



## Narma Devi Bista

"I have lived in Khar VDC all my life. As a young girl, I really wanted to study, but at that time, the practice of sending daughters to school did not exist. I got married to my husband when I was 16. He consults me in family matters, and provides enough income for our children and us. This way, all our children are able to go to school.



I used to stitch clothes at home before the training, before I got into allo. Last year, I got in touch with the allo group in Godhani, and received training on stitching in Kathmandu for three weeks. My stitching has improved a lot as a result.

The training also changed a lot within me. I could not speak in front of men or groups of people before this. Since participating in the training, I have become more confident about speaking in front of people. The training also changed our community. We didn't really know about allo before. The plant was just lying in the jungle, rotting. We now know the potential of allo. We can make clothes or other products out of it, and it gives us, especially women, the opportunity to receive trainings, get jobs and generate higher incomes. This improved our lifestyle, and also encourage other women to join our allo processing group."



## Jogini Manyal

"I got married when I was 12 years old. Two years later, I gave birth to a daughter. When she was six months old, my husband left for India to find work. I have no idea what happened to him afterwards. He disappeared. I had to move back in with my parents in order to provide a good home for my daughter and myself.



For the past 12 years, I have mostly been a housewife. As a child, I was already interested in knitting. My mother always told me that she would support me for as long as she lived, but that I would have to do something for myself, learn something, and develop skills that would support me. I knew I needed change in my life to make sure I could provide for my daughter and myself. So, I joined the Godhani Allo Group and received my first training on thread making. Later, I had the opportunity to go to Kathmandu for more training.

Before I became a part of the allo group, I had no real social life, no community circle. In our group, we can talk to each other, release our frustrations, and motivate each other. The group gives us all confidence, and encourages us to reach higher."



# Breaking New Ground with Allo



How the allo value chain has changed livelihoods and business in far-western Nepal

## About the Kailash Sacred Landscape

Located within the remote southwestern portion of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, adjacent districts in the Far-Western region of Nepal, and the northeastern flank of Uttarakhand State in northern India, the Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL) is spread over an area of about 31,000 km<sup>2</sup> and represents a diverse, multi-cultural, and fragile landscape.

The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) is a transboundary collaborative programme between China, India, and Nepal that has evolved through a participatory, iterative process among various local and national research and development institutions within these countries. The programme aims to achieve long-term conservation of ecosystems, habitats, and biodiversity while encouraging sustainable development, enhancing the resilience of communities in the landscape, and safeguarding the cultural linkages between local populations.

## About Transboundary Landscape Initiatives in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region

The Hindu Kush Himalayan region is extremely varied, yet there are many interlinkages between biomes and habitats as well as strong upstream-downstream linkages related to the provisioning of ecosystem services. The Convention on Biological Diversity advocates for the use of landscape and ecosystem approaches for managing biodiversity in the region, recognizing the need for increased regional cooperation. ICIMOD and its partners have identified six transboundary landscapes for programmatic cooperation. From west to east, these are: Hindu Kush Karakoram-Pamir, Kailash, Everest, Kangchenjunga, Far Eastern Himalayas, and Cherrapunjee-Chittagong. The transboundary landscape concept makes it possible to address the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources (biodiversity, rangelands, farming systems, forests, wetlands, and watersheds) in landscapes defined by ecosystems rather than administrative boundaries. The approach is people-centred and includes cultural conservation, which is an essential first step to resource conservation efforts in the region and helps translate collaborative action into sustainable and equitable development.

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## Narendra Singh Dhimi

"When I was studying in grade nine, my father asked me to go abroad to earn money for the family. So I went to Qatar and worked there for three years. When I got the chance to come back home, I thought that doing something in Nepal would be better than continuing to work in Qatar.



During my stay in Qatar, my family told me about the work being done by ICIMOD, RECAST and different NGOs with regard to allo. So when I came back home, I began working with these organizations. I hadn't received any specific training, but over the course of a few years, I have become a community leader responsible for selecting people for the training provided by SABAH. They make allo products, sell them in the market and earn some money to improve their livelihoods.

