UN University Volunteers contribute to sustainable infrastructure in Nepal

Sustainable infrastructure impacts quality of life. As urbanization increases, the maintenance of infrastructure becomes a challenge for local governments. In Nepal, the engineering expertise of five UN University Volunteers contributed to infrastructure asset management at the local level, helping to improve the lives of many.

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While engaging with key stakeholders and elected officials, the group of five invest time to fully understand the impact of existing policies, laws and regulations on municipal asset management and areas of reform and improvement.

In this process, they also identify issues and document progress made in
infrastructure asset management within their municipalities. This documentation is part of the Public Asset Management System - supporting the local government in important decisions of how to best spend public money.

Volunteering within my community is an opportunity to support my municipality in initiating Infrastructure Asset Management (IAM) and learning how local governments function and manage infrastructure assets. --Shraddha Thapa, national UN University Volunteer Infrastructure Asset Management Associate with UNCDF, Hetauda sub-metropolitan city office

The IAM initiative in Nepal is part of a joint programme of UNCDF, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), in partnership with the Town Development Fund. Six municipalities in Nepal - Bhimdatta, Butwal, Dharan, Dhulikhel, Hetauda and Tulsipur - are selected to pilot infrastructure asset management. There are plans to expand to additional municipalities - Mechinagar, Bhadrapur, Ithari, Janakpur, Harion, Gorkha, Tansen, Birendranagar and Dhangadi.

Under the same programme, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provides technical support and guidance for asset management goals. To collect data on infrastructure assets, the One UNOPS Kobo Collect app is used. It was designed in collaboration with UNOPS and based on the formats prepared by these UN University Volunteers.

Clean drinking water, roads, buildings, solid waste management, sewage and drainage systems, irrigation, land, forests, parks, public recreation areas, and water resources are part of the focus.

UN Volunteers provided technical assistance in various aspects such as orientation training, action
plan preparation and IAM inventory compilation. Their support gave us a solid foundation for sustainable documentation and management of public assets, and we are hopeful that this project will enable us to move forward towards our municipal goals. --Esmita Yogal Shrestha, Engineer, Town Development Fund Focal Person, Dhulikhel Municipality.

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Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure**