

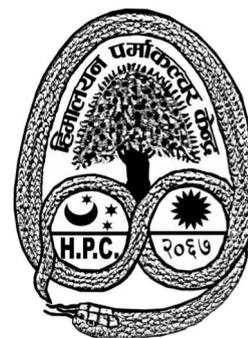
Himalayan Permaculture Centre

www.himalayanpermaculture.com

Building Livelihoods for Household and Community Resilience

6-month Report

Date of this report: November 2020



Introduction and background

Activities in the program area have continued to be severely affected by the Covid pandemic continuing as it has since described in the previous report. As a district Surkhet has seen relatively high cases (2725 cases, 14 deaths at time of writing in late November) compared to Humla (32 cases, 1 death) and internationally Nepal seems to have a relatively low occurrence of both infections and deaths, though testing is low. At the time of the last report Nepal was in lockdown, it came out of that and into the monsoon which, thankfully, has been relatively “normal” and allowed reasonable rice and maize harvests. As usually happens at this time, HPC’s implementation of projects is reduced during the monsoon due to travel and transport challenges - Covid has made these more extreme, of course – but also because farmers are so busy with crop planting and management. Despite this, staff have managed to work within these challenges and implement various programs, as described below.

The overwhelming challenge has been restrictions related to the Coronavirus epidemic that has stopped staff from travelling around the villages and to and from the markets to purchase materials for activities. During lockdown all training were halted as social gatherings of any kind were not permitted. This has meant falling behind on activity targets and subsequent budget underspend. The Covid pandemic has also prevented HPC from finding a legal and political solution to the Baragaun farm closure in 2019, where much equipment was held at the Resource Centre by the villagers of Baragaun and not released, and the fact that HPC still own the land there. Both of these issues have had a financial and material effect on HPC as well as mental challenges with motivation, security and well-being issues at stake. Despite these challenges work has largely continued according to the below report.

Working Areas

An updated summary of groups’ names, locations and demographics is given below.

		Households	Women	Men	Total
Surkhet	2 municipalities, 13 villages	194	587	673	1260
Humla	2 municipalities, 18 villages	612	1855	1884	3739
Total	4 municipalities, 31 villages	806	2442	2557	4999

These figures represent the demographics of the villages that have been registered with HPC as participating villages. They do not include the new villages that have requested participation, where HPC staff visit for surveying, and barefoot consultants have started to work (usually on training).

Activities

1. FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

1.1 Resource Centers (RCs)

HPC has continued its establishment of a new resource centre at Tadhiket near Mavidada village. The main building complete, work has continued to establish kitchen garden and agro-forestry systems, and these are already starting to produce with **21kg of vegetables, 250kgs of fodder and 215kg of firewood** harvested from the farm over the past 6 months. Several training courses have already been run there, including a 5-day residential farmers’ training, mobile farmers’ training and several technical trainings such as SRI, mulching, liquid manure and bio-fertilisers.

Meanwhile, activities have also continued at the Humla RC in Dapka village including residential farmers' training, mobile farmers' training and technical trainings including fruit nursery management (pinching and plastic removal), mulching and SRI.

1.2 Farmers' demonstrations

To facilitate demonstrations in the villages, materials such as seed, spray tanks, pipe, sprinklers, secateurs, grafting knives, pruning saws and seedlings have been provided to village groups.

Details are given below of the number of households implementing various techniques inside and around the farms. Many are tiny interventions or changes to traditional practice, such as keeping water pots and grinding stones covered when not in use, or keeping cooking and eating utensils and pots off the ground on a rack to dry after washing. Others are more production-orientated such as composting, kitchen gardening, agro-forestry and the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). These may be aimed at increasing productivity and/or reducing cost (including time/labour) through better resource management of existing local resources, as well as introducing new ones.

