



Travelling seminar: A field-oriented approach to engage, advocate and influence policy makers and planners for up scaling good practices

Travelling Seminar Report



Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research, and Development (LI-BIRD)
Pokhara, Kaski

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Travelling Seminar Report

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SUMMARY

A one-day travelling seminar was organized by LI-BIRD to the project sites of Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA Phase 3) and Paristhiti Yantra (PY) of Pokhara MC on 1st of July 2025. The target participants of the event were the representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management and Cooperatives (MoLMAC), Gandaki Province, Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project (PMAMP), Agriculture Knowledge Centre (AKC), Kaski, Agriculture Section of Pokhara Metropolitan City, market representatives, media representatives, and representatives of farmer's groups and cooperatives of the project sites. The main objective of the travelling seminar was to demonstrate various successful initiatives promoted by LI-BIRD in the area, foster meaningful dialogue between policy makers and planners, and influence them for upscaling through integrating into local and provincial government's plans and programme. The travelling seminar was conducted with three key sessions, introduction and orientation session, field visit and interaction with beneficiaries, and reflection of the field visit and closing session.

A total of 30 participants attended the travelling seminar and observed the works of LI-BIRD particularly through community-based institutions. The major attractions of the visit were the initiatives of Shree Namuna Organic Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd. on commercial seed production, source seed maintenance, and market linkages of vegetables, Foxtail Millet production site, CRA and rain-water harvest technologies adopted by farmers of Okhle, and the contributions of Jaibik Srot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sanstha in conservation of local landraces and biodiversity of the Rupa and Begnas Lake area. During the interaction, the members of the community shared their challenges and expectations from LI-BIRD and other government stakeholders especially relating to capacity building and market related facilitations. The participating stakeholders have expressed their commitment to supporting the farmers to the extent possible and appreciated the work of farmers and farming communities. During the reflection session, the participants also acknowledged LI-BIRD and its initiatives through CRA Phase 3 and PY project in the visited project sites and expressed their keen interest in collaborating with LI-BIRD in the future.



Seed and catalog displayed at Jaibik Swrot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sanstaat Pokhara-31, Sundari Danda.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| AKC | : | Agriculture Knowledge Center |
| CRA | : | Scaling up Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihood of Smallholder Farmers in Nepal |
| MoALD | : | Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development |
| MoLMAC | : | Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management and Cooperatives |
| MT | : | Metric ton |
| NGO | : | Non-government Organization |
| NRS | : | Nepalese Rupee |
| LI-BIRD | : | Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development |
| PIU | : | Project Implementation Unit |
| PMAMP | : | Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project |
| PMC | : | Pokhara Metropolitan City |
| PRERNA | : | Promoting Resilience and Enterprise Development through Utilization of Natural Resource in Nepal |
| PY | : | Paristhiti Yantra (Integrated Resource Management of Water and Ecosystem in Central Hills of Nepal) |
| SIF | : | Social Innovative Fund |
| TA | : | Technical Assistant |

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Summary

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A walk through Kaguno field at Kafalghari.

1. Introduction

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD), a non-profit making, non-governmental organization, is committed to capitalizing local initiatives for sustainable management of natural resources for improving the livelihoods of rural poor and marginalized farmers, especially women. LI-BIRD has been a pioneer organization in strengthening participatory methodologies for research and development in agriculture, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management with a focus on environmental, gender and social safeguards. Thereafter, LI-BIRD has played an instrumental role in institutionalizing these approaches in the national system. For over 30 years, LI-BIRD's work has positively impacted the environment, including restoration and conservation of biodiversity, natural habitats and ecosystems, and enhanced the livelihoods of the rural, poor and marginalized farmers through appropriate technological, social and policy changes.

In Kaski district, LI-BIRD has implemented three projects, namely Scaling up Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihood of Smallholder Farmers in Nepal (CRA Phase 3), Integrated Resources Management of Water and Ecosystem in Central Hill of Nepal (Paristhiti Yantr), and Bayer's-SIF-Promoting Resilience and Enterprise Development through Utilization of Natural Resource in Nepal (PRERNA). Under these projects, LI-BIRD has identified different innovative, local need-based, and locally adopted initiatives. It was important to share these impactful initiatives and tangible evidence with the government representatives along with other stakeholders to further scale out and scale up of the program implemented by integrating them into local and provincial government's regular plans and programmes. For this, the demonstration sites should be appraised by the provincial and local level decision makers and key elected politicians. The travelling seminar; wholeheartedly internalized by LI-BIRD could be one of the means to achieve this objective.



