

## Tribhuvan University's staff in Nepal trained in local innovation and farmer-led joint research

Twenty one teaching staff members (11 women and 10 men) of the Institute of Science and Technology (IOST), Tribhuvan University, and its affiliated campuses throughout the country participated in a training programme on local innovation (LI) and farmer-led joint research. This training was made possible through the funding provided by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and Nuffic (Dutch organisation for internationalisation of higher education) through its TMT (tailor-made training) window. IOST's Dean who officially opened the workshop expressed his appreciation for the support of the Dutch MoFA and Nuffic for their generous contribution to build the capacity of the institute's staff.



The training began with a 6-day residential workshop in Nagarkot conducted by Chesha Wettasinha of the Prolinnova International Secretariat at KIT and Basanta Rana Bhat of Ecoscentre, Chitwan, member of Prolinnova Nepal. Dharma Dangol of IOST and current coordinator of Prolinnova Nepal and Suman Manandhar of UNDP, former coordinator of Prolinnova Nepal provided support as resource persons. The training was the first time that many of the IOST staff were introduced to participatory research in general and farmer-led research based on LI in particular.



*Trainees preparing presentation (Photo: Chesha Wettasinha)*



*Trainees involved in small group assignment (Photo: Chesha Wettasinha)*

The workshop included a field visit to three peri-urban farmer innovators around Kathmandu involved in rooftop gardening, mushroom growing and nursery management. Having discussed the concepts of farmer innovation in the first two days of training, the field visit was an excellent opportunity for the trainees to interact with farmer innovators in real life. They were impressed with the creativeness and knowledge of the farmer innovators.



*Shekha Narayan Maharjan, farmer innovator, sharing his innovations in rooftop gardening with trainees (Photo: Chesha Wettasinha)*

After the initial workshop, the trainees were mentored through follow up visits and email and phone communication. Each trainee prepared a post-training assignment on how they were going to put the new knowledge and skills to practice in their day-to-day work as teachers and researchers in various disciplines.

This included ways in which they would integrate aspects of the LI and support to farmer-led joint research in their teaching and research assignments.

The follow up visits to some of the campuses was a good opportunity to interact with the trainees as well as other staff and students. It was encouraging that more than half of the trainees had held seminars in their own campuses to share what they had learnt with fellow staff and students. Two of the campuses were making plans to include some elements of the LI and farmer-led research approach into their curricula. One campus was interested in having their students document local innovation in their district and were preparing a proposal to obtain funds from the University Grants Commission of Nepal. The trainees have also used their personal Facebook pages to share their experiences and some of them have published articles in local newspapers.

An additional benefit that the training afforded was the space for staff of IOST's far-flung campuses to meet together and share experiences. Moreover, it was also an opportunity for staff of different disciplines to interact and learn from each other. This rare opportunity was valued by all the trainees and new connections were made. Having got to know each other, the group hopes to stay connected, share their experiences with each other and learn together.