



DOLPO TULKU CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



Completion Report

UPPER DOLPO: EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROJECT

December 2021

Executive Summary

The impact of COVID-19 pandemics on food safety and security is not unknown from its emergence. The World Food Program reported that some 272 million people are facing or at risk of facing acute food insecurity as of 2021. And Nepal is not an exception. The unfolding crisis has affected food systems and threatened people's access to food via multiple dynamics. We have witnessed a major disruption to food supply chains in the wake of lockdowns triggered by the global health crisis and a major global economic slowdown. These crises have resulted in lower incomes and higher prices of some foods, putting food out of reach for many. Similarly, Dolpo, one of Nepal's highest and remotest regions, also witnessed food insecurity as the Government imposed restrictions on harvesting Yartsagunbu the previous year. Further, the Tibetan seasonal trade center at the border has remained closed for two years in a row. Hence, the locals neither had the money to buy nor the place to purchase the basic food supplies like flour, butter, tea, oil, and other essential supplies. In response to the request of the local government authority who witnessed food insecurity as a major challenge amongst the families in these communities, the Dolpo Tulku Charitable Foundation (DTCF) partnered with the different national and international organizations working in Dolpo to implement a food relief program. The program was implemented in close coordination with three rural municipalities of the Upper Dolpa. At the end of the program 755 families which included elderly, physically differently abled, single parents (widowed or divorced) who are most susceptible to food insecurity.

This ration relief activity was launched in July 2021 to provide food security to the families for one and a half months until their crops harvesting season. Together with its partners, DTCF was involved in Purchasing, Packing and Delivering the food. The respective local Government executed the distribution. In the community where the Project was implemented, the local authorities identified the families, i.e., ward chairpersons and members.



The selection was prioritized based on their vulnerability (Women headed Household, child-headed Household, differently-abled people with existing health conditions.). At the end of the Project, it has positively impacted the vulnerable families by ensuring food security for at least one and a half months.