Group photo at Shree Namuna Prangarik Krishak Sahakari Building, Arba.

Travelling seminar is an integrated approach of field monitoring where the attendees get the opportunity to observe the project's initiatives firsthand, interact directly with the beneficiaries, and evaluate the project's progress upon interactive dialogues between organizer, attendees, and beneficiaries. LI-BIRD organized a one day travelling seminar on 1st July 2025 covering four project sites located at Pokhara-13, Arba; Pokhara-28, Kaphalghari; Pokhara-28, Okhle and Pokhara-31, Sundari Danda. The event was graced by Honorable Minister, Padma G.C. (Shrestha), Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management and Cooperatives (MoLMAC), Gandaki Province, representative officers from MoLMAC, Gandaki, representatives from federal level agriculture project, provincial level agriculture institutions, national level media representatives, representatives from agriculture cooperatives, farmer groups, markets, and board members and staff of LI-BIRD. During the event, participants observed four different initiatives launched and promoted by LI-BIRD in collaboration with different local and provincial level government bodies and social institutions.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the travelling seminar was to demonstrate various successful initiatives promoted by LI-BIRD in the rural areas of Pokhara Metropolitan City, foster meaningful dialogue between policy makers and planners, and influence them for upscaling through integrating into local and provincial government's plans and programme.

The specific objectives of the events were:

- To share with the participants about the conservation of local landraces, source seed production and market model of seeds under Community Seed Bank and marketing model of vegetables through cooperatives.
- To appraise various local landraces adopted by farmers owing to the wildlife conflicts with the food production system, especially Kaguno (Foxtail Millet), its production and marketing potential.
- To evaluate rain-water harvest initiatives and its impact on vegetable production of small farmers in the areas of water scarcity.

- To examine landscape level conservation of local landraces, agro-biodiversity and payment system of ecological services.
- To identify the potential approaches and practices which can be upscaled in collaboration of LI-BIRD and local provincial government in Gandaki.

3. Methodology

The travelling seminar was organized for a day by LI-BIRD. The methodology of the travelling seminar includes:

3.1 Target participants:

The participants in the travelling seminar were selected after a round of consultation with MoLMAC, Gandaki and in-house discussion within LI-BIRD. Based on the time availability of Hon. Minister, the participants were consulted via telephone and provided formal invitation letters from LI-BIRD via email. The event participants were Hon. Minister from MoLMAC, Gandaki, officers from Ministry of Agriculture,

Land Management and Cooperatives, Chief of Economic Development division of Pokhara Metropolitan City, Chief of PMAMP, PIU, Kaski, Chief of AKC, Kaski, Chief of Plant Protection Laboratory, national level media representatives and board members and staff of LI-BIRD. Altogether, there were 30 participants in the event.

3.2 Site selection and initiatives observed

Prior to the event, a program team from LI-BIRD visited and observed various sites of LI-BIRD within Pokhara valley to inspect the roadways and potential hurdles for the travelling seminar. Based on the observation, four visitation sites were finalized. At Pokhara-13, Arba; Pokhara-28, Kaphalghari; Pokhara-28, Okhle and Pokhara-31, Sundari Danda, participants observed different initiatives related to CSB, vegetable marketing, production of local landraces (Kaguno-Foxtail Millet), rain-water harvest and landscape level of agro-biodiversity conservation and payment system of ecological services.



Hon. Minister, MoLMAC sharing her thoughts during group interaction at CSB, Arba.



Stakeholders observing the seeds displayed at CSB, Arba.

