages took 3 days (by foot of course - there are no roads here. They walked 2 days, flew, bussed and walked a day to Baragaun. From there they returned by bus and foot back to their villages - a journey that will take them 5 days)

Right - women representatives from HPC's Surkhet groups comprising the local Women's Health Network. They meet every 3 months to discuss issues and review activities in the Women's Health Program, and decide what activities they want to do in the coming months. These may include activities such as holding discussion groups, field trips or training days.



Left - women perform a traditional dance at HPC Agricultural Fayre (*mela*) held in Baragaun. Over 2 days the Fayre hosted an inter-groups volleyball tournament and displays of prize crops and local handicrafts. Over 250 men women and children attended. This was HPC's first *mela* and it hopes to hold it as an annual event. In the 90's HPC's predecessor, the Jajakot Permaculture Program, used to hold *melas* that would attract thousands of farmers. It was a major event of the calendar and a huge array of dances, agricultural produce and handicrafts would be exhibited.