Practical Activities	June-November 2020		
	Surkhet	Humla	Total
No: households implementing	180	612	792
House hygiene	179	612	791
Stove	102	612	714
Toilet	179	214	393
Grinder	179	612	791
Water pot	180	612	792
Hay box	0	24	24
Sweepings	143	432	575
Waste water management	127	475	602
Plate/pot rack	173	383	556
Compost	97	60	157
Fodder trough	18	0	18
Salt lick	7	10	17
Kitchen garden/vegetables	177	513	690
Mulching	72	8	80
Liquid manure	39	18	57
hot bed	2	0	2
Leaf pots	1	10	11
Home nursery	78	40	118
Fruit nursery	27	0	27
Air nursery	3	3	6
Off season onions	5	20	25
Grafting	9	0	9
Budding	1	45	46
Top grafting	4	2	6
Air layering	30	8	38
Pot irrigation	3	3	6
Orchard	121	5	126
Agro-forestry	112	9	121
SRI	15	31	46
Green manures	4	7	11
No till	2	1	3
Bamboo cuttings	1	0	1

Improved plough	179	104	283
Fruit tree Pruning	78	0	78
Greenhouse	2	0	2
Biomass compost	67	0	67
Double digging	21	12	33
Urine collection & use	10	13	23
Seed production	165	48	213
Fruit planting	125	28	153
Water Filter	170	275	445
Jam/juice making	1	7	8
Solar Drier	10	12	22

Most of these activities are illustrated in the [Farmers' Handbook](#), a key training tool used by HPC.

Demonstration farmers

Demonstration farmers, that are implementing the techniques listed above, are divided into 3 categories according to how many techniques they are practicing and whether they are supporting others through training (see previous report for categories). The current distribution of the top 3 categories of demonstration farmer is as follows:

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total
Humla	17	27	36	80
Surkhet	21	40	58	119
Total	38	67	94	199

A survey of 40 demonstration farmers over 9 groups in Surkhet has been made, looking at their livelihoods as impacted by learning HPC's approaches. This has documented extra income earned to the tune of NRs **3,786,700/- over the past 6 months**, and is described below in section 4. Livelihoods.

From this can be seen that some farmers are more pro-active in their application of the agro-ecological approaches and methods taught. HPC does not intend to "change every farmer", rather lead by demonstration, and provide the training and resources – or empower/enable villagers to access themselves – for self-development. It will support and encourage farmers/households that can be innovative and committed. Meanwhile HPC also realises that some households and even communities are particularly marginalised and so require more support in problem-solving and finding resources than others.

Fruit and multi-purpose tree production

HPC puts high emphasis on growing fruit trees as an efficient perennial land use, source of nutrition and farm income. Further, for farmers to be able to produce themselves high quality fruit trees enables them to do this at low cost and also as a further income stream through selling of fruit trees.

This report covers the summer time and monsoon, which a time for propagation, planting and care of evergreen fruits such as various citrus species, pomegranate, guava, papaya, as opposed to deciduous fruits such as apple, pear, plum, walnut and almond that are propagated and planted over winter. An exception is propagation of deciduous trees by budding, which is done over summer months.

Planting

In both districts a total of **1838 fruit trees** of **35 species** have been planted over the monsoon, including Lemon (476), orange (296), olive (200), banana (137) and pomegranate (136). Other species include grapefruit, mausam, junard, mango, jackfruit, sugar cane and avocado.

Survival of planted seedlings is estimated at 60-75% and depends on several factors: the species, oranges and mangoes are more sensitive than lemons; pomegranate are very hardy. A drought during planting season may also adversely affect survival, so plants are usually heavily mulched to protect from this.

Propagation

Budding, air layering and cuttings a 3 ways of propagation used over the summer, as well as growing from seed. In total **160 plants** have been budded in Humla, while nearly **8000 grafted plants** (mainly apple, but also walnut, almond, apricot, plum, peach and pear) successfully grafted last winter await distribution this coming winter.

Harvesting

From **22 different species** over **38,000kg of fruit** was harvested in 31 villages over the summer. The top 10 are:

Peach: 9,672kg	Plum: 9,555kg	Banana: 4,481kg	Guava: 3,742kg	Pear: 3,324kg
Apple: 2,634kg	Mausam: 1,398kg	Orange: 1,002kg	Lemon: 2,778kg	Lime: 676kg

Other fruit species include papaya, apricot, almond, lemon, walnut, chestnut, Kiwi fruit and pomegranate.

Multi-purpose trees, shrubs and grasses.

In addition to fruit, HPC promotes trees shrubs and grasses providing a range of products to support food and farming, and local biodiversity. In this period **11,000 trees shrubs and grasses** have been established over the monsoon on farmers' fields, when plentiful soil moisture will help them to establish. Popular species include mulberry, Asian pepper (Timur), *Melia azadirach* (Bakaino), Napier grass, willow, *Ficus* spp., cardamom, soapnut and broom grass.