4. The seminar

The travelling seminar was conducted with three key sessions, which are described below:

4.1 Introduction and orientation session

The orientation session of the travelling seminar was conducted at Shree Namuna Organic Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd., Pokhara-13, Arba, Kaski. Prior to the session, the participants were welcomed by the farmers of the cooperatives and provided delicious breakfast, including the Khir of Foxtail millet (Kaguno). The introduction and orientation session were conducted formally, Chaired by Mr. Tek Nath Baral, Chairperson of Shree Namuna Organic Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd. and Hon. Minister as Chief Guest. The session was moderated by Mr. Santosh KC, TA, LI-BIRD. After the chairing session, the

participants introduced themselves followed by the welcome speech from Mr. Beni Basnet, Board Secretary, LI-BIRD. He also briefly shared the objectives and schedule for the rest of the seminar. Mr. Bishnu Adhikari, Secretary of the cooperative, provided a brief introduction to the working modality and the initiatives undertaken by the cooperative for conservation of local landraces, seed production and marketing of local agricultural produce. Following the presentation, the participants were asked to give their views regarding the activities of cooperatives. The participants inquired about the production and marketing of Improved Pokhrelhi Jethobudho rice, guidelines and standard maintenance of seed, marketing tracking system, and prospective collaboration among private and public sectors to strengthen marketability of local seed production.

In addition, the discussion session also highlighted the importance of certification; landscape branding and Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) of local production and incentives additional to the minimum support price of the agri-produce. During the closing of formal session, Hon. Minister, Padma G.C. (Shrestha) expressed a note of thanks to the cooperative's members for delightful breakfast and wished success for the initiative of cooperative undertaken in collaboration with various government sectors and LI-BIRD. She also appreciated the establishment of CSB and highlighted how it aligned with the priorities of provincial government in conservation, promotion and marketing of indigenous crops. Furthermore, she acknowledged the work of LI-BIRD in capacity building of cooperatives and promotion of good agriculture practices in the region. The formal session was

closed by Mr. Tek Nath Baral emphasizing the role of all levels of government and non-government organization in promotion of local seed systems and marketing of local produce.

4.2 Field visit and interaction with the beneficiaries

Following the orientation, the participants moved to the field visiting and observing various initiatives.

At Shree Namuna Organic Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd., participants observed the community seed bank where about 87 landraces of 30 crops have been conserved by the active participation of 64 households associated with the cooperative. The major crops conserved in the CSB included Phokhreli Jethobudho Rice, Malepatan Bean, Millet, Root crops, etc. The participants observed community-based biodiversity



Farmers of Kafalghari sharing their experiences of farming Kaguno with the stakeholders.



Ms. Ambika Bhandari presenting the current status of Kaguno cultivation and achievements of the farmer's group.

management, adoption and promotion of environment friendly technologies and values chain development of agroecological products at Arba.

Following Arba, participants headed to Kaphalghari Pipal Dali Women Farmer Group, Pokhara-28, Kaphalghari, to appraise the cultivation of Foxtail Millet (Kaguno). During the interaction, farmers shared their stories of transforming crop production systems, experiences and the changes they observed brought about by adopting Foxtail Millet in the community. The participants were astounded by the involvement of local farmers toward the production of foxtail millet. Farmers asserted how the crop has been able to resolve the problem of wildlife conflict, especially monkeys, which was prominent while cultivating maize. Ms. Ambika Bhandari, Chairperson of Women group shared how

a simple advice of her mother regarding producing foxtail millet, instead of maize to solve the problem of monkey attack, encouraged the whole village towards the production of the crop. She also duly appreciated the involvement of LI-BIRD in the capacity building of the group members, seed support and establishing marketing linkage for the promotion of foxtail millet. In addition, PMC has allocated minimum support price of NRS. 120 per kg of Foxtail Millet. The women group alone produced 4 MT of Foxtail Millet in 2081 and has targeted the production of about 6 MT for 2082. Ms. Bhandari also emphasized on the potentiality of Foxtail Millet as cash crop for small farmers.

Mr. Indra Prasad Poudel, Senior Programme Officer, highlighted how LI-BIRD identified Foxtail Millet; an endangered variety of millet, through

diversity fair in 2013 and promoted it in Kaski district through varietal selection, source seed production and distribution to different farmers groups, including those in Madhabeshi and Kaphalghari. Later, LI-BIRD also engaged directly in developing the marketing channel of Foxtail Millet in collaboration with Annapat Agro Pvt. Ltd., through packaging and branding.

