

Dui Desh Tin Katha

दुई देश तीन कथा

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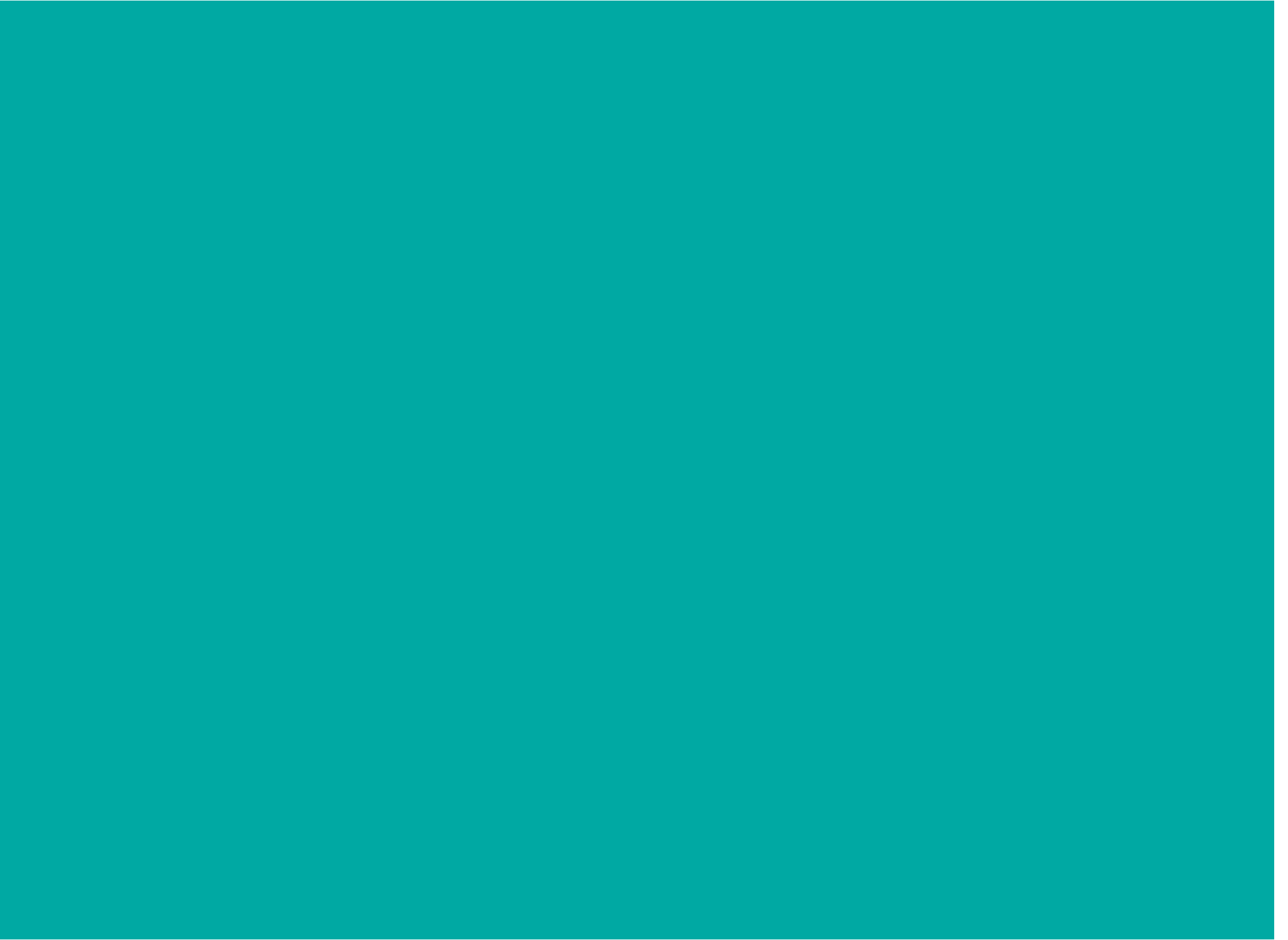
Cover photo: Swastika Ghimire, Anita Ghimire, Ipsha Poudel and Binita Karki

(Word cloud derived from 10 transcripts of participants and selected pictures from participants' drawing)

Disclaimer

The content and material presented in the book are of the participants and do not reflect the views and opinions of Nepal Institute for Social and Environmental Research (NISER) and the Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ). These organisation will not assume any responsibilities regarding the content and materials contained in this book.







Foreword

Arts are universal languages and are gifts of stories, of rituals, of cultures, wisdoms and dreams ! They are gifts of women singing, dancing, telling stories of structural violence, experiences of migration, struggle, and resistance and creating spaces for survival and indeed celebrations of successes when dreams are realised. Thus arts are voices of women across cultures!

It was proved by an artistic workshop organised by NISER with migrants' wives staying back. More fascinating was to learn that women have used artistic languages to express themselves more positive ways than formal conversations. So arts are also ways to create optimism!

Among optimisms, women not only told their stories of structural marginalisation in the society they belong to, they also spoke rather broader aim to address their historical socio-cultural marginalisation, economic discrimination and political exclusion they have long been encountering.

Artistic strategy employed by NISER and local partner was a powerful, innovative, culturally responsive and participants friendly to understand millions words through a simple drawing. I'm hopeful that this exercise becomes a foundational evidence to understand that despite their structural marginalization, socio-cultural boundaries created by their specific context, gender discrimination to enjoy life chances, actually migrant's wives do have a universal language to speak, if the opportunities to tell their tells are available.

Dr. Meena Poudel
Member, Advisory Board
MIDEQ



Foreword

While the wellbeing of families lies at the heart of the decision to migrate for many of those living in South Asian, it is rare to hear about their experiences of being separated from their families or about the ways in which families who stay back think about their migrant family members. Instead, migrants are often represented as single people, typically young men, who have chosen to migrate through self-interest.

Funded by the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund, the work of the Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ) Hub challenges these assumptions and representations. MIDEQ unpacks the complex and multi-dimensional relationships between migration and inequality in the context of the Global South. We aim to transform understanding of the relationship between migration and inequality in the context of the Global South by decentring the production of knowledge about migration and its consequences away from the Global North towards those countries where most migration takes place. We do this by drawing on the experience and expertise of our partners across 12 countries, including Nepal, to generate new knowledge which can be used to inform concrete policies and practices which improve the lives of migrants, their families and the communities in which they live.

As part of this work, we allocated resources to the project's partners in the Global South to develop and deliver impact interventions which ensure that our research supports and informs policies, interventions and approaches which generate the changes we want to see. This beautiful photo storybook is one of the outputs from this work in Nepal, delivered by our partner the Nepal Institute for Social and Environmental Research (NISER) who wanted to highlight the impacts of migration for the families of migrant workers who are often unable to see their families for years at a time.

Drawing on their learning from MIDEQ's creative arts and well-being work theme, they decided to create the space for migrants and their families to share their of migration through paintings, organising a series of painting workshop with the wives of migrants, with the children of migrants and their peers from non-migrant households, and with Nepali migrants currently working in Malaysia who have been living there for between nine months to nine years. 105 wives of migrants, children from 76 migrant households and 38 children from non-migrant households took part in the workshop where they painted their feelings related to migration of/away from their family members. For the wives of the migrants, the first round of the painting workshop was followed by three-days of orientation training regarding their husband's migration and their life and family management since his departure from Nepal. This was followed by a second round of painting workshop in which the paintings that were produced were quite different from those in the first workshop. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words and this book shows this is the case.

I congratulate the NISER team, the local partners and the member of MIDEQ's global advisory board Dr Meena Poudel for the beautiful photo storybook.

We hope that with this work we will be able to give the much needed space to "family" in the migration discourse and most importantly on the global debate on migration and development.

Professor Heaven Crawley, Director, MIDEQ Hub



दुई शब्द

नेपालमा अधिकांश युवाहरू विदेश तर्फ मोहले आकर्षित गरेको देखिन्छ, शायद नेपालमा रोजगारीको व्यवस्था नभएकोले, विदेशको रोजगारी तिर आकर्षित भएको, दुई चार पैसा कमाउने घर परिवारलाई राम्रो खान, लगाउन र घर बनाउन सकिन्छ भनेर युवाहरू वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जान रुचाउँछन् र छोराछोरीको उज्ज्वल भविष्यको लागि पनि जाने गरेको देखिन्छ। तर वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जानेहरूले पुर्व कुनै किसिमको तयार नगरी जान्छन्। नेपाल सरकारले र वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जानेहरूले व्यवस्था गरीकन जान्छन्। घर परिवारलाई केही थाहा हुँदैन। नेपालीहरू विदेशमा त्यहाँको कुनै निती वा कानून थाहा नभएर वा केही कारण बस अलपत्र वा कारागारको जिवनयापन गर्न बाध्य हुन सक्छन्। त्यसैले वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जानु पुर्व तयारी गरीकन मात्र जानु पर्छ। यता नेपालमा भएका घरपरिवार लाई पनि नेपाल सरकारले जनचेतनाको कार्यक्रमहरू गरीरहनु पर्छ। विदेशमा भएका आफन्तहरू कारणवश अलपत्र परे भने कुन ठाउँमा जाने कहाँ सुझाव लिने, कस्ता कस्ता कागजपत्रहरू राख्ने, भनेर काम लाग्न सक्छ। यस्ता कुराहरू थाहा पाई राख्नु पर्छ र समस्याको हल हुन्छ। यस्ता विषयमा नेपाल सरकारले वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जानेहरूका परिवारलाई चेतना मुलक कार्यक्रमहरू लागु गर्न पर्छ।

अनिता देवकोटा

अध्यक्ष

महिला, बालबालिका तथा समुदायिक विकास केन्द्र (WCCDC)



दुई शब्द

वैदेशिक रोजगारीलाई सुरक्षित, मर्यादित र व्यवस्थित बनाउन केन्द्रबाट प्रदान गरिने विभिन्न सूचना तथा सेवाको गुणस्तर अभिवृद्धि गर्ने र ती पूर्व-रोजगारी अभिमुखीकरण मोड्युल सेवा प्रवाहमा एकरूपता कायम गर्नमा सहयोग पुर्याउने उद्देश्यले यो फोटो पुस्तिका समयसापेक्ष प्रकाशन गर्न लागेकोमा खुशी लागेको छ ।

पूर्व रोजगारी अभिमुखीकरण मोड्युलमा विभिन्न किसिमको विषयहरू जानकारी गराएको छ । ती मोड्युलहरू वैदेशिक रोजगारको मूल्यांकन बारे मानसिक तत्परताका बारे सुरक्षित आप्रवासनको सुनिश्चितता बारे आप्रवासनको मनोसामाजिक प्रभाव व्यवस्थापनको बारे, वैदेशिक रोजगारको लागि सीप बारे नै सबै मोड्युल बारेमा विस्तृत रूपमा जानकारी दिइएको छ । सबै मोड्युलहरूको फाइदा र वेफाइदाहरू समेटिएको छ । यो मोड्युलमा वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जाने युवायुवतीहरूका साथै तीनका परिवारजनका लागि उपयुक्त जानकारीहरू हालेको छ ।

नेपालको संविधान श्रम र रोजगार सम्बन्धी नीतिमा वैदेशिक रोजगारीलाई शोषणमुक्त सुरक्षित र व्यवस्थित गर्न तथा श्रमिकको रोजगारी र अधिकारको प्रत्याभूति गर्न यस क्षेत्रको नियमन र व्यवस्थापन गर्ने र वैदेशिक रोजगारबाट आर्जन भएका पूँजी, सीप, प्रविधि र अनुभवलाई स्वदेशमा उत्पादनमूलक क्षेत्रमा लगाउन सहज गर्ने विषय उल्लेख गरिएको छ । वैदेशिक रोजगारीको सन्दर्भमा स्थानीय सरकारले रोजगारको स्थापना तथा व्यवस्थापन, सीपमूलक तालिम सञ्चालन, वित्तीय साक्षरता, तथ्याङ्क व्यवस्थापन, सामाजिक एकिकरण वैदेशिक रोजगारीबाट प्राप्त ज्ञान, सीप र उद्यमशीलताको उपयोग गर्नु पर्ने व्यवस्था गरेको छ । वैदेशिक रोजगारीमा जानेलाई सुरक्षित बनाउनका लागि सम्बन्धित सरोकारवालाहरूलाई सूचना तथा प्रेरणा दिन यो फोटो पुस्तिका उपयोगी हुने अपेक्षा राखेको छ ।

प्रदिप कुमार मेहता
आप्रावासी स्रोत केन्द्र, सप्तरी
परामर्शकर्ता

Acknowledgements

This photo book is a collaborative effort, made possible by the collective dedication of everyone involved. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and organizations who contributed to the creation of this remarkable photo book, a testament to the artistic expressions and voice of migrants' families and migrants themselves.