Community Funds

HPC supports community groups to create and operate their own micro-finance systems from community funds collected on a monthly basis from each member. They are then used to provide loans for small business initiatives and in some cases emergency relief where needed.

During the current period loans of between NRs 300 to 36,000/- were given to a total of **143 households** (about 885 people). They were used for a range of needs including domestic costs, food, medicines, and investing in home-run business such as buying livestock. Repayment of loans is recorded as 100%.

This reporting period's audit is summarised below:

	Loans given	Expenses	Cash	Total NRs	GB£
Humla	257,000	17,280	153,730	428,010	£2,853
Surkhet	942,966	10,850	3,960	957,776	£6,385
Total	1,199,966	28,130	157,690	1,385,786	£9,238

1.3 Farmers' Training

Due to Covid in Nepal, group gatherings have been restricted and HPC's training program has been similarly affected, with less opportunities for calling folk together. Despite this, seasonal trainings have continued with 5-day, 3-day, 1-day and short technical trainings in a range of topics being delivered. In Humla the residential training was held in collaboration with a local organisation, the Shaipal Agricultural Cooperative.

Trainings in this period have included mulching, vegetable gardening, fruit nursery, waste water management, compost making and integrated pest management.

Training is provided by the HPC staff and barefoot consultants (BCs). BCs are farmer-trainers that have experience at implementing agro-ecological systems and motivating

others to try. The barefoot consultants are also hired by other organisations to provide training and follow-up support in their own program areas. This has seen farmers from Humla and Surkhet travel to Dhading district (Linjho and Puru villages, on a 5-year agreement) and Kailali district (Social Welfare Institute) for a 5-day training.

Selection of participants for training is normally done by village groups themselves, or sometimes by invitation of HPC. While the culture is inherently patriarchal, HPC staff and BCs know that equality is important, and if village groups forward mostly men for training, staff will make sure women are properly represented.

After trainings, farmers make an action plan. There is follow-up from staff, and because groups are under regular involvement with other related programs, farmers have continuous monitoring and support. Achievements are then monitored, such as seedlings planted, stoves made, kitchen gardens maintained, seed saved, etc. Outcomes are then reported in the Annexes.

A training summary is below.

Surkhet	No: Trainings	Days	Participants		
			Women	Men	Total
Residential Farmers' Training	1	5	8	11	19
Mobile Farmers' Training	33	10	256	140	396
Technical Trainings	6	17	26	30	56
Total	41	32	290	181	471

Humla

Residential Farmers' Training	1	5	11	12	23
Mobile Farmers' Training	1	16	23	26	49
Technical Trainings	36	24	77	84	161
Total	38	45	111	122	233
Total All Areas	77	56	367	265	632

Slide and Film shows

There have been no shows during this period largely due to Covid restrictions

1.4 Livestock

Livestock form an important part of households' and communities' productivity and resilience, and also account for much of its cost especially in terms of labour. HPC supports livestock programs around needs of stall management, health and breeding. It supports demonstration/model farmers, training, livestock health camps and breed improvement. Associated agroforestry, compost making and other agro-ecological approaches create integrated farm systems that can be productive and provide livelihoods, while increasing and improving the natural resource base.

The livestock health camps and trainings have been reduced due to Covid restrictions; however barefoot vets and qualified staff have continued to treat livestock on an ad hoc basis. A summary of treatment is given below.

Castration		Internal parasites				External parasites			Total
Ox	Goat	Sheep/ goat	Cow/ Ox	Buffalo	Horse/ mule	Sheep/ goat	Cow/ Ox	Buffalo	
25	68	90	1	2	2	655	612	0	855

Meanwhile 2 castration tools have been provided to groups in Surkhet.

Livestock stall management

Training has been provided and demonstrations of improved stalls started construction in 9 villages in Surkhet and 2 in Humla. The “improved” stall is one relying on a concrete floor and crib for feeding fodder, to keep it off the ground. Meanwhile the concrete floor means that manure and urine can be harvested and the stall kept clean at the same time. Ideally all farmers would construct such a stall, however, it is expensive to build and out of reach of the poorest/most marginalised farmers. The government and other NGOs provide support, and HPC helps to broker such support. Meanwhile, farmers are also able to take loans from their group micro-enterprise fund (see above 1.2).

1.5 Irrigation

HPC provide support and materials for communities and households to construct irrigation systems for their farms. This involves supporting collection, storage and distribution infrastructure tapping local springs or collecting from local streams and rivers. It may also involve utilising waste-water from drinking water tap-stands to water village nurseries and kitchen gardens.