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01 Project Background

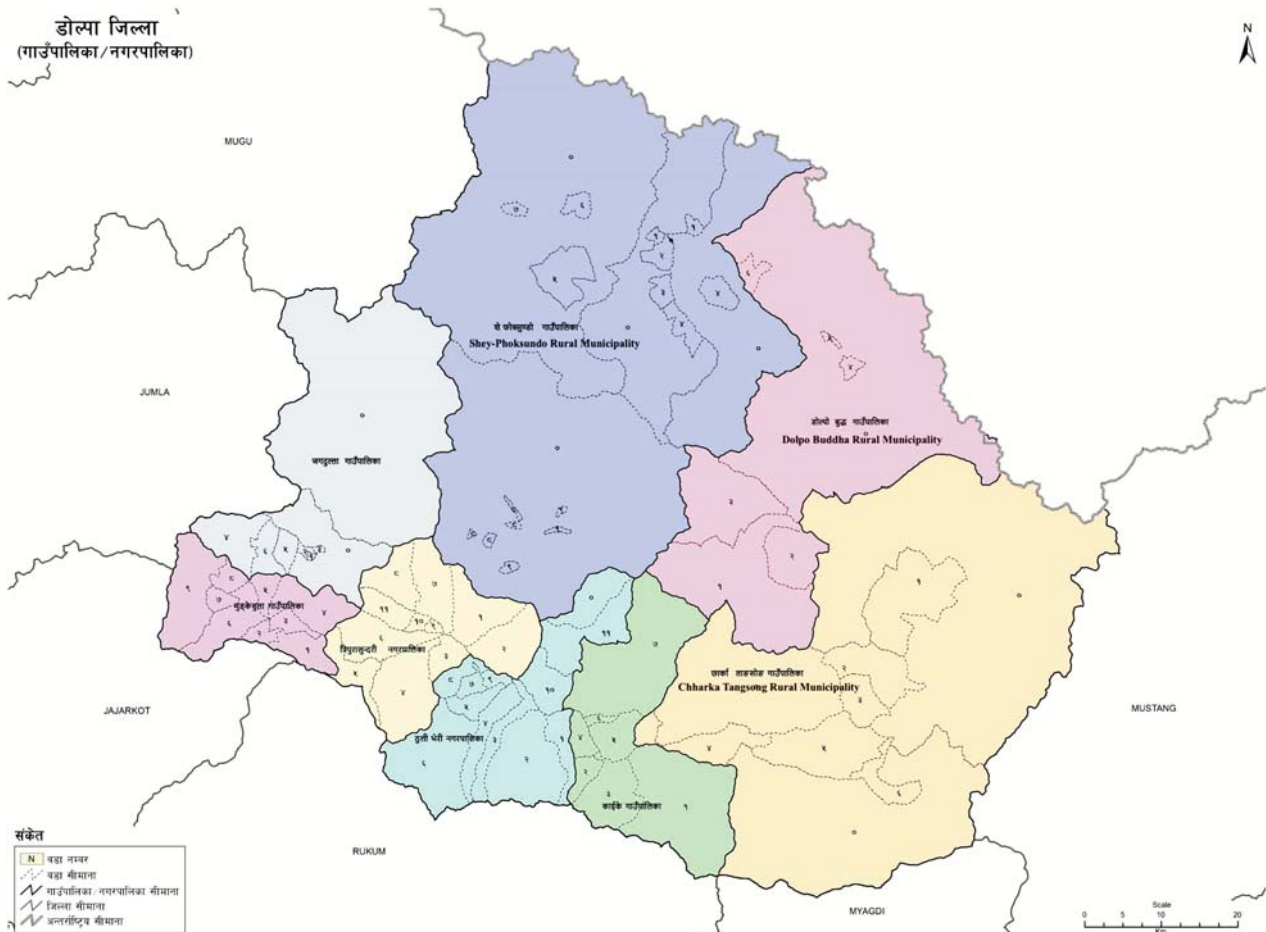
The outbreak of COVID-19 and the lockdown measures that followed had a significant impact on our food systems and soon became a litmus test for the extreme inequalities of our times. Disruption to food supply chains, loss of income and livelihoods, and uneven food price trends in localized contexts affected food security and nutrition worldwide. And in mountainous regions like Dolpo, the food insecurity rapidly escalated amongst the locals since the locally grown crops won't meet the needs year-round due to limited crops and cultivation land without any income source of direct cash. Hence, the lockdown has greater implications than the COVID itself. This gets even more complicated as these communities depend on trade at the Tibet-China border once a year to purchase food and supplies.

Further, the imposed restrictions on harvesting Yartsagunbu the previous year resulted in no source of direct cash income, and exhaustion of little savings. Hence, the locals neither had the money to buy nor

the place to purchase the basic food and other essential supplies.

In the past, the locals usually received 100 kgs of subsidized rice from the Provincial Government every year. But this time, in some of the rural municipalities, it was delayed due to various reasons such as lockdown and other factors, which resulted in challenges in the collection and transportation of rice packages.

With aims to improve the immediate food security of vulnerable families adversely affected by lockdown and exhaustion of their savings and stored food, the Foundation, and its partners, approved the Emergency Food Assistance Project in July 2021, with funding of NRP. 35,00,000. The Project's expected impact was to reduce the vulnerability of food insecurity in the target villages of the Upper Dolpa. Its desired outcome was improved access to sufficient food and another income source to local people through the handover of the transportation contract to three distribution points (Dho, Saldang and Kakot).



1.1 Project goal:

Provide food supplies to address the most urgent needs and prevent the scarcity of food items.



1.2 Project Objective:

By the end of the project, 755 of the most vulnerable families in Saldang, Namdo, Karang, Lhuri, Musi, Nyisal, Komaash, Kuwa, Tingyu, Polde, Shimen, Dho, Tokyo, Lang, Chharka, Kakot, Mukot, and Shang villages from three rural municipalities of the Upper Dolpa, identified by the ward chairmen, members, and key informants received 30 kgs worth of food supplies intended to last for one and a half months in collaboration with the local Government.