First and foremost, we are immensely grateful to all the participants who gave us many many hours of their busy time and let us into their lives. Despite knowing you lived daily amidst anxiety and uncertainties of having your loved ones working in a foreign land and /or yourselves working in a foreign land while families waited back home eagerly you, we dared to ask you to share about it. We apologize for taking you through the not-so-easy memory lane and sincerely hope that conveying your message to all the concerned authorities who have the power to make positive changes in your space through this book is, though only small, a return for your favour. We also hope that our effort of putting the artistic expression of yours into this book will make you happy.

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This book is a part of the Migration for Development and Equality Hub (MIDEQ). Funded by the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) (Grant Reference: ES/S007415/1), MIDEQ unpacks the complex and multi-dimensional relationships between migration and inequality in the context of the Global South. More at www.mideq.org

NISER (Nepal Institute for Social and Environmental Research)

Introduction

This book is a part of the Flexible Funding work under the Migration for Development and Equality Hub (MIDEQ). Funded by the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) (Grant Reference: ES/S007415/1), MIDEQ unpacks the complex and multi-dimensional relationships between migration and inequality in the context of the Global South. MIDEQ aims to transform understanding of the relationship between migration and inequality in the context of the Global South by decentering the production of knowledge about migration and its consequences away from the Global North towards those countries where most migration takes place. More at www.mideq.org.

MIDEQ explores South-South migration in six 'corridors' that link migrants' countries of origin and destination. Nepal-Malaysia migration is one of the corridors. The Nepal Institute for Social and Environmental Research (NISER) is MIDEQ's partner for the Nepal- Malaysia Corridor. NISER, an independent Research Institute duly registered with the government of Nepal conducts research in different contemporary issues and impact-evaluation of interventions.

This book is an outcome of long-term engagement with migrants, returnees and their families in Saptari and a consequent desire to give voice to experience and emotions of families who are rarely accounted in the migration-development discourse. The paintings were made and

stories shared in a painting workshop conducted with current migrants working in Malaysia, wife who stay back, and children from migrant and non-migrant families in 2023. Wives of migrants, children from migrant families, children from non-migrant families, and Nepali migrants participated in the workshop held in Nepal and Malaysia. Workshop for wives and children of migrants were conducted in Rajbiraj, Saptari for which the project partnered with Women, Children, and Community Development Centre (WCCDC). A total of 105 wives, 76 children from migrant families, 38 children from non-migrant families participated in the workshop. Workshop for current migrants was carried out in Kuala Lumpur of Malaysia with support of the North-South Initiatives (NSI), an NGO working for human rights of workers in Malaysia (for details see <https://nsinitiative.net/>). 31 Nepali migrants working in Malaysia between 9 months to 9.5 years participated in the painting workshop. In these workshops, they were asked to reflect on the migration and/or families who have stayed back in Nepal. Children from non-migrant families were asked to reflect on A single round of painting workshop was carried out with current migrants and children while two rounds of painting workshop was carried out with wives of migrants. The wives of migrants participated in a 3-day orientation workshop between the two rounds of paintings.

This book conveys the feelings and experiences of men who leave their homes and go for foreign employment from Nepal, of their wives and children who stay behind and bear the absence, through paintings. The stories in the book are derived from interviews with the participants.

The paintings and the stories were used with their consent. Through the book, our objective is to work as intermediaries in taking voice of migrants and their family members to all the stakeholders who work in the space and have the power to influence positive outcomes in the lives of migrants, their families, children and spouse, to the home communities, Nepal and the destination countries.

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Amar Lamichhane

Amar Lamichhane, a 24-year-old former carpenter, is a first time migrant. He has been working in Malaysia for the past 9 months, leaving behind his parents, wife, and son. Since his family was growing, basic expenses were becoming hard to meet. His only option was to migrate to Malaysia for better opportunities only to realize that his high expectations had failed him. Besides a basic salary of RM 1500, he was promised regular OTs and other facilities by the manpower agent. When he arrived in Malaysia, he realized he had been misled. Nevertheless, he manages to send money each month to his wife and parents.

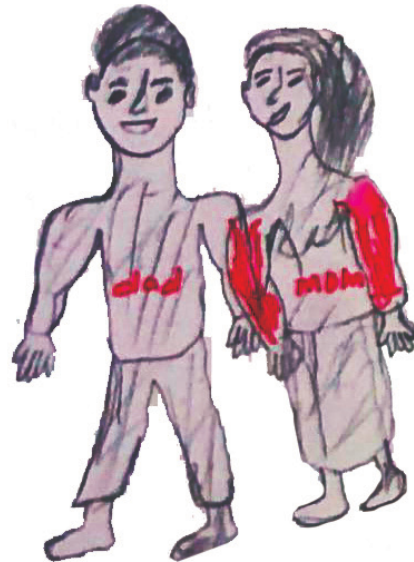
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Amar participated in a painting program for migrants, whereby, he painted a beautiful house with a garden situated near the hills. In future, he would like to build a house and reside along with his parents. Being the only son, he expresses his deepest gratitude towards his parents. He says he is forever thankful to them for showing him the world.

Having had a terrible experience on arrival at the Malaysian airport, he urges the Government to build better seating arrangements for the comfort of travelers. He felt humiliated to have witnessed the ill-treatment of Nepali workers by airport personnels. He urges the airport staff to treat Nepali workers with dignity and respect. Along with that, he hopes the government also conducts regular assessment of the living conditions of foreign workers throughout Malaysia. Like most of the youths in Nepal, Amar has had to leave the comfort of his home to look for greener pastures. He strongly suggests that Nepal Government should create better job opportunities and focus on building the nation so that the youths of Nepal, stay in Nepal with pride.



Future Home
in my life



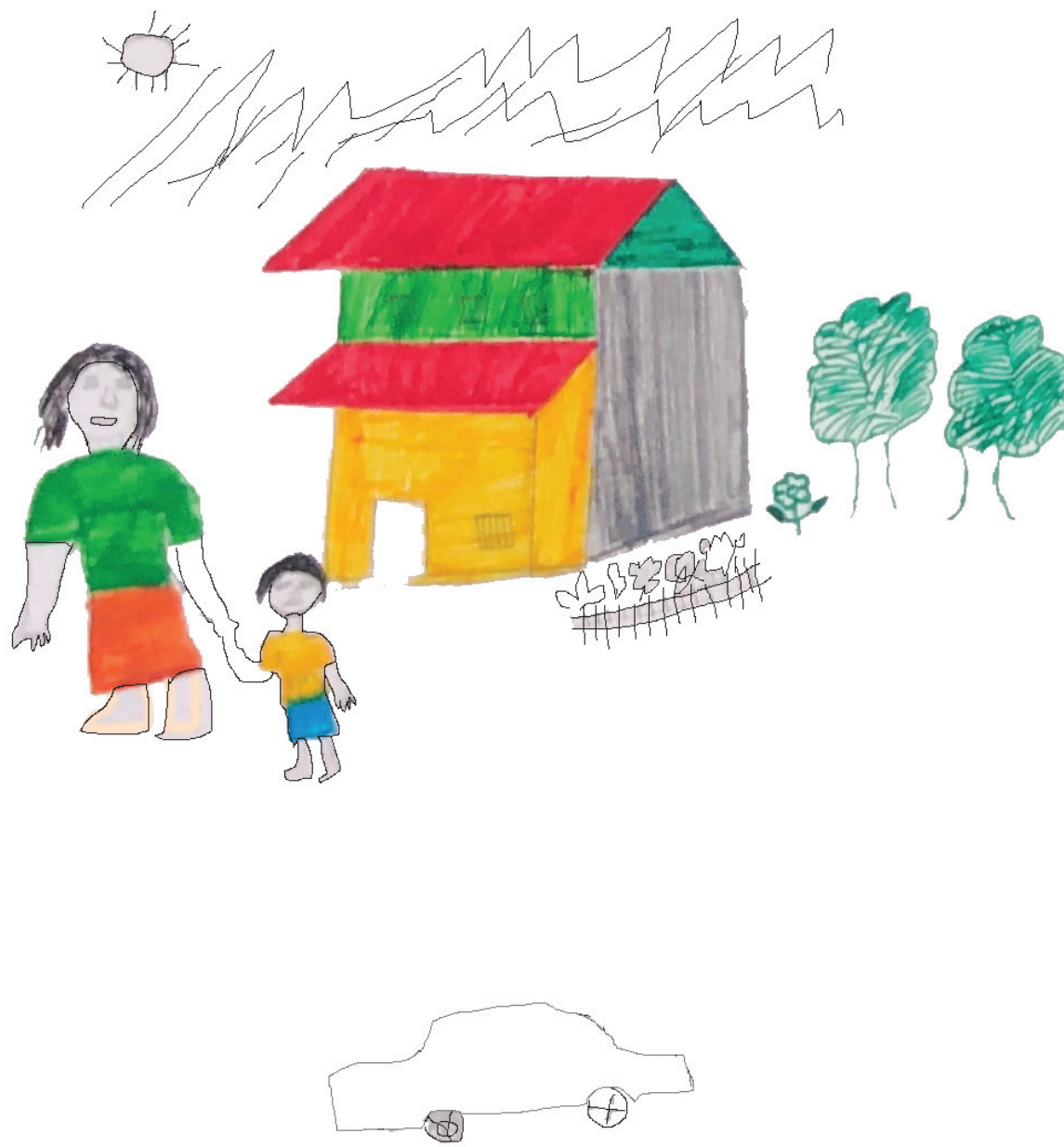
Arun Gurung

28-year-old Arun Gurung, a father of two children is a first-time migrant. He is currently working in Malaysia in a pharmaceutical company. He has been working in the same facility for 9 months as a packer, doing the same job, which is, packing cough syrups in cartons. As the sole bread earner of his family and with the lack of better opportunities in Nepal, Arun decided to migrate to Malaysia with hopes of a better future. He was quickly discouraged to find out that his savings were not substantial even after toiling so hard. He intends to return to Nepal after concluding his contract and migrate to Europe or Korea for better prospects. Apart from the various training received on the job here, he feels he has learnt a new language that has helped him communicate better. However, he wishes that all workers, irrespective of their nationalities, be treated equally.

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Being a true patriot of his nation and a devoted family man, Arun describes his departure as heart wrenching and tries to depict the same in the picture drawn by him, as part of the painting program. He has painted what he calls a house of his own with his own people, looking out for his safe return. He longs to be with his family, especially his children. He wishes to educate them so that they do not have to look for opportunities outside of Nepal.

He strongly feels that Nepal Government should introspect and change the narrative of Nepal being an import-rich country. By setting up various industries and promoting agriculture, he strongly believes it will help Nepal increase its workforce thus discouraging people from going overseas. As for the Malaysian Government, his only suggestion to them is that they honor and respect the Nepali workforce who risk their life and limb trying to keep their industries running.



