



IMPACT STORY

Sanu Maya Shrestha's journey towards independence

Sanu Maya Shrestha, age 33, residing in the rural municipality of Konjyosom, Nepal, is a successful entrepreneur engaged in multiple enterprises with the support of her husband Surya Narayan Shrestha. Prior to building their business, they were engaged in family agriculture and vegetable farming, which was not sufficient to meet the increasing expenses of the family. In 2008, they were able to take a small loan to start a grocery store. Thanks to the income from the store, in 2012 Sanu Maya started a small poultry farm which proved to be very profitable. Indeed, now they are running a farm with 4,500 chicks. The total monthly income of Sanu Maya is now above NPR 100,000 (approximately USD 860). This has also helped her in starting a milk collection center.

In 2019, Sanu Maya attended a business management training, as part of the project "Strengthening the Capacity of the Energy Sector to Deliver Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Results". This training gave her basic and fundamental business knowledge, such as accounting keeping, market analysis and how to build a relation with market actors and eco-system stakeholders. The training represented a further leap forward for her business. With the support of the project mentors, she registered the poultry farm, thus becoming the only one running a poultry farm professionally in that area.

Challenges

In building their business, Sanu Maya and her husband faced a number of challenges. Finance is a bottleneck for many starting businesses, including theirs. Access to loans is very difficult, as bank requirements are very strict and difficult to meet, and procedures usually take a very long time. Moreover, interest rates in cooperatives and microfinance are very high. With

support of the project mentors, she opened a bank account at Sanima Bank Ltd, where she applied for a loan request. The bank has completed its valuation process and at the stage of approval.

Similarly, she has been facing challenges for regular supply of inputs for poultry (feed, chicks and medicines), high mortality of chicken and secured market. She also realized that she needs to deepen her knowledge on how to operate a poultry business professionally. In order to address the challenges, the project has linked her with a leading poultry company of Nepal. The company will regularly supply inputs, provide technical supports (training and counselling) and provide buy back guarantee.

Future plans

Sanu Maya's plans for the future do not stop here. She is in the process to obtain a stable, higher power supply through the Electricity Users Cooperative (EUC), which will allow her to run a rice mill, and maintain the preferred temperature in the store and in the poultry farm, especially in winter. She also plans to add another modern poultry shed for regular production and supply. Similarly, the rice mill will allow her to produce poultry feed as a by-product.

"Women can be engaged in a large variety of activities. However, they need self-confidence, patience and support from their family. I encourage any women to try and start their own business"

**-Sanu Maya Shrestha
Women entrepreneur, Nepal**

