

Forward

All large scale changes in history started with a few people taking the lead and showing the way for others. These are the visionaries who see the challenges we face and also have a clear idea of the desired future state of affairs. They do not wait, but rather take the first few steps based on what they have and what they know. More people join in, more pieces fall into place and before we know it, we have a movement and large scale impact. This is why we believe that the future of the planet earth is in our hands.

CRAFT is a great way to connect people to our only planet; craft is a way to remind people all over the world about the creative energy in each one of us. Our planet needs this creativity so that humans can continue to flourish on earth, along with it and not against it. Craft needs a chance to compete with those other products that are not doing good to us and our earth. This publication will help us make the link between the creativity in us, our amazing craft heritage and the planet that we must care for. This publication is based on our experience in engaging young people and the communities they live in, in craft revival and contribution to the creative green economy of Nepal and planet earth.

We must come together and change the economy where growth depends on each one of using a product and throwing it away. We had a economy where it made sense to repair our shoes, clothes, watches and pens. Look at how Nepal rebuilt after the 2015 earthquake. Many of the monuments damaged have been restored to their original form. We live in a world where some would have us believe that the earth's natural resources are unlimited and it is free. During COVID 19 pandemic we were reminded of the true value of oxygen. Humans are clever and are selfish to know what is good for our self. We need to come together, put our collective creativity to work and change the future to one where we can be one with our only planet Earth.

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Chapter 1

From knowing to doing, are you willing to make the leap?

The contents of this publication are organized to give the reader a first-hand look at how we are making the transition to a creative green economy by engaging people who care about our planet. At the outset we shall try to understand why people who know so much about the environment, the limited natural resources, the throw away economy that we have made a way of life etc. do not make the transition to doing something about it. In the same way we want to tell the story of people who are doing it and why they are doing what they do.

Taking the lead

The transition from knowing to doing requires real leadership. We have to inspire those around us to take informed and calculated risks. We have to make to transition a fun and worthwhile thing to do. We must give due attention to the people who stand to gain or to lose and also the key issues that must be tackled for success. We need to have a clear picture of the desired future state we seek and be able to communicate this to a wider audience. We must place ourselves in the future we seek and take the necessary next steps. We must have a bias for action. A small action is better than a big intention. We must be driven by a bias for action. We may need to seek out coaches and mentors to succeed. We must give ourselves the permission to take the lead.

How big is your tool box?

When the hammer is the only tool we have, *every problem begins to look like a nail*. There is need to take a really good look at our tool box and see what tools we have to address Nepal's challenges. Blaming the poor or poverty has been the single rhetoric which, over the past decades, has also become our begging bowl. Many people have made poverty and begging an industry in itself. We have projects for each and everything. From garbage collection to forestation, from road building to power generation, and from education to nutrition, all short term projects. We have so many projects. Unfortunately, every project has a starting date and an ending date. Lack of tools can be a major reason why many who know, may not do.

Reliance on Relief

Every year we have floods, drought, and other natural and man-made disasters. We have begun to learn that relief itself has become an occupation and a new economy. There are people who place the claims, the media plays its part, the government agencies and donors all have a stake in the short term "relief operations". We have seen case stories from all over the country that relief is actually called the "third crop". There was a time, we were told, when people felt ashamed to stay in line for relief. Now every aspect of relief has been institutionalized. Everyone seems to like floods and droughts. This notion of relief can be a reason not to do anything to change the state of affairs. We know, but why not wait for the relief to come.

One Degree Asia

At a gathering of youth from countries of Asia in Singapore described as a festival of young change-makers, the goal was to bring them together so they could share and collaborate on ideas, dreams and projects. As for the very clever title of the event, the conference literature explained that “it only takes one degree to change water into ice, one degree from water to reach the boiling point, one degree to change one’s perspective. Insignificant as it seems, one degree is all it takes to make the most significant change.’ This insight is critical for Nepal where we always talk of 180 degrees change but have not dared make the one-degree change. Change starts with a small initiative. A small step has to be taken that will lead to the desired change over time.

Profit is not a bad word

Governments do not create wealth. It does not know how to make money. It only knows how to take our money as taxes and fees. The only way to get out of poverty is to do business. Many people lose money because they do not understand the concept of making a “profit”. In Nepal wealth creators or profit makers are still looked upon with suspicion. Unless we begin to respect them and give them greater importance over donors, INGOs, NGOs, bureaucrats and politicians, poverty cannot end. A Thai social leader once told us that NGOs are like a small pond, donors are like a lake, but businesses are like a river. In order to start on our journey to bring change we need to understand profit and the difference with profiteering.

Careful who you listen to

As the story goes, a team of ‘expert’ astrophysicists were building a spaceship to go to Mars. They struggled with numerous designs that either did not work or were rejected by other ‘experts’. As they sat having a coffee break, in flew a beetle from a nearby tree and landed on the table. The scientists decided to study the beetle and use its natural features to design the new spaceship. They used numerous instruments to study the beetle and concluded again and again that there was no way it could possibly fly. According to their calculations, the beetle was not designed to fly and they let it go free. The beetle got on its feet and spread its wings - but could not fly. It had to walk out of the lab. This is the result of listening to too many people who tell you something cannot be done. Be careful who you listen to.

Hard work pays

It is difficult to convince anyone anymore that hard work really pays. Many Nepalis have lost confidence in the system and in themselves to a point where cynical comments greet you everywhere. This is the one time in our history that we cannot give up hope. We need to draw inspiration from what the Japanese must have gone through after two atom bombs were dropped on them, the Germans at the end of World War II, the Indians after the Hindu-Muslim riots of the 1940s and the USA after the civil war. We need to believe that “we can fly”. Hard working people start their day before the sun rises.

All aid and little trade

Strolling around areas of town where the tourists frequent, one sees men and women trying to sell the “singing or healing bowl”. The first impression one may get from a distance is that someone is begging. Fortunately, this is the sight of a Nepali trading. This sight raises a key insight as to how we may do better economically. Should we seek aid or should we trade?

History teaches us that Nepal has, at different points in the past, been a trading nation. We used to mint coins for the Tibetans, we were the trade route that linked the Gangetic plains and the Tibetan plateau. Our traders travelled far and wide bringing home huge fortunes. Then in between these prosperous times we went to war, we enslaved the weak and condemned them to working the land and providing unpaid labor to the state and landlords. This impoverished the country. The time now seems right to take up the trade route again.

We all like to swap stories about how Thailand, South Korea, Singapore, were not really much more economically better off than Nepal in the 1960s – and then something happened. Our intake of aid increased, their volume of trade increased. What is really worrying about aid is that it is initially free and in small quantities and ultimately addictive; and when we are ‘hooked’, aid dries up and it becomes ‘debt’.

To believe we can

We hear stories of how young Nepalis are selling their family land to pay for a foreign job. I asked one of them why he did not just send food, vegetables and fruits that he grew on his land to the Arab countries instead. He turned around and gave me a look of disgust! Where did this guy come from? What was this guy talking about? Throughout the day I asked the same question to about 20 people. Nobody challenged my idea but then nobody said they were going to do it either. None of them believed that they could do business and trade globally. What makes us think that the only way out is foreign aid? We all need to believe we can and secondly we need to create **affair and level playing field governed by rules and laws**.

Government and foreign aid

In order to expedite this transition from begging bowl to selling the “singing” bowl, the government of course needs to remove obstacles, pass clear and enforceable laws that are “pro-business” and then get out of the way. Aid givers and those who mean well for Nepal have a really important role to play and that is to open up their domestic as well as global markets for Nepali goods and services. If we study the recent history of Japan and Germany which were both destroyed in 1945, we see that if aid had not been followed by trade, they would never have become the wealthy countries they are today. Further, the biggest problem with aid is that it “crowds out” local investment and local entrepreneurs.

As an example, two Nepalis decide to “do” business and brainstorm. They decide to go into the “ladoo” (sweets) business. The two spend the entire day making these sweets and get up early the next day to go sell them in the market. As they roll the cart, one says he is hungry. The other says “remember this is a business and so you must pay for the sweets.” Five rupees change hand. After a while the other partner is hungry. He also pays five rupees. This goes on until they run out of sweets to sell even before getting to the market. Both sit on the roadside to celebrate and to calculate their profit. Out comes the

same old five rupees. Not a great way to become rich! We need to take the lead but we also need the skills and the tools. We also need to work to create an environment where we can succeed.

Chapter 2

Are you creative? We need you, the earth needs you

This second chapter explores the creativity in each one of us and how we can recognize our potential. That potential needs to be nurtured and utilized to bring the world the best products and services that use natural resources wisely and also manage the full cycle of what we craft without doing any harm. This exploration of the creativity in people and communities will also look into the challenges that young people face in maintaining their family and community craft traditions.

The numbers that we have that describe the state of planet earth are not good. Greenhouse gases, deforestation, water quality and quantity, species extinction, frequency of disasters, migration, conflicts, all indicate that we need to change the way we are doing things and we need to be more creative. We know, for example, we can get good light from a one watt LED that we used to get from a 100-watt incandescent bulb. The gold, silver and bronze medals at the Tokyo Olympics came from discarded mobile phones. Paris says the next Olympic Games will be the greenest ever in terms of energy, water, mobility and flights.

Ideas and entrepreneurs

Everything that we do not like around us is probably the start of generating a new idea. We can generate ideas but it takes an entrepreneur to convert this into a product or service that is valued and can be priced. It often takes numerous iterations to get to this stage. New information requires that we need to change the design. Complex solutions require deeper understanding of how all the components work and also the complexity of the supply chain. We have seen how the carbon paper was replaced by the photocopy machine, or how quickly the fax machine disappeared. Thirty years ago SMS started with 160 letters and today 100 billion messages go out daily. COVID 19, in a strange way helped spread the ICT quicker than governments could. In Nepal we achieved five years to digital technology in just five months due to the virus.

Know the Context

Nepal looks small on a flat map - but what we really have that few others have is **volume**. In terms of the population, there are over seventy countries which are smaller than Nepal. For many years now we have been constantly given the excuse that Nepal is poor because of the hills and mountains, combined with the fact that we have a large and ever growing population. We are told again and again that these are the real obstacles to our economic development. There even was a time when politicians told us we had to know English before we could “develop”. Today we live in a very competitive world where trade barriers are being broken and new markets are being opened up all the time. More people globally have more purchasing power than ever before. Nepal needs to recognize these new windows of opportunity. The question then is: what do we have that the rest of the world does not have and want.

There is perhaps no place on earth where one can stand at a spot and take a photograph of a crocodile, rhino, or banana 'tree' with a 8000 meters peak as the backdrop. Having steep slopes that go from less than 100 meters above sea level to over 8000 meters in a very short distance gives us a competitive advantage no place on earth has. People need to be brought on board with arguments that go beyond the beautiful landscape. Eco-tourism or village tourism will now

have to be built around sports, organic diets, clean air, and herbal therapy and of course the globally unique art and craft.

The steep slopes of Nepal and the crisp air of the mountains are perfect for growing coffee, many varieties of fruits and vegetables. Herbs and aromatic plants needed to make skin care creams and oils used in spas across the world could come from these slopes. We would not have to undertake the expensive task of moving them to markets. The users and buyers would come to us. Nepalis who rely on rice, millet wheat and corn can switch to these high value plants and crops. The related industries would create new jobs for processing and packaging these resources. Only the surplus would be sent abroad. It may all sound too good to be true but blaming our volume and lamenting over the fact that we do not have flat lands isn't going to get us anywhere.

Rhetoric to Action

Most Nepalis are tired of studies, reports, planning workshops and forming a committee or commission. What they want is to be part of some actions that will impact people's lives positively. A small something would be nice right now than a very big nothing. Many people have shown a bias in the past for knowledge and information hoping they will lead to action. We need to shift this paradigm and start doing things first with the objective of then generating knowledge, and not the other way around.

There is a popular story related to this in the Buddhist texts that may give us some clarity. A man who had been listening to the Buddha for a long time approached him one day and said, "I have listened to all your discourses so far and nothing has happened to me." The Buddha quietly asked the man where his house and village was. "Sravasti", was the reply. The Buddha then explains, "If you say Sravasti one thousand times, will you get home? No, you have to start walking towards Sravasti and then eventually you will get home." We need to take those initial steps. It may be worth mentioning here that we need to act individually as well as collectively and be able to make a clear distinction between the two!

Group discussion: Separate desirables from the possible

We can start by looking at our garbage and what goes to the landfill site as a point of departure. What can we do, design and bring into the market that will replace things that are going to landfill sites? The following questions will help shape the group discussion to generate ideas and bring out the entrepreneur in us.

1. Why are people moving away from the traditional flowers to plastic ones? Is there a reason why people want to use electric plastic lights over the traditional oil lamps during festivals?
2. Is price a strong reason or is it the erosion of tradition and identity that makes us choose things we can use and throw away over traditional craft that we clean and re-use each year?
3. Are the skills and the artists who can make these traditional craft still around? Is the knowledge and the skills disappearing or being carried by the younger generation?
4. Are the traditional reusable materials available at an affordable price?
5. Given a choice why would you be willing to pay a bit more, say for a proper cup over a disposable plastic cup? How can we convince others to do the same? Are these conversations taking place at home, work, and classrooms?

Chapter 3

One earth, one experiment: we do not have a spare planet

The third chapter looks at processes and practices that do not harm the planet and how communities have preserved the knowledge, skills and techniques associated with these. We shall look at how bad practices crept in and displaced them. We shall then look at the various strategies that work or may work to bring these practices back.

Education is often at the root of many positive changes. The sooner we can get to the young minds about the plight of the planet and their role, the better we shall all be. We therefore need to ensure that schools and the faculty have the needed tools and techniques to help students understand the planet and their role in creating a green economy. New skills will be needed, along with a curriculum and spaces in the school where children and put their green ideas to work. Craft again can be a great way to make the link between the economy and the planet.

When young graduates join the job market or start their own enterprises we want them to think purpose, planet and people along with profit. We shall need the right laws, regulations and rules that govern these businesses so they do not pollute and damage the earth. We shall have to align the right incentives that lead them to a green economy. Innovation will be a continuous process along with efficient use of natural resources. We must do more with less. We shall need access to on-line resources as well as a pool of experts to help.

We will have to work to make learning a continuous process and not limit things to events. New ideas are being proposed all the time on how to move to a creative green economy. Facilitated and dialogues with the market is also key to understanding the demand side. There are many moving pieces and we need to stay updated. We need partnership, collaboration, and also a bit of competition. We depend on each other for success. Links to the classrooms is critical.

Understanding Nepal

Nepal is a very diverse country in terms of the topography/geography and the culture of the people. What we cannot afford to do while moving ahead is to make the mistakes of generalizations. What will work with the people in the plains to the south will not work with the people in the Himalaya.