I have seen changes take place in my family's and my community's thinking since we started working with allo and training to use it. We are now aware of better techniques and know how to conduct business. Now, I see myself as a businessman who has experienced, first hand, the positive effects of the changes brought about by ICIMOD, RECAST and SABAH in my community."



## Experiences from the National Handicraft Exhibition in Kathmandu

This past May, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), in collaboration with the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC), Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology (RECAST) and SABAH Nepal, launched the 'Kailash' brand ("Kailash-Truthly Sacred") at the Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall in Kathmandu, Nepal, during the 13th National Handicraft Exhibition.

Community members behind the production of Kailash brand goods were on hand at the fair to showcase their products.

Madan Raj Pandey is associated with *nigalo* (Himalayan bamboo) and *riitha* (soapnut) businesses in Darchula. According to Pandey, handicraft products such as *daalo* (traditional bamboo storage baskets) and *namlo* (flat pieces of woven rope used for supporting large load-carrying baskets), and processed *riitha* products received the greatest market attention at the exhibition.

Similarly, Sher Singh Bahara, a member of the community facility centre for allo (Himalayan nettle) in Khar, Darchula, said that allo topi (caps) and pakhi (mats) had been highly appreciated by visitors.

When asked about the exhibition, Binita Maharjan from SABAH said that *riitha* products from Darchula and traditional *daalo* from the far-western region of Nepal were amongst the most sold. In the case of allo, she said that numerous manufacturers had shown an interest in obtaining allo thread and fabrics for their own products.



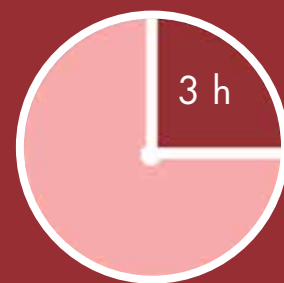
# INCOME

## Amount of time needed to boil allo bark by rocket stove

Required before allo training

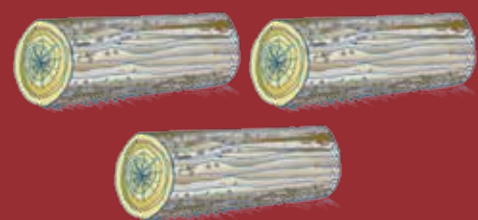


Required after allo training



## Amount of fuel wood needed to boil allo bark by rocket stove

Required before allo training  
240 kg



Required after allo training  
80 kg



## Earned Income, per kg, of allo thread

- Before allo training: NPR 800
- After allo training: NPR 1,100

## Market Outreach and Private Sector Engagement in the Allo Value Chain in Nepal

**Before allo training:** Local markets only

**After allo training:** Producers learned how to engage linkages set up through SABAH which facilitate the process of reaching out to national and international markets with buyback guarantees. These linkages also present opportunity for additional skills enhancement trainings at various nodes along the chain to produce international standard products.

## The Development of the Kailash Brand

“Back in our village, we don’t sell our products with tags and logos, but here everything is so systematic and the Kailash brand has added so much value to our products. Whenever customers have asked me about the Kailash brand, I have felt very proud telling them that the brand is from our village. Now I understand its value.”