Banita Paswan

Banita Paswan has been working in Malaysia for the past 10 months. This is the first time she has been away from her only son who recently turned thirteen. A string of family problems led her to Malaysia, and she hopes to make the best out of her stay. She currently works in a company that manufactures LCD and touch screen glass for smart phones and other electronic devices. Her primary job is to coat the display glass with special glue and set it on a frame. Being an optimist, she is grateful to her supervisor and colleagues for their love, support, and guidance. The only agonizing part of her job, requires her to stand all day, leading to swollen legs.

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Banita's painting reflects the true optimism in her. She has vivid memories of Nepal. She has painted the sun rising from the mountains and the most beautiful display of rainbows, particularly in the month of Asar-Shrawan. She misses running her fingers along the ice-cold waters of the river and the cool breeze that follows. She is very fond of the Kanz grass, especially for its white color that blooms in the month of Shrawan. The Kanz grass is a significant part of the Terai, where she belongs. The house in the painting portrays her undying love for her son. Although tiny, she wants to be able to build him a house in the future.

Like the rest of the world, inflation is at an all-time high in Malaysia. Banita sincerely hopes that the Malaysian Government explores its possibilities of increasing the basic pay rate in order to make her life a little easier. With that, she prays that good fortune be bestowed upon her company so that she can continue getting work. Her unconditional love for her motherland gives her added strength to strive harder for her dreams.

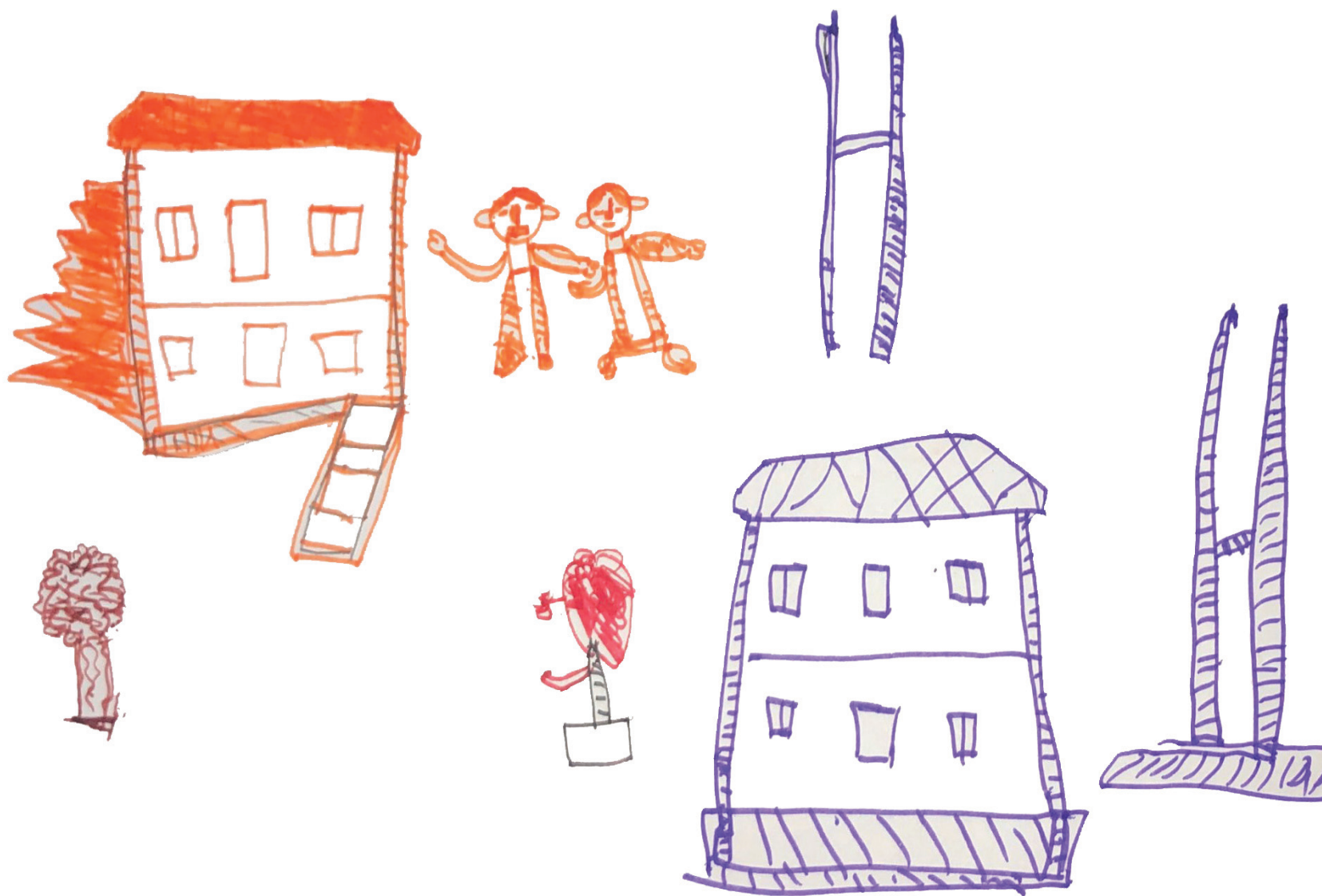
Basundhara BK

Basundhara BK, is a single mother of two daughters and a son. She and her children were abandoned by her husband when her youngest son was only a year old. She decided to seek foreign employment due to lack of financial support and opportunities in Nepal. She first embarked on her journey to Kuwait where she worked as a domestic worker for three years. Oppression and physical abuse at the hands of her employer led her to no other option but to flee from their home. She feels indebted to her agent and Nepal Embassy for coming to her rescue on time. Despite the misery and mistreatment, Basundhara succeeded in building her own house with her earnings from Kuwait. Not only was she able to raise and educate her children but, she emerged as a stronger woman that will not stop at anything. She has had a good experience so far with her only drawback being the local language.

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As part of the painting program, Basundhara drew a sketch of the house she built and her hostel in Malaysia with the KLCC Tower standing tall next to it. This amalgamation of thoughts reminds her of the ironies in life. Nepal failed to give her financial stability and Malaysia failed to give her the comfort and joy of being home.

Since both her daughters were married off in her absence, she worries for the future of her son. She deeply regrets not being able to give him the correct guidance that is required in the teenage years. She knows there are thousands of people just like her, leaving their families behind to work on foreign soil. It may be a free country, but one may never feel free. Her only hope for Nepal Government is that they create jobs and give people the opportunity to stay closer to home. Something that she aches for every day.



Bir Bahadur Parajuli

29-year-old Bir Bahadur Parajuli is a first-time migrant to Malaysia. He has been working in a pharmaceutical company for the past ten months. His earnings as a taxi driver in Nepal barely contributed towards his livelihood. Leaving behind his wife and two sons, Bir Bahadur migrated to Malaysia to give them a better life. He is, however, unsatisfied with the meagre salary of RM 1500 and no extra income from overtime work.

He plans to return after completing his 2- year contract. He believes the equivalent of the income earned in Malaysia is comfortably attainable in Nepal.

Bir Bahadur participated in a painting program for migrant workers. His fond recollection of his son going to school is revived by his sketch. There is a drawing of his home, his wife and younger son waving goodbye to his elder son who goes to a boarding school in Kathmandu. His absence from the drawing depicts the numerous sacrifices a father must make to ensure that his child's future is bright and filled with love.

Due to lack of knowledge, Nepali migrants are often misled by manpower agencies. They are promised one thing in Nepal and delivered another. The contract states free accommodation, regular OTs, and medical treatments but that was hardly true in Bir Bahadur's case. Manpower agencies play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between job seekers and foreign employers. Therefore, Bir Bahadur feels the Government of Nepal must be impelled to take strict action against all manpower agencies who have not shown any transparency and accreditation.



Biswa Ram

Biswa Ram, from Saptari, has spent the last eight years employed in Malaysia. He was initially working for a tyre manufacturing company called Goodyear when the company split. He initially travelled to Malaysia at a friend's recommendation via a manpower agency. He describes his experience as pleasant and has kept his employers and supervisors in good regard. However, Biswa is concerned for his safety and security on the streets of Malaysia, where he was robbed twice, in broad daylight of his phones and other possessions.

Biswa is currently enjoying his vacation in Nepal with his wife and four children, for the first time in eight long years. While in Saptari, he participated in a painting program for migrants. A childlike sketch portrays his three daughters, one of whom is married. His son had just turned one year old when he departed for Malaysia. The sketch of his son seems to be frozen in time.

Biswa is all set to make Malaysia his last and final stop before he retires in two years. His efforts were rewarded when, in just eight years, he was able to pay off his entire debt, construct a home, and purchase farmland. Once he is back, he aims to get his daughters married, spend quality time with his family and pursue a career in agriculture.



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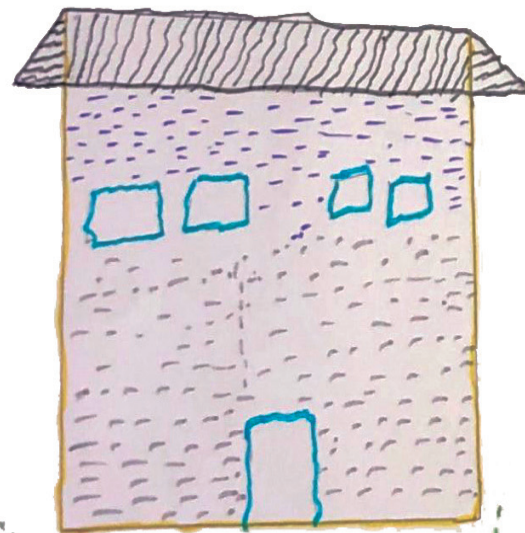
Bimal Tamang

Bimal Tamang, an unemployed youth of twenty-one, took up his first job as a migrant worker in Malaysia. He has been working in a pharmaceutical company for the last 10 months. Describing his job as relatively easy, Bimal is satisfied with the extra income he generates during peak season by working overtime. Bursting with energy and eager to explore the world, he aims to migrate to Korea after concluding his 2-year contract.

Bimal's painting represents a beautiful blend of culture, nature, and architecture. The painting of his future home, a rest-stop under the Peepal tree and recreational swimming pool is shown nestled under the majestic Himalayas. His vision perfectly embodies the union of the traditional and the contemporary.

With the assistance of his uncle and his aptitude with computers, Bimal was able to fully benefit from the free-visa- free-ticket scheme enforced by the Government of Nepal. Frequent OTs during peak season enabled him to make substantial savings as well as sustain his family. His awareness of this matter helped him reduce his financial burden. He calls on Nepal Government to track down such fraudulent manpower agencies and prosecute those who demand exorbitant fees.