As the wealth of individual Nepali rises, there is a trend to emulate the lifestyle and consumer habits of the “developed” countries that has caused the climate crisis in the first place. Decarbonizing what we produce, how we produce, how we consume, and manage the product for its full life cycle will be the key. The topographical diversity and the mountainous terrain are vulnerable to climate change. This diversity is both the strength for Nepal and also a challenge. There is no such theory in Nepal as “one size fits all”.

Inclusion is the key strategy we need to adopt while moving ahead. No one should be left behind, and success means making sure everyone is on board. Over the centuries the Nepali people have protected and accumulated a huge volume of knowledge and skills about how to live in and with nature. This indigenous knowledge is eroding and need to be conserved for success. Locally developed technologies,

agricultural and forest management practices, livestock and grazing area management are all areas we need to learn from and build on.

Indigenous crops, plants, tree species, seeds and the tools and techniques that go with them need protection. We have to invest in the people who are the keepers of the knowledge. Part of our work must focus on looking at underutilized crops and not just promote rice as a socially accepted staple food. Herbs and aromatic plants found in the wild across Nepal offer a chance to attain prosperity by making wellness products as an incentive for the local people to conserve Nepal's natural resources.

Need to Stay Optimistic

In the early 1990s, the prediction for the rise of the temperature of the earth was estimated at 4°C by the end of the 22nd century. Now research has given us hope which will see the earth heat up by only 2.8°C. This gives us room for optimism according to recent science journals, publications and media reports. Now we need to do our part in Nepal with our youth and active citizens to show the way ahead.

Nepal has taken the decision to becoming one of the first clean energy countries in the world. Given the fact that Nepal imports all of its fossil fuel needs and given the fact that local capacities already exist to build hydro, solar, biogas and even its limited wind resources, the goal is doable indeed. Nepal has a declared goal of being a net zero country by 2045.

Planet Earth is Telling Us Something

There are around eight billion humans on earth today along with all other plants and animals. What this means is that one out of every two humans ever born on earth are still alive. It is increasingly clear that we have less clean water, less forests and less arable land and more poor people than ever before. The ones who are rich have done so at a huge cost to the earth. The World Watch Institute has calculated that we have used over 15 trillion dollars' worth of the earth's natural resources as a free good to pay for our present life style.

There are today more and more people who are working very hard to lead a lifestyle that the earth probably cannot sustain anymore. Consumerism itself has become a highway with no exits at all. Everyone wants bigger homes, cars, and to generate even more 'waste'. Recent developments around the world clearly indicate that the earth is trying to tell us something. As Nepalis it would pay for us to listen to mother earth really carefully.

People are suffering

Over the past month the news has been dominated by the extreme weather patterns and the conclusive reports by eminent scientists that human activities producing carbon dioxide is to blame for climate change. The US administration was accused of tampering previous global warming reports to favor their inaction, while Canada's Environment Commissioner lost her job. Seventy-five percent of the Indonesian capital Jakarta was inundated while displacing a hundred thousand residents. Florida was hit by deadly winds.

At the Davos World Economic Forum, business leaders were discussing their responses to climate change and reduction is carbon dioxide. They were told to either invest one percent of their turnover into cleaner production or prepare to pay five percent or more later. In the meantime, two and half meters of snow fell in north east America, forest fires in Columbia and flooding in Queensland, Australia. It even snowed in Kathmandu valley. The earth is definitely trying to tell us something. As climate changes we have to face new diseases that we have not heard of before let alone have the resources and the treatments they require.

Listening to the earth

If we listen really carefully to the earth, Nepalis will also see that each of these global challenges are an opportunity for us. With nearly half of Nepal under forest cover in the form of protected areas, buffer zones and community forest, Nepal has a real chance to make money by entering the carbon trading mechanisms. Our biogas units, small and big hydro plants and Solar Tuki give us an added edge.

Nepal could even host the proposed site for the global carbon exchange. World Resource Institute estimates that the carbon trading market is valued at 40 billion dollars. Nepal must think outside the box to bring in the new and additional resources we need. Clean Development Mechanisms, Climate Change etc. We have to step out and teach ourselves about renewable energy resources and energy efficient technologies. Our “underdevelopment” in the fossil fuel dependent era can become Nepal’s greatest asset in the future.

If you plan for 100 years, educate children...

There is an ancient wisdom in Asia that says: those who plan for a year plant rice; those who plan for ten years plant trees; but those who plan for a hundred years educate their children. In Nepal, we have made large investments in education but the drop-out rate is still large despite a high enrollment rate in grade one. Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness (ECCA) has been launching a school environment improvement program for three decades now. For success we need to catch them while young.

Looking at the situation from the supply and demand perspective we need to make our society a “zero tolerance” society when it comes to child labor. Now, business organizations like the Federation of Nepali Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Confederation of Nepali Industries(CNI) and the Nepal Chamber of Commerce need to state a clear “zero tolerance” policy for all of its members. If we could only punish parents with a fine or even imprisonment if their children do not attend school, we would really achieve our goal.

Only Elephants Should Wear Ivory

In the fifty years between 1950 and 2000, the world’s economy is estimated to have grown by 600 percent giving people a huge power to purchase. This power, if not used wisely, could result in the extinction of largest wild animals forever. A protestor holding a banner outside a theatre on Time Square in New York said it all, “Please *do not wear a fur coat. If you must display your money, pin some dollar notes on your wool coat.*” People with wealth can damage our planet and other beings that we share the earth with. Crocodile leather wallets, boots and belts; tiger-tooth necklaces, leopard, bear or tiger-skin carpets, stuffed animals as room decoration are often bought by the rich. They begin to

believe in myths about how eating wildlife parts can increase sexual powers. With the Chinese and Indians having more buying power than ever before, our tigers, rhinos and other endangered species could disappear forever!

Protests have been growing against trade in wildlife and their use in testing cosmetics and medicines. Movies like “Legally Blonde” highlight the plight of animals - especially dogs and cats. The more aggressive protestors have begun resolving to splash paint on people wearing furs. There are many groups around the world that are dedicated to protecting our wildlife such as Green Peace, Wild Aid, and our own homegrown Wildlife Watch Group. There are two international conventions that help prevent the movement of wildlife and their parts around the world called TRAFFIC and CITES.

Today there is a whole section of the Nepali economy that is dependent on having a healthy population of wild animals. The tourism industry has economic linkages from local people in biodiversity rich areas to travel agents in faraway countries. They are mostly silent about these issues that have a huge impact on their future. We took peace for granted. Let us not take our wildlife for granted.

It was in the forests south of Dhulikhel that the young prince Mahasattwa was on a hunting trip with his brothers and friends. As the story goes, the prince was peering into the dense forest for a kill when he stumbled on a tigress with young cubs. The cubs were obviously hungry and it took a while for the prince to figure out that the tigress was in no state to feed her cubs. A deep sense of compassion overcame the prince. Mahasattwa decided to offer himself as food for the tigress so that she could then feed the cubs and save their lives. He laid down his arms and knelt close to the tigress. Nothing happened. The prince then realized that the animal was so hungry, tired and weak that it was in no state to kill the prince and feed itself! The prince then took up his sword and began to cut strips of flesh from his body and began to feed the tigress. The spot has been immortalized as Namo Buddha.

We do not expect a sacrifice of this scale, however, you can make a difference by exercising your power as a consumer. It is what we buy that matters. It is imperative that each one of us realizes this power. It is our values and demands that put wildlife parts in the market. The only place wildlife belongs is in the wild. Let us keep it that way. The power of the consumer combined with on-going efforts to protect wild habitats and enhancing the quality of life for the poor will surely ensure a future for these beautiful and magnificent animals.

<https://www.iucn.org/our-work/nature-based-solutions>

Nature-based Solutions

Nature-based Solutions leverage nature and the power of healthy ecosystems to protect people, optimize infrastructure and safeguard a stable and biodiverse future. Nature-based Solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously benefiting people and nature.

Nature-based Solutions address societal challenges through the protection, sustainable management and restoration of both natural and modified ecosystems, benefiting both biodiversity and human well-being. Nature-based Solutions are underpinned by benefits that flow from healthy ecosystems. They target major challenges like climate change, disaster risk reduction, food and water security, biodiversity loss and human health, and are critical to sustainable economic development.

Nepal can and will take the lead

Climate change is no longer “something that is going to happen in the future”. It is already here and Nepal, like the rest of the world, needs to adapt as well as take mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There is also a need to build a creative economy that moves us all away from carbon based resources. In the meantime, the whole world and Nepal need to stop wasting time and valuable resources in “talk shops” that only yield empty promises. It is time to act. Nepal already has a head start. We can and we must build on what we have. This is the space that young people need to step into along with all the active citizens who care and want to contribute positively.

Coming up with clever arguments that do not lead to tangible results should be avoided. We do not need another study or another report. We need action that is smart and strategic. The creative energy of young people and their leadership skills is what we need to tackle climate change not another speech. We do need evidence and regular reporting to ensure that our actions are leading us to the desired future state. “Young people are creative, they are confident, they have the courage.” And hence they can and will lead us forward.

Nepalis are Resilient

Nepal and the Nepali people have just recovered from an armed conflict, a massive earthquake, an economic blockade and the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges and the way Nepal responded to these with our friends globally are examples of how resilient Nepal is. It is this resilience that will get us past the climate crisis as well. We must learn from the past, but have our eyes on the future. The youth of today have experienced the challenges Nepal has faced and how we were able to move out collectively. The recent election has also sent a message that we trust our young leaders.

Building on Success

Nepal has ended power outages and begun to export its renewable and clean hydro power. Nepal has attained 45% forest cover in four decades. In the process we have saved the one horned rhino from extinction and doubled the tiger population in a decade. The population growth of Nepal is now on the negative. The social development indicators are also all on the positive. Nepal has made good progress on expanding solar energy (both SPV and thermal). It has become a global leader in capturing of methane gas for cooking and lighting.

Climate Change Impacts Are Real

The summer of 2022 saw the spread of dengue fever in the Kathmandu valley like wildfire. This disease was new to the population and people were ill prepared for it. Nepal’s expensive infrastructure like bridges and roads are constantly under threat due to glacial lake outburst flooding (GLOF), food security due to change in rainfall patterns is a huge concern and the vulnerability has been extended due to broken supply chains from new source countries like Ukraine. Villages are reporting their springs drying up and people fall into debt due to failure of crops and seeds.

Nepal's Collective Commitment

At COP26, Nepal made the commitment to reach carbon neutrality by 2045, well ahead of China and India. Nepal has no coal and fossil fuel and we have plenty of water, sun and biomass. If we work strategically and collectively we can achieve this target. Secondly at COP15 for biodiversity conservation, Nepal has made a commitment with the rest of the world to protect thirty percent of its land by 2030. Nepal is already nearly there. Nepal has also made good investments in education, health and infrastructure to improve the quality of life of the people. It is time to leverage these foundations to create a society that is mindful about its impact on nature and climate in particular.

Further reading: Government of Nepal Climate policy and commitment

Nepal is committed to accelerating climate action whilst adhering to the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement as per national circumstances. Nepal's goal is to achieve net zero emissions between 2020-2030 and after a period of very low emissions to full net zero by 2045. Nepal would also like to gain recognition for its mitigation contributions beyond its border through clean energy trade. Nepal's Long Term Strategy envisions bold policymaking, social transformation, and technological advancements that will lead to a carbon-neutral, inclusive, and climate resilient future. Nepal's total carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in 2019 was 23 mMt in the reference scenario. This figure is expected to rise to 34 mMtCO₂ in 2030 and 79 mMtCO₂ in 2050. While non-energy-related emissions accounted for 46% of net CO₂ emissions in 2019 the energy sector accounted for 54%. In the reference scenario, non-energy emissions would gradually decrease to 32% of total emissions by 2050. Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) CO₂ emissions were estimated to be 8 mMtCO₂ in 2019 and are expected to rise to 17 mMtCO₂ by 2050.

In the with Existing Measures (WEM) scenario, the net CO₂ emissions will be reduced by 30 mMtCO₂ in 2030 and 50 mMtCO₂ in 2050. In this scenario, the energy sector will be one of the most important contributors to emission reductions. LULUCF will contribute significantly to carbon removal in the first 10 years. However, the sink potential of LULUCF will decrease over time per the assumptions used in this scenario. As a result, after 2030, net carbon emissions will rise at an annual rate of 11%.

In the additional measures (WAM) scenario ambitious interventions in the energy sector combined with ongoing and additional carbon removal interventions indicate that Nepal's net CO₂ emissions will be lower than 'zero' in the period 2020 to 2030, then hovering around 'zero' throughout 2035 to 2045. Sequestration increases from 2045 onwards reaching -5.7 mMT in 2050.

Comparison of different scenarios shows that the country's carbon emission reduction potential is very high, and with interventions of strategic measures, it is capable of maintaining very low emissions levels. It is even possible, with ambitious, conditional targets, to achieve negative carbon emissions by 2050, whilst reaching net-zero before or by 2045.

Sectoral strategies

1. **Energy:** Nepal uses energy in agriculture, transportation, industry, and commercial and residential sectors. As per the 2019 baseline assessment, residential, transportation, industrial, commercial, and agricultural energy use contributes to emissions in descending order. Thus, to reduce carbon emissions in the residential sector the use of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) must be reduced and more electrical appliances e.g. electric cooking and biogas must be used. The transportation sector will need to transition to zero-emission transportation for intercity, intra-city, and freight travel across public and private modes. The brick sector needs to shift to zig-zag and tunnel kilns technologies, and then full electric heating. The use of energy-efficient technologies will also help in reducing emissions in the agriculture sector. The main strategy is to power the industrial, commercial, and agricultural sectors with renewable energy and hydrogen technologies, which Nepal has in abundance. Furthermore, in the power generation sector, all electricity will be generated from renewable sources, primarily hydropower plants, as well as solar PV.
2. **Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU):** Nepal's emissions from industrial processes and product uses are currently low. But with the expected growth forecast, Nepal will switch to renewable energy and waste-related fuel, and raw materials such as limestone for the cement industry. Additionally, Nepal will explore the potential for carbon capture and storage, beyond that possible through the forest sector.
3. **Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU):** In the agriculture sector, Nepal must switch to better cultivation practices, rice intensification system, better manure management, soil organic matter enrichment, soil management practices such as low soil tillage, adaptive and resilient varieties, and breeds, expanded adoption of controlled release of stabilized fertilizers, better enteric fermentation processes, and promote agro-forestry and other sustainable agriculture systems.
4. **For Forestry and Other Land Use:** Nepal must increase and maintain its forest cover, increase afforestation and achieve net-zero deforestation, adopt measures to decrease forest fire incidents, scale-up sustainable forest management, and agro-forestry, and private forestry practices, promote energy-efficient technologies and improve the monitoring and database systems.
5. **Waste:** To reduce waste emissions from solid waste disposal, open burning of waste, and wastewater treatments technologies like methane gas recovery, incineration of waste for heat and power generation, and methane generation from anaerobic digester in wastewater treatment must be promoted.
6. **Energy Trade:** Significant emissions reductions can be achieved outside of Nepal through Hydro and Solar power exports. These have been included to illustrate the potential, whilst acknowledging that this does not form part of the current national emissions regime.