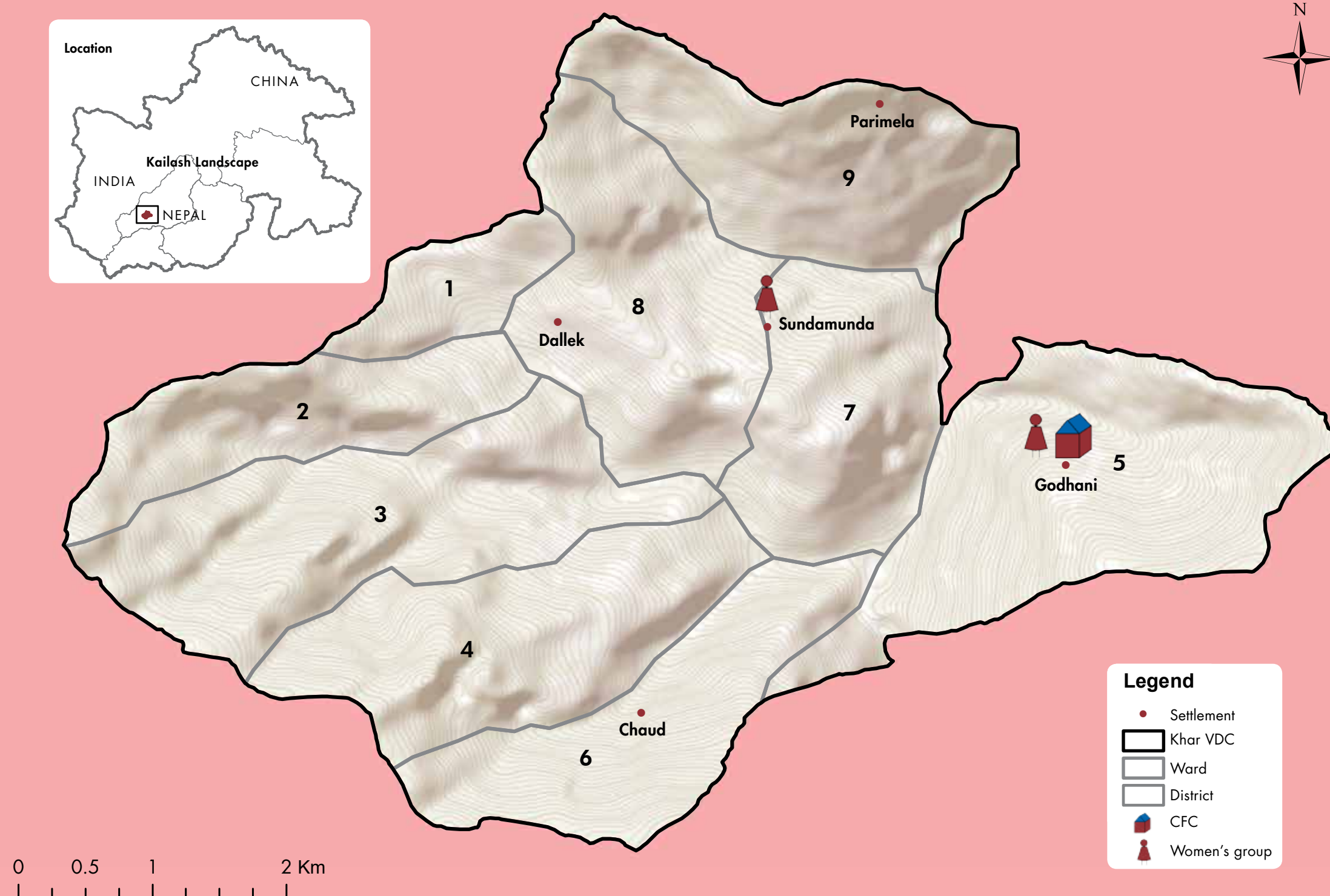
– **Narendra Singh Dhami**, team leader, Khar VDC



Engaging the private sector contributes to the development of a common branding mechanism for the products being produced across the Kailash landscape under the “Kailash–Truly Sacred brand”. This brand is being promoted by private sector agencies in Nepal and India. Government partners will monitor the brand for quality compliance.

“We are branding it Kailash, so that it will be easier for consumers to differentiate among various products available in the market. This is the reason why we are trying to create an umbrella brand of Kailash and to integrate the various products of the Kailash region.”

– **Robin Amatya**, CEO, SABAH Nepal



# Community Facility Centre (CFC)

- Between June and October 2016, a CFC was constructed with locally available material at Godhani, Khar VDC. ICIMOD and the local community combined resources to build the centre which houses a handloom and several sewing machines.
- The Godhani CFC has 78 members.
- Five members of the Godhani CFC received training on the daily operation of the CFC. Information on a code of conduct for members to comply to was also provided.
- Members are spinning the allo thread at home and going to the CFC to weave them into cloth.