Restrictions due to lockdown and the pandemic have delayed implementation of these systems, and currently 5 villages are working towards completion in Surkhet.

1.6 Appropriate Technology

HPC has been testing different forms of appropriate technology aimed at reducing labour time and cost to perform agricultural processing tasks such as harvesting, winnowing, threshing, spinning, oil expelling and de-hulling. The aim is that villagers will be able to identify tools and machinery that will speed up traditional tasks, releasing time for other activities such as farm diversification, livelihoods, child care and education. In addition, some machines provide a more efficient way of extracting oil and juice resulting in higher outputs for lower inputs of time. In this period **2 foot-pedalled wool spinning machines** have been acquired for Humla. They are similar to the nettle-spinning machines acquired for Surkhet last year. A short video of farmers practicing on and using the machines is [viewable here](#). Also in this period **9 chaff cutters** have been distributed to farmers’ groups in Surkhet. HPC have been able to provide more chaff-cutters than planned as farmers are providing 50% of the cost.

Natural Paints Program

HPC has been developing ways of painting onto cement plaster using locally made natural paints as an alternative to synthetic paints purchased from the market. Apart from being expensive, synthetic paints often contain toxic and non bio-degradable elements that go on to pollute the environment. HPC has been providing training and demonstration over the past 2 years and in this period provide a further farmers’ training for *Janachetana* group in Mavidada village, where 1 whole house was painted.

2. HEALTH PROGRAM

2.1 Women’s Health Program (WHP)

HPC’s Women’s Health Program works around 3 main activities: training, health camps and networking. Women’s Health Trainings (WHT) include gender training, and take place through residential 5-7 day trainings at the resource centres and mobile 3-day courses run in the villages. Short half to 1 day trainings and workshops are also provided.

Women’s Health Training (WHT)

In this period only **8 trainings** have been able to be provided: 6 of them to complete the **Menstrual pad-making training** for every village in Humla. In Surkhet one **3-day integrated women’s health training** was provided for **13 women** in Gurung Gaun, and 1 for **8 women and 1 man** in doll-making (for children’s dolls), held at the new Resource Centre. Training is provided by HPC staff, women BCs and volunteers from the Women’s Health Network (WHN).

Women's Health Camp (WHC)

The WHC for this period was due to be held in Humla but was called off due to Covid. In the previous period the Surkhet WHC was similarly called off.

Women's Health Network (WHN)

The WHN provides follow-up support for training participants and health camp patients as well as develops programs for the groups to implement. They support HPC's education around stoves, food processing, diet, nutrition, hygiene and toilets, as well as integrating with kitchen gardening, agro-forestry, fruit growing, drinking water and other community enterprises. As such women's health is integrated into all sectors of village regeneration.

Stretchers

In villages far away from health services, there is difficulty to carry sick people to health centres due to lack of stretchers. In this period HPC has provided **2 stretchers** to village groups in Ghatutol and Mavidada villages of Surkhet .

2.2 Drinking Water

HPC assists villagers to access safe drinking water by tapping local springs with a low-input system of natural materials and local skills used to make collection tanks and tap stands, vastly reducing the cost of building systems. Drinking water tap stands are further integrated with irrigation systems for local nurseries and kitchen gardens, supporting nutrition, agro-forestry and livelihood programs.

In this period establishment of drinking water systems and existing systems' maintenance has been delayed due to the Covid restrictions delaying purchase of pipe and other materials from the bazaar. There are currently 5 systems surveyed and under construction in Humla and 4 in Surkhet.

3. EDUCATION PROGRAM

Practical Literacy Classes

This activity involves running practical literacy classes in Humla and Surkhet. The PLCs combine Freirian literacy principles with HPCs unique collection of practical activities based on the Farmers' Handbook (FHB), an easy-to-read compendium of over 40 farmer-friendly methods to increase domestic household and farm productivity. PLC participants learn letters and words, and later sentences, that form topics from the FHB such as stove, nursery, toilet, hygiene, diet, fruit tree grafting, etc. At the same time as developing their literacy skills, they also apply the methods in their own houses and fields.