Investments

Significant investment will be required to achieve these ambitious GHG mitigations and net abatement targets over the implementation period. Demand-side investment, transformative investments, and non-energy sector investment, such as forestry, are all included, (production costs of green hydrogen are excluded). The required costs are estimated in constant US Dollar prices (2000 AD) for all scenarios. The total costs of the sectors considered in the reference scenario are estimated to be 4.2 billion USD between 2021 to 2030, 7 billion USD from 2031 to 2040, and 17.5 billion USD from 2041 to 2050. In the

WEM scenario, the total costs of the sectors considered are estimated to be 42.8 billion USD from 2021 to 2030, 34.4 billion USD from 2031 to 2040, and 56.2 billion USD from 2041 to 2050. In the WAM scenario, the total costs of the sectors considered are estimated to be 46.4 billion USD from 2021 to 2030, 53.4 billion USD from 2031 to 2040, and 96.3 billion USD from 2041 to 2050.

Linkages with Other Sectors

The ambition of Nepal to minimize emissions and achieve Net zero emissions by 2045 has clear links to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, and implementation of Nepal's Climate Change Policy (2019), REDD+ strategy, and NAP for 2030 & 2050. The SDGs include both direct and indirect targets and indicators aimed at achieving low-carbon, climate-resilient development in Nepal. Climate action has been fully integrated into the SDGs as a key means of achieving its sectoral goals of sustainable development. Another important aspect is to consider the gender and inclusion issues whilst designing and implementing the mitigation strategies.

Nepal's emissions excluding LULUCF doubled between 1990 and 2016, going from about 26MtCO₂e to 54 MtCO₂e in that period. Under current policies, emissions are expected to increase between 31 -36% by 2030, compared to 2016 levels, reaching 70–73 MtCO₂e in 2030. With this growth, the country's per capita emissions would go from 2.0 tCO₂e/cap in 2016 to 2.1–2.2 tCO₂e/cap by 2030, but will remain well below the world's current average emissions per capita of 4.8tCO₂e/cap.

Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change. The government is currently developing its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) with a focus on seven thematic areas:

1. Agriculture and food security,
2. Forests and biodiversity,
3. Water resources and energy,
4. Climate-induced disasters,
5. Public health,
6. Tourism, natural and cultural heritage, and
7. Urban settlements and infrastructure (Government of Nepal, 2018c).

In 2015, the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPCC) drafted a Low Carbon Economic Development Strategy (LCEDS) for the country, which aims to catalyze concrete actions that would support low carbon development in the energy, agriculture, industry, transport, waste, residential and commercial sectors. Although the Ministry of Population and Environment (MoPE) already submitted the LCEDS to the Cabinet, the strategy has not yet been approved. In March 2020, the government published the 'Kathmandu Valley Air Quality Management Action Plan-2020' to reduce air pollution levels. This was also one of the targets listed in the NDC. Although the action plan is finally in place, no other major progress has been made and air pollution levels are still above the national quality standards.

Due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and two rounds of lock-down periods, our assessment expects Nepal's 2020 emissions to be 0.7-2.4% lower than in 2019. Informal businesses in Nepal make up to about 50% of enterprises and are the main source of income for most of the labour force. Seasonal and informal workers in both the formal and informal sectors represent close to 85% of the labour force and are among the most vulnerable, based on income, and their ability to sustain themselves through the economic slowdown. In particular, tourism declined by 60%, impacting several

other sectors like accommodation, food, entertainment and recreation, resulting in economic losses worth 400 million USD.

A recent study from the World Bank highlights that socio-economic impacts in Nepal can magnify depending on how things develop for three key elements:

- tourism, trade, and foreign employment;
- potential collapse of the inadequate health infrastructure and availability of a vaccine;
- Nepal's heavy geo-economic reliance on India and China.

To date, the government's response to the pandemic has focused mainly on strengthening the health system by increasing health spending and social assistance. Some measures have also been in place to support informal sector workers as well as small and medium-sized enterprises and those in the tourism sector. Until now, Nepal has not put in place any recovery measures that can be labelled as either high or low carbon measures. Energy-related emissions contributed about 37% to Nepal's total emissions excluding LULUCF in 2016. In the same year, about 91% of Nepal's population had access to electricity.

The Nepali electricity mix is dominated by hydropower, which accounts for nearly 90% of installed capacity and 99% of total electricity generation. The total energy supply on the other hand, is predominantly based on bio-fuels and waste with a growing share of oil since 2015. This is in conflict with one of Nepal's NDC sectoral targets that aims to reduce its dependency on fossil fuels. Instead, the consumption of bio-fuels, waste, oil and coal have continued to increase steadily since 2015 with coal being on the lower end of consumption. The National Rural and Renewable Energy Program (NRREP) was also referred to in the NDC, saying the programme would aim to reduce dependency on biomass by making its use more efficient. Although almost 1.5 million improved cooking stoves and about 400,000 biogas household systems have been set up since 2016, biomass consumption has continued to increase over recent years.

The Government's "white paper" on Nepal's energy sector sets the target of generating 10 GW of electricity in the next decade while also marking the years 2018–2028 as the 'Energy Decade' and will focus on the "development and expansion of hydroelectricity and all types of renewable energy to provide clean energy to all Nepali households within the coming three years and to avail electricity to all households per demand within the next five years". However, a recent study on progress towards the implementation of the NDC reports that the targets set by both the "white paper" and the NDC (20% of renewables in the energy mix) are far from being achieved as the current share of renewable stands at 3.2%.

Chapter 4

Why we need to get “development” right

Growth and landfill sites

We do not seek economic growth which is dependent on how much we buy, use, waste and then throw away. There are no more landfill sites available to us. Do you know that one third of all food in the world goes to waste?

Pollution and disease

We do not want development that pollutes the earth, and makes us sick when we breathe or when we drink water from the spring or water spout. We do not want to grow old in a world where we spend all our money and savings on medical and hospital fees. We want our children to be healthy and have a real childhood in nature.

Case study: Creasion and the recycling economy.

Scarcity, inequality, and conflict

We live in a world where vital resources such as air, water and soil are getting limited. This often leads to huge inequalities in society and very often results in violent and armed conflicts. We seek a just and equitable use and distribution of natural resources which is enough for all of us to thrive in. There is so much waste and inefficiencies in our systems.

Economic development is an aspiration for billions around the world. Many believe that people need to come out of poverty by any means possible. The wealth we see in the world is at a huge cost to our planet. The development models and thinking need to be challenged and a different route must be taken if we are to continue to live and prosper on planet earth. The fourth chapter will look at why we need to get our definition of development right.

Informed Investments

Information and know-how is the biggest variable and gap in Nepal’s development effort. This is one reason we see so many foreign “experts” in every field. Hydro power development like so many other sectors has many myths, and we all need to understand the issues and enable better decision making.

For the young entrepreneurs who are aspiring to enter the hydropower sector we need to study and stay informed. Nepal is a country full of resources but in the hands of poor managers. Nepal has done quite a bit that will enable us to learn and do more. We need to open our minds to these opportunities and challenges. We must help the young, who aspire to become engineers to specialize in technologies that give us clean and renewable energy, efficient water management and meet development aspirations of the people.

Case study: Dhulikhel Hospital

Media and fake news

The media is critical for this transition but may not always be on the side of the planet. Fossil fuel lobbies are strong and have unlimited financial resources. A Google search may not give us the best ideas we seek. The social media is seen to be used to attack people who speak on the side of nature and often labeled as being anti-development.

Peace Dividend

People generally agree that peace is not the absence of a conflict. There are numerous costs that can be avoided if we had peace and security. We would no longer have to spend on guns, uniforms, guard posts, x-ray machines, guards for politicians, construction of barracks and endless meetings about conflict and peace negotiation talks. We could calculate the saved money and put it all into one big account called the “Nepal **Peace Dividend** Fund”. We then go out there and find the best ideas and the best entrepreneurs. If the idea creates more jobs and return on investment, invest more. We can begin with our art and craft heritage

Nepal today needs a fund like this. Everyone knows or needs to know that lasting peace will be attained only when we have a thriving economy. This is going to require we create new wealth and ensure proper distribution of this wealth. We need to provide Nepalis a social security net. In terms of getting to this goal and in terms of what specifically we shall want to use the venture fund for, there are a few insights that might be useful towards defining a strategy to get us there.

Value added chain

Nepali natural resources are being sold with little or no value additions. Herbs, fibers oils, timber, and even human resources (do not want to use the word slaves) are being exported for the least possible value, whereas if we could invest in creating added value by making finished products, we would create greater new wealth. Nepalis are capable of taking a piece of stone and making it into a Ganesh statue. A piece of wood can be become a beautiful window. Nepalis who could be taught to speak and write Arabic would make so much more money in Arabia.

Increasing shelf life

Nepalis depend on their agriculture for livelihood. This is the one thing they are good at doing more out of practice than anything else. The subsistent economy that is based on land and the vulnerability that comes from having to depend on weather patterns and government subsidized inputs continue to keep most Nepali farmers poor. One critical area where we could use new and additional infusion of venture capital could be in the area of increasing the “self-life “of Nepali farm products ranging from apples, mushrooms, herbs, vegetables, milk, you name it, they are perishable. The only way to make money from them is to increase the shelf life. We can then get them to the markets in Arabia or Europe or Japan. This will be the biggest boon to the Nepali farmer.

Take the middlemen out

One of the reasons why Nepalis producers do not do well in the competitive marketplace is because there are too many middlemen and women. We need to better leverage the use of digital platforms and cell phones and the internet so that buyers and producers can talk to each other directly. We are not just talking of a producer in remote areas of Nepal and Kathmandu –but rather the producers’ villages and the whole wide world. We need to have more delivery and transport companies that can move stuff on mule trains, on to trucks, trains and then on to cargo planes with little or no hassles. Taking the middlemen and women out would be a business in itself.

Cradle to cradle

The naïve market believes that growth of any economy depends on how much people throw away, discard and then buy more. This creates huge challenges of disposal and lasting impact on our natural environment. What the world wants to see more and more of our goods, products, wrappings and boxes that become nutrients for the soil when we do not need them anymore. As Bill McDonough of the Blue Green Institute says, “Even when we send food aid to any country, imagine the additional benefit we can leverage if the sacks containing the grains were fertilizers for the soil for next crops, instead of plastic.” Cradle to grave is now out of vogue. We want the word *waste* removed from our vocabulary. This is a new advantage for Nepal to do it right and do it in such a way that this becomes “our global advantage.”

Internet can enable

The internet offers a very safe space to express our concerns for Nepal. One in three has access to the mobile phone device and many more access information from FM stations. In more developed economies the ratio is much higher. What these social media have done is allow people to stay connected with the reality of Nepal much more than ever before; without ever having to step out of the comfort of our houses and offices. The problem is that knowing how bad things really are often does not translate into doing something about it. People will often not leave the computer and hence, what they know from the fact that they are connected will never translate into any action. Being able to know what is happening without having to wait for the evening TV news or the morning newspaper is great; but the fact that the state of affairs does not really change much is sad. We must all join in if things are to change.

Apathy

People who are too comfortable in Nepal within their nice houses and surrounded by all the consumer goods they can buy, do not seem to care too much. The wealth they have is because of how “smart” they are, while all the problems and challenges facing the country are the fault of bad politics and the government. There is a lot each one of us can do to show our responsibility towards the deteriorating state of affairs. It may begin with something as simple as reducing garbage or segregating it at the source. It may be bit more complicated as in restoring a local heritage or putting street lights. The forests need care, the water sources and rivers, the wildlife, all need our attention. While taking responsibility for one’s own action is not the most rational thing to do, let alone being responsible for our country, we do not seem to spare any admirations for people in other countries where the individual displays nationalism in their everyday actions.

Level the Playing Field

Slovakia has a population equal to the number of people jailed in the United States. What makes it possible for a country of two million to play level with the richest country whose population is nearly 150 times larger in a game of football? There is something about a level playing field that makes this possible. The world was a very different place just two decades ago. It took concepts like *colony and apartheid* for granted. The new South Africa was born only in 1994 and is today the focus of the world.

Another question that comes to mind as we watch the World Cup is why “smaller” countries like the two Koreas and Japan have teams in the finals but not China and India. Does it have to do with the fact that in this part of the world individual “goals” are placed ahead of the collective? Are we really not able to work together for something common? Whatever the reasons, it is obvious that for many countries, regardless of size, history, wealth or culture, when there is a level playing field they can play and win.

‘GARI KHANA DEUU’

“*GariKhanaDeuu*” can mean so many things including leave me alone, I can take care of myself, do not need anything from you, and really is an expression of frustration and anger at strikes that shut down the country. The average Nepali is today tired, hungry, overworked, underpaid, over advised, and often very desperate. Do you see the aspirations in the eyes of all those young people standing in line to get a job in Korea?

Oil and water do not mix

In Copenhagen at the climate conference, USA, China, Brazil and a few other large economies scuttled any chances of setting binding limits on how much carbon dioxide we put into the atmosphere. While the politicians and a section in the oil industry celebrate the debacle in Copenhagen, hundreds of thousands in China and Brazil are suffering from the worst floods recorded. Most of these ordinary people, who had so little, now have nothing. It is not a level playing field for the vulnerable when nature unleashes its powers. People who have contributed the least to create the problem in the first place are often the worst victims.

In the meantime, the oil leak at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico just won't go away. While people around the world are opening their minds and learning about and adapting to renewable and clean energy options, some economies continue to pursue the oil path. The explosion, leak, and subsequent inability to stop it are now exposing the real cost of oil. For a long time, renewable and clean energy choices did not stand a chance to compete with oil because it has always been subsidized. The fact that BP now has to pay for the short and long term damages is giving us some idea of what the true cost of oil really is. If BP is able to pass these costs onto the consumer in North America, renewable energy sources will become competitive and finally we shall have a level playing field.

Demystify Development

Everyone seeks it, everyone says they are working for it; you can buy books and attend classes and get certified as an expert in it. Yet it is such an elusive subject. What is even more difficult is to actually agree on whether an investment or product or infrastructure represents “developments”. Are we developed because we have a wide highway to Bhaktapur? Or is the fact that everyone seems to be

talking on the phone, development? In the same way, is building and pulling the chariot of *Karunamaya* (the one full of compassion) something highly developed people do? Rather than just asking good questions, it may be better to start a conversation on what we may agree on is “development”. Can we agree that societies that are able to make smooth transitions of power to democratically elected people are a “developed”? A society that is able to equitably distribute wealth and make sure that there is a climate for those who create wealth, including law and order, is a developed society. A developed society is where people say what they do and do what they say?