मेरा सपना
सुन्दर संसार

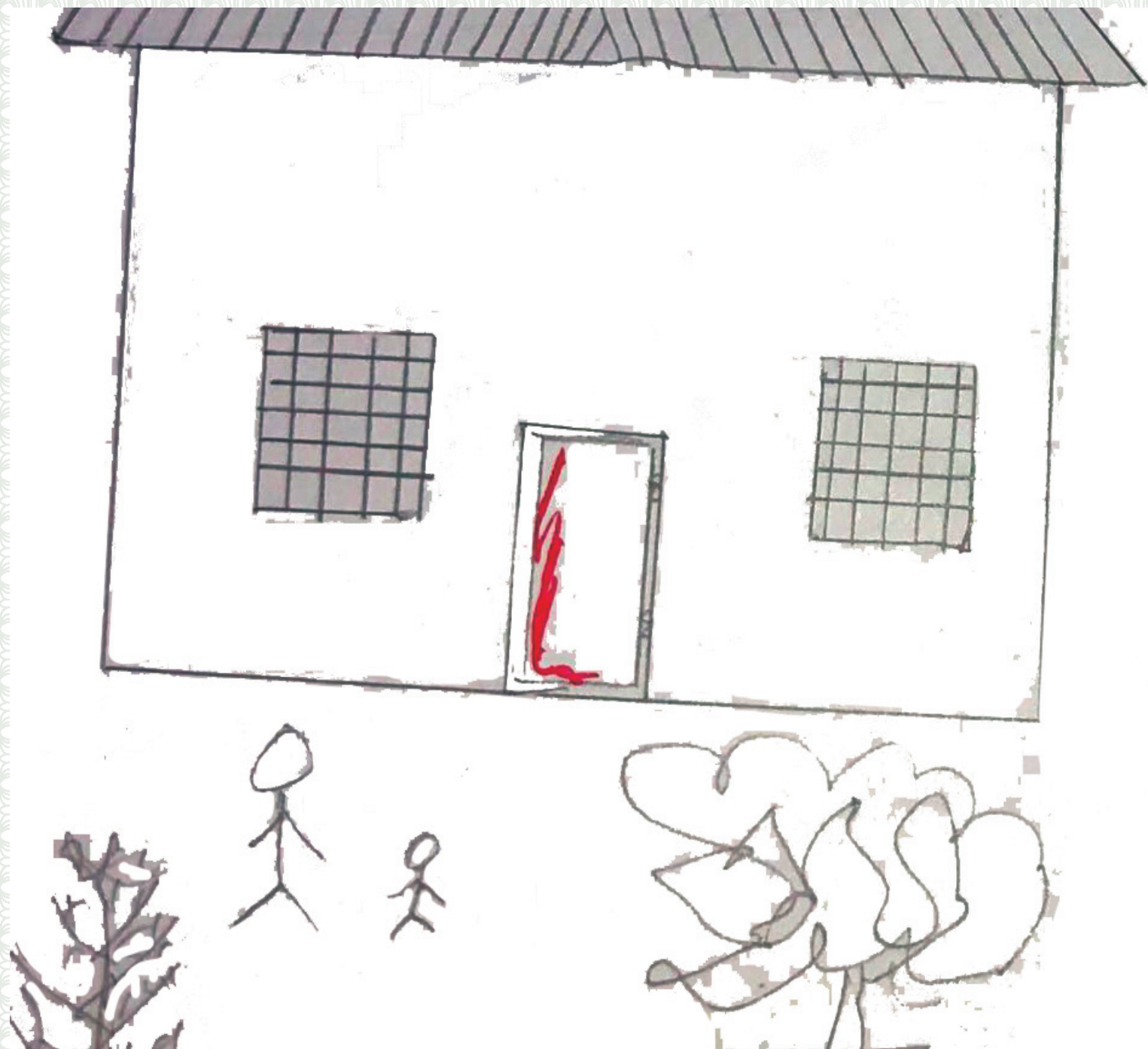


Bibhushan Chaudhary

Bibhushan has been employed Malaysia for the past 11 months. He works as a machine operator. This is his second migration to the same country where he spent his first seven years working in a different capacity. His familiarity with the work culture, environment, climate, and language brought him back to Malaysia. He is satisfied with his pay and additional income from working overtime.

As part of a painting program for migrants, Bibhushan has made an effort to portray his time spent at home with his wife and child. During his seven years of employment in Malaysia, he saved enough money to build the house in the painting. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Bibhushan had to leave behind the comfort of his home and family, especially his two-year-old daughter who had just begun to call him “Baba”.

Going forward, Bibhushan intends to work for another six to seven years while taking occasional vacations to see his family.



Chandra Das

Chandra Das used to make a living through a ride-sharing app called Pathao when he stumbled upon an advertisement that read ‘free-visa-free-ticket to Malaysia’. It enticed the 26-year-old and he decided to migrate for the very first time. In Malaysia, he has been working in a pharmaceutical company named Duopharma for the last ten months. Being in a risky profession previously, Chandra does not recall breaking a single sweat in his current job. He enjoys all the comfort and coolness of the air-conditioning, brightly lit rooms, and relaxing atmosphere at work. His supervisors are very flexible and give regular guidance. He looks forward to making an extra income through regular OTs just as before.

Chandra’s son was barely 2 months old when he kissed him farewell. He expresses his remorse for missing out on all his infant’s developmental milestones. A certain melancholy is depicted in his painting. There is a sketch of his future home and a little boy standing under a tree, perhaps waiting for his father’s love.

The rising cost of living has made it difficult for Chandra to make ends meet. His dreams and aspirations are gradually dwindling. He requests the Malaysian Government to reconsider and re-evaluate the minimum wage for migrant workers. A salary as low as RM1500 barely allows for any savings. He believes Nepal Government should stop sending its citizens to toil for such pitiful wages and focus on job creation in Nepal. Chandra wants to explore the labor market in Korea and is currently learning the Korean language via YouTube.

Name: Chandan

Address: Sarlahi, Nepal

Work - Duopharma, Malaysia

Age - 26



आजको एउटा घर
बनाउनको लागि
विदेश भाइयो गए
यहाँ विदेशमा आएर
खीन्ने घरको सबैजो
रुन्छ ।



Chhatra Kumar Parajuli

Chhatra Parajuli's employment history in Malaysia spans across two decades in different capacities. He first embarked on his journey in the year 2002-2006. He spent four miserable years working in a furniture company where both working conditions and accommodation were substandard. In 2008, after thorough research and his exposure in the labor market, Chhatra landed his second job as a security guard. It was in one of the largest and most reputable property development groups in Malaysia. He put in ten arduous years of work before advancing to supervisor. He describes his experience there as phenomenal. In addition to receiving fair pay, the workers received bonuses, were housed in respectable hostels, got paid a week ahead of time, and were generally delighted with their jobs. After his contract expired in 2018, Chhatra decided to return home and launch a business. Unfortunately, all his savings had to be diverted towards his father's urgent medical needs, forcing him to return to Malaysia again in 2023. Currently, he is employed as supervisor by a different security company.

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As a father of two teenagers, a daughter and son, Chhatra believes it was a struggle to remain geographically distant from them. He had departed when they were toddlers and recalls his children not being able to identify him as their father. He expresses gratitude to his wife for being the torch bearer of the family in his absence. He admires her for her devotion and resilience. As part of the painting program, Chhatra drew a sketch of his wife and two children under the map of Nepal. Given the current political scenario of his country, he intends to work in Malaysia for a few more years before eventually heading home.

Despite their popularity in security jobs, Nepali guards still face several issues like forced labor, limited holidays, longer duty hours, maltreatment and dominance from their employers and local colleagues alike. Chhatra feels the dignity and respect they deserve is lacking at large. Chhatra also believes the Malaysian Government should stop unlawful retention of passports by employers. Nepali workers should be free to carry their identities with them and nothing should restrict their movement. Chhatra claims the implementation of the free-visa-free-ticket scheme in Nepal has been highly ineffective. Not even one percent of Nepalis have been able to take advantage of the scheme. He calls on Nepal Government to investigate this issue immediately.



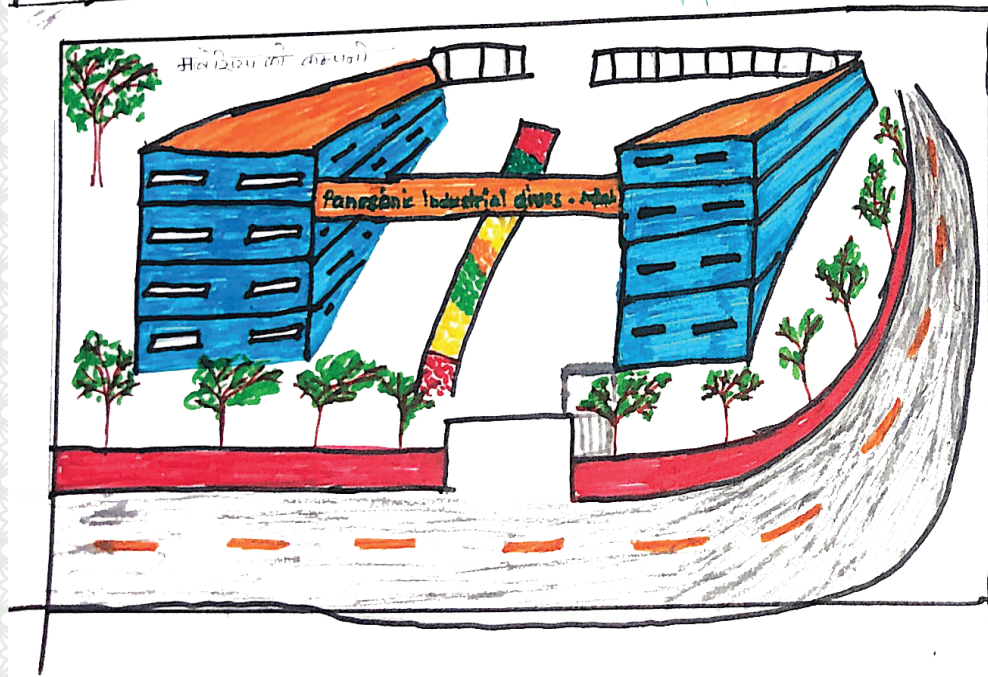
Dilip Prasad Chaudhary

25-year-old former cook, Dilip has been employed in Panasonic, Malaysia for the previous 10 months. This is his first migration. The construction of his home incurred a heavy debt. His income as a cook was insufficient to cover even the most basic costs, let alone repay his debts. On a friend's recommendation Dilip took advantage of the free-visa-free-ticket scheme to Malaysia. For the first couple of months Dilip was able to earn a substantial amount due to his regular overtime. However, the number of OTs have greatly reduced. Dilip has a feeling that the company may not be doing too well. He is contemplating his return home after his contract expires in 14 months.

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Dilip's painting is a vibrant burst of colors. It is a representation of hope, trust, anticipation, stability, and success. His entire journey to Malaysia is depicted in the artwork. He has shown the start of his journey from his home in a small village in Rautahat. Having grown up on a farm, he remembers some of the most idyllic times being in his orchard and on his farm, surrounded by the warmth of his family and the sound of chirping birds. It is easy to observe the tall buildings and the hustle-bustle of Kathmandu city in the next picture. It is where he started his visa application process. His hopes and aspirations seem to be taking flight in the painting of an airport with an aircraft taking off. His hopes for stability and success in Malaysia are reflected in the painting of the factory. Following the payoff of all his debts, Dilip dreams of moving into a larger home with his family.

Although he considers himself fortunate to have been placed in a good company, Dilip is haunted by the harrowing details of oppression and abuse shared by his fellow migrants. He calls on the Malaysian Government to take strict action against the perpetrators and impose heavy fines. He warns Nepal Government and Nepali people to be wary of fake documents and demands carried out by fraudulent manpower agencies who push migrants into a debt trap.

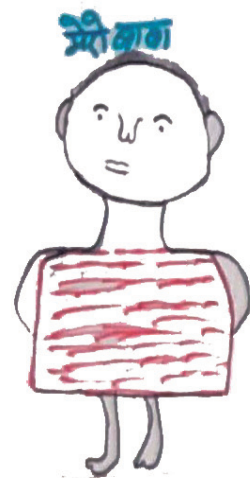


Goma BK

Goma BK, a mother of two, is a first-time migrant to Malaysia. Her job is to assemble mobile parts and peripherals. Previously, she was apprehensive about working overseas. Language barriers made her anxious. However, Goma seems to have settled well in her new job. She feels that she can now communicate more effectively, work more efficiently, socialize better, and be open to learning new things.

Goma's love for her children knows no bounds. She was prepared to cross geographical boundaries to give them a fulfilling life. She also shares a beautiful bond with her parents who have taken the responsibility of raising her two children in her absence. The four people she genuinely loves and longs to be with are depicted in her painting. Goma hopes to build a house surrounded by a fence and a garden. She wants to build a nice, sturdy roof where the entire family can gather and bask in the sun.