The next destination of the travelling seminar was Pokhara-28, Okhle where the participants observed rain-water harvest technology promoted by Kanchan Nepal. The initiative has constructed 34 pumpkins shaped, 8000-liter capacity water tanks. Once a water scant village, it has now thrived as an agriculture hub producing different types of seasonal

and off-seasonal vegetables under the technical support of LI-BIRD. The Okhle Organic Farmer Group has received capacity building training on agroecological practices and support for the construction of plastic tunnels from LI-BIRD. Mr. Namakanta Timsina, a member of Okhle Organic Farmer Group, intensively stated the importance of rain-water harvest system in such water scarce villages and technical guidance regarding safe food production system for their socio-economic upliftment. The participants observed various agricultural practices of Mr. Namakanta Timsina, including improved cattle shed, mulching technology, protected tomato cultivation, bio-pesticide formulation, etc.



Hon. Minister, MoLMAC, interacting with farmer from Okhle.



Stakeholders observing different varieties of rice conserved at Jaibik Swrot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sansta at Pokhara-31, Sundari Danda.

After lunch, the participants visited Jaibik Swrot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sansta at Pokhara-31, Sundari Danda. The multistakeholder team observed local landraces of rice, finger millet, and local vegetables conserved at the biodiversity information center, managed by Jaibik Swrot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sansta. Altogether, 53 different local landraces of rice, 12 landraces of finger millet and 13 types of Taros have been conserved by the institute. In addition, 5 different local land races of rice, namely Ekle, Bayarni, Kalo Jhinuwa, Pahele and Ratto Anadi,

have been registered in the National Seed Board (NSB), whose source seed production is coordinated by the very institute. The participants also got the opportunity to observe various publications on the diversity of birds and butterflies present in the information center.

Afterwards, the participants joined the reflection session as the last part of the event at the meeting hall of the Jaibik Swrot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sansta.

4.3 Reflection of the field visit and closing session

After observing the various initiatives in Jaibik Swrot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sansta, the participants of the event joined for reflection session. The session was planned at the end of the visitation to provide a platform for the participants to share their observations, experiences, and constructive feedback regarding various initiatives that they observed throughout the day. The session was also scheduled to initiate interactive discussion on the way forward and scaling out and scaling up farmers' friendly initiatives. This session was facilitated by Mr. Bharat Bhandari, Executive director, LI-BIRD. In general, the participants

appreciated the work done by LI-BIRD in promoting farmers' friendly and environmentally sound and sustainable technologies which can directly impact small farmers' livelihoods. They provided constructive feedback and suggestions to the involved cooperatives, farmer groups and LI-BIRD, along with their commitment to integrate good practices in their plans and programmes as well as work in collaboration with LI-BIRD for greater impact in coming days. During the reflection session, the majority of participants expressed their views regarding the travelling seminar and concluding remarks were delivered by Mr. Pratap Kumar Shrestha, Chairperson, LI-BIRD.



Dr. Pratap Kumar Shrestha sharing his concluding remarks.

5. Reflection from the participants



“I am grateful for all the helping hand in organizing travel seminar and providing the opportunities to observe various initiatives ongoing in farming communities and interact with farmers. The works of Shree Namuna Organic Agriculture Cooperative are unique and inspiring. The local products are reaching the market but need proper branding of organic products for recognition and premium pricing. Also, our efforts are forever aligned with capacity building of the CSB established in the cooperatives. Furthermore, I express my gratitude to LI-BIRD, AKC, Kaski, Annapat and other stakeholders for their role in promotion of Foxtail Millet farming in Kaphalghari as a potent solution against monkey invasion in agriculture. The initiative for conservation of indigenous crop is truly praiseworthy, and I am committed to provide continuous support for such endeavors. In addition, rain-water harvest technology, tunnel farming

and small irrigation adopted in Okhla, transforming the entire village, is commendable. MoLMAC Gandaki is always standing with such ingenuities for their promotion and wider adoption. P.S. I am thankful for delicious Khir of Kaguno and Sail roti of Kodo.”