Chapter 5

The enablers, understanding markets

People who care

There are so many people in the world who care about the state of our planet and are willing to do something about it, to improve things. Each one of them is an enabler for us.

The faithful

In countries like Nepal the faithful still go shopping for traditionally harvested and crafted ritual objects and offering for their daily use. We need to understand their needs, values, what they can afford and the calendar with which they operate. We must understand the lunar calendar and also that the biggest demand on Tuesdays will be at the Ganesh temple.

Tourists

Foreign and local tourists alike like to buy souvenirs that they want to take back home as gifts and souvenirs. They like a wide range of products and at different price points.

Mindful global citizens

There are the thinkers and philosophers and people who can influence what we do and what we consume. They may be celebrities or writers. They may be with the media or with financial institutes. All can be our enablers.

Policy makers

Politicians and government agencies make the enabling policy environment that allows us to succeed. We need to advocate based on evidence and help with the policy making process.

Technical and vocational schools

Over a hundred thousand Nepalis go to attend technical and vocational education and enter the job market or start their own businesses. This a great source of human resources need for Nepal to move to a green economy. Currently these schools are struggling to get the needed enrollment. This could be because the skills they teach do not match the requirements of creative green economy.

Local governments and their elected leaders

With the launch of the new constitution, Nepal has local governments that are taking the lead to create creative green economies at the level of the people and their settlements. They could be the game changers and have the needed resources to make things happen.

Our success will depend on the support we get from many players across society. The market is a very powerful and often invisible force that we need to engage. In this chapter five we want to understand who the enablers are and what we need them to do for success.

We cannot compete with “free”

No one in the world can compete with anything that is free! For example, while operating a ‘free’ clinic is noble, it creates a huge distortion in terms of the fact that it cannot be replicated and those who want to charge a fee for the services can never succeed.

Ideally what we would like to see is a clinic where everything is ‘free’ until you are healthy; but once you begin to earn, you pay back so that another sick person can be taken care of. The same principle needs to apply to art and craft business, education, housing, and infrastructure of all kinds in Nepal. There needs to be a culture of paying so that the next person, next village, next town also gets what we have. This is the only way to justify foreign aid, subsidized loans and charitable giving in Nepal.

Butterflies and caterpillars

Everyone loves to see the beautiful and colorful butterflies; but few seem to have any affection for the hairy caterpillars. Reality is that we cannot have one if we do not have the other. We do not complain when land and gold prices go up. No one complains about the fact that people steal electricity while those who do pay for electric power have outages. People are asked to pay taxes but the government feels that they are doing the people a favor when they pave the road or fix a leaking pipe. We are asked to pay a hefty airport tax but look at the state of the services.

The biggest challenge in mobilizing resources for development in Nepal is the fact that people expect the government and donors to provide it free. How can anyone compete with “free”? The only way we can end poverty in Nepal is to make the various services and products they need into locally owned and operated businesses. This will be possible only when those *who make poverty their business* step back. This is not to say that there is no room for humanitarian help. There will always be such a need. We just need to make sure that we do not crowd out those sectors where services and products are well developed and ready to be rolled out.

CSR and good intentions

It is fascinating to see airlines bringing back the garbage from Lukla. What a great intention and yet how useless an impact. What are people thinking? There is a cost involved in flying in the garbage. What costs were passed on to the tourists and the people of Khumbu who led the expeditions, had a good time and made a lot of money in the process! This incident raises the question of what is CSR and what is charity; what a publicity stunt is and what is a well thought out plan. It is impossible to understand why tourists and the hotel owners of Lukla should be subsidized.

They need to learn to calculate and charge the real costs of their recreational activities and businesses so that they begin to purchase and dispose of waste responsibly. Price is an effective tool to attain conservation goals in Sagarmatha. Let us not subsidize the tourist or the tourism sector. Imagine if the news was about an airline flying the top 100 Sherpa high school students to Kathmandu for an education

tour. These kids will grow up to become the greatest brand ambassadors of the airlines. We need to use local materials so that garbage becomes a thing of the past.

Branding Nepal

In many formal and informal gathering, meeting, event and boardroom, the issue of branding Nepal keeps coming up. The issue becomes a bit urgent when the image of Nepal goes down due to various negative news. The fact that Nepal has the tallest mountain and the shortest human being helps; but we did not really do much to make these happen. The old descriptions of a peaceful Himalayan kingdom are a thing of the past. Poor and land-linked are not accurate descriptions anymore either.

There is also no doubt that branding Nepal will only be a reality if the young entrepreneurs and the younger generation come together for this purpose and take it on as a passion. A donor “project” will not do it and we should not take this path. Given the fact that many parts of the world that were far behind Nepal in economic and other development terms have already done so well, we have no time to lose. We must speed up the process. The doers must override the talkers if this country is to get anywhere fast.

One aspect of Nepal’s economic poverty and the low purchasing power of the people has meant that Nepalis have not yet destroyed the soil with excess chemical fertilizer and pesticides. Due to “lack of markets” and government subsidies, people have also not yet switched over to “hybrids” that require plenty of chemicals. What all this means is that Nepal can and must make a head start to becoming an “organic country”. Nepal has a huge advantage with a diverse climate variation enabling us to grow all kinds of food. Roads, airfields, telecommunications are all enabling us to check demand and prices and deliver the products. Some have already begun and are doing quite well.

Carbon Neutral Nepal

Nepal has no coal, petrol, diesel, kerosene, or natural gas. All of these fuels, when combusted, produce carbon dioxide as a by-product. On the other hand, we have water, the sunshine, and plenty of forest cover. The topography and the location of Nepal (not too north or south) make it an ideal place to tap renewable and clean energy resources. The deep valleys and mountain saddles give us ample wind and the glaciers melt to give us perennial rivers. There is no way we can catch up with the fossil fuel dependant countries. We cannot compete with the oil producers of the gulf; but we can lead the path to become the first carbon neutral country in the world.

This is the global trend and as climate change induced disasters rise in frequency and impact the whole world will have to follow us. As carbon taxes and disaster insurance costs rise, the global awakening about the need to ban greenhouse gases will rise. We need to be ahead in this. We missed the industrial revolution, the socialism boat, we missed the dot.com boom. We cannot afford to miss the carbon neutral future. We can do it or watch others do it as we have done so many times in the past. We are not just victims, we can lead.

Here Comes the Sun...

It is not very difficult to understand that if eight billion people in the world dry their clothes outdoors, the sun does not shrink. That is the basic concept of a renewable source of energy. On the other hand,

once we burn kerosene, petrol, diesel or coal, it is gone forever and we have smoke (CO₂ and other nasty gases) as bi-products. Hydrogen could also be the perfect fuel; and when we burn it, water would be the bi-product (hydrogen plus oxygen equals water, remember?) Humans have been worshipping the sun for as long as we can remember and there are literally eight billion reasons for this today. What we are, what we eat, what we wear, and drink are all there thanks to the sun.

Birthplace of “Buddhas”

Flying into Lumbini, one meets amazing people. If we do this right, there are at least a billion people around the world who aspire to visit the birth place of the “Buddhas” and offer their “*shrada*” as people have been doing for two and half millenniums. The fact that Siddhartha Gautam Buddha spent over thirty years of his life in the area is not even common knowledge among many Nepalis, forget the rest of the world. Some only want to reap the immediate and short term benefits of tourism; but not the longer term and longer lasting benefits of the “teachings” of the Buddha. We can build a whole new economy based on local art and craft and the traditions that go back to the time of the Buddha.

Reading and case study

Caring for the Earth is still good business

How many Nepalis does one rhino employ?

In 1973, the Royal Chitwan National Park was created to protect Nepal’s globally unique flora and fauna including the one horned rhinoceros. In those early days, the rhino population was dwindling and there was fear that these beautiful creatures may become extinct. Resources were set aside by the government and international agencies. Many people including close to one thousand soldiers of the Royal Nepalese Army guarded the less than 100 last remaining rhinos. With protection, the rhino population began to grow slowly and today Chitwan is probably home to as many rhinos as it can sustain.....A real success story all of us Nepalis can be proud of.

Thanks to a lot of effort by numerous professionals and supporters of wildlife preservation in Nepal and globally, the park continues to do well. It not only employs people directly as rangers, game scouts, wardens and security personnel, but there are a large number of people employed by the hotels, jungle lodges, travel agencies, airlines here and abroad, who all owe their jobs to the rhino and its successful comeback. Add to this all the brands that use the rhino to sell everything from local hand-made paper to honey, and we sure have a lot to toast the health and wellbeing of this animal.

Unfortunately, the Nepal rhino success story is rare in the world. The earth has already lost 60% of its ancient forests to date according the World Resources Institute. Just as a comparison, Chitwan National Park covers 932 square kilometers. In contrast, when Russia opened its forests as crop to foreign companies in 1996, it lost over 10,000 square kilometers of its tree cover in just that one year.

So does business really understand and appreciate how so many people have jobs because we were successful in saving the rhino? Is it still a myth that saving the rhino and caring for the earth can and should become good business? Surveys and studies done over the past decade with hundreds of businesses globally show that caring for the earth results in higher profits in the following ways.

1. Manufacturing processes and products that care for the earth do not waste raw materials, water, and energy leading to minimum waste disposal costs and treatment facilities. Everything contributes to higher profits.
2. As international and local rules, regulations and standards are tightened in favor of the environment, businesses that have adopted earth friendly practices find their liability, legal fees, fines, as well as insurance and personal liability claims are much lower – leading to more profits.
3. Marketing of products that do not damage the earth is easier in a world of growing consciousness – especially among young consumers who have a huge purchasing power. Employee morale is also much higher in clean work places leading to better productivity.

In this context, a key question needs to be looked at: despite these obvious benefits of caring for the earth, why is there so much animosity between business and environmentalists? The reason perhaps can be found in the general belief that in the early 1990s with the Earth Summit at Rio, people in business saw that environmentalists were getting too powerful too quickly. This is definitely the observation we had in Nepal. The environmental movement was center stage, all donors, international and national NGOs were focusing their efforts on the environment. The constitution of Nepal is probably the only one in the world that has “sustainable development “in the states’ directive principles. Ministries were being formed. Departments, text books, guidelines, standards, all were being re-designed to incorporate the environment. Business was understandably threatened.

Going forward, both sides have realized that they can and do agree in principle that caring for the environment is good for business and is also a good business in itself. Today the world also has numerous entrepreneurs who are coming up with new breakthroughs that help business and help the earth.

Fake silver hurts

Silver jewelry and art and craft are one of the high value added export items on which many families depend for their livelihood. The ancient skills and designs that are produced locally are popular here and abroad and orders seemed to be flowing in good volumes. The silver artists and businesses are a key part of Nepal’s larger business scene. People generally still do not trust the government and bank saving accounts and would prefer to save their money in precious metals such as silver and gold. Then people began to realize that some of the clients were paying for silver and getting other cheaper “look-alike” metals instead. The emergence of “fake silver” is hurting and people will not invest till they can get “certified” genuine products. The silver business sector is not really organized and the government has many competing priorities. They need a forum where the private entrepreneurs and the government can sit, discuss and solve the problem and win the trust of everyone.

Need for dialogue forums

We need to promote a culture of dialogue to help us resolve many issues that we feel need resolution. If we are not able to get to a few but important quick wins, people on both sides will lose interest. These forums should be for discussing and resolving very important issues such as how to keep the fake silver out, how to ease the export of local art and craft, and tackling challenges facing the hand-made industry. If we can learn from any team games, it is quite obvious that the winning team always talks to each other. Finger pointing and blaming is a sure way to lose.

Historically any negotiation that takes place after demands are put forth, end up with one side winning at the expense of the other. The growth of the art and craft business in Nepal does not have to be a zero sum game. The government does not want to nor is it really good at producing goods, providing services or managing utilities. The private sector is slowly growing to take up these new spaces. With a very short history, everyone realizes that it will take some more time for the sector to get there. There is a lot of learning to be done by both sides before people's expectations can and will be met. It is going to take two to tango.

Look at the Nepali flag

If there is one good reason to celebrate the Nepali flag, it should be because our flag carries the sun. The sun gives 30 million Nepalis their sustenance. The monsoon winds bring us the rain that allows us to replenish the soil and grow our food. It allows trees to grow and the grasslands to house our rich biodiversity heritage. It melts the snow on our mountains and gives us numerous perennial rivers which could provide Nepal and the region a carbon neutral economy. In other words, if Nepal was to take the path like no other country and work to create a solar energy based economy, the sun on the flag will mean that we shall exist as long as the sun comes up.

Technology has come a long way

Decades ago we had solar powered satellites, water pumps and lanterns but out of reach of the pockets of the majority of people around the world. Today, the technology has improved so much. In the near future we shall see solar photovoltaic "panels" that can be 'painted' or printed on our roofs. More than the solar panels, a real revolution has taken place in the area of storage of electricity or battery technology.

While the panel serves to convert light into electricity, the battery stores the power for future use. These technologies would not be very cost effective if the appliances or end use technologies did not improve. Today, we have light emitting diodes that make lighting with solar power very cost effective and efficient. A fraction of a watt can light a small room well. It has become possible to replace kerosene as the primary source of lighting in rural and urban homes.

The stone age...

The stone age did not end because we ran out of stones. The fossil fuel age will also end long before we run out of oil. Human beings who made polluting cars can make non-polluting cars. We just have to align the incentives for innovation and entrepreneurs who know how. Many countries around the world also define nationalism as energy independence. If there was a country that can take this path rapidly, it is Nepal. In the future world of carbon trading, we could make money by selling our carbon rights to the late comers. We just need to open our minds.

Chapter 6

Case studies – short summaries and key findings

This chapter looks at the lessons we have gathered in the process of preparing various case studies in the craft tradition in different communities across the country. Nepal Art Village launched “In Our Hands” incubation program for “young and creative” minds in partnership with British Council in Nepal, Kathmandu University (School of Arts, School of Engineering), Applied Arts Scotland, Edinburgh Napier University, and the National Innovation Center.

In Our Hands is a youth oriented entrepreneurship program that Nepal Art Village developed with British Council Nepal as a response to address the global challenges with art and craft as a entry point. Our aim is to build capacity for young minds and provide resources, platforms, and connections to help develop a creative green economy in Nepal and advance long-term climate goal. It comprises of a series of workshops that include mentoring sessions, a pitching and networking event, a grant, and a final showcase of opportunities for Nepali youths.