Goma had to accrue a debt of 3.5 lacs in order to cover the agent's fee prior to traveling to Malaysia. It helped her understand how important it is to do extensive research before moving abroad. To avoid the need for migration altogether, she impels the government of Nepal to establish job opportunities. She worries that the remaining debt will take several more years to pay off because overtime has been cut. She would like the minimum wage for migrants to be reexamined by the Malaysian government.



Juddha Chaudhary

36-year-old Juddha Chaudhary has been employed in Malaysia for the last 10 months. This is his second job overseas. Previously, at the age of 21, he had migrated to Qatar where he worked for two years as a building electrician. Upon his return, he constructed a house and launched a business. Unforeseeable events led to significant debt, and he decided to migrate for a better income. In comparison to Qatar, Juddha is pleased with the prompt payment and benefits he has received. The language and infrequent overtime work, however, are his major deterrent.

Juddha belongs to the Terai, which lies to the South of the Himalayas. His painting signifies the richness of the region with its vast agricultural landscape, tall grasslands, dense forests, and home to a variety of birds and animals. His favorite pastime was fishing in the pond, which brings back many happy memories. He tremendously misses his family and two children back home.

Having experienced inequality, Juddha is adamant that Nepali migrants receive the same treatment, pay, compensation and amenities as their Malaysian counterparts. He demands justice and fairness from the Malaysian government and firmly believes Nepal Government ought to initiate discussions with them regarding the matter.



Keshab Ghimire

23-year-old Keshab was idling around his house with no interest in getting a degree. He made the decision to migrate for the first time, largely due to the persistent pressure from his mother and his uncle's advice. He has spent the last ten months working in Malaysia. There is a newfound confidence in the young man. The prospect of learning a new skill excites him. Even though his supervisors are kind and courteous towards him, he is appalled by the preference given to Malay employees. Their favoritism at the workplace enables them to receive bonuses, allowances, and better shifts. Keshab condemns the prejudice against Nepali workers and believes everyone should be treated equally.

As part of the painting program, young Keshab has tried to depict a typical Nepali household that is tucked away in the foothills of the Himalayas. The sun rising above its horizon only means that he must broaden his horizons as well. Keshab is very optimistic about the future and wants to explore different countries and job markets, while he is still young.

Coming from an underdeveloped nation, Keshab was greatly impressed by Malaysia's highly developed infrastructure, economy, industries, and the high quality of life. He feels Nepal could also succeed if they concentrated on establishing industries for the youth instead of sending them as slaves to labour on foreign soil.



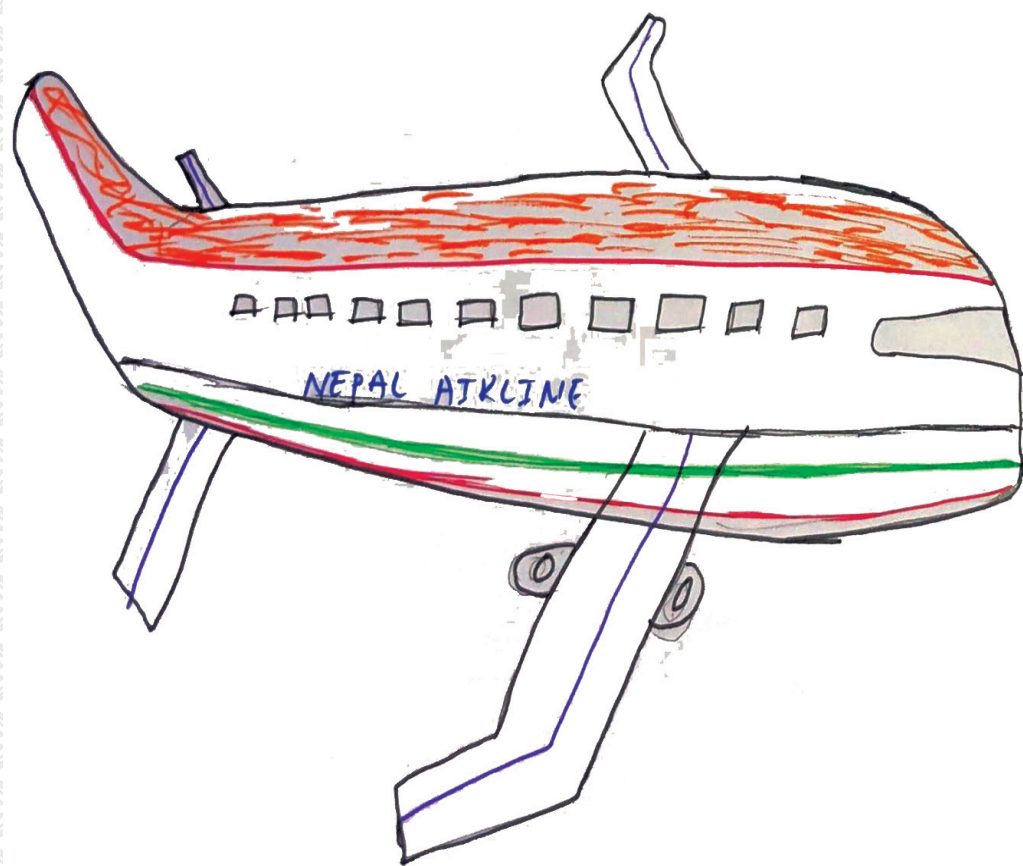
Kamal Chandra Rajbanshi

Kamal Chandra Rajbanshi has been living in Malaysia since 2014. His first job as a cashier was at a retail store where he worked for 8 years. He was forced to quit because he could no longer put up with his senior officer's misconduct and lack of professionalism. For the past 2 years, Kamal has been employed at a social organization that offers financial and legal advice to Nepali migrants in Malaysia. He believes Nepalis are more vulnerable on the streets and are in constant fear of harassment and theft. They are mostly tormented and intimidated by the locals. Having assisted numerous laborers, Kamal believes that those employed on plantations are frequently mistreated, underpaid and forced to endure appalling living circumstances.

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Kamal's painting is an illustration of his future plan. His departure from an airplane and his journey home with a backpack are depicted in a sketch. After spending a decade in Malaysia, he intends to permanently return in 2025.

Thousands of Nepalis are being scammed by manpower agencies on a daily basis. Migrant workers end up paying more than the capped amount in illegal agent fees. Kamal criticizes Nepal Government for not being vigilant and failing to take serious action against them. He calls on Malaysian Government to do a thorough background check of the companies before granting them the license to hire foreign workers.





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Lila Lopchan

27-year-old Lila Lopchan was looking after her elderly parents while working at the press. She was forced to migrate to Malaysia for the first time as a foreign worker when financial difficulties arrived at her doorstep. For the past 1-year, Lila has been working in a company that manufactures oxygen masks and urine bags. She feels her major setback is the local language that is widely used as a means of communication. She has had to deal with rude, impatient supervisors and face constant harassment and intimidation from her coworkers. The safety and security of women outside the workplace is also a major concern for Lila as some of her female colleagues have had to face sexual assault followed by verbal comments of sexual nature.

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Lila misses her family immensely, especially her mother. Her painting depicts the house she would like to build in the future and share with her elderly parents. While she is still single, Lila looks forward to carrying out philanthropic work that includes empowering women and small girls who have been persecuted and orphaned. Her painting demonstrates her love for mankind.

Having experienced favoritism at work, Lila hopes for all Nepalis to be treated equally. She insists that their diligence and commitment be acknowledged and valued by the Malaysian government.

In order to keep up with the increasing cost of goods, the minimum wage needs to be reevaluated simultaneously. Having said that, she calls on Nepal government to improve employment prospects and utilize the nation's workforce in its own nation.



Lukla Roka Magar

Lukla has spent the last nine years working in Malaysia. Her first overseas job was as a Quality Assurance Personnel. Back in her village in Rolpa, Lukla used to earn a livelihood picking Yarsagumba and doing other odd jobs. She is, perhaps, one of the first few women from Rolpa to have ventured out at that time. Although nervous in the beginning, Lukla has persevered and worked hard to become a confident person living a debt-free life.

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Lukla has a practical approach towards life. Coming from an underdeveloped area, resources were not easily accessible due to harsh terrains and little road access. Her artwork is a depiction of the resources and facilities she wished to have as a child. Lukla dreams of a small, comfortable home in the village that has its own garden and water source. The importance of a school and hospital in the vicinity is pointed out in the picture. In the face of growing religious intolerance, the temple in her artwork symbolizes her respect for all religions. Being a health enthusiast herself, Lukla emphasizes the value of leading a healthy lifestyle and how fortune favors those in good health.

Lukla condemns the discrimination towards Nepali workers in the workplace. She asserts that Malays are not just given first preference but also receive better pay, compensation, and facilities at work. She demands that the Malaysian government be respectful and give equal pay and benefits to all workers, irrespective of nationality. She firmly believes that Nepali workers can be dissuaded from migrating overseas if the government of Nepal were to establish various factories and mills across the country.



Labika Kumal

Labika Kumal has been working in Malaysia for the past one year as a laundrywoman. Her migration was prompted by poverty and unemployment. On considering her brother's advice and support, Labika made her first migration leaving behind her 4-year-old son. Although her job requires her to stand for long hours, she is pleasantly happy to receive regular OTs. She enjoys the various amenities Malaysia has to offer, public transport being one of them. She loves the environment here and goes out with her friends on regular outings. However, she is extremely cautious when walking alone on the streets. Migrant workers are most vulnerable of petty thefts and assault, she says.

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Labika's artwork captures her positive mindset. She talks about the sun in the image and its importance on a gloomy day, trees that let in the fresh breeze, butterflies, blooming flowers and chirping birds- all of which are positive indicators of life. Her painting depicts her future home with a garden and her little son who will soon be going to kindergarten. Something that she could not depict in paper is the unconditional love for her son and the constant thoughts of him that brighten her day.

According to Labika, manpower agencies are taking advantage of people's illiteracy to charge hefty fees. It is her solemn request to Nepal Government to investigate and penalize such fraudulent agencies that scam the underprivileged of their hard earned money. Since Labika has one more year in Malaysia, she is looking forward to an annual increment that will help determine her stay.

