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NEPAL

SUCCESS STORY

Bajura carpenter carves out a successful future at home

After years of working abroad, USAID Local Works program helped a Nepali man learn the skills needed to succeed at home



Basanta Bahadur Shahi stands in his workshop where he crafts wood products and earns a livable wage to support his family. Shahi participated in a USAID Local Works training program and is now successful enough to not have to seek work outside Nepal. Photo credit Pratigya Silwal/USAID Nepal (2023)

USAID Local Works project in Bajura assisted 300 returning migrants and their families, ensuring they have the skills and support to prosper in Nepal.

Basanta Bahadur Shahi made the hard decision to migrate to India in search of a good-paying job after he was unable to make ends meet as a low-paid, unskilled carpenter in his native Bajura District. But after five years abroad, Shahi was no better off, as COVID-19 caused employment opportunities in India to dwindle. Shahi returned home to his wife and three children.

Back home in Sudurpaschim Province, in western Nepal, Shahi joined a skills training program through the United States Agency for International Development Local Works project. This program has helped him improve his employability, and he is now able to provide for his family.

“I was reconsidering going back to India for work when a whole day of work could not cover my family's basic living cost, but now I don't see the need and I feel confident that I can sustain my family with this business,” said Shahi.

The USAID Local Works project was launched in 2021 to enable vulnerable and marginalized communities to respond and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. In

Bajura District, the USAID Local Works activity courted 300 returnee migrants, like Shahi and their families, equipping them with skills-based training, both farm and off-farm, pig-farming, goat-farming, poultry, fruits and vegetable farming, bee-keeping, carpentry, masonry, tailoring, shoe making, and others to improve their livelihoods at home.

Shahi, one of the 300 returnee migrants, was selected to receive training through this program. In 2022, he participated in a 90-day carpentry course, acquiring skills and knowledge in using tools and machines to make furniture. The Local Works program also provided him with tools to start his business.

Because families have limited resources, the training and tools are instrumental for program participants. Since running a business requires company registration, immediately after the training Shahi partnered with a co-villager who already had a registered small furniture-making business and started working.

For more information about USAID Nepal's economic growth programs visit <https://www.usaid.gov/nepal/inclusive-economic-growth>