The 3 classes that have been operating in Humla since last December were temporarily halted due to lockdown and re-commenced in June. A class started in Surkhet ran for 1 month before lockdown caused closure, and has since operated for another month.

	women	men	total
Surkhet (1 class)	12	1	13
Humla (3 classes)	56	0	56
Total	68	1	69

Schools' Program

HPC also works directly with schools in its areas, through co-design and development of bare land with planting trees and gardens, which helps to provide pupils vocational training in farming/gardening and health (WASH) useful not only for school but that they can take home and apply there as well. It also supports schools with infrastructure such as for drinking water, furniture, roofing, painting etc. with an aim of creating a more comfortable learning environment. HPC is currently supporting 6 schools in Surkhet and 4 in Humla. It recently provided relief support to Gokarna Secondary School in Pakhapani village after the roof was blow off in a storm.

In addition to its work with schools in its working areas, barefoot consultant (BC) Durga Rokaya is trained by HPC and has been seconded to work at [Kopila Valley School](#) in the Surkhet district capital Birendranagar, to help establish and run their school gardens and micro-farm. He is also teaching 1 class per week (each lasting 45-60 mins) for 8 classes in vocational skills such as nursery establishment and operation, kitchen gardening, Integrated Pest Management, mixed vegetables and composting. As part of the classes that Durga is providing at Kopila Valley, HPC is starting to create curriculum documentation in Nepali that can be used in other schools and classes in its working area and beyond.

Education materials

HPC is continually developing training materials to help make its courses more effective and provide better resources for participants to take home after learning and demonstration.

4. LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM

To build truly regenerative and resilient villages HPC has developed methods and approaches to strengthen food sovereignty and security, community and individual health, and both child and adult education. To add to these it is researching and developing regenerative enterprises based on local resources and skills, that can add income and livelihoods to create homes and communities that attract people to stay, live and work rather than seek meaningless and often dangerous employment overseas. It is currently running the programs described below and is always looking for ways to strengthen and diversify its approach.

A survey of **40 demonstration farmers** and households in 9 groups from Surkhet has shown that a total of NRs **3,786,700/- (£25,245)** has been earned as a direct result of techniques taught by HPC. The extra income ranges from NRs 5,000 to 220,000/-. These include income from crops such as cardamom, garlic, vegetables and fruit (fruit seedlings' sale as well as fruit), livestock products (bees, meat, dairy and sale of livestock) and jobs such as training (as a barefoot consultant), blacksmithing or mill operation. This is showing that gaining a meaningful livelihood is possible with improvements to farming systems involving diversifying and integrating systems and enhancing local biological resources organically.

The next stage in HPC's monitoring and evaluation will be to assess what the improved income is used for, and what changes (if any) in livelihood are observed.

In the past much of HPC's work has involved distribution of resources to back up the demonstration and training inputs, for example providing tools and material support, veterinary medicines, etc. HPC now aims to gradually to hand over acquisition and distribution of such resources to community and cooperative ventures in the villages. They aim to provide fewer "free" services as time goes on, and instead stimulate the economic status so farmers can afford to purchase themselves, as a general aim and strategy. Instead of providing secateurs for free, for example, sell them via the agricultural tools distribution centre. This process has already begun with Community Agro-vet and Farm tools distribution Centres (see below). Communities have also been contributing costs towards the biogas and solar-lighting programs, and acquisition of chaff-cutters.

Beekeeping

HPC aims to increase bee populations and their fodder sources, and trains farmers in hive construction and beekeeping. Many of the thousands of trees, shrubs, grasses, herbs and vegetables its groups are planting each year are sources of pollen and nectar including fruits with multiple outputs for bees too. Bees in turn help the pollination of these plants increasing productivity of fruits, vegetables and crops such as mustard and soybean.

In this period, resources such as veils, queen gates, honey extractors and comb knives have been distributed to groups. Farmers meanwhile have recorded a honey production

of **256kg** from 92 improved (framed) hives and **101 traditional hives** with a market value of NRs 1,71,600/- (£1,144).

Vegetable seed production

Not surprisingly, seed production is an activity that farmers are still able to do even in lockdown!

Both as a way of reducing cost and to increase resilience seed saving is a vital activity. In this period **over 200kg of indigenous and heritage seed** has been produced including indigenous beans, chilli, pumpkin, bitter gourd, local turnip, broad-leaved mustard, radish, snake gourd, coriander and aubergine, and introduced heritage varieties of lettuce, Swiss chard, carrot and cabbage.