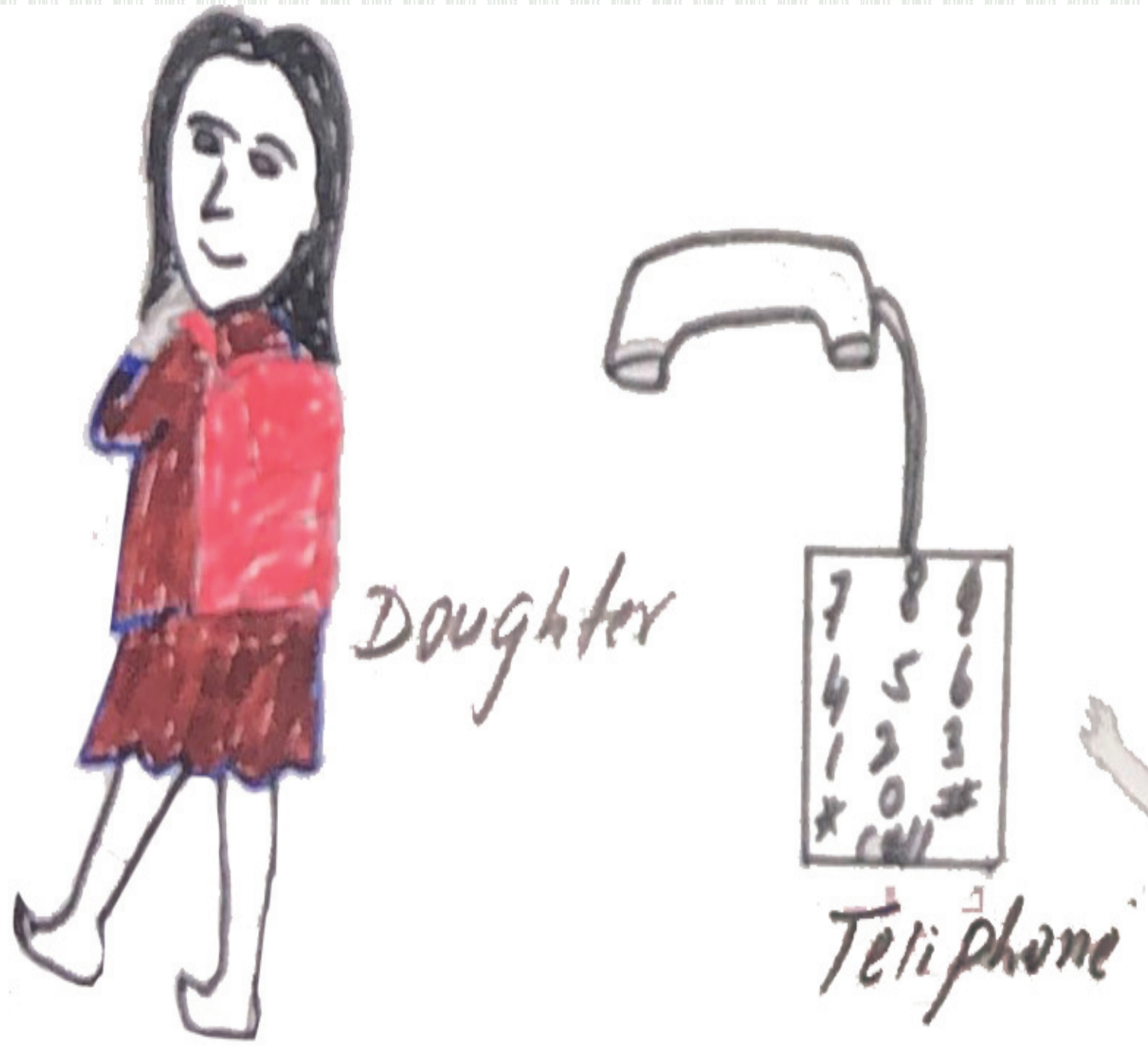


Mahesh Tharu

In 2010, Mahesh Tharu migrated to Malaysia for the first time. He worked for 9 years as QA Assistant before returning home to consider a marriage proposal. He migrated again in 2023 to work in the same capacity as before but in a different company. He has been working at Supersafe Industry, Malaysia for the last 14-months. Mahesh respects and values the diversity in his workplace and has had the pleasure of getting to know many wonderful people over the years. Having been a victim of robbery once, his primary concern is his safety while navigating the streets of Malaysia.

After the birth of his daughter and growing expenses, Mahesh decided to migrate for the second time. His daughter, who currently goes to school makes it a point to call him every day. His painting portrays the beautiful bond of a father-daughter relationship. His artwork serves as a gentle reminder for people to maintain family ties even when they live miles apart. Afterall, distance only makes the heart grow fonder.

Mahesh alleges that his company has failed to fulfil its obligations and violated the contract. There has been a deviation from the agreed upon salary, number of duty hours, and medical allowances. Recently, Saudi Arabia made amendments to its labor laws, whereby, a worker can switch jobs with another employer without having to wait for one year. In Mahesh's opinion, Nepal Government ought to initiate talks with their Malaysian counterpart to help implement a similar law in Malaysia that would help make a migrant's life much less complicated.

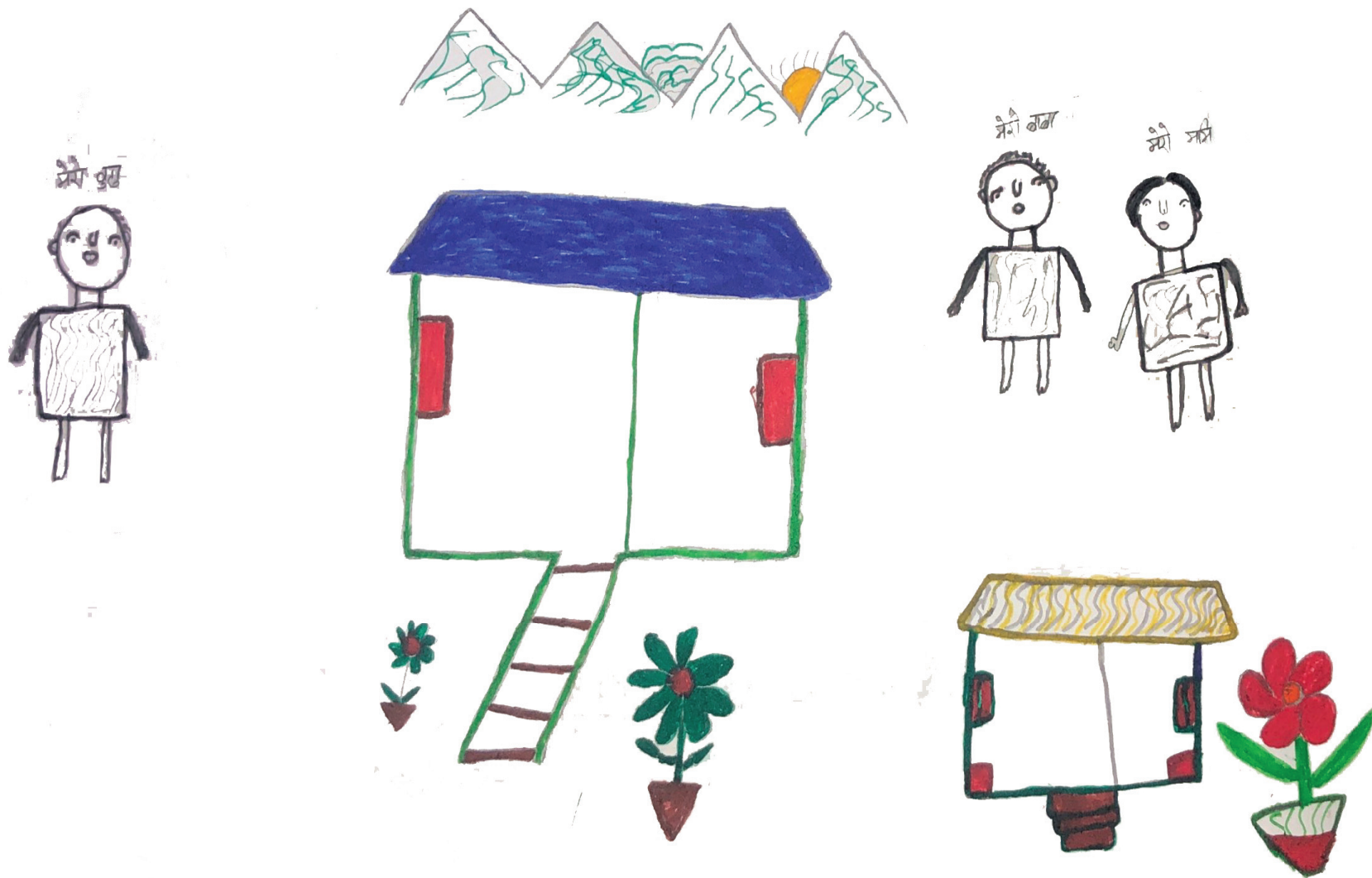


Munni Magar

Munni Magar is currently employed in Malaysia for the past 10 months. She works in the LCD department glueing glasses on to mobile frames. Before her migration to Malaysia, Munni was employed in Kuwait for 6.5 years as a domestic helper. Newly married Munni and her husband migrated to Malaysia together but are living miles apart from each other. Passport retention by the company remains a pivotal issue for Munni. She fears being harassed by the police while travelling or going for medical check-ups.

Munni's artwork depicts her elderly parents and her husband, both of whom live away from her. As shown in the picture, she wants to build a home and be able to look after her ailing parents in their old age. Munni's husband is her strength. They often talk about building a home together and leading a blissful married life.

Both Munni and her husband have had to incur heavy loans to migrate to Malaysia. Due to lack of OT, she is certain it will take many more years to pay it off. These days, the majority of Malaysian companies are underperforming, which results in fewer duty hours and less income. She believes it is crucial to conduct thorough research and consider the advantages and disadvantages before moving abroad. She impels Nepal Government to establish and invest in industries so that people do not have to leave behind their ailing parents, spouses, and children. Employee savings are impeded by the growing cost of goods. In order to deal with it, Munni thinks companies should provide free meals and lodging in addition to timely pay. To make things affordable for Nepali workers, she implores the Malaysian government to maintain inflation at a healthy level.



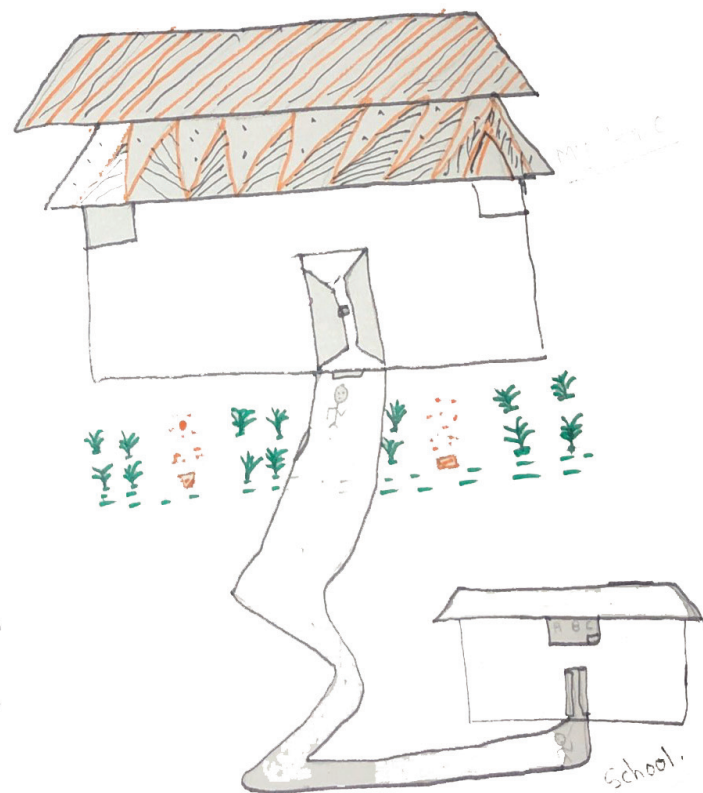
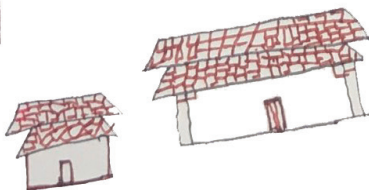
Niru Magar

27-year-old Niru Magar is a first-time migrant to Malaysia. Due to unforeseen circumstances and lack of job opportunities in Nepal, she chose to migrate in search of a better future. Niru is disappointed that she did not receive the longer duty hours that were promised in the contract, in addition to free meals and lodging. She asserts that even on public holidays, their salaries are deducted. However, she lacks the courage to voice her complaints and has let the matter be. Her only focus now is her job.

As part of the painting program, Niru drew a sketch of her 6-yr old son wearing a white doctor's coat. He is seen leaving his house and making his way to the school. Niru gets her strength from her son whose fond memories encourage her to strive harder every day. She wants to see him turn into a successful physician someday. The house in her artwork depicts two homes – her current home and the one she plans to build in future which will have compound walls and a front garden. Catching the sunrise, listening to the birds chirping, and watching the raindrops fall are some of her favorite activities depicted in the picture.

In order to keep up with the growing expenses, debt and inflation, Niru strongly urges that Malaysian government re-evaluate the minimum wage for foreign workers. Like most Nepalis, Niru has accepted Nepal's failure to generate employment for its citizens. She intends to move to other developing countries if things in Malaysia do not improve.