## Number of people earning a regular income from CFC

Bhumiraj Allo Processing and Collection Centre, Godhani

30

## The Development of Women's Enterprises

More than 25 women's enterprises have been developed at various nodes along the allo value chain. Since receiving training, all of these women have been employing improved techniques to spin allo thread at home. Seven women in Godhani have started their own tailoring businesses. Of the trained women, five are knitting products per the development and design training provided by SABAH. The remaining women are making thread and using equipment at the CFC to weave fabric, which is then provided to the stitching group to make various products such as allo bags, purses, coats, and other items which are being sold under the Kailash brand by SABAH.

### Members of the Bhumiraj Allo Processing and Collection Centre, Godhani



“Allo has changed the perspectives of women in Khar; they have begun to think beyond their kitchens and their livestock sheds.”

– **Govinda Singh Thagunna**, Godhani

### Members of the Shree Kedarnath Allo Collection and Processing Centre, Sundamunda



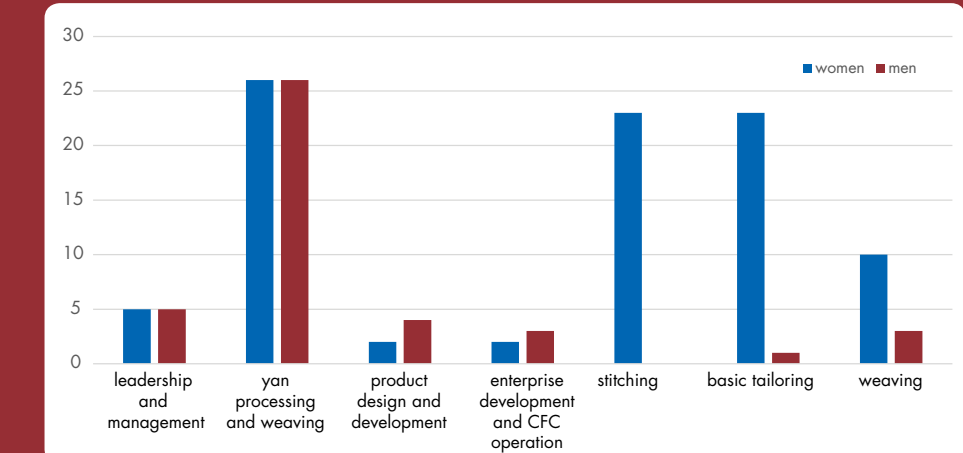
# SKILL

Over the course of two years, the Kailash Initiative provided trainings that progressed in complexity, starting with basic skills and included advanced trainings and refresher courses as well.

## Number of trainings

12

## Training topics covered and attendance by sex



Training	Before Training	After Training
Yarn Processing and Weaving Training Bhumiraj Allo Processing and Collection Centre, Godhani	C+	B+
Yarn Processing and Weaving Training Shree Kedarnath Allo Collection and Processing Centre, Sundamunda	C	B
Stitching Training Bhumiraj Allo Processing and Collection Centre, Godhani	B	B+

### Classification descriptions

- A +** Capable of making products independently with little guidance from an instructor. Eligible for advanced level training.
- A** Capable of making products with guidance from an instructor. Eligible for advanced level training.
- B+** Good skills, but fine-tuning for quality products is missing. Can be considered for advanced level training.
- B** Potential for better skills, but not yet improved enough to be up to the mark.
- C+/C** Not much improvement. Further training needed.

# LEADERSHIP

The Kailash Initiative focuses on building the capacity of the local population to start and run their own businesses. The leadership trainings covered the following topics:

- Clear vision of the process of CFC establishment.
- Understanding the roles and responsibilities of a leader.
- Understanding the importance of group and team work.
- Clarity on the documentation and reporting processes.
- Clear understanding of the value chain model.
- Understanding of marketing, store and inventory management, as well as customer relations.

“The 15 days of this training programme have changed my whole perspective towards the work I do. When I saw allo products at the Hansiba store, I realized their market potential. One day, I want to see allo products made by us in Darchula, Nepal, at the store in India.”

– **Sunmati Manyal**, participant, leadership training, Darchula