Cotton Growing & Processing

Following intensive training from a UK-based organic cotton growing consultant between 2016 and 2019, farmers have been able to grow small amounts of organic cotton. They are currently harvesting the cotton at present and it will be weighed and ginned (removing of seed from lint). HPC's efforts to scale up this program are currently being affected by Covid-related restrictions, however at least seed is being saved and multiplied. The aim is to process the cotton locally through the weaving program, and further made into garments and sold locally as a priority, with an option to find niche markets in the organic, fair trade international market if possible.

Mills

HPC supports sustainable infrastructure projects such as hydro-mills that are key to process local crops into flour, oil, etc. In this period villagers from Himal group in Ghatutol have replaced the wooden shaft and blades of their traditional mill with iron an improved iron mill. This improves the efficiency of the mill, and means that it will run on a lower flow-volume of water. This in turn means that the mill can operate further into the dry season as streams' flow rate decreases, so villagers can continue to mill flour locally and not travel to larger mills further away.

In Pakhapani, Jana Jyoti group have up-graded their multi-purpose mill by fitting a cloth processing mill component (see below).

Herbs development

Farmers are continuing to cultivate useful herbs in their gardens and agro-forestry plots, and in this period over **900 herbal plants of 17 species** have been established in villages by farmers, including lemon grass, comfrey, mints, aloe vera, *Aconitum Heterothyllum*, sweet flag, and wild asparagus. Plans to be able to process oil from a distillation mill are still delayed due to Covid restrictions. Most herbs are being used for own consumption but some have been grown for sale, for example *Aconitum* and *Paris polyphylla* (herb paris) in Humla.

Weaving & Fibre Processing

Group members in the Cherkule region of Rajena municipality (Mavidada, Chaurgaun, Ghatutol, Subbatol, Pakhapani and Gurung Gaun villages) are currently harvesting wild nettle *Girardinia diversifolia* (Nep. Allo) for processing into yarn as started last year following training, spinning wheels and other harvesting equipment being provided by HPC.

Cold Store

Construction of a new cold store in Surkhet has been delayed due to Covid. A site has been selected in Chaurgaun village (Shrijana group).

Apple drying Humla

Farmers from HPC's 18 villages in Humla documented a healthy **2,643kg harvest of apples** between August and November, and are using the 12 home-made solar driers provided to process some of them into apple rings.

Biogas

Due to Covid-restrictions technicians contracted to construct biogas system at HPC's new RC in Surkhet have not been able to visit and the implementation of this is delayed.

Solar electric

HPC have been providing solar sets comprising panel, battery and 3 lights to households. The benefits of this are:

- better illumination enables better hygiene,
- students are able to study at home
- there is less need for burning fossil fuels/wood for lighting
- less smoke-related illnesses
- reduced cost of lighting.

In this period 44 sets have been delivered to Chaurgaun (Shrijana group), Gurung Gaun (Pragitshil Krishak) and Bhalim (Shanti) villages. Beneficiaries provided transportation portage and 40% was raised from communities, which helped to cover extra costs of providing a better quality product than was originally selected, as well as increased costs due to Covid-related price increases in transport.

Sugarcane Processing Machine

Following provision of a hand-operated sugar cane press in Surkhet a 2nd machine has been provided in Surkhet as well.

Cloth recycling machine/training

In Surkhet an existing flour hydro-mill run by Janajyoti group of Pakhapani has been adapted to run a cloth recycling mill. This machine runs off water-power, and reduces old recycled clothing into floss that is used for stuffing bedding, cushions, etc. and so turns a waste into a resource with a market value. The aim is for the mill to purchase the waste cloth, and be able to sell the processed floss on the market.

Community agro-vet centres

HPC has for many years been providing veterinary medicines through its livestock program (see above 1.4) and now aims to hand this activity over to village groups to manage through a community-run outlet. Covid restrictions have affected the ability to purchase certain materials, but medicines have started to be acquired, shipped and distributed by HPC in Surkhet and Humla. In this period in Humla **33 households** have used the services of the Agro-vet centre, benefitting **789 livestock**.

Farm tools community sales centre

Similar to the agro-vet activity, HPC has been providing useful tools and materials to village groups such as irrigation pipe and sprinklers, secateurs and other farm implements. Through this program HPC will hand acquisition and distribution over to village-run co-operatives, a process that involves building the capacity of local groups to manage, and while Covid restrictions have reduced or delayed activities, materials have continued to be distributed centres in Humla and Surkhet. In this period in Surkhet **115 households** and in Humla **48 households** have purchased tools from the centres.