My Son
"Lovson" →

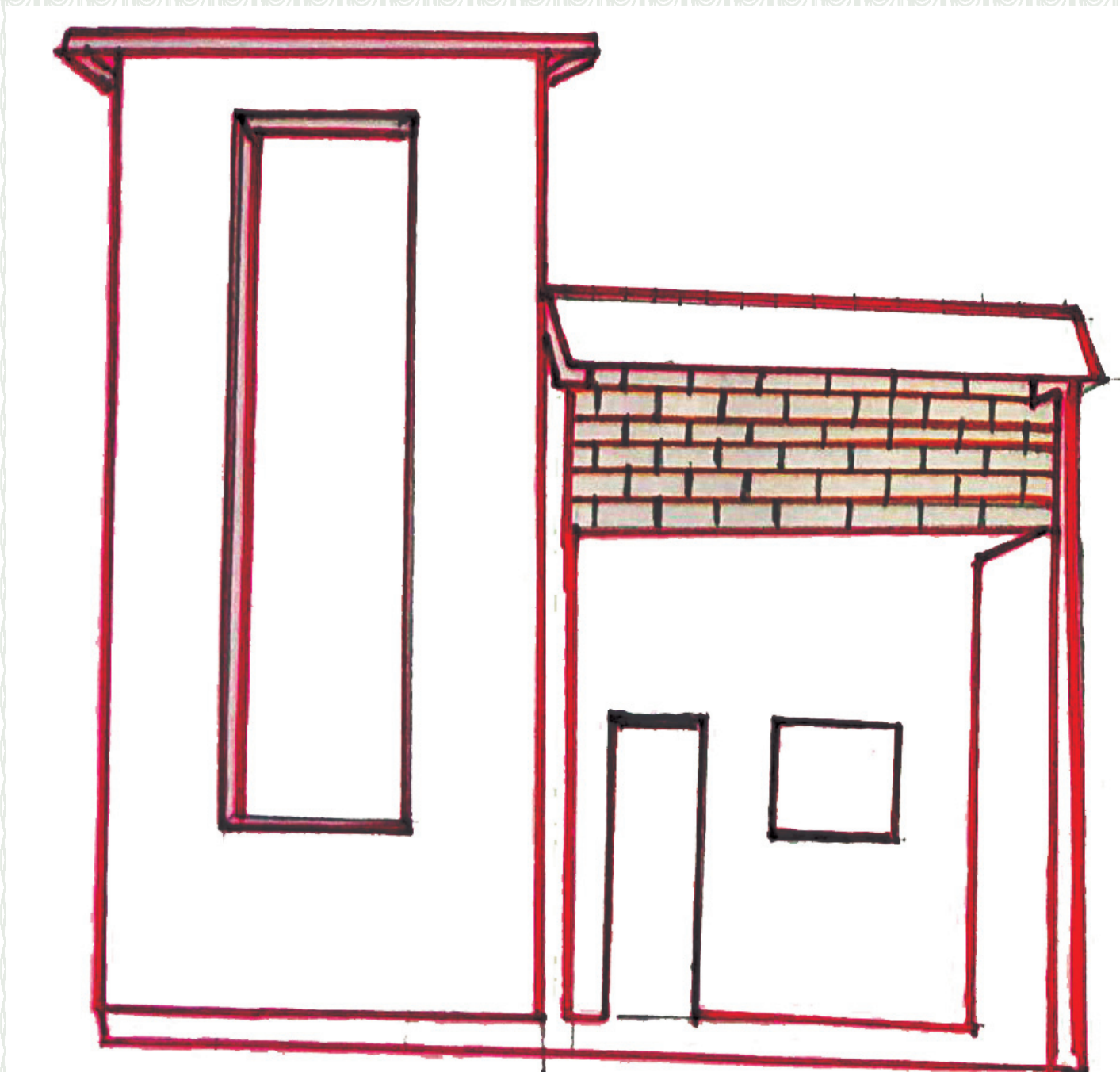


Pramil Tharu

Father of two children, Pramil Tharu first migrated to Qatar as a building construction worker. He worked for two years but was forced to return when the company closed indefinitely before Covid-19. Pramil's own brother who happens to work in Malaysia, recommended a good company to him and helped him with his visa. He is currently employed at Supersafe Industry producing rubber tiles for the last 16 months. Pramil likes the weather in Malaysia and enjoys taking occasional outings with his friends.

As part of the painting program, Pramil's newly constructed home is portrayed exactly in his artwork. He recalls his rickety old house nearly on the verge of collapsing. With dedication and diligence, Pramil successfully completed the construction of his dream home in just 16 months of his stay in Malaysia. In fact, he designed and laid out the entire floor plan.

In comparison to Qatar, Pramil enjoys his work in Malaysia. He is satisfied with his salary and additional income from OTs. He intends to work for a couple more years before he permanently returns to Nepal. With his savings, he plans to open a shop that will generate income in the coming years.



Prakash Tharu

Former radio jockey, Prakash Tharu, has spent the last 10 years in Malaysia. He is the founder and secretary general of an ethnic committee for Tharus in Malaysia. Every 2-3 months a communal program is organized where they share counsel, support, and celebrations. Being supervisor, Prakash is satisfied with the income he generates through salary, OT, and other perks. However, he loathes the unnecessary harassment and ill-treatment by police personnels and locals alike.

Prakash participated in a painting program for migrants. Through his artwork he recalls spending some of the best years in his hometown. The house on the left of the painting is his ancestral home in the village. It depicts his innocent childhood years spent with his siblings and parents. The house on the right is built 4 kms away from his ancestral home after property division. He lives there with his wife and two sons aged 11-years and 10 months. The artwork in the middle depicts his professional journey as a radio jockey at Radio Kapilvastu. He reminisces the bonding and sharing of ideas with his friends and colleagues over tea. After the birth of his elder son, Prakash was unable to meet daily expenses with his monthly income and resorted to migration for better earnings and a better future.

Being a victim of prejudice, Prakash firmly believes that the Malaysian government should take a strong stand to protect its foreign workforce who are most vulnerable. Thefts and assaults are rampant on the streets of Malaysia, but the government seems to keep their eyes shut when it comes to defending foreign workers.



Peshal Tharu

Peshal Tharu was a student when he first migrated to Malaysia on a friend's recommendation. For the past 11 years, he has been working as QA Assistant in a rubber factory that manufactures rubber floorings for sports facilities. Peshal's earnings through salary and OTs allow him to send home a substantial amount each month. He is satisfied with the company and the benefits provided to him. In his free time, he engages in social work that deals with worker issues, like drug abuse, theft, suicide etc.

Peshal's painting is a decade old memento. He misses his life in the rural village, surrounded by mountains, rivers, and forests. He would often visit the temple shown in the middle of the lake to offer his prayers to the local deity. He misses the warmth of his family and the comfort and common liberty of living in one's own nation.

Peshal highlights the favoritism towards locals at the workplace and how rules are purposely made stringent for foreign workers. He claims that locals enjoy longer annual leave and can easily acquire medical certificates without much effort. He condemns the discriminatory act of injustice and impels the Malaysian Government to lay out fair rules for everybody. In order to keep Nepal's youth from migrating overseas, Peshal points out the imperative need for industries in the country. He calls on Nepal Government to give priority to education, employment and to re-establish the industries that were once shut down by the state. He also believes his government should liaise with the Malaysian government, whereby, companies can send inquiries and worker demands directly to a government portal. This way the government can have control over manpower agencies and save its citizens from falling into vicious debt traps.



Radhika Chaudhary

Single mother, Radhika Chaudhary first migrated to Malaysia in 2013. Her marriage at the young age of 15 collapsed a few years after the birth of her son. Grappling with finances and raising a child single-handedly, Radhika made up her mind to seek work overseas. She has been employed by Electronic Company at two different branches for the past 10 years. Her job becomes monotonous and difficult at times, but her financial independence gives her solace.

As part of the painting program. Radhika chose to draw her mother. She considers her as a woman of substance. Her mother used to work in Kuwait, and it was she who encouraged and supported Radhika financially. Her artwork is an expression of gratitude towards her mother who has always been a pillar of strength to her.

After 10 years of service in Malaysia, Radhika believes that the provision for provident funds should be extended to migrant workers as well. She also believes that a decade long service should be rewarded by allowing workers to stay in Malaysia indefinitely. Should that be deemed unrealistic, the Malaysian government must reevaluate the basic salary for foreign workers to ensure they have a decent living.

She calls on Nepal Embassy to set up a 24-hour emergency response unit for migrants in distress and provide them the relief they need, quickly and efficiently.



Raj Chaudhary

Raj Chaudhary is currently employed by Electronic Company as machine operator. Previously, from 2017-2021 he was employed at a different company in Malaysia but had to return home on the request of his parents. They were terrified of losing their only son to a pandemic. Raj made his way to Malaysia again in 2023 and has been working at Sony for the past 1 year. He makes a decent living and is satisfied with the amenities provided by the company. However, he is disappointed that his Malaysian counterparts make RM1800 as basic salary whereas he makes RM1500 for the same job.

Raj participated in a painting program for migrants, whereby, he has beautifully captured his memories of childhood in a rural backdrop. He recalls having a giant mango tree in his garden that would bear lots of fruits. It made him the center of attention every summer as boys from his village would gather around him. He recalls being surrounded by his family's love and misses them tremendously.

Raj had stumbled upon an advertisement that read “free visa, free ticket to Malaysia”. He took advantage of the scheme and migrated to Malaysia for the second time saving thousands of rupees and avoiding debt. He urges Nepal government to track down fake manpower agencies charging exorbitant fees from the poor and illiterate and penalizing them. He calls on the Malaysian government to reevaluate the minimum wage to match soaring prices of goods.