1.3 Criteria for the recipient selection:

1. The elderly, physically disabled, and other groups with special needs.
2. Families that are identified as the most vulnerable groups with little or no resources to fall back on by local leaders, youth, and key informants; Single-parent families (widowed, divorced or unmarried)

02 Project Implementation:

The Foundation carried out the responsibility of purchasing, packing, and delivering the rations to each village of the beneficiaries, considering all the stakeholders in this Project. And the local Government has actively executed the distributions of food supply once it was delivered to the pre-agreed place.

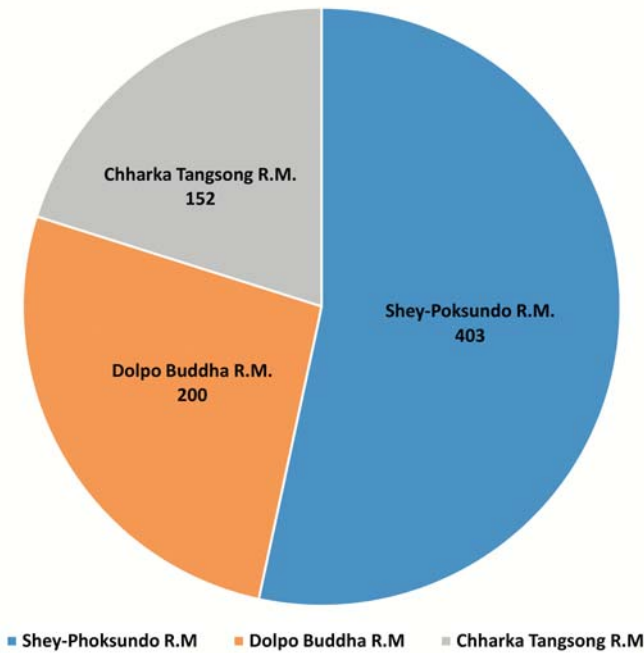
The Emergency Food Support Project was executed in close collaboration of all involved parties, where the responsibilities were as follows;

- **Dolpo Tulku Charitable Foundation:** Took the responsibility of coordinating with donors, procurement, packing, transportation, evaluation, disbursement, and finally, reporting.
- **Local Rural Municipalities:** Identified the vulnerable families under the set criteria and listed the names followed by the distribution and reporting back on the Project after the completion, along with the feedback and recommendation.
- **National and International Organization:** They acted as sponsors and reviewers and delivered inputs from their experience and recommendation.

Considering the urgent need for the budgetary support provided by the Project, the overall arrangements and implementation were satisfactory. Under the guidance and agreement amongst the budget supporting partners and local rural municipalities, DTCF effectively and efficiently managed procurement, storage, and distribution of a large quantity of food grains over a period. The supporting agencies, namely, the suppliers, mule men, and local ward chairman of the respective municipality, effectively and efficiently delivered, stored, and distributed the food grains to selected families.

03 Number of Beneficiaries:

No. of beneficiaries in each Rural Municipality



04 Project Results/Outcomes

Outcome 1: Stabilized or improved food consumption over the assistance period for targeted households.

The operation successfully ensured acceptable food consumption in the targeted vulnerable households by the end of the assistance period. A total of 755 vulnerable families (Approximately 60% headed by women) received benefits from the free food through the distribution project. Depending upon the place, the rice or flour (30 kg/household) was distributed to cover the rice consumption needs for one and half-months of the target vulnerable population.



The Project is rated effective as it fully achieved the outcome of improving food security through food

safety net coverage for the poor and vulnerable population affected by the pandemic.

Outcome 2: Provided an extra income source through the delivery contract.

The Project's approach of providing the transportation of food supply contracts to local villagers has ensured additional work, and almost 90% of transport of rations from Dunai to the respective village was all done by the local mule men. And this result achieved the outcome of ensuring additional income sources to Dolpopa through this Project.