Crafting Futures, one of the British Council’s global programs became the basis for a 2021 program offering the first innovation grant designed for nature-based craft businesses. In Our Hands continues these efforts by championing the creative green economy as a response to the global challenge of climate change. We need case studies to highlight what happens in the real world and the people who are taking the lead. When we have enough of these, a pattern will emerge that will help with evidence based policy and alignment of the needed incentives for large scale change. They will help us get to a shared understanding of what needs to be done.

In year 2022, out of 13 sustainable business ideas, we selected 6 projects supported by grants from British Council Nepal. Following are the six grantees that showcased their prototypes with passion, presenting them to the public as to how they will address the global challenge through the project they developed for a creative green economy.

Sambriddhi Prajapati

Sambriddhi Prajapati is a Master’s Degree student on International Relations and Diplomacy who grew up in Bhaktapur city. Her family runs Peacock shop which deals with lokta paper products. She has a passion to upgrade their ancient knowledge of paper making into next level with use of modern technology.

She started her own unit known as **Bhwom** to find alternate raw ingredient in making lokta paper production. As the objective of the project, she hopes to employ agro and timber waste to champion more sustainable paper production in future.

Lokta is the main raw material in creating Nepali paper which villagers harvest in 55 hilly region districts of Nepal while Bhaktapur city was the paper production center till early 1990s. Due to 10-year internal conflict young lokta harvesters have migrated to gulf region for more job opportunity. Even after 10 years since Maoist came back to main stream politics, people are forbidden to enter forest without their permission. Scarcity of the *lokta* had diverted craft producers to experiment substitute paper making materials like *babiyo* and banana fibers. Rural villagers have now lost their seasonal income generation

source but she hopes to bring change into rural economy with use of organic waste like rice husk, corn husk, straw and timber waste with added value of using natural dyes in paper making process. She was also our researcher on Crafting Future 2020 case study program on *lokta* paper.

Manoj Mali, Anu Rai, Nischal Devkota

Manoj Mali a local youth of Nagdaha lake is also a mechanical engineer. He is keen on tackling issues related with nutrients and sediments loading at Nagdaha. He along with his friends Anu Rai and NischalDevkota, who are aquatic ecologists, have formed a group called **Wetlands of Nepal** to implement and utilize nature based solution for biodiversity conservation, and wetland restoration.

Like many lakes, water lettuce has taken over Nagdaha and covered up the sacred water body. They are determined to make use of this invasive species encroaching the wetland into economical revenue project for local youths.

Nagdaha lake area lies at Dhapakhel village of Lalitpur municipality which is believed to be resident of Karkotak Naga— king of serpents. People come to perform rituals once a year at this lake during Nag Panchami. Keeping in mind the religious and historical values these three enthusiasts saw the need to educate and involve local people for the sustainability of this wetland area. As the income generation activity, they produce Jholmal - a bio pesticide engaging youth of the surrounding area.

Manisha Maharjan

Manisha Maharjan is 25-year-old student of Bluebird college of Management who is already running a project named “Tajilaji” with John Maharjan dealing with local cultural promotion. Through **Project Green Gold**, they aim to reclaim sustainable consumption products out of waste generated by the hemp industry of Nepal.

Compared to natural forest, Hemp plants can sequester carbon faster and can grow in much shorter time. They want to build and introduce finer and better quality hemp product from the existing clothing industries and create seasonal income generating activity for home based mothers’ group of Lalitpur district. They have worked on incorporating Hemp with other fibers to produce finer quality outputs at cheaper cost and open more design options than those that are currently available.

Priyanka Sukla

Priyanka Sukla is a 25-year-old graduate student from Apex College from Nepalgunj. She comes from Awadhi community which comprises less than 2% of Nepal’s population. She is keen on working with home based female workers in her community to apply traditional expressions in the up-cycling of textile waste

Each year we throw a lot of unused textile as garbage dumping them near rivers and dumping sites which takes many years to be decomposed. She feels she can help women gain economic independence through needle craft from her company known as **Kattran**.

She feels that to upscale and transform the discarded textile found in her Awadhi community into home decorative items accessories and home décor objects will not be hard than convincing her own mothers, sisters and grandmothers to make use of waste textile to create in a fun way for economic benefit.

Rajiya Banu

Rajiya Banu comes from the marginalized Muslim community of Churaute who have been leading non-profit organization called Bighnaharta Nepal to create self-sustainable community in rural areas. After the 2015 earthquake, she along with her peers visited Chepang community in Raksirang Rural Municipality of Makwanpur district where they saw plenty of Amriso plant growing naturally around hilly areas. They saw the benefit of using it as local material in creating natural broom.

Broom was created as the main product from Amriso plant but lot of agro waste was created out of it. As a secondary product, Rajiya and her friends made recycled paper out of it which they name it as **Khoriyo ko Kaagaj**.

She has been able to help out Chepang community make alternate paper production out of natural waste that you get after making broom from Amriso plant as a sustainable way to revive the traditional knowledge of the people of Makwanpur.

Tayama Rai

Tayoma Rai is a science student who is passionate about agriculture and would love to help farmers of Khotang and Bhojpur districts to protect their agricultural land by stabilizing with SALT method along with alternate building materials for them.

After lot of research she created eco-friendly carbon neutral building material and named it as **Gitta**. Using cow dung and rice husk ash with calcium hydroxide which is a retrograde solubility, Gitta is able to produce cement like blocks by using natural drying methods. The end result is a better brick in terms of strength, weight and material cost compared to traditional kiln bricks. She hopes to support small scale farmers with this new building material and encourage a circular process across the supply chain.

Crafting Future in year 2020

During the pandemic lockdown in year 2020, Nepal Art Village (NAV) in collaboration with the University of Leicester (UOL) through the British Council's Crafting Futures program, initiated nature based case studies on the theme of ceramic, wool, *lokta* paper, natural grass, bamboo and flowering plants. This was a unique program to help young people to document and prepare case studies about Nepal's art and craft heritage.

Throughout this difficult time when each one of us witnessed loss of lives of our dear ones, we were able to pull off this project through online discussions. We were able to document, analyze case studies and compile their stories. These are few observations that craft is currently facing socio-economic and environmental struggles:

1. Migration: internal and international. Craft-makers from the rural areas are moving to the cities, or going abroad, and the transmission of knowledge and skills has become an issue
2. There are opportunities promised through infrastructure development projects, which are intended to bring in more visitors, tourists, thus increasing demand for craft products
3. Changes in the ecosystem: climate change has contributed to the shortage of natural resources and conservative or old conservation practices has erected new barriers to securing raw materials for traditional expressions and living. Moreover, with people moving, new invasive species have entered Nepal, compromising its biodiversity.

As an output of this project, we were able to document and prepare case studies including the state of the current use, threats and opportunities for conservation, demand and pressures on the sources of materials used in craft making. Researchers were clearly able to identify where there are gaps and the needs for interventions on the entire supply chain from the natural base to the market and back to nature.

Following are 6 researchers whom we selected across the country to represent various locations and to identify the most threatened craft in their respective areas.

Chandra Prakash Pathak

Chandra Prakash Pathak is a local resident of Lumbini working as a photographer for Lumbini Development Trust. He is actively engaged in marketing natural grass products of his community for the global market. His main idea is to understand the situation of grass craft weaving at Kapilvastu and Rupendehi districts which are part of Greater Lumbini Area of Nepal.

To weave grass items, weavers need to collect *Kans* grass from the premises of Lumbini Development Trust where they are permitted to harvest once a year as primary raw material. For *Munj* grass, they travel down to Tinau river bank to harvest and collect them as the second raw material. Weavers are just knowledgeable of their traditional pattern and design of basketry, but recently with the help of an NGO named Bridges Between, weavers of Lumbini had an opportunity to showcase their skills in US market as well.

Pratibha Jha

Pratibha Jha is a regional reporter for the Deshsanchar and a news presenter for Appan Television who lives in Janakpur. Her idea is to find the status of *Kumhar* community who make ceramic items as their family occupation in rural areas of Dhanusha district. Traditional pottery making has its market in Janakpur area due to rituals and festivals happening around the year. She discovered that innovative design is lacking among rural potters who are stuck with their ancient works of art causing them to not be able to make advancements in upliftment of their livelihood. She feels Kumhar community need to get access to trainings to learn new technique and product design for sustainability, adopt digital technology to improvise and to attract urban markets of Janakpur.

Pranathi

Pranathi is involved with Abari which specializes in using natural materials for buildings. They have developed a bamboo supply chain which not only supplies them with the bamboo they use in construction and product design but also specifically have created a green corridor in what was once a land ravaged by floods. Her main theme is to research about the bamboo craft of Chepang community and document their traditional knowledge which aided their survival in forested land living in Madi and Shaktikhor community of Chitwan district.

Bamboo craft is an integral part of Chepang community of their agro ecological cycle. With relocation of homes after being displaced by the creation of Chitwan National Park, they have less access to raw material in weaving bamboo baskets. Abari is working with master weavers who are settled in their demonstration farm and work for natural building and ecological restoration, to producing their traditional work which is bamboo basketry.

Asta Narayan Dhimal

Asta Narayan Dhimal did his Master's Degree from Ratna Rajya Campus on the topic of "Nature and Human Being Relationship". Due to his love for nature, he has been able to identify the dyeing plants used by his community which is less known to other people of Nepal.

His main idea is to research on dyeing plants at Jhapa district of eastern Nepal. During his research, he has been able to identify four natural coloring plants used by Dhimal women of Morang, Jhapa and Sunsari district to dye their textile. These women weave these pattern textiles worn as traditional clothes to disseminate their weaving knowledge to younger generation. These coloring plants have helped them to preserve their traditional knowledge about handloom weaving in Dhimal community.

SabitriGautam

Sabitri Gautam has a Master's degree in Arts and is a local resident from Pokhara valley. She is a full time housewife with the passion of exploring local arts and craft of lakeside Pokhara along with the trading of yak wool done at the area. Her main idea is to research about production of yak wool textile in Kaski district and learn about how the business is sustained. During her research she discovered that though Pokhara used to be trading center for woolen product but now the production of wool has shifted to other districts.

Nepali wool is rarely being collected since wool shearing is done seasonally compared to China and Mongolia where shearing wool is done with modern equipment producing sufficient textile to supply all over the world. Himalayak, a two phase project is designed to be conducted in 5 years' time by IFAD in collaboration with ICIMOD with main hub in Kathmandu to promote yak herders of Nepal is underway. Hopefully this project will benefit highland yak herders and shopkeepers of lakeside Pokhara. At present there are about 70,000 yak and chauri in 28 higher elevation districts of Nepal.

Sambriddhi Prajapati

She is a researcher from Bhaktapur district who conducts case study on *lokta* paper for our Crafting Future program. She was again successfully nominated to become our grantee for IN OUR HANDS program to advance her research work into Bhwom project to find alternate raw materials in place of *lokta* fiber. During her case study days during pandemic, she discovered that *lokta* is scarce due to pandemic as well the fact that there has been restrictions to enter forest by the Maoist groups. However, *lokta* producers found alternate raw material in Babiyo, banana, and Argeli plants and other lesser quality plant which gives paper texture like rice husk, corn husk, straw and timber waste.

Chapter 7

Creative Green Economy

This seventh chapter brings information and lessons together to define the creative green economy that should become an integral part of “our common future”.

Creative

To create jobs, we need job creators; and this requires a certain type of education and value based society. There is a whole generation of Nepalis who remember being scolded by our teachers when we failed a test by reminding us that we deserve to end up as farmers or workers. This generation studied hard so that they would never ever have to work! This value is so deeply engrained in Nepali society that only when we are out of Nepal do we seem to be able to “work” and be proud of it! What we need is education that makes people proud of hard work. We need education that teaches us how the economy works. We need job creators and not job seekers. We need education that teaches us that creating jobs is real nationalism, not shutting down the few enterprises that still offer jobs. Schools and colleges should be the centers for learning about the creative green economy.

Let us, for example, look at how we might want to use the smart devices in our hands and pockets. We need to launch a campaign to get Nepalis to upload as much as we can. If there is no content on Nepal, what will people download as access increases? All over the world there are examples of how people are capturing their oral traditions and capturing it in digital format. Nepal has a rich heritage that needs to be uploaded. It is not too late to start right now. The good thing about computers is also that no matter how many e-mails we send; the computer does not get bigger or smaller. Many digital platforms allow us to do business with very small marketing budgets.

We want to see better designed homes that are energy and water efficient. We want to see manufacturing processes that reduce the use of carbon based natural resources. We want to see nothing landing up at the landfill site. We want to see large scale up of ideas like the school play pump that lifts water as children play. We would also like to see high value plants being planted and harvested within their capacity to regenerate.

We want to see design of goods that enable full recycling or recovery and reflecting the true price of the inputs. We want to see shorter supply chains. We would like to see innovative incentives and enabling policy. We need to narrow the skill gap in this process. For this we need a market that is driven by informed consumers. Many offices, industries and hospitals are turning their waste into energy. Poultry farms are leading the way in Chitwan. Plans are underway to make every house a energy generator in Nepal. SPV and thermal solar heaters are already a common site across Nepal.

Lead can no longer be used in ceramics, mercury cannot be used for gold plating and ammonia is now banned in printing ink. We really need to be creative to find better substitutes.

Case study: Knot Craft, Shyam Badan Shrestha, Patan Industrial Estate

Case Study: Laxmi Sharma: Buttons from bones

Case Study: Wild earth, Maharajgunj

Green

Nepal has hosted numerous climate change conferences and even hosted the global tiger workshop. There is a need to look at both these issues in terms of the jobs that we can create for Nepalis, not all of it necessarily in Nepal. The need to adapt to climate change is real, the need to mitigate the negative impacts, as well as the need to generate renewable, clean and non-fossil fuel based energy will create new jobs. Similarly, the tiger is a beautiful and magnificent animal whose presence in the wild is a proxy indicator that the ecosystem is healthy. It is what is generally known as a keystone species. It survives only when all the other smaller species of animals and plants of the ecosystem are intact. There is therefore huge interest and resources available to save the wild tiger from extinction.

Tourism is a side benefit that is already generating jobs by people who just want to see the tiger. Further, the economic value of these natural resources are today well understood. Conservation and management of these resources creates jobs. Just add up all the jobs community forestry, elephant rides in parks and fishery have created. Green is the way forward. We are being reminded that three fourth of humanity will face water shortages by 2050. Awareness is one thing, but doing something about it is another

Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha, Nepal's best known botanist, explained why the global environmental movement had chosen green as its preferred color. Green is chlorophyll and the only substance in the world that uses sunlight to create food through a process known as photosynthesis. The rest of the known world relies on green plants, the primary producers, to make food for us. The rest of us, in effect, are parasites.

