

Intangible Heritage Conservation: Promoting Dhimey and Lakhey among Youths of Bungamati



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Devastated by the 2015 Earthquake, Bungamati the southern-most town of Lalitpur Metropolitan City is gradually rising on its feet. Youths are revitalizing their intangible heritage and there is a renaissance of culture and arts. With the support of Parya Sampada Project, aiming to rebuild the economy of people through heritage conservation and tourism promotion, youths gathered together and demanded training of Dhimey the traditional drum of Newars and Lakhe Dance the mystical demon serving the people. 25 youths were trained to perform these traditional instruments and 11 on the mask dance that keeps the streets musical particularly on the months of August and September. The one and half months training has not just encouraged the 36 trained youths but their proud performance on the streets of Bungamati is attracting new generation to follow their path. Once left out practices to the 'useless folks' of the community is now

taking pride of being part of- the sustainability reestablished to conserve the intangible heritage. Municipal Ward Chairperson Mr. Ambir Raj Shakya, community organization leader Mr. Prem Maharjan are owning and encouraging the project that has revived the life in the streets of Bungamati after the earthquake, which was otherwise fading away with the modern lifestyle of business and busyness.

As an initiative to promote culture and achieve a sustainable rebuilding of the settlement of Bungamati, the project attempted to encourage youth participation and engagement in preservation of the culture and traditions of the ancient Newar settlement of Bungamati. On the closing event of the training the Dhimey Expert Mr. Sunil Maharjan and Lakhey Dance Expert Mr. Dabal Raj Tuladhar were very satisfied that their knowledge could be passed on to the youths. The young lady drummer Sumi Maharjan expressed her emotions of being a lady, "now we are no more mere observers in the streets, but a performer".

Youths with their new Dhimey

Photo: UN-HABITAT

Another youth, Robin Tuladhar was so happy that he could continue the local cultural dance that was gradually fading away.

Partnering with Lalitpur Metropolitan City Parya Sampada is the project initiated by UN-Habitat along with implementing partners SABAH Nepal, Lumanti, CIUD and IHS under EU SWITCH Asia funding. The main aim of the project is to demonstrate how traditional settlements shattered by earthquake can be revitalized through conserving cultural heritage and augmented by tourism-based economy. Contributing to SDG 11 and 12, this project has once again underscored the sustainable development of towns should not be limited to urban infrastructures and services but need to intertwine with its cultural practices bringing the youths on the front line.