05 Project Costs and Financing

The total cost of the Emergency food support project at completion was NRs. 37,20,825 /\$32,355 (Table 1). The project's cost increased slightly as we added the new recipients later since we missed some of the families and villages in the earlier name list besides the cost of the packing materials, which we didn't estimate at the time of calculating the project's budget.

The initial estimated project budget, including the administrative cost of the DTCF, was NRs. 36,13,428/\$31,421. Therefore, the difference between the estimated and actual costs was NRs. 1,07,397/\$934, which was the additional cost incurred for the project.

Table 1. Project Cost Summary

| Rural Municipality | Particular | Food Items | No. of Family | Quantity | Rate(NPR) | Amount(NPR) | Total (Nepali Rupees) |
|----------------------|---|--------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | (Rice/Flour) | | Kg/Family | Per Kilogram | No. of family * Qty * Rate | |
| Shey Phoksundo R.M | Food Items | Rice | 347 | 30 | 79 | NPR 822,390.00 | NPR 1,934,525.00 |
| | Delivery Cost(Dunai to Saldang) | | 347 | 30 | 105 | NPR 1,093,050.00 | |
| | Packing Materials | | | | | NPR 19,085.00 | |
| | Food Items(Rigmo & Pugmo) | Rice | 56 | 30 | 79 | NPR 132,720.00 | NPR 211,400.00 |
| | Delivery Cost(Dunai to Rigmo & Pugmo) | | 56 | 30 | 45 | NPR 75,600.00 | |
| | Packing Materials | | | | | NPR 3,080.00 | |
| Dolpo Buddha R.M | Food Items | Wheat Flour | 200 | 30 | 75 | NPR 450,000.00 | NPR 833,000.00 |
| | Delivery Cost(Dunai to Dho-Tarap) | | 200 | 30 | 60 | NPR 360,000.00 | |
| | Packing Materials | | | | | NPR 23,000.00 | |
| Chharka Tangsong R.M | Food Items(Chharka Village) | Rice | 36 | 30 | 70 | NPR 75,600.00 | NPR 176,400.00 |
| | Delivery Cost(Beni to Chharka) | | 36 | 30 | 90 | NPR 97,200.00 | |
| | Packing Materials | | | | | NPR 3,600.00 | |
| | Food Items(Rest of the villages) | Rice | 116 | 30 | 79 | NPR 274,920.00 | NPR 420,500.00 |
| | Delivery Cost(Dunai to Kakot) | | 116 | 30 | 40 | NPR 139,200.00 | |
| | Packing Materials | | | | | NPR 6,380.00 | |
| Add: | Total Cost of the Food Support Project | | | | | | NPR 3,575,825.00 |
| | DTCF Administration Cost | | | | | | NPR 145,000.00 |
| | Total Cost of Food Support in Dolpo (NPR) | | | | | | NPR 3,720,825.00 |
| | Total Cost of Food Support in Dolpo (USD) | | | | | | \$32,355.00 |

06 Evaluation of Performance:

6.1 Relevance

Project design at appraisal was highly relevant and remained unchanged during implementation and at closing. The scale of food insecurity witnessed by local authority amongst the vulnerable families of the Upper Dolpa since the locally grown crops don't meet the needs year-round and the dried up of their only cash incomes sources after the limitations on harvesting Yartsagunbu, there was a clear need for the Project and the Foundation processed the Project as an emergency measure at the Local Government's request. The outputs addressed both immediate consumption-support needs and the medium-term until their new crops harvesting time.



6.2 Effectiveness:

The Project is rated effective as per the local leaders and volunteers. It improved food security through food safety net coverage for the poor and vulnerable families affected by the continuous two-year closure of trade centers and constraints on their income sources, such as restriction of Yarsagumbu harvesting. Additionally, the handover of the transportation contract of food supplies to locals of particular villagers ensured additional income sources. All food supplies were procured, delivered, and distributed within the stipulated time except the Chharka and Dho-Tarap villages, where the delivery of the relief was deferred due to bad weather. In short, the project outcome and outputs were efficiently met as all outputs (Timely procurement, safe delivery, efficient distribution of relief, and increased availability of food for vulnerable households) were efficiently and effectively achieved.