We have no spare planet. It is therefore quite profound when we internalize the fact that the future of human beings in this world in turn depends on how we utilize sunlight and green plants around us. As we all know, the sun and green plants are renewable energy sources and even the monsoon or the tiger depend on these ultimately. Hence a carbon neutral economy will have to rely on renewables that do not put any carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than it is able to absorb and convert into food. We will also have to learn to do more with less. We should not buy things we do not really need. We need to compost more and start our own gardens. We do not need more critics but more leaders who take things into their own hands.

The cost of doing business as usual without caring for the earth is going to grow. We shall face greater shortages, degradation of the sources of resources we need, pollution that impact our health and our medical costs. These lead to decreased productivity, employee morale and liabilities and insurance cost hikes. There will be more regulations and greater legal fees to pay. The values of the young consumers are changing and they will have new and better options to choose from.

Case study: Kushal Gurung, Wind Power Nepal, Muttha, and Gandaki Urja

Economy

Long term peaceful Nepal is going to depend on the prosperity of the Nepali people. This means jobs and work will have to be created for millions more. Specifically, we need to create on an average, four hundred thousand jobs annually if we are to keep up with the number of young people who will enter the job market each year. Unemployed people are hungry; and hungry people are angry. Angry people fight and will carry guns. We all understand by now that peace is not the absence of conflict. This will require out of the box thinking and creativity.

As we travel towards Pokhara, for example, we see that local people are making a lot of money by selling top soil to the left of the road and sand from the Trishuli River to the right. The problem with this picture is that a “free” natural good is being sold for “profit” with no “jobs” being created. There is no value addition at all. The sand could easily be made into, for example, inter locking building blocks. Jobs could be created and real profit made. The trees of the terai were once sold off in the same way instead of making high value furniture first. Go to west Nepal and we sell high value aromatic plants and herbs but few have distilled oil from them and created jobs for the local economy. The economy must put back what it took from the planet in a truly circular manner.

Case study: Green Growth, Sindhuli

Case study: Smart Paani, Pulchowk, Patan

Case study: Fresh Elements, Pokhara

Case study: ICIMOD Godavari plot and brick kiln work, Lalitpur

Case study: Sajha Bus, electric bus fleet, Pulchowk

Value added chains

Nepal is finally a green energy surplus country. We have actually started exporting hydro power. This dream is once again inspired by the deep rooted thinking that we will then not have to work! Why would we sell clean hydro power when we could use it to make goods and services that will create jobs in Nepal? We should measure the future prosperity of Nepal, not by megawatts generated, but by the number of Nepalis employed. Remember we need 400,000 new jobs each year and this will require us to be much more creative than just selling power to India.

The globally unique Nepali national flag can be a symbol for the creative green economy. The blue borders represent the thousands of small and big rivers, the triangles - our Himals, the sun and moon the “permanence of Nepal” in terms of being able to rise again and again; and the red is the blood of the creative and hardworking entrepreneurs. The combination of all these concepts would lead to a strong economy fueled by clean and green energy and hence ensure peace and prosperity in Nepal and regions around us.

Missed opportunities

During the industrial revolution in Europe, Nepal was under the autocratic Rana regime for 104 years till 1950. When India and China were building infrastructure under centrally planned economies under Nehru and Mao, Nepal had the party-less Panchayat system. When India and China liberalized their economies to attain double-digit economic growth rates, Nepal was undergoing a bloody armed conflict. We have missed so many opportunities. Let us make sure that we do not miss the creative green

economy revolution. It is the best thing that could ever happen to a country with such diversity in every sense of the word. We have the hardware, the decentralized power sources, the wireless connectivity, and people who have the passion and the needed skills. What are we waiting for?

A large part of the debate about an inclusive and federal Nepal is because of a history of discrimination among ethnic, language, sex and geographic divides. The great thing about the creative green economy is to do it without discriminating anyone. It takes young minds very little time to figure out how this will work.

Few people who ask “why not” instead of why have led all great changes in world history. This creative green economy revolution will require all those Nepalis who are at a point in their life to give themselves permission to make it happen. Imagine the days when people had to rely on unreliable pigeons to deliver messages. Unique visionaries who challenged themselves and their societies to get to the next level have led every innovation since then. Nepal is not only ready for a big change, but we have no option but to get out of the current poverty and disparity.

Good Intentions are just not good enough

The monsoon is not as timely and the glaciers are not as strong as we once believed and are melting. If we had to choose from the numerous possibilities to invest our scarce resources, we must choose young people and a new economy based on creativity and green resources. We have the energy, the passion, the ideals, values and above all we still dare to dream. It is time for those with good intentions to take a step back! No one wants to meet another person with a good intention any more, we need people who will “just do it.”

Chapter 8

In Our Hands

This eighth chapter is dedicated to looking at how messy “doing” can be. Our actions will speak louder than our words. We will need to be motivated to getting “our hands dirty”. There is no need to wait for the time when all the pieces are in place. We have to start, and now is as good a time as any. What we decide to use, what we will buy and ensuring that nothing needs to go to the landfill site is our choice. In the world we live in, consumer is king. Art and craft is a great place to start. It is in our hands. Further it is less frustrating to begin with what we can do and not have to rely on others to begin.

The British Council, Nepal Art Village and Kathmandu University have joined hands to launch an incubation program for young people who wish to leverage the creative energy in them to conserve, improve on and scale up our craft traditions. The goal is to move society towards appreciating and using traditional and new craft that is good for our planet, makes a profit, involves people and has a real purpose. We are supporting young people to carry out research and prepare case studies, we are incubating their innovative ideas, helping to pitch these ideas to people and agencies with investment resources, coaching and mentoring. We want to help with greater digital presence for these products and people. We have seen huge potentials in expanding ritual related craft.

We want to help the traditional craft to improve with technology, new and better processes, marketing, pricing, branding etc. We want to see shorter supply chain, a better value chain, all contributing towards a creative green economy. We have a toolkit that can be used by all those who are ready to take initiative. We may even publish “an encyclopedia of Nepali craft” in the near future. We want to join hands with the CNI Swadeshi campaign, the FHAN design school, and contribute to Nepal’s attainment of net zero by 2045 and 30 by 30 campaigns. We want to see more renewable and de-carbonized products that help distribute benefits equitably.

In your hands

To be able to take advantage of the “In Our Hands” campaign, you will have to stay optimistic. So many good things happening around the world, led by young people, and yet we focus on the negative. Every day we come face to face with challenges and we come up with new ideas and solutions. We need to give ourselves permission to do. We know what works for our family and our communities and we need to turn this insight into design principles. Pricing may start with asking a simple question around whether you or your family would pay for a product or service. The problems we have can have innovative solutions. You must be willing to lead, work with teams and have an open mind. There are no failures only lessons. All situations demand leadership. Situations create leaders. Imagine the day when young people refuse to work for companies that do not take care of the planet, people in the process of making a profit? It is in our hands.

Tools and Skills

There will be a skill and knowledge gap as we all move to a creative green economy. The ability to analyze and make choices along with better understanding business concept in the new economy will be critical. Ideas will have to adapt to new innovations, materials, technologies and market feedback. For

example, a person selling insurance for a fossil fuel vehicle, now has to know how a electrical vehicle works. If the municipalities across Nepal ensured all houses had a water treatment system, a rainwater harvesting system and solar panels and solar water heaters on the roof, the earth would begin to heal.

Four “P” approach

Purpose, people, planet and profit must all be integrated while designing and launching a product or service. We cannot choose one over the other. We have to find the middle ground where all the above can come together.

Understanding scaled impacts

Nepal needs something big that is of significance to distract us away from the normal conversations about politics and challenges we face daily. There are wonderful and scenic villages along the slopes of the Himalaya that are remote and far from road heads and communications with the rest of the world. These communities are now classified as being most vulnerable to climate change and hence need to be better prepared. These villages and settlements can now become the new “climate smart” communities. Nepal cannot just play the victim any longer. We need to take the lead. The idea is that these communities need to be better prepared for rapid change in their ecosystem; and they need to be connected if disasters struck. The Great Himalayan Trail has connected these communities east to west Nepal for over 1700 kilometers.

The GHT is also be a tourism product, it is being developed and it will showcase to the world how Nepal is taking the lead to help remote communities to become climate smart. Please help make this initiative a success. Tell everyone about it and promote this idea to the world. Mountains are a critical resource for the future of humanity and yet a neglected one. It is extremely fragile and vulnerable to climate change. We need to get better at caring for our mountains. With so many businesses, products, services, and publications named after our great mountains, there should be no problem getting media space and time for their cause. This is in our hands.

Look at the positive changes

Did you know that mobile phone penetration has reached 100 percent of the population? Internet reach is now over 75 percent. This is of course not enough. The potential of this technology for future social and economic applications and its impact on the quality of life of the ordinary Nepali can be huge. Connectivity can be the first step towards large scale change.

Nepal has no fossil fuel

Nepal has no fossil fuel resources of its own and imports all of its petroleum energy needs using scarce foreign currency deposits. Few in Nepal will even dare to explain why the trolley buses which ran on clean hydroelectric power have been put out of service and the infrastructure uprooted literally. On the other hand, the electric three wheelers which used to run on diesel continue to do quite well taking commuters from point A to B without spewing any smoke. Across Nepal, people have always relied on the sun for light and heat; and this life style is very often associated with and referred to as under – development and subsistence. Development has often been depicted by industrial chimneys that put out a lot of smoke into the atmosphere.

Today the mind set has shifted and people are generally aware about the fact that with climate change, we are extremely vulnerable. As water spouts and wells began to dry up and the number of hours of power outage grew, everyone knew something was not right. In the *terai* belt, along the length of the **Churia** range, sand and stones are being mined and trucked out to build irrigation canals and roads in India. This devastating mining activity, while financially attractive in the short run, will definitely contribute to more severe flooding in southern Nepal and north India. Remember the timber from our *terai* was used a century ago to build railway lines in India.

Today Nepal's reliance on fossil fuel is so nominal that a switch away from these would be much simpler and easier than for many so called "developed" economies. In the meantime, we do need to work on near term and critical issues such as food security which are threatened due to short term impact of changing rain patterns. In Mustang people are offering prayers for rain, while in west Nepal, there are reports of people selling off their livestock due to lack of drinking water. Meanwhile the Nepal Food Corporation is leasing its prime agricultural land in Thapathali to build yet another business center! In other parts of Asia scientists have modified rice species to adapt to two weeks of inundation.

Don't miss the boat

People who are still questioning and challenging the science, cause and effects of climate change are outdated. Countries like Nepal have a real chance to move ahead to lead the region as the first carbon neutral economy. New targets and better carbon trading mechanism will help us get to our goal quicker. This will require a lot of home work. Trade in carbon is presented as a market solution but the lessons of the past would indicate that while money will change hands, the earth may not really benefit.

We need to be *RESILIENT* and *ADAPT* to short term impacts. As a case in point, when it begins to rain, people will do nothing to prepare for next year's drought. Look at what we have done to prepare the people of Koshi after each year's floods. A simple step we can take, as an example, is to clean all the historical ponds in Kathmandu and make them two to five feet deeper so that we can harvest each year's monsoon rainwater for the coming spring. All this is in our hands.

Chapter 9

Nepal Art Village: our commitment to the creative green economy

Because we care

This last chapter looks at the creative work of designing and building the Nepal Art Village by engaging artists and their creativity in Nepal. A team of artists, artisan families and their friends have come together to launch the Nepal Art Village (NAV).

Why are we building the Nepal Art Village?

- Nepalis and the whole world are proud of the 7 UNESCO world heritage sites in the Kathmandu valley that our ancestors built. There are additional three sites outside the valley namely Sagarmatha, Chitwan and Lumbini-the birthplace of the Buddha. The question we are asking today is, “Should we build a site that will be a future world heritage site?” We have the knowledge and skills; we can mobilize the resources. So why not leave our own legacy for the future generation to be proud of.
- Secondly we want to create a space where the natural, cultural and built environment is conducive to what artists and creative people need to excel. We want to be healthy, ensure longevity and be able to lead a long productive life. Water, air, forests, open spaces, walking and cycling lanes, hike trails, all will help create the ideal space for creativity. This has to be a place where we can all excel collectively.
- We know that people do not move to places where there are monuments and houses but to places where there is work, jobs and opportunities for gainful employment. At a time when one in four Nepalis have left the country and work abroad, we need to create work opportunities here in Nepal. Nepali art and craft is competitive and the world is our market. We shall also create jobs with traditional food, drinks, festivities and cultural events as well. Visitors and the services for them will all create work for the residents of the “village”. The dividend will be shared and reinvested for the purpose. We believe that heritage will unite Nepal.

The NAV team is led by an executive committee, a fully functional secretariat and shareholders who have invested in the project. We have also formed partnerships with the local municipal government and local wards. We now have banks and savings and credit groups who are backing us in this endeavor. NAV is a registered company formed under the laws and regulations of Nepal. We have our office at Patan and the site where we are building the art village is Chhampi in Godavari Municipality in south Kathmandu valley.

What is the Nepal Art Village? What does it consist of?

The Nepal Art Village has four very distinct areas by functions. The first will be a core heritage area where we shall display the best our artists can design and craft. This will be the main area that will draw visitors and be able to enjoy the best Nepalis artist have to offer. The second will be a residential area where there will be individual and collective housing designed in traditional styles but with all the modern amenities needed for comfort for everyone, especially children and the elderly. Water, waste, energy, greenery will all be managed for zero negative impact and renewability. The extra rooms families have will be put on line to generate income. We hope to offer more accommodation collectively

than the largest hotels in Nepal. The third will be businesses which include shops, restaurants, coffee and tea shops. The whole place should become a vibrant market place to buy and sell the best Nepal has to offer in the most relaxing shopping experience. Art, craft, textiles, food, drinks, pickles to local dairy and vegetables products will be available. We plan to use the market to revive ancient recipes and a memorable dining experience.

The fourth area will be dedicated to workshops where artists, craftsmen, weavers and potters will all be able to do what they do best. We plan to make this into world class work spaces with the best safety standards. All the needed inputs will be available with ease; and shipping and handling services will be there. Transport from and to the art village will be easy and convenient.

As part of this initiative, we are establishing a Garden Center at the Nepal Art Village to achieve the following objectives

- To preserve and propagate endemic plants/trees of Nepal and the Kathmandu valley using historical references and oral traditions.
- To preserve and promote all the flowering plants which are sacred and needed for various rituals and ceremonies in our life and even death.
- To preserve and protect the plants and trees associated with the life, teachings and sites related to the history of the Buddha. This includes promoting the tree removed from the Maya temple at Lumbini dedicated to the mother of the Buddha.

As part of our contribution to fighting climate change, the Garden Center will provide services, plants, and space to those individuals and organizations who want to attain zero carbon status through carbon sequestration. The service includes carbon footprint calculations, nursery with choices of trees, plantation and regular reporting. The center will also be managed to provide advisory services on gardening, landscape, plantation, plant maintenance, soil test, water harvesting and use of renewable energy. The Garden Center also has the goal to identify, train and mentor a new generation of **conservation leaders** and will offer the following programs on a regular basis.

