

Fostering Pathways for Rural Progress

Mohan Karki, Managing Director of K. M. Engineers Builders, shares his inspiring journey from rural Nepal to leading a company focused on infrastructure development

With over 35 bridges successfully constructed in the hilly terrains of Nepal, K. M. Engineers Builders stands as a beacon of hope for communities in need. Founded by **Mohan Karki**, who grew up in the remote hills of the nation and dedicated to delivering essential infrastructure to rural areas, the company has transformed the lives of countless villagers, providing vital access to education, healthcare, and safety.

In an interview with **Business Frontier, Karki, Managing Director of K. M. Engineers Builders**, shares how his formative experiences shaped his vision for infrastructure development. He discusses how his company continues to expand its positive impact across Nepal's most isolated regions, striving to build a better future for all.

How did your early life experiences in the hilly regions of Nepal shape your vision for infrastructure development?

I was born in a small village in the hilly district Okhaldhunga of eastern Nepal, surrounded by towering mountains. Back then, reaching the nearest motorable road meant a four-five-day trek on foot. When I was just seven, I made my first journey with my father, traversing steep slopes and cliffs and crossing hundreds of rivers and streams. After days of exhausting travel, we finally reached the road.

Even today, I vividly recall every bit of those trails. Eight years later, when I was around 15, I retraced that path alone, guided only by those childhood memories. As I walked, I imagined the

city's roads and bridges extending to my village, connecting it to the outside world. My young mind was filled with dreams of building roads and bridges, though I had no idea what kind of education or skills were needed to make that a reality.

Luckily, I found myself working for a reputed construction company, and the dreams from my childhood began to resurface. Determined, I set out to start my own company. As fate would have it, I had the chance to acquire a construction firm specialising in building bridges. This was a turning point for me. Today, most of our projects involve bridge construction, which allows me to live out my childhood dreams through my business.

How do you prioritise safety and environmental sustainability across your projects?

Our company's mission is to contribute to rural infrastructure development. Most of our projects are small to medium-sized, which naturally reduces their environmental impact. Safety is always our top priority. We ensure the well-being of our employees, labourers, and local communities, taking special care to protect their health. After completing every project, we also engage in initiatives like tree planting and protecting local water sources from contamination, ensuring a sustainable and positive impact on the environment.

What role do you believe infrastructure plays in connecting remote communities with urban centres in Nepal?

Having grown up in a remote region, I know firsthand how difficult life can be

without access to proper infrastructure. In my village, we had to stock up on essentials like salt and kerosene for the entire year. Once a year, villagers would trek for four to five days to bring these basic supplies home. While it was a necessity, it also shaped our simple, self-sustained lifestyle.

Today, roads have reached even the most remote areas, changing lives dramatically. However, there is still a significant lack of motorable bridges, especially across Nepal's hundreds of rivers and streams. Recent studies show that Nepal needs 600-700 more bridges.

The monsoon season makes travel extremely difficult in hilly areas, while lowland regions are frequently flooded, cutting off villages from essential services. Many children cannot attend school due to the risks involved in crossing rivers. Sometimes, people can't access emergency medical care because of this lack of connectivity. Bridges are not just about transportation but about access to education, healthcare, and safety.

What motivates you to expand K.M. Engineer's Builders in Nepal's remote areas?

KM Engineers is a commercial construction firm, but profit isn't our primary motivator. Our fundamental mission is to bring happiness and opportunity to remote villages. While larger companies often take on big infrastructure projects, we focus on making a meaningful impact where it's most needed. Seeing the joy and relief on the villagers' faces when they finally have a bridge connecting them to the rest of the world is our valid reward.

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We've independently designed and constructed about half a dozen bridges and are constantly improving through regular training and by adopting new technologies. This keeps us competitive and ensures that the quality of our work is second to none. ”

Since 2015, we've successfully constructed over 35 bridges, helping to uplift rural communities. We have also been firmly committed to completing projects within deadlines and supporting the government's infrastructure goals. We have completed some of our bridges well before the deadline, bringing them into service sooner than expected. Our reputation is built on delivering what we promise.

How do you ensure a strong company culture across different project sites?

We believe in more than just delivering projects on time; we aim to create a supportive environment for our workers. We pay close attention to their health, their families' well-being, and even their children's education and healthcare. Many of our workers have been with us for eight to nine years and are willing to continue in the coming days because they know that we care about them beyond just their work. This long-term loyalty and mutual respect are vital to maintaining a solid company culture.

How do you integrate innovative technologies into your construction projects to improve efficiency and quality?

Constructing bridges is inherently challenging, but we pride ourselves on building structures that last more than 50 years. We don't just build bridges—we design them too. We've independently designed and constructed about half a dozen bridges and are constantly improving through regular training and by adopting new technologies. This keeps



us competitive and ensures that the quality of our work is second to none.

What advice would you give young professionals aspiring to make a difference in the construction industry?

Nepal may be a lesser developed country but it has untapped potential for infrastructure development. There is so much work to be done — whether on roads, bridges, high-rise buildings, hydropower projects, cable cars, or even metro and railway systems.

Situated between two economic giants, Nepal is a land of opportunity,

especially in construction. Exploiting these opportunities requires a skilled workforce. Nepal offers ample prospects for young professionals eager to make a difference.

Young professionals have an incredible chance to make a real difference. However, many young people like to go abroad because they believe bureaucratic hurdles and regulations are tough to handle.

But the power to change Nepal lies in our hands. If we work together, the next generation can turn Nepal into a paradise through infrastructure development.