

# Newsletter

Jan & Feb 2026

## The Second Edition

In this edition, the Local Infrastructure Support Programme (LISP) is proud to shine a spotlight on the incredible women and members of marginalised communities who continue to reshape the landscape of local infrastructure across Nepal. The months of January and February have shown that inclusive development is not just a principle of LISP's work - the programme is trying to turn it into a reality by forming Users Committees (UC) where women are leading construction teams, and community members are collectively strengthening the resilience of their villages. This edition brings forward three stories women in Raralihi working on a river training project, inclusive UC in Maitada accelerating road improvements, and Musikot Rural Municipality's strategic prioritisation of a road improvement project.

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Women participants from settlement level displaying participatory project selection chart

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## Women lead flood resilience in Raralihi

The Raralihi community is located along the Tila Karnali river; the area is highly exposed to flooding because the Karnali basin experiences intense monsoon-driven surges which erodes its fertile apple-farming land and threatens the local livelihood. Through LISP's participatory planning support, the community identified this threat as its urgent priority and selected the Patarsangu–Kholakhani River Training Project, to manage the flow of the river so that it does not damage the settlement and land. The project applies gabion box structures designed to retain loose, landslide-prone soil and safeguard the agriculture land behind it.

Co-financed by LISP and Tila Rural Municipality, this river initiative in ward no. 2 ensures that local priorities translate into tangible and protective infrastructure. Before construction began, LISP supported capacity-building for the local UC by providing pre-construction training, strengthening the community's long-term technical skills. The project employs 60 workers – 52 of whom are women. Remarkably, all five skilled key positions (Chairperson, Co-chairperson, Secretary, Co-secretary, and Treasurer) are held by women. They are actively involved in weaving and assembling gabion boxes, packing stones, and supporting site supervision and quality assurance. Ms. Hira Shahi, an assistant sub-engineer from the Local Government (LG), further reinforces daily monitoring. This is a powerful example of women led community resilience, demonstrating ownership, technical ability, and commitment to protecting their community.

Once completed, the project will help local farmers significantly improve the productivity and economic potential of crops such as potatoes, apples, and beans by reducing the risk of river-induced damage.

To date, the project has achieved around 60% physical progress, with strong engagement from the LG representatives, officials, and the LISP team.



**UC workers piling stones for gabion boxes**



**UC workers weaving gabion box**

The project estimate includes a provision for separate toilets for men and women so that women have their own sanitation space. This simple but impactful provision reinforces LISP's broader commitment to inclusive, safe, and equitable working conditions, aligning with its goal of empowering women and marginalised groups to participate meaningfully in local infrastructure development.

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Ms. Kalasa Nepali, Raralihi’s UC Treasurer, clearly reflects the community’s pride and empowerment, “Any person moves forward by the principle of learning by doing or doing by learning, but here I have received both opportunities in the same place,” she says. She is elated as she is able to work within her own community. With her husband working in India due to limited local employment, she hopes that similar opportunities continue so that he can eventually return home and work within the community.

Looking ahead, the LISP team plans to assist the LG on Operation & Maintenance (O&M) guidelines and is developing mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability of the river training works beyond the project period.

As part of the climate resilience and disaster risk reduction (CR&DRR) approach, the project features a two-layered gabion structure with a geotextile filter placed behind them. After completing the installation and stone filling, the embankment will be back filled and locally suitable vegetation – such as *baish saplings* – will be planted to reinforce slope stability. These combined interventions will help protect the community for years to come, while showcasing the transformative power of women-led local action. ■

## Inclusive Users Committee drive progress in Maitada

The Maitada–Lispani Road Upgrading Project which covers approximately 540 metres, officially commenced on 1st December 2025, co-financed by LISP and Ward No. 8, Shivalaya Rural Municipality, Karnali. The Maitada–Lispani road serves as the primary route connecting several villages to Aireli Bazar, the central marketplace in Sima of Shivalaya Rural Municipality.

Before Nepal’s federal restructuring, residents walked nearly three hours to reach this trading center. With the establishment of Shivalaya Rural Municipality after the Constitution’s promulgation, the LG constructed a trail road extending from Aireli Bazar. Today, this route links Layanta, Pakha, Talligaun, Talloban, Pokhare, and Lispani, stretching all the way to Ward No. 8’s office—covering approximately 60 kilometers and transforming mobility across the region.

The project area includes 325 households with a population of 1,645 people—806 men and 839 women. By caste and ethnicity, 1,349 residents belong to Brahmin/Chhetri/Thakuri (BCT) communities, while 296 are from Dalit communities, and 10 individuals are persons with disabilities. This diverse population is now directly engaged in and benefitting from the road improvement efforts. To foster local ownership, a 46-member UC was formed with representation from all settlements. The committee includes 28 women and 18 men, with 8 Dalit members and 40 BCT members. The executive committee consists of seven members—six women and one man—including one Dalit representative, reflecting a genuinely inclusive leadership model.