- Nature hikes to help young people understand nature, development issues, water, energy and biodiversity conservation and management issues, and provide them with tools. We shall organize hikes and also overnight camping trips in and around the garden center.
- Hands-on training on water harvesting, energy planning, zero carbon houses and offices will also be organized.
- Lectures and seminars by prominent environmental leaders and master classes will be held here.

The Garden Center will also have a **clay craft area** where we shall have regular classes for school children and their family.

Commitment to a creative green economy

Nepal is rich in natural resources; the Nepali people are skilled craftsmen and women who have been successfully harvesting and creating craft for thousands of years and we care about the need to manage natural resources for the future generation. In the early 1950s the country opened up to the outside world and since then, the market, that pushes plastics and throw away goods that end up in landfill

sites, have replaced some of the traditional craft. A good example is the replacement of **sal** leaf plate with plastic plates.

The movement of young people from rural areas to urban centers has also created a gap in knowledge about natural resources and the skills to craft them in these new surroundings. Many Nepalis have also moved abroad. There is a danger that the transfer of traditional skills and knowledge may disappear if we do not do something.

Climate change is not something going to happen but we already feel the impact across Nepal and we have increased frequency of disasters like drought, floods, glacial lake outburst, disease moving up the Himalaya, change in rain pattern etc. All these have an impact on people and the natural resources they depend on for their daily needs including locally crafted products and services.

Today we also have a younger generation that cares and wants to take positive actions. They are now exposed to the world and hence appreciate what they had even more. They are also caught between the need to make a living and support their families and the desire to conserve their traditions. In many areas we see short term economic activities winning. This has a longer term negative impact on the natural resources, the people and ultimately their craft making skills and knowledge.

The following are our objectives:

- To ensure that the natural resource base that has sustained the craft related activities, businesses and traditions are sustained.
- To ensure that local people are able to document, preserve and transfer their skills and knowledge to the younger generation while applying nature based solutions to manage the entire life cycle of the product, and services.
- To adjust and make needed changes to ensure that they and their products are in tune with the market, and their ultimate impact on our climate. The market needs to provide the needed incentive to protect these natural resources and their natural habitat.

The method has these distinct steps

- To document and prepare case studies including the state of the current use, threats and opportunities for conservation, demand and pressure on the source of materials used in craft making.
- To clearly identify where there are gaps and the need for interventions on the entire supply chain from the natural base to the market and back to nature.
- To turn this learning into training and learning modules and deliver them to young entrepreneurs in Nepal and then expand regionally and globally.
- To scale up the process across Nepal and beyond.

Selection of pilot sites for case studies in the previous phase

The new international airport at Lumbini offers to become a great opportunity to boost the economy and quality of life for the local people. A key part of this strategy will include local craft made by harvesting local natural resources. The focus of the case study will be natural fibres. The Kathmandu valley is rich in its craft culture, but also is a huge market that is changing. We can see cheaper plastic

materials replacing natural products. The Kathmandu valley also has a huge demand for traditional ritual crafts that need to be tapped to revive natural craft and protect the sources, working with young entrepreneurs.

Janakpur is the center of Mithila heritage and its rich Mithila craft culture. The Mithila heritage also extends beyond Nepal's border into India. Railways and large investments are being made to make these areas and historical sites into attractive destinations. The local leadership and young people want to revive their local craft culture. In Janakpur we focus on clay or ceramic craft. The next case study is from Pokhara and adjoining areas because the leadership wishes to make it a zero carbon destination. It is already a popular tourist destination for Nepalis and global tourists who come to do the famous Annapurna trek. Pokhara also has a very rich natural craft tradition very popular with local and international tourists. Here we plan to focus the case study on wool.

Alignment with “In our hands”

Nepal Art Village is a key sector partner for “In our hands” incubation program for young and creative minds. We are partnering with the British Council in Nepal, Kathmandu University (School of Arts, School of Engineering), Applied Arts Scotland, Edinburgh Napier University, and the National Innovation Center. In Our Hands is a unique opportunity for those who wish to bring out the creativity in each one of us for positive social change.

In Our Hands is an entrepreneurship program that aims to build capacity and provide resources, platforms, and connections to help develop a creative green economy in Nepal and advance its long-term climate goals. It comprises of a series of workshops that include mentoring sessions, a pitching, and networking event, a grant, and a final showcase of opportunities.

Since 2019, the British Council has been working with a consortium of partners to explore the intersections of environment, society, and culture.

Crafting Futures, one of the British Council's global programs became the basis for a 2021 program offering the first innovation grant designed for nature-based craft businesses. In Our Hands continues these efforts by championing the creative green economy as a response to the global challenge of climate change. British Council research indicates that youth worldwide want to act but do not have the right space in climate change response. We also have looked at how inclusion can be supported through the application of heritage in development. In Our Hands brings these together to support youth entrepreneurship for greener, more inclusive and more resilient development.

Annexes

Federation of Handicraft Association of Nepal, FHAN

FHAN has a new leadership team that is dedicated to build on the success of the past fifty years. Nepal's handicraft carries the rich history and culture of the Nepali people and has helped introduce Nepal to the world. Further these unique and beautifully crafted objects have earned foreign currency for Nepal throughout our history of trade and prosperity. Handicraft has become an integral part of Nepal's tourism sector and provides jobs for thousands across the country.

While opportunities exist and FHAN is dedicated to work for Nepal's artists and their craft, the country has gone through a very challenging period. The armed conflict, long drawn out political transition, the earthquake of 2015, the Indian economic blockade and the COVID-19 pandemic have created huge challenges for the sector.

With the election of a new leadership team at FHAN, the window has opened to give new energy and creative approaches to developing the handicraft sector in Nepal. This strategy document is the result of a two-day workshop held at Bhaktapur from April 22-23, 2022 participated by a wide range of individuals representing all aspects of the sector across Nepal.

This strategy looks at the next three years' period that will be critical to give new direction; and to innovate both in terms of what is done but also how things are done.

FHAN goals for the next three years

The new leadership team at FHAN is committed to achieving the following for the handicraft sector in Nepal

- **Conservation** of Nepal's ancient handicraft tradition and all the related skills, techniques and cultural heritage related to them
- To **nurture** and create an enabling environment for artists to grow their craft, skills their enterprises and market them
- To invest in the **development** of the handicraft sector and ensure that artists are able to update themselves and stay competitive in the ever changing marketplace.
- To help artists and their craft to **scale up** without compromising authenticity and uniqueness.

The scope of FHAN's work must reach all across Nepal and bring forth every craft heritage that Nepal has. This is across products, geography and people all over Nepal.

Major components of FHAN strategy (2022-25) and the guiding principles for its work ahead

The success of this strategy will depend on the following critical areas of work and the underlying principles which will guide the work of FHAN.

- FHAN will assert itself into the leadership role and become the principle agency and major player in Nepal's economy. While there is broad recognition of the role played by the handcraft sector in terms of tourism, FHAN does not have the rightful place at the table where Nepal's socio-economic development policies are discussed and formulated. This needs to change. FHAN aspires to be an equal partner in Nepal's development and will not stay on the sidelines and play victim anymore.
- Inclusion is one of the key aspirations of the constitution of the Republic of Nepal. Past work to bring all craft products artists and geographic coverage within FHAN has been good, but it needs to become better. All craft, handmade products, artists and geographic locations all over Nepal must benefit from the efforts of FHAN, its resources, investments, programs and activities. FHAN will make inclusion a key component of its work and a major guiding principle for the next three years and beyond. FHAN must become the umbrella organization for all those engaged in the handcraft sector and must ensure that no one and no craft is left behind. FHAN will work as a leadership institution that will represent the interest of the entire sector.
- The FHAN secretariat and its ability to implement all the programs and activities of FHAN is critical for success. The secretariat has many years of experience and already has a wide range of capacities to execute on behalf of FHAN, its boards and the leadership team. It must identify gaps, update its ways and follow the best practices of a modern organization. Human resources are a key variable that will decide whether FHAN succeeds or fails in its goal. There is also the need for ensuring that the secretariat is the implementing wing of FHAN and must comply with all relevant laws, rules, regulations and guidelines that are endorsed by the Government of Nepal and FHAN board. The guidelines must be updated regularly and the staff trained in compliance.
- Building on the fifty-year history of FHAN can and will serve as a real asset while moving ahead. The past fifty years, the experience that has been gathered and the assets built are a great place to start. There is no need to start from zero. FHAN needs to leverage the fifty years' history as an effective branding tool but must also keep its focus on the future.

Hence the key components of the strategy and principles revolve around

- FHAN's ability to take a leadership position at the national and international level
- Creating an inclusive FHAN where all products, crafts, artists and geography fit in
- Efficient and well trained secretariat team that is capable of implementing
- Fifty-year history to be leveraged for the future.

Major outputs to be delivered

The following outcomes are critical for FHAN to achieve its goals as an umbrella organization in the country and to ensure that all handicrafts are conserved, nurtured, developed and expanded

1. The federal, provincial and local governments, development partners and the private sector recognizes FHAN as the apex body to partner with in order to maximize the contributions of the handicraft sector to the overall socio- economic development of Nepal.
2. FHAN maintains a strong digital presence globally and in Nepal, utilizing the power of all forms of technology and digital media. These will include the use of multiple languages specific to large and growing markets and countries. This digital media presence will also be utilized to engage young people and bring them back to help conserve and promote local art and craft.
3. The local presence, local networks and capacities of district level associations will be mobilized for the purpose of fulfilling the overall FHAN goals. FHAN will evaluate and invest in these associations and build a strong base all over Nepal as part of this strategy.
4. Nepal is very diverse when we think of local craft, materials, artists and the diverse nature of the support these require. FHAN will expand its work to incorporate and promote this diversity by reaching out to these art and craft forms and ensure that they are conserved and promoted for all future generations.
5. FHAN's work should not be limited or compromised by the availability of resources (including access to finance) and must have a robust resource mobilization process which will be undertaken to make sure FHAN is well funded and capable to attain its goal.

Beyond the above priorities, there is a longer list of actions and outcome that need attention. Some of these include:

- Celebrating 50 years of FHAN
- Providing continuity to those activities that can create value to the FHAN goal
- Upgrade the FHAN design centre and attain its full potential and also as a revenue generation source
- Re-design training programs based on real needs of the members and the sector so that results can be achieved, and generate resources / revenue.
- FHAN secretariat will create a data base of proposed activities and track them on a priority basis.

Activity selection criteria and evaluation process

It is important to have simple selection criteria for choosing which activities to implement and which not to. This is what makes a strategy effective and aligned to the goals of FHAN. These are as follows

- Does the proposed activity help FHAN take a leadership position?
- Does the activity encourage inclusion across all craft, products and geography?
- Does the secretariat have the capacity to implement and are there gaps?
- Does it build on the past 50 years 'history'?

Case study for group work

Proposal for the Content development, design and publication of the Nepal Tourist Heritage Passport 2023

Nepal is a destination and a brand name that seems to sell itself. From young adventure sports seekers to the mature academics, everyone seems to love coming to Nepal and spending some time and money here. It seems that modern day tourism began with the first 22 visitors brought by Thomas Cook in 1956. The numbers have grown steadily and so has the spending per tourist. In those days the US dollar

was worth less than ten Nepali rupees. Planes had to land at the Gaucharan, a cow grazing field. Nepal's tourism sector has come a long way since then.

Nepal Tourist Heritage Passport – a fun tool for visitors to Nepal

The Government of Nepal is a world leader in terms of protection and management of its globally unique built, natural and cultural heritage. It is now time to show our success to the world and generate revenue for the conservation and management of these sites by making sure that the tourists who visit Nepal are

- Well informed about what is available in Nepal in terms of heritage destinations and experiences
- Encourage the visitor to stay longer and to spend more with the full realization of their contribution to Nepal's conservation efforts
- To help equitably distribute the benefits of tourism across Nepal and manage over tourism in some areas.

Nepal cannot fit into one tourist passport

Nepal has so much to offer that there is no way everything can fit into one passport. The first one in the series of passports will include information on the following experiences on offer while in Nepal

- UNESCO designated World Heritage Sites (Kathmandu, Sagarmatha, Chitwan, and Lumbini)
- Major Pilgrimages including Muktinath, Janakpur, Namobuddha etc.
- Adventure sports
- Food experiences
- Shopping experiences

The passport will be designed to serve as a checklist for easy reference.

Life time experiences and Nepal Tourist Heritage Passport

What this passport will try and do is guide the tourist to have a life time experience that he /she will enjoy, pay for and tell others about it. Unlike a monument or temple, the experience will vary for each visitor. The passport will help each visitor to explore and have the experience they seek. We have to understand that Lumbini is not looking at three historical "stones", but having a true experience at the birthplace of the Buddha. This passport and the information it contains will be different and will contribute to the stated objectives above. Subsequent passports will feature more experiences in the future.

What will the Nepal Tourist Heritage Passport achieve for the sector?

Nepal in 2023 has over 50 airports, including three international, a good network of roads, wide choices of accommodation and good human resource base to cater to a wide variety of tourists. There is a wide range of local foods, drinks, fruits to choose from. Handmade gifts are growing in variety and quality. Many Nepalis have travelled abroad and know what the tourist needs and how to set expectations. The

contribution of tourism to national GDP is still low but growing. The components that are imported for tourism needs are huge and so are the investments being made by Nepalis and FDI. Jobs are the key and direct impact that is also growing.

Updated information to ensure accuracy and relevance

The Nepal Tourist Heritage Passport will be supported by a QR code and links to all the relevant government websites and information portals. The passport will not contain all the information but the needed links. The life time experiences that Nepal offers must be real time and from the comfort of the knowledge that one can stay connected at all times. There is no practical way to capture all the information in a tourist passport but by leveraging technology we can ensure the widest possible coverage and inclusion.

The content, design and publication method/process

The passport (sample attached) will contain information on Nepal, the various destinations and the life time experiences that we want the tourists to have and take away with them. The information will be presented in the form of a checklist along with things to do while in Nepal and with spaces to receive stamps as the tourist moves around Nepal. The idea is to get them to do and experience as many things listed as possible. The passport itself will serve as a souvenir to remember the trip to Nepal by and to show friends and family. This will help boost number of tourists, the days they spend here and what they spend.

Passport in Hindi, Chinese and other popular languages

Given the higher number of visitors who are expected from India and China, we shall make arrangements to publish the Nepal Tourist Heritage Passport in Hindi and major Chinese languages. The experiences will also be adapted to the needs of the two categories and information that is relevant to them will be included. Many things will be the same for both groups. The passport is a simple and fun tool and will be easy to replicate at the province and local levels. Hanumandhoka Museum has already made a “passport” for visitors. Many of whom are Nepali.