Local chicken rearing partnership

This activity is aimed at providing training, technical support and material resources to poorer households to start rearing local chickens as a home business. Last year 12 households in Surkhet and 5 in Humla were selected to participate in the program and are continuing to develop their flocks. Monitoring in Humla reports that from broods of the original 5 chickens provided, 3 cocks have been sold for meat and 150 eggs sold providing a total income of **NRs 9,450/-** so far.

Blacksmith training

This activity aims to build on existing blacksmithing skills to enable stronger and more effective tools to be produced and maintained locally. In this period a further training has been provided in Humla for 6 men. Meanwhile a performance evaluation of 5 blacksmiths from previous trainings in Surkhet shows that over the year they have made **653 local tools** such as sickles, hoes, khukuris and chisels, as well as maintaining

546 old tools. From this part-time work they have earned income totalling **NRs 109,220/- (about £720)**, meanwhile local farmers have been able to get their tools fixed locally and acquire newly made, good quality ones.

Furniture making training

This training aims to develop skills to start small-scale furniture cottage industries using local wood and timber. One training was provided last year before lockdown when 2 farmers travelled to Almost Heaven Farm in Ilam (Eastern Nepal) to participate in a bamboo-making training. A further training is underway as this report is being written, and will be described in the next report.

5. CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Permaculture Design Course (PDC) and other capacity-building trainings

Due to Covid restrictions the PDC and follow-up, Village Design Course, Trainers' Training (ToT), Organisational training and Business and marketing training activities have been delayed. Similarly Farmers' field trips and farmer-farmer extension, barefoot consultants' workshop, rice breeding training and cultural program have not been able to be implemented.

Barefoot Consultants

Part of HPC's capacity building program involves production and monitoring of barefoot consultants (BCs) that are trained in many forms of agro-ecological techniques and approaches and then hired as consultants both within and outside of HPC working areas. Many of the farmers' trainings described above in 1.3 are now provided by BCs within HPC's 31 villages, but they are also contracted to move outside of the areas where and as required. In the current period **10 BCs** have provided various services in **20 occasions**, including women's health (menstrual pad-making training), grafting and integrated farmers training and wool spinning.

Farmers' Exchange meetings

Limited Farmers' Leaders meetings have been able to be held. In Surkhet meetings were held with staff and Barefoot consultants (BCs) in June and November to plan Covid-related strategy and activities, and for the annual review and evaluation. Similarly in Humla 3 meetings were held to discuss BC contract and activities in Linjho/Pulu of Dhading district and the acquisition of wool spinning machines and subsequent training, as well as meeting for the annual review and evaluation as in Surkhet.

Organic certification

HPC has continued to research into methods of organic produce certification and in particular the **Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)** of certification following training in the previous period. It has now made an agreement with the Social Work Institute of Kathmandu to be coordinated out of its branch in Kailali district. SWI will provide PGS training and implementation of a **community organic certification program** over the next 3 years (2020-2023), whereby SWI will provide all training and capacity building inputs to HPC staff and groups enabling them to certify various farm produce under the PGS system. In March PGS trainer Mr Tulsi Giri gave an orientation workshop in Surkhet (described in previous report).

Festival

In Humla the Farmers' Festival postponed from August was able to be held in November. Over 300 farmers attended from villages in and around HPC's working area for 2 days to celebrate farmers' culture and productivity. Prizes were awarded for agricultural produce and handicrafts, and local groups performed traditional dance and song alongside sporting competitions.

Covid-related welfare, Humla

As a result of Covid lockdown and villagers not able to travel, HPC was requested by the local municipality in Humla to collaborate in providing welfare assistance in its working areas. As a result in June during lockdown HPC provided **1190kg salt** and **626 bars** of clothes washing and body soap to **293 households in 11 villages**.

Community contributions

Community contributions to activities in Surkhet and Humla are detailed in **Annex B (worksheet 4)**. They show a total contribution of **1,835 person days** with a monetary value of **NRs 1,024,500/- (GB£6,830)**. Activities include maintaining community infrastructure (paths, water courses, mills, schools and community learning centres), and direct contributions to HPC programs such as portering of equipment, and construction of HPC's new Resource Centre.

HPC Website

HPC's website, www.himalayanpermaculture.com was created February 2009. Up to the time of this report (November 2020), over **276,655** hits have been recorded.