



Environment: Forestry, Energy & Ecosystem Services

Perseverance of Waste SME ensuring sustainability



“I always wanted to stay in Nepal and generate employment opportunities for locals” shares Mr. Ram Bahadur Gurung.

Mr. Gurung is from a small village in Trishuli of Nuwakot district. and an ex-army. Upon his visit to China in 1990s, as an ADC of late King Dipendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, he noticed cloth recycling machine and thought the technology to be lucrative if introduced in Nepal. Immediately after his retirement, he established a cloth recycling factory in 2010 named as Trishuli Kapas Prasodhan Udhyog in Trishuli investing US\$ 12,000. “I could live at ease from pension but it’s not just money and ease, passion is all it takes to be an entrepreneur” he smiles. There were 16 employees working for him, each earning US\$ 50per day.

The operation was smooth with satisfied employees and customers. Unfortunately, massive earthquake of April 2015 turned his factory into debris and the sight of his house was even heart wrenching as his house also turned into rubbles. The frequent lethal aftershocks urged for safety and settled him to Ilam. After recovering from mental turbulence of earthquake, his entrepreneurial spirit drove him to reopen his factory in Ilam with same name.

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He managed US\$ 15,000 from Welfare Fund managed by Nepal Army in subsidized interest rate. He built necessary infrastructure, leased land and bought machine to start from scrap. However, he was troubled by the lengthy governmental procedures and unreliable power supply. Despite all the hurdles, he managed to start the operation from May 2016.

“The process of recycling starts from collection of unwanted clothes” he shares. He charges US\$ 10 for each batch of 12 kg of clothes brought by locals to recycle and pays US\$ 0.07 per kg of waste clothes collected from market considering the quality of clothes. Before Trishuli Kapas Udhyog, locals used to otherwise dispose/burn/burly their waste clothes haphazardly but now they are overwhelmed to sell their waste clothes and receive money or recycled products in return. On an average , he collects 3000kg of unwanted clothes per month.

After collection, it is segregated by his employees to avoid metals, net, raincoats, leather and button. The rejected materials after segregation are disposed into waste collecting tractor operated by municipality and facilitated by PPP for 4Gs project. Then shredding makes the clothes a good feedstock for machine to produce processed cotton. The final product thus obtained is used to prepare cushions, blankets, mattress and pillows as per the demand of customers. He sells 60-70 pc of mattress, 10 pc of blanket, 20-25 pc of pillow and



25-30 pc of cushions per month. “My objective behind recycling old clothes is to provide environment friendly affordable bedding, quilt and other products even to people with compromised economic conditions” he smiles with pride.

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Currently, his income is reduced to half as compared to Trishuli but he is hopeful to maximize his income after persistent efforts. Despite the loss, he provides employment to 7 females and 2 males. Apart from employment and income generation, he shares his vivid satisfaction of being able to contribute in sustainable consumption and production (SCP) along with clean environment through solid waste management as one of the waste SMEs in Ilam Municipality.

Winrock International is implementing PPP for 4Gs Project funded by European Union, SWITCH Asia Programme in Ilam. The main objective of project is to establish a sustainable approach of solid waste management through public-private partnership by mobilizing SMEs. Thus, Trishuli Kapas Prasodhan Udhyog is one of the key stakeholders of project. The project started interaction with Mr. Gurung while his factory was at the last stage of establishment.

Exposure visits, business and financial planning and improvement of working environment has helped Trishuli Kapas Prasodhan Udhyog and other similar SMES in business analysis, arranging financials and identifying market. In due course, Trishuli Kapas Prasodhan Udhyog, also reciprocated openness in learning and eagerness to utilize project benefits for environment friendly and sustainable SME operation as one of the components of solid waste management. In addition ,project has supported Mr. Gurung with safety equipment and establishment of market linkages for his products.

The financial crunch of Mr. Gurung was hindering to provide his employee with occupational health and safety equipment as well as awareness raising programs. “I am happy to receive equipment support from project because excessive dust inside factory was unbearable for my employees, bare hand use of machines resulted in injuries, particles irritated their eyes and their dress were torn sometimes” he smiles after receiving support from project.

Furthermore, project recognizes efforts of Mr. Gurung and other SMEs by capacitating them with relevant trainings and providing exposures in different forums to share their journey. In addition, project aims to provide initiatives for stable market linkages as well as financial access for to ensure sustainable expansion in long run.

“My joy knows no boundary as my effort is recognized by the project. This has motivated me to work harder to generate more employment opportunities and contribute in waste management. Furthermore, I am thankful for the exposure brought to my small venture by the project” he chuckles.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

For additional information:

Winrock International | Pashupati Colony, Devkota Sadak | Baneshwor | P.O. Box: 1312 | Kathmandu | T 977.1.4467087|F 977.1.4476109 | W: www.winrock.org.np/switchasia | E: winrocknepal@winrock.org

Ilam Municipality | Bhanupath, Ilam | T: 977-27-520031| www.illammun.gov.np

Namsaling Community Development Center (NCDC) | Dhobidhara, Ilam | T: 977-27-520411/520792 | W: www.ncdcilam.org.np | E: ncdcilam@ntc.net.np