Estimated budget and resources required

- Research and content development
- Design, layout and pre-press ready copy and QR code
- Printing/shipping
- Publicity/orientation for relevant entrepreneurs and government employees
- Launch event

Case study 3 for group work

Program for launching guided tours for Nepali visitors with special focus on school children at all Government museums across Nepal

The Government of Nepal currently runs nearly ten museums across Nepal and has permanent staff hired for the purpose of guided tours at these museums. While tourists generally are accompanied by a

tour guide, Nepali visitors have to rely on their teacher and go through the museum on their own. We have designated guides, information officers as well as other museum staff who can help Nepali visitors and school children to have a true learning experience at our museums.

The museum experience is as good as the museum guide

Nepali museums are some of the best in the world and have a unique collection and displays that can help the Nepali visitors, and specially school children to

- To understand Nepal, its history, culture, economy and people better and make them well informed citizens.
- Provide an opportunity for every Nepali visitor to appreciate the diversity of Nepal and why it has a unique place in the world
- Help students do better academically by having a chance to visit and experience places where historical events happened and get to know more about the people they read about in the textbooks
- Be able to become better “ambassadors” for Nepal

These objectives can be fulfilled only if we have well trained museum guides who love their work and are equipped with the needed resources and materials to do their work well.

The positive experience at the museum will only be as good as the guide. This positive experience will

- Bring more Nepalis to the various museums across Nepal
- Generate revenue for the museum and all the businesses at the museum and around them
- Help build up a well-informed citizen base that can tell Nepal’s story better to the world.

Museums as the classroom for young minds

Properly trained and motivated museum guides will help turn museums into effective learning classrooms. The guide must ensure that the enthusiasm of young Nepalis who come to our museums reach even higher levels when they leave. They will then become the best spokespersons for the museums. Schools across Nepal must be encouraged to organize educational travel and learn more about our own country through museums and our guides. Few schools today know about the biodiversity museum at Tikauli, the natural history museum at Swayambhu or the army museum at Chhauni. These assets are all part of the classrooms that young Nepali need to access.

Investing in our museums and our museum guides

There is a general perception that museums are boring places where they store dead artifacts in glass boxes. It is the museum guide who will bring these objects and displays to life. The collections the museums have are indeed “priceless” but their true value will be understood if we make a small investment in our guides and provide them the needed trainings and tools to tell the story of these collections better. This will be a small part of what has already been spent. This will be the software that brings the hardware to life.

Indicative budget for the program launch (2023/2080 BS)

1. Inventory and survey of all guides and potential guides in Nepali museums (standard form)
2. Design of content for guide training
3. Seminars and workshop for museum guides
 - a. Kathmandu
 - b. Chitwan
 - i. Resource persons (2-3)
 - ii. Resource materials
 - iii. Logistics: Venue /food/ transport
4. Guide resources/ tools/materials/
5. Certificates/ closing ceremony
6. Promotion of program / signage
7. Promotional activities for visitors

Map with museums and staff available across Nepal (To be prepared after initial survey)

Draft format for a typical day at the museum

- The calendar of holidays, schedule and fees will be widely circulated on the various museum websites
- There will be three guided tours conducted by each museum guide per day
- The tours, name of the guide and the timings will be posted on a board in public areas and close to the ticket counter
- There will be internet portals by which schools can pre book the guided tour at each museum.
- The proposed timings will be 11am, 12.30pm and 2.30pm exclusively for schools and one additional tour for Nepali visitors.
- The students will pay the standard entry fee but the guided tour will be free (no additional charges)
- Services such as canteen, publications, copies of information will be on sale

Over time, museums will be able to sell books, coin collecting albums, replica and copies of artifacts etc. in order to sustain the expenses of the museum.

Communities and Kings

Sustaining Patan Museum through Community Engagement

A whole generation of Nepalis has grown up with the notion that the beautiful monuments at Patan Durbar Square were built by kings. If you take a closer look at Krishna Mandir, you will notice that the many *gajurs* or pinnacles on the temple are different. If the king had built them or if the state had paid for them they would all be the same.

Photo of Krishna Mandir with museum at back

The reason for them being different is because different communities must have crafted them separately and then contributed to the building of the globally unique temple dedicated to Krishna. If the kings had done this on purpose, then we must recognize how wise they must have been in those days. This is how we also need to approach the sustainability of the Patan Museum. Community engagement is the key.

Tea and coffee economy

At the Patan Durbar Square, we can buy tea from Ilam and coffee from Syanja. The three communities are already linked but not in a formal manner. If these local governments could work together, the volume and quality could be upgraded. There are huge benefits to all these communities in terms of job creation, income and the ability to pay for health and education. We have not told the story of how this linkage is actually functioning and the value being created in all the three places. This could be the first step.

You can meet a waitress from Myagdi, a metal craftsman from Gajuri and the fruit and vegetable vendor from the terai and all are supporting their families back home. It is because so many people benefit from these monument zone that it has become easier to generate support for heritage conservation in Patan and across Nepal. The tour guide, the handicraft vendor, the tourist bus drivers and the staff at Patan museum all have jobs because of the Patan Durbar Square and the Patan museum. The multiplier effects in the local community are even greater.

Museum without walls

The first and critical step towards engaging the community to sustain Patan museum must begin by understanding that there are no walls between the museum and the community. Patan itself is a living museum and the people who are engaged in art and craft, food and festivals are all contributing to making Patan a truly wonderful experience for locals and foreigners alike. The museum just happens to be a great place to tell the story of Patan, the Kathmandu valley, Nepal and the entire Asian continent and its communities.

One big challenge is that the word "museum". It is not a good word to describe what happens here. A museum means a place to store and display dead and inert objects and hence young people tend to stay away. Patan museum is a happening place with events and festivities all year around. The beautiful buildings and courtyards are part of the bigger city and connected to the daily life of the people. The

water spout, Manga Hiti, still flows, the annual Krishna Janma-astami attracts people from near and far. The annual Bhimsen-jatra makes the monument all part of our life and living heritage.

Only if young people visit

Like all things in the world, sustainability has to do with young people and whether they like what they see at Patan Museum. If young people do not come here, then we know we need to change the way things are being done. All across Nepal, young people are travelling with their friends, their family and school. Why would they come to Patan? Do we have housing for young people? Where will they eat? Is transportation affordable for young people?

Photo of heritage passport and school children

Bringing young people from schools all over Nepal will be a great way to ensure that the Patan museum, the city and its entrepreneurs can sustain. The *heritage passport*, that is now becoming popular, needs to be launched across Nepal so that young people come to the Patan museum and Patan city. They need to travel, they need to eat and need safe and secure places to spend the night. All this sounds like revenue for the city and hence for the museum. The reverse is also true. Kathmandu school children need to travel across the country. We need to create a win-win economy for all.

Federal Nepal and local leadership

A federal Nepal demands that local governments not just seek more power but also begin to generate local resources to serve the people. If the Patan museum is a critical part of the revenue stream for Patan municipality, resources must be set aside for its up keep. Resources are not just money, but skilled people and services that will ensure Patan Museum remains a world class venue. Municipal leaders have travelled on enough study tours to know what is needed and how things need to be done. Before federalism, you could blame the central government, but not anymore.

Home-stays have become an important part of ensuring that visitors have a truly lifetime experience. The local government has to think beyond taxes and must facilitate the supply of essential services such as water, clean energy, security and access to medical services. Here again, the revenue generated must be used to sustain the museum and all the areas around it. We cannot “kill the goose that lays the golden egg.” In creating the win-win economy the Patan museum must benefit as well. It is a means to a much greater end.

Management for sustainability

In the past, resources came from donors and this reliance on aid and charity must be diversified for long term sustainability. We need to thank all the countries and foreign agencies who have helped the Patan museum in the past. A part of the available resources must now be invested to ensure financial and broader sustainability. We must develop more skills than those associated with writing donor proposals. We cannot just highlight our weakness and gaps but show our strengths and opportunities.

We can start by launching a “**friends of Patan museum**” campaign. The museum shop and restaurant need to be marketed better. Ticket sales are good but visitors who pay need better facilities including parking, toilets and drinking water. Events at the museum have to be selected better to add value and cover the revenue gap. All this requires better management skills and re-orientation. We may need new

skills and a more corporate approach. Sustainability will depend on how we manage the business of Patan Museum.

Case Study: Hanuman Dhoka

Nepal is located in the middle of Asia and Hanumandhoka Durbar (Palace) is located at the centre of Nepal. What a great location to teach and learn about the history of Nepal and Asia. Einstein was fond of saying that “imagination is more important than knowledge”. Let us imagine the true potential of Hanumandhoka and why it is a UNESCO designated World Heritage Site. Which student or researchers of history of Asia would not like to attend the University of Hanumandhoka? We know that little has been studied and taught about this part of the world.

The timing is good and Nepal needs new ideas to wake up society and government about the true potential of what Nepal has for its future prosperity. The use of this great asset only as a tourist destination is of very low value and benefits only a few. The main palace and the surrounding city is at present an open museum. In the last 2000 years or more, many events took place at this site from the visit of Chinese scholars to invasions from Bengal. Imagine how many students of Buddhism would have rested here before going to Tibet to become great masters. Imagine all the traders who moved up and down the Himalayan valleys making a profit for themselves and for Nepal. Imagine all the political decisions made in these courtyards that have shaped the current modern state of Nepal.

Every staircase, window or courtyard has a story waiting to be told, written about and spread across Nepal and globally. The sounds of Hanumandhoka, the many festivals that take place here need to be better understood. Their origins still evade us and we are, at best, re-telling fables that sound believable. We need to get to the root of these for the future generation and we owe it to them.

Managed as a centre of excellence

The word ‘university’ may dampen the enthusiasm of many when they compare what we have in mind with the state of existing learning institutions. The one we have in mind is a centre of excellence and should be able to compete with the best around the whole world. Nepalis should not undermine what we are capable of doing. If we can excel around the globe, we can do it here at home. The fact that the old palace and the nearby monuments, historical spaces, and shrines will take care of half of what we need, we will need a great curriculum, a world class faculty, physical and modern learning and teaching spaces, housing, canteens and connectivity. All this really means is that we shall realize the true value of Hanumandhoka. Imagine attending a lecture at the GaddhiBaithak.

Dedicated to those who forget the past

As we move forward, as a country and as a region, there are many things one can learn from our past. There is a really good reason why and how the great Hanumandhoka palace was built, why it went into decline and why it is empty at night. There is a popular belief that history does not repeat itself, but people who forget history keep repeating the same mistakes. The wars around the world, the political decisions we make, the rise and fall of businesses and failed states could be avoided if we were willing to

learn and help chart societies into the desired future state. Hanumandhoka can be the place where we do this for our part of the world. Few places still exist in such good state and the recovery work done after the 2015 earthquake will help.

Extended Hanumandhoka

The events that took place in Hanumandhoka are linked to events that happened in Gorkha, Nuwakot, Kerung and Kuti. Some happened at nearby sites like Rana Mukteshwar and BhimMukteshwar. Others are linked to the famous temple of Tripureshwar and KalmochanGhat. All these historical sites must become an integral part of being able to tell the history of Nepal with Hanumandhoka as the centre. Many of these sites have become squatter settlements, parking spaces and are in a dilapidated state. Imagine their value as places of learning and research for the future generation. The statue of Tripurasundari must be waiting to be noticed and her story told to everyone. Let us not allow them to decay and disappear.

Wanted: teachers, researchers and students with imagination

This idea will take off when enough people know the true value of the World Heritage asset and join in and start a larger public debate. We have many teachers, researchers and students among us who are often frustrated because they do not have a real challenge at hand. This project can motivate many people and also give us a good reason to come together. This could be the project that unifies us and gives the needed sense of purpose. Imagine what the city government makes by parking two wheelers and what we can make by establishing and managing a world learning centre at Hanumandhoka. We can even start by running a few classes for history and art /craft and then keep expanding as we learn more and have access to more resources. We need to start somewhere. We cannot wait till all the pieces are in place.

Police station into world class living spaces

Today when heads of state or governments and dignitaries visit Nepal, they have no option but to stay at a commercial hotel/property. Why can we not convert the police station to the west side of Hanumandhoka palace into a world class living space for our state guests. It will generate the needed resources for our university instead of paying a commercial hotel. All the state dinners and receptions can be held at the beautiful and historical courtyards in and around Hanumandhoka. The GaddhiBaithak could be renewed as a place for Nepal to receive credentials from diplomats. The festivals at Nasal Chowk would continue as they have done for centuries and the world would know more about Nepal through the media that come with the dignitaries.

Tourists and foreign students welcome

The current arrangement of Hanumandhoka as a tourist destination need not change. They can pay a fee and get a guided tour by guides, students and faculty and can even attend some of the lectures and guest lectures that may be taking place on particular days. The festivals and the chariot pulling will continue as they have for centuries. The only difference is that the new status as a university will create and add real value to everything that happens here. These tours may actually help enrol more students and faculty each year. This will be like no place in the world. The gift shop could be upgraded with books

and hooded jackets, the “Sounds of Hanumandhoka” sound track, posters, T-shirts, and miniatures of all things at Hanumandhoka.

Heritage Passport

The Hanumandhoka museum has launched the Heritage e-passport as a creative learning tool for visitors and students. Soon there will be a “hard copy” version that can be stamped and taken as a souvenir. This passport has the basic information and a map of what you can do, see and have a bit of information on each location. This needs to be expanded into 3-D modelling and prepare detailed publications on each of the amazing assets that are housed at Hanumandhoka. The museum development committee has done a good job of placing many items on display with captions; but much more can be done. We need artists and craftsmen and women to carry out repair, make replicas and miniatures for sale at the gift shop.

Benefitting the whole community

There is a real challenge to mobilize the needed resources to manage such a great World Heritage site like Hanumandhoka. The local people are tired of always being told what they cannot do and benefit little from being close to these monument zones. The idea of a university means the economy in and around are going to get the much needed boost that they deserve. The local people can supply the needed goods and services and prosper with Hanumandhoka. There will be jobs created and a vibrant economy around food, housing, IT services, transport, clothes, stationary, and art and craft. The whole area will become an economic hub that will generate resources rather than be a liability for Nepal.

Supply chains

The backward and forward economic linkages of the University of Hanumandhoka will reach far and near. The nearby places will be able to supply much of what is needed to consume here. Coffee and tea will come from as far away as Ilam and Syanja. Everyone talks of promoting Nepali goods and services. We need to create these centres of consumption. We can promote sustainable life styles and consumption in these areas and serve as a model for the whole world. The river front properties at the Bishnumati will be prime property for rental to students and faculty. The river will become clean as a result of the value created. This could become a win win for everyone including our desire to protect and conserve our globally unique heritage.