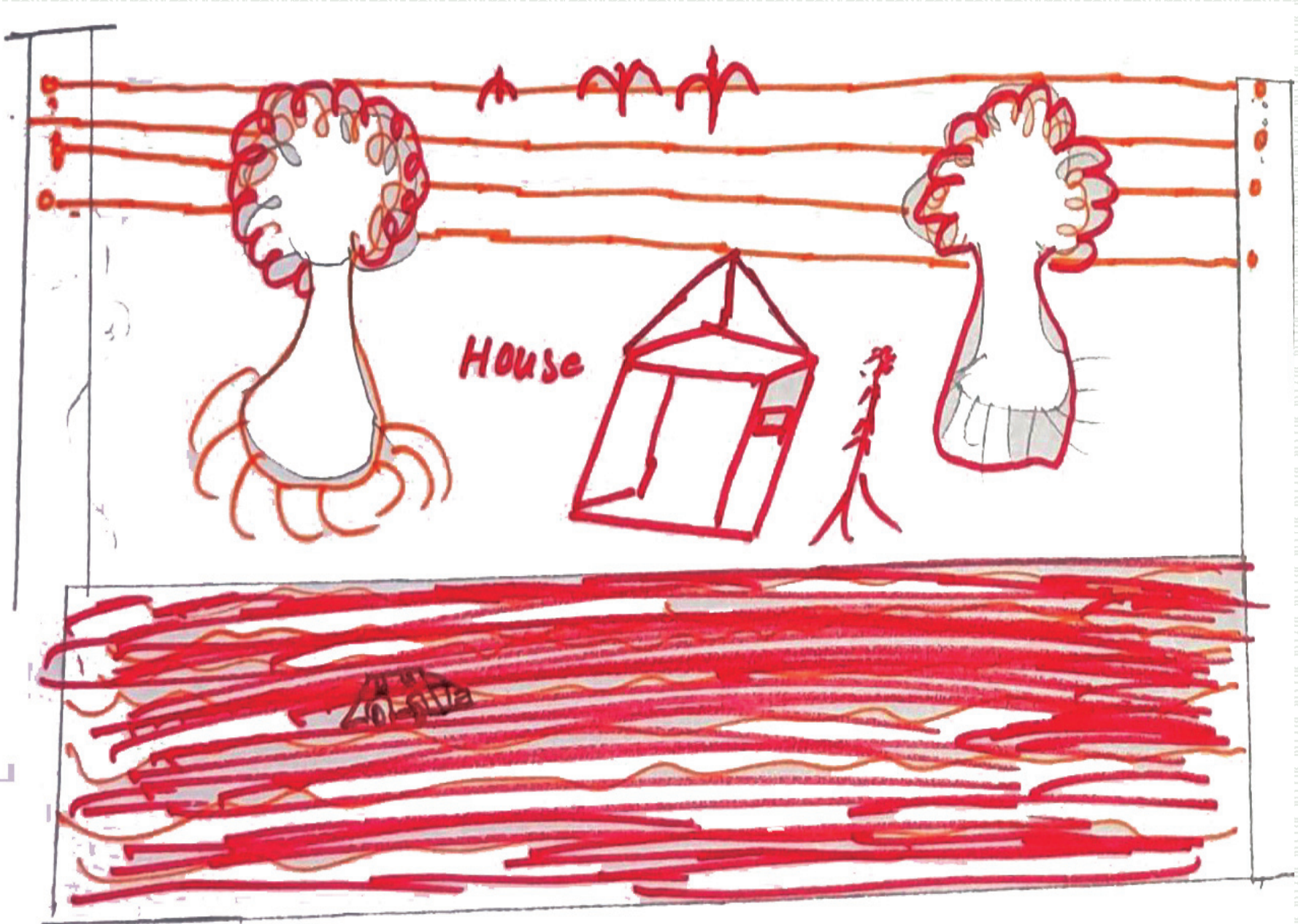
Rameshwor Chaudhary

34-year-old Rameshwor Chaudhary previously worked for Electronic Company, Malaysia from 2011-2017. He returned home for a potential marriage prospect and spent a couple of years in Nepal with his family. He tried his hand at farming but that alone could not sustain his family. Migration was the only way out. He is currently employed by the same company working as a machine operator. Having spent a considerable amount of time in Malaysia, Rameshwor has seen some slight instances of religious discrimination at his workplace. He feels that his Muslim coworkers receive preferential treatment at work and that their mistakes are often overlooked. Due to the high rate of theft and assaults against foreign workers, Rameshwor feels exposed outside of the workplace. The locals cause unnecessary harassment and intimidation while the local police are of no assistance.

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As part of the painting program, Rameshwor fondly recalls his home in between mighty tall eucalyptus trees that are used as utility poles for electricity transmission. His attempt to portray his home under the overhead electricity lines can be seen surrounded by cornfields in his village in Rautahat. Rameshwor admits he lacks the technical skills to create art. He would have liked to draw his 6-year-old daughter making a videocall and asking “Papa, please show me your face”.

Due to lack of OTs and soaring price of goods, Rameshwor’s savings are zero. He is struggling to make ends meet and wants to advise prospective migrants to do in-depth research before making a move abroad.



Ramila Rai

33-year-old, Ramila Rai, was abandoned by her husband when she was 4 months pregnant with her daughter. Her husband's lack of support and the added strain of money overwhelmed her. Her two years of retail work experience in Kuwait prior to marriage gave her the courage and confidence to reapply for an overseas job. Ramila left for Malaysia with the intention of providing her daughter with a fulfilling life. She has spent the last ten years working for an electronics company. Ramila is satisfied with the salary she receives along with bonuses and other benefits. However, since Covid-19, to cope with losses, the company has stopped overtime.

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Ramila's artwork depicts her life revolving around her daughter, who is now a teenager. She regrets having to leave her behind as a toddler and worries that the absence of parental interaction may have affected her social and emotional development. She misses a father figure in her daughter's life. Ramila takes a vacation occasionally to be with her daughter while continuing to work overseas.

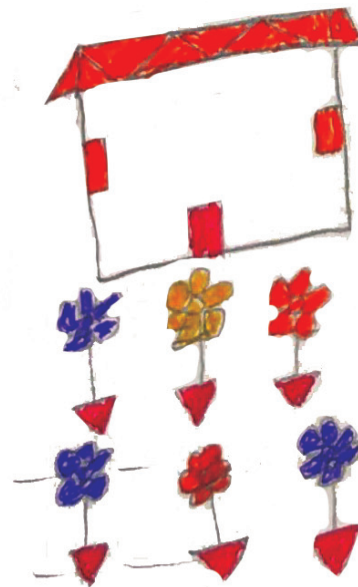
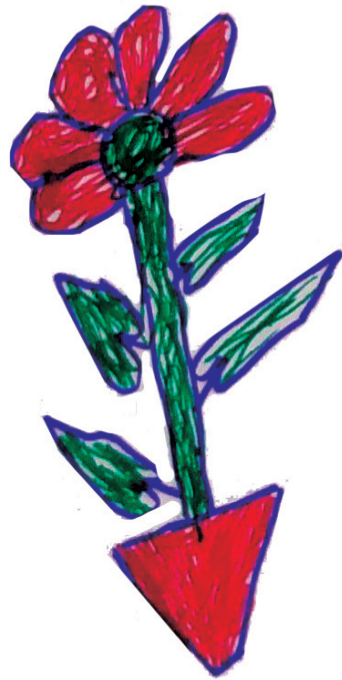
This year, workers have lost all hope due to the increasing prices of goods. Basic necessities are becoming hard to meet. To make goods more affordable, she asks the Malaysian government to subsidize the rate of goods. The growing vulnerability of Nepali workers in Malaysia is brought to light by Ramila. She asserts that workers are struggling due to untimely pay, less than minimum wages, forced labour, theft, inequality and injustice, to name a few. She urges the government of Nepal to safeguard and protect its people abroad and to fight for their rights, if necessary.



my daughter



this is my House



this is malaysia House

Shyam Chaudhary

30-year-old, Shyam Chaudhary was leading a normal life running a small cafe called “Momo Center” in Nepal. After the marriage of his two sisters and his own, Shyam suffered significant debt, forcing him to liquidate his café and find a job abroad. He is currently employed at Electronic Company in Malaysia for the past 11 months. He recalls earning a sizeable income through OTs for the first few months. However, the number of duty hours have declined rapidly as the company is under loss. Shyam is struggling to make ends meet as the price of goods spiral upwards. He plans to permanently return after concluding his contract.

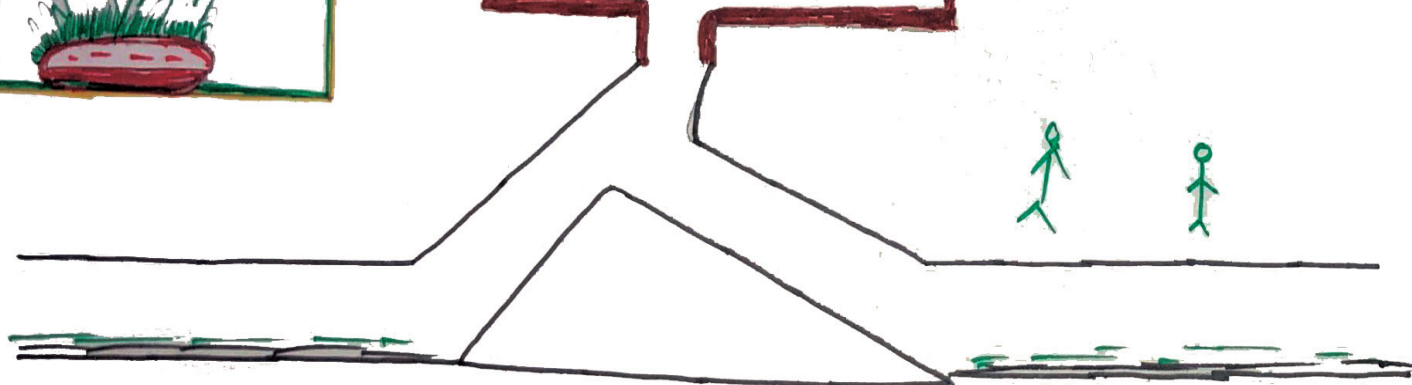
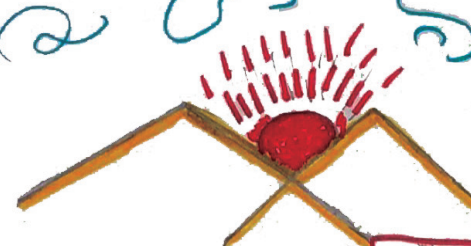
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As part of the painting program, Shyam's artwork serves as a delightful memento of his time spent in his hometown. He recalls catching the morning sun from the east and waking up to warm conversations over morning tea with family. The drawing of the eucalyptus tree represents his contingency plan. His goal is to plant 250 eucalyptus trees on a 3-acre plot of land and reap the benefits ten years later.

Shyam points out to Nepal being an agriculture-centric nation in the past and its potential to significantly boost the country's economy. He urges the government of Nepal to make investments in the establishment of industries and agricultural sector so that people can pursue a career and live a happy life in Nepal.

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Sunita Chaudhary

Sunita Chaudhary, mother of a 16-year-old daughter, has been employed in Malaysia for the past 10 years. She started off as a machine operator and slowly rose to the position of QC Assistant. Having endured a great deal of suffering and misfortune in her lifetime, Sunita's only hope was to migrate for a better prospect. Courageous and resilient, she takes immense pride on being the first female from her village to work overseas. At work, she has won everybody's love and respect due to her diligence and hard work. She even won the title of "Best Performer". She feels confident and secure about her job and is fluent in the local tongue.

62 Sunita's artwork is a representation of a typical Tharu home in a rural backdrop. Proud of her Tharu heritage, she wants to renovate and preserve her traditional home and traditional equipment like the 'Dhiki' which is a husk lever. The sun, moon, rain, bird, and tree in the painting symbolizes the deep connection Tharu people share with nature. An indigenous ethnic group, Tharus have their own indigenous beliefs, practices, and customs. Sunita sadly recalls an instance of discrimination by her Nepali coworkers in the form of untouchability and witchcraft allegation. She condemns such archaic malpractices and wishes to see everybody co-existing in harmony with each other.

Along with other benefits, Sunita is satisfied with her job and salary. She has purchased property in Nepal, paid off her outstanding debt, and is currently educating her daughter. She intends to permanently return, invest in a small agricultural business, and support her daughter, who needs a mother figure in her life. The only thing she asks of the Nepali government is that they accept returning migrants with kindness and open arms and not subject them to needless scrutiny and misconduct at the airport.



Tirtha Limbu

Tirtha, used to work as an auto driver in Nepal when unanticipated events compelled him to seek work overseas. Because of his age, he was rejected by numerous countries. Malaysia was the only nation to accept him. Currently, he has been working as a security guard, for the past 10 months. Tirtha claims that the company has deviated from the contract that was signed in Nepal. The actual salary is far lesser than the salary agreed upon. The company, however, accepts no accountability for it, and his messages are not being received by the manpower agents in Nepal. Despite feeling trapped, he must continue working to pay off the debt he has accumulated.

Tirtha's painting depicts his entire life-story. His story begins from his home in Taplejung where he lived with his first wife and two sons who died during childbirth. He remarried five years later and has a daughter with his second wife. Over the years, Tirtha has worked hard to accumulate several properties and has built two houses for his two grown sons. After settling them, he plans to build a third house and spend the remainder of his retirement years with his second wife and daughter.

Tirtha has witnessed prejudice against foreign workers over the last four months with regards to wages, work hours, medical care, safety, and justice. He genuinely feels that the workers should receive protection and fair treatment from the Malaysian government. Having been a victim of deceit, Tirtha contends that the government of Nepal should open recruitment agencies that are managed by the state and cut out the middlemen who serve as fake agents charging exorbitant fees. With its heavy reliance on remittances, he believes the time has come for the government to intervene and take meaningful action for its citizens.

Chayaki S napu