By adopting a UC model, the project also generates short-term employment opportunities for households located along the road corridor, providing much-needed income and reinforcing community ownership. The project has sparked strong community optimism, as improved road connectivity will make it significantly easier for



Users Committee at the pre-construction training Maitada



#### Settlement level meeting Maitada

farmers to transport agricultural products to Aireli Bazar and beyond. Women, youth, and marginalised groups are actively participating in construction and decision-making activities, embodying the programme’s commitment to equitable development. The UC’s teamwork demonstrates exemplary community spirit, ensuring fair participation and shared responsibility.

The road upgrading design was developed based on extensive community consultations, inputs from local representatives, and findings from a detailed field survey. In 2025, LISP Technical Assistance (TA) led an exemplary settlement level planning process in Ward No. 8, ensuring broad participation from Pakha, Pokhare, and Lispani residents. During this process, several challenges surfaced in selecting projects for the annual plan. Villagers expressed concerns over projects omitted from the previous year and disagreements arose as different settlements advocated for their own priorities. The Ward Chairperson played a pivotal role by mediating discussions, encouraging consensus, and ensuring that community voices were respected. Ultimately, a set of appropriate and widely accepted projects was recommended for the municipal annual plan and budget. The design incorporates measures to reduce long-term risks, promote climate resilience, and enhance safety, while protecting the surrounding environment. It also systematically integrates Gender, Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) principles—ensuring that the road upgrade is not only technically sound but socially inclusive and future-ready.

Once completed, the upgraded road will bring substantial improvements to the daily lives of all 1,645 beneficiaries. Overall, travel will be safer, faster, and more reliable, facilitating easier access to markets, schools, health posts, and government services. Farmers will be able to transport crops more efficiently and at lower cost, strengthening local livelihoods. Improved connectivity will also ensure that ambulances and emergency services can reach communities more quickly—an essential factor during health emergencies or natural disasters.

Throughout implementation, the coordination between the Ward Chairperson and the UC Chairperson has been excellent, contributing to smooth execution and timely progress. As per the agreement with Shivalaya Rural Municipality, the project is scheduled for completion by March 2026—and current progress indicates it will be finalised within the planned timeframe. ■

## Strategic funding secures Musikot’s Historic Heritage



#### Construction site Musikot Durbar

The Musikot Municipality in Gulmi District, Lumbini Province in strategic partnership LISP, successfully implemented permanent landslide control measures to secure the historic Musikot Palace and its surrounding areas in ward no.2. This critical intervention has effectively mitigated a long-standing environmental hazard, ensured safety of approximately 15,000 residents and stabilised a vital regional transit road.

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Prior to Nepal’s transition to a federal structure, construction of motorable road near the palace site faced severe instability due to absence of integrated drainage system, combined with the region’s volatile clay-like soil (Kamero) composition. This led to frequent slope failures during the monsoon season. The landslides did not only disrupt transportation but also threatened a Dalit settlement comprising 10-15 households, forcing several families to abandon their ancestral homes. The persistent risk significantly impacted the safety of school-going children, local livestock, and the public.

Despite the urgent nature of the risk, the project remained pending for years due to the substantial capital investment required.



**Landslide control measure construction**

However, upon LISP’s launch in Musikot in 2024 (2081 BS), the municipality designated this site as a top-priority infrastructure project.

The Municipality executed this project with a total investment of NPR 12.5 million, structured through a collaborative funding model:

**LISP Contribution:** NPR 10 million

**Musikot Municipality Contribution:** NPR 2.5 million

The municipality managed the construction through a formal competitive bidding process. To ensure structural integrity and adherence to timelines, both municipal engineers and LISP technical teams conducted rigorous, routine monitoring throughout the construction phase.

The completion of these stabilisation structures yielded immediate benefits for the region:

**Regional Connectivity:** The intervention facilitates uninterrupted and secure travel for residents of Wards 1 through 4, while also improving the primary transit route to Ishma Rural Municipality and Dhorpatan, Baglung.

**Cultural and Tourism Preservation:** By securing the area around the historic Musikot Palace, the municipality has secured a vital cultural landmark, encouraging the return of internal tourism.

**Public Safety and Education:** The stabilisation provides a safe corridor for students and protects essential community infrastructure and agricultural assets.

Local stakeholders report a significant shift in the community’s socio-economic landscape. The permanent control of the landslide has restored confidence in local settlement patterns, stabilised property values, and created a more resilient environment for daily economic activities. ■

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**Use of AI Tools**

Copilot AI has been used in preparing this report. All AI assisted content has been thoroughly reviewed, contextualised, and edited for accuracy and relevance to the programme.