6.3 Sustainability

The Project is rated less than likely sustainable. The outputs of the Project present a mixed picture in terms of sustainability. Usually, the Provincial

Government makes annual allocations of subsidized rice to families of the Upper Dolpa and has successfully responded in the past. But in the last years, due to the pandemic and nationwide lockdown, provincial budgets for subsidized rice were delayed and sort of remain uncertain. However, the funding of national and international organizations working in Dolpa for food security will eventually depend on the allocation of funding from provincial budgets, which in turn depends on the resources available and the degree of the organization's priority in this Project.



07 Issues, Lessons, and Recommendations:

7.1 Issues:

Our priority is to deliver the food supply to the vulnerable people as soon as possible, as the monsoon season was going on at the time of implementation of the Project, the challenge of the bad weather was there for mule men as they had to deliver the supply by trekking at least 2-3 days which resulted to maximum changes of dry food getting damage from rainfalls beside the suitable packings. Second, the arrangement of 378 mules within the stipulated time during the monsoon season was a bit of an issue. Most of the mule men were reluctant to make several trips back and forth due to uncertain weather and rough terrain as it might lead to accidents and the animal's death. In the reporting part, we confronted some difficulties in communicating, especially in receiving the photos and other information from the responsible person due to unstable and limited access to internet connections.

7.2 Lessons:

The key lesson from implementing the Project in collaboration with different donor organizations and local rural municipalities is follows. First, engaging the local Government and community in identifying vulnerable families, distribution, and supervising the relief activities with financial and technical support through the foundation yields rich dividends by bringing ownership of the Project. Second, the donor organizations were deeply involved in project funding, planning, supervision, and implementation and committed to robust oversight, which contributed significantly to successful implementation.

7.3 Recommendations:

1. Supply Chain Management:

It is critical, mainly as many low-income countries have limited port and bulk rail or road capacity, often leading to bottlenecks in transport that slow down commodity distribution. This has repeatedly proved a problem in landlocked countries like Nepal over the past decades. Therefore, the local Government of the three municipalities should work together internally and externally to figure out other supply chains rather than only depending on the China border.



2. Productivity enhancement support:

Quality seed and fertilizer distribution to small and marginal farmers should be done through a well-research, well-targeted, and well-managed system and based on farm sizes and potential of crops that could grow over there, which will provide additional sources of food for families of the Upper Dolpa.



The general public from Shey-Phoksundo RM has highly appreciated the group of sponsors who heart and toil to the people of Upper Dolpo in educating and health sectors.

Two consecutive years of Covid-19 was a devastating moment for people all over the world. Likewise, in other societies, Dolpopas was no different. Food crisis & medical supplies inadequacy were the most lacking for the communities of Dolpo. As a bandage for the swollen parts and ointment for the wound, Dolpo Tulku Charitable Foundation, in collaboration with sponsor groups, played a vital role in filling those inadequacies and crises.

We have no words to regard how thankful we are to the allkindhearted sponsors. Thanks a lot. Your humanity at the time of crisis was invaluable. If such crisis or pandemic reveals further, we have no more spaces to shout none other than you. Once again, thanks a lot, and we wish you long life. May god suffice your wishes and pray for the success of the entire sponsors.

*PemmaWangchen Dolpo
Ward Chairman, Namdo
Shey-Phoksundo RM, Dolpa, Nepal*

08 Project Partners:

A. Donor Organization

1. Dolpo Tulku e.V, Germany
2. HUMAN Stiftung, Germany
3. Altitude Project, Canada
4. Schulverein Lo-Manthang, Switzerland
5. Friends of Nepal, Germany
6. Chay-Ya Nepal, Nepal
7. Dolpo Mutual Aid

B. Local partners in the Upper Dolpo

1. Shey-Phoksundo Rural Municipality
2. Dolpo Buddha Rural Municipality
3. ChharkaTangsong Rural Municipality