- Hon. Minister Padma G.C. (Shrestha), MOLMAC, Gandaki

“The event has been effective in demonstrating various farmer friendly initiatives. Indigenous crops are best suited for Kaski district and LI-BIRD engagement in in-situ conservation is highly appreciated. I find Kaguno successful for commercial production and it needs to be regulated and promoted through an incentive model for marketing of internal production. In addition, brochures on rainwater harvest need to be published for information dissemination about technology.”

**- Mr. Manahar Kadariya, Chief,
Economic Development Section,
Pokhara Metropolitan City**



“Learning from these types of exposure visits helps extension agents to be familiarized with farmer-friendly technology. AKC has been collaborating with LI-BIRD in seed production of Pokhreli Jetho Budo rice as well as in promotion of neglected crops identified by LI-BIRD, such as Madale Kakro. Furthermore, I find Kaguno best suited for water scant and monkey problematic area and its production and promotion is aligned with the interest of provincial government as well.”

**- Mr. Kiran Sigdel, Chief,
Agriculture Knowledge Center, Kaski**



“I express a vote of thanks for prioritizing such a travelling seminar. PMAMAP, Kaski has been providing financial and extension service in promotion of Madale Kakro. Similarly, I am committed to integrating Kaguno into a new PMAMP program for nutritional security as well as rainwater harvesting technology in a small irrigation program. Also, LI-BIRD and PMAMP need further collaboration for production of indigenous crop seeds.”

**- Mr. Madav Prasad Lamsal, Chief,
PMAMP, PIU, Kaski**

“I was involved personally in formal registration of Seto Kaguno according to Provincial Seed Act in collaboration with LI-BIRD. The source seed of Kaguno needs to be produced following the proper guidelines. To strengthen Community seed Bank, a highly appreciated LI-BIRD’s initiative, lab test needs to be made free of cost and seed production needs to be linked with marketing. I really appreciate Annapat Pvt. Ltd. for facilitation in marketing. Regarding Kaguno cultivated in Kaski, LI-BIRD in collaboration with local and provincial government should take the initiative in its registration process.”

**- Mr. Nirmal Regmi, Under Secretary,
MOALD**





“I am extremely delighted for such a multistakeholder and express my sincere thanks to LI-BIRD for the arrangement. The Jaibik Swrot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sansta started Kaguno cultivation from 2057 B.S. We increased the production of seeds from 68 kg to 1365 kg of seed of five landraces of rice. We are engaged in conservation of 53 varieties of Rice, 12 varieties of Millet and 13 varieties of Yam. To sustain the conservation activities, we are in dire need of support from government and NGOs like LI-BIRD.”

- Mr. Puspa Raj Subedi, Jaibik Swrot Samrakshan Abhiyan Sansta

“ I am thankful for the active participation of multi stakeholders in travelling seminar organized by LI-BIRD and constructive feedback received. Working with multistakeholder is the tradition LI-BIRD value above else. We are committed to testing innovative technologies in collaboration with all three tiers of government, maintaining long term partnership with farmers.”

- Mr. Pratap Kumar Shrestha, PhD, Chairperson, LI-BIRD



Walking through the Kaguno field.



Rupa Lake.

6. Recommendations

- Plan and organize such multistakeholder travelling seminar on timely manner to showcase the project's good practices and achievements to be able to influence local, provincial and federal government stakeholders into mainstreaming proven practices and approaches by integrating them into government's policies, planning process and programmes.
- Develop Package of Practices (PoP) of Foxtail Millet including availing appropriate technologies for farmers regarding production. For this, a collaboration was recommended between local and provincial stakeholders which shall be initiated by LI-BIRD.
- The farming community recommended stakeholders to explore suitable post-harvest technologies to help them reduce drudgery and add value to the community aiding additional financial benefit to the community.
- The joint monitoring team recommended selection of good quality seed of Foxtail Millet cultivated in Kaski and initiate registration under the provincial seed law provisions of the Gandaki Province. It was suggested that LI-BIRD, PMC and Provincial Seed Lab should work collaboratively for this registration process.
- PMAMP recommended preparing joint plans for production, promotion, and marketing of local landraces, especially Foxtail Millet after successfully being registered as suggested earlier.

7. Conclusion

The major objective of the travelling seminar was to demonstrate various innovative and farmer-friendly initiative, including production and promotion of Kaguno (Foxtail Millet) and sensitize all three tiers of government for mainstreaming the promotion of such initiatives in their plans and programs. From the reflection session organized at the end of the event, it was observed that the defined objective was successfully met.

We received various constructive feedback from both the officers from all tiers of government and Hon. Minister Padma G.C. (Shrestha) regarding the initiatives implemented in farming communities. The government agencies expressed confidence in maintenance of collaborative working environment with LI-BIRD in the coming days as well. In addition, the multi stakeholders asserted their commitment to play a prominent role in replication of such initiatives through integration in their plans and programmes. Specifically, regarding Foxtail millet (Kaguno), LI-BIRD has been recommended to take the initiative of its registration process, develop package of practices and maintenance of source seed in close collaboration with local government and seed testing laboratory, Gandaki Province.

Annex 1.

Participants Details

| S.N. | Name | Organization | Position |
|------|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1 | Hn. Padma G.C. Shrestha | MoLMAC, Gandaki Province | Minister |
| 2 | Manahar Kadariya | Agriculture Department, PMC | Chief |
| 3 | Kiran K.C. | Agriculture Knowledge Centre | Chief |
| 4 | Nirmal Regmi | Provincial Seed Lab | Chief |
| 5 | Madhav Lamsal | PMAMP | Chief |
| 6 | Bina Parajuli | MoLMAC, Gandaki Province | Personal Secretary |
| 7 | Nirmal Adhikari | Kanchan Nepal | Executive Director |
| 8 | Parsuram Bishokarma | Annapaat | Manager |
| 9 | Krishna Mani Baral | Annapurna Post | Media Person |
| 10 | Lekhnath Dhakal | Jabik Srot Samrakzyan Abhiyan | Chairperson |
| 11 | Puspha Raj Subedi | Jabik Srot Samrakzyan Abhiyan | Secretary |
| 12 | Tek Nath Baral | Shree Namuna Prangarik Krishi Sahakari Sanstha | Chairperson |
| 13 | Bishnu Prasad Adhiakri | Shree Namuna Prangarik Krishi Sahakari Sanstha | Secretary |
| 14 | Kopila Baral | Shree Namuna Prangarik Krishi Sahakari Sanstha | Member |
| 15 | Sarada Baral | Shree Namuna Prangarik Krishi Sahakari Sanstha | Member |
| 16 | Ambika Bhandari | Kafalghari Krishak Samuha | Chairperson |
| 17 | Madhav | MoLMAC | Sokiya Sachib |
| 18 | PSO | MoLMAC | PSO |
| 19 | Partap Kumar Shrestha | LI-BIRD | Chair, Executive Board |
| 20 | Beni Basnet | LI-BIRD | Secretary, Executive Board |
| 21 | Bharat Bhandari | LI-BIRD | Executive Director |
| 22 | Laxmi Gurung | LI-BIRD | Head of Admin and Finance |
| 23 | Mira Dhakal | LI-BIRD | HR Manager |
| 24 | Bishnu Dhakal | LI-BIRD | MEAL Manager |
| 25 | Jenny Shrestha | LI-BIRD | Team Leader, CRA |
| 26 | Indra Prasad Paudel | LI-BIRD | SPO, CRA |
| 27 | Bishnu Bhusal | LI-BIRD | Team Leader, PY |
| 28 | Anupam Uprety | LI-BIRD | SPO, PRERNA |
| 29 | Raj Kumar Chaudhary | LI-BIRD | Finance Officer |
| 30 | Hem GC | LI-BIRD | Data and System Associate |

Photos



More Photos:

https://libirdnepal-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/person/photobank_libird_org/EtwH059PCYZlo-GEhonhev0B9-CPHCxe-xCXTM_G0uCaaw?e=gPWSNj



For more information



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