



**OXFAM**

Efforts to make communities happier, healthier, and stronger.

Seven stories of bringing change in common peoples' lives.





These stories are collected from eight different districts where Oxfam is working to help people through Earthquake Response Programme and Sustainable Development Programme.

The positive responses we get from our beneficiaries consistently motivate us to help them lead better lives.

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# WOMEN IN THE FRONT LINES TO BUILD BACK BETTER



Rita Dulal is a 26-year-old mother of three girls from Sindhupalchok who recently got a formal training on masonry skills from Oxfam and partners. “Earlier, we used to put heavier stones on the upper parts of the houses, but now I know that it is wrong to put heavy stones on the roofs. My technical knowledge has increased,” she says. Photo by: Bipana Dhimal/Oxfam

One of the major challenges the earthquakes of 2015 put forward was rebuilding damaged houses, building them in a way that would make them withstand any such future tremors. The Government of Nepal has come up with strict building codes and the houses need to be constructed by trained masons. It is estimated that more than 20,000 trained masons (as per the Post Disaster Needs

Assessment report of 2015) are required in the country for the construction works. Oxfam in Nepal is trying to contribute to build that workforce.

From January 2016-November 2016, nearly a thousand masons have been trained by Oxfam and its partners to construct earthquake resistant houses in seven earthquake districts (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Gorkha,



Rita Dulal and others clearing a site before starting the mason training. Photo by: Bipana Dhimal/Oxfam

Sindhupalchowk, Nuwakot, and Dhading) with the goal of “saving lives now and in the future with enhanced resilience for vulnerable women and men at risk of, or coping with, disasters.” Of these trained people, a hundred are women.

*“I used to carry bricks and make mortar only; now I can make walls and rebars (reinforcement of steel bars) for concrete.”*

**Rupa Bisunkhe**

The construction industry in Nepal is male dominated and women issues are hardly taken into account, and there are discrepancies in the wages as women are systematically paid lower compared to their male counterparts.

In construction works, women are mostly engaged in the most simple labor works like sifting sand, carrying bricks, and crushing rocks into smaller stones. Oxfam in Nepal wanted to break this trend and started providing masonry skills training to women. In September, a training was conducted only to women in Lamatar,

Mahalaxmi municipality in Lalitpur district to help them build earthquake resistant infrastructures. “I used to carry bricks and make mortar only; now I can make walls and rebars (reinforcement of steel bars) for concrete,” 22-year-old Rupa Bisunkhe of Lamatar said after the completion of the training.

The women were trained on how to lay foundations, raise columns, fix cross beams, put ties, set proper connections, and erect walls that would finally ensure a resilient structure. Maiya Thapa Magar from Lubhu said the training had given her new knowledge of making stronger

houses. “I stopped the construction works at my home so that we could put bands in the wall to make the house stronger.” Shuvadra Shrestha (40) from Sudal said, “I have implemented the knowledge I acquired from the training in the projects I am working on.”

The week-long training was conducted on a community land with the permission of ward secretary where the participants built earthquake resistant models so that the public could see how safe houses would look like.

**Sudin Pradhan, Lalitpur**



Women in Lamatar placing ties in right way to align the steel bars of pillars to provide additional strength. Photo by: Sudin Pradhan/Oxfam

# FARMERS REAPING BENEFITS THROUGH NEW TECHNOLOGY



Farmers transplanting paddy saplings using SRI technology. Photo by: Oxfam

Shivaraj Thanet and his wife Lokmaya of Nawalparasi are very satisfied with the paddy production this year. “Earlier, the production of rice would suffice my family of eight members for about five months but after implementing the SRI system, we had rice for 8 months.” They participated in a training on SRI (System of Rice Intensification), organized by Oxfam, a new way of planting the paddy for better production.

SRI is a cost effective way to increase the productivity as it requires small amount of water and fewer saplings. It also produces less husk and bran while processing into rice. Unlike the traditional methods of planting a bunch of saplings together, single saplings are planted at a distance of at least 25 cm in the SRI method.

“We use less water to keep the soil moist after transplantation, compared to traditional methods in which the



A woman using a weeder in the field where paddy was planted using the SRI technology. Photo by: Oxfam

paddy fields are submerged in water. The weeds can also be removed frequently and easily using a weeding machine,” says Roone Singh Mahato, Junior Technical Assistant (JTA) of Kumarworti in Nawalparasi.

Oxfam has been encouraging farmers to adopt SRI since 2015. So far, 60 farmers have been trained and all of them have grown rice adopting the technology. Farmers like Shivaraj have been able to increase the paddy production by 45-50%. Shivaraj got the training in 2015 and planted paddy in 0.473 hectares of land.

*“I planted paddy using SRI techniques in 0.038 hectare land. The yield was almost double than what used to be in previous years. Moreover, the rice was very tasty.”*

**Sita Goudel**

Another SRI trained farmer, Sita Goudel from Kumarworti-7 says, “I planted paddy using SRI techniques in 0.038 hectare land. The yield was almost double than what used to be in previous years. Moreover, the rice was very tasty. That is why, this year I have planted paddy in 0.22 hectare land.”

Training on SRI is under Oxfam’s Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) which supports cooperatives in Nawalparasi to run a rice mill. Under this programme, farmers from Jahada, Tilakpur and Kuwarworti village development committees have been provided the SRI training. In 2015 alone, 44 farmers were trained who planted paddy in 7.4 hectare land using the SRI system. They have reported double yield. In 2016, 22 farmers were trained and they adopted SRI in 2.53 hectare land; similar yield is expected this year as well.

**Nishma Basnet and Prakash Subedi,  
Nawalparasi**

## OXFAM HELPING EARTHQUAKE AFFECTED FARMERS TO BUILD GRANARIES



Bhim Bahadur Tamang made this granary using locally available materials. Oxfam in Nepal and its partner, Janahit Grameen Sewa Samiti (JGSS) provided him a grant to build it. Photo by: Arjun Gahatraj

Bhim Bahadur Tamang, 42, of Kadambas is a farmer who not only lost his house in April 2015's earthquake but also his granary, food items, and other utensils and goods.

Tamang's production of rice, maize and millet had significantly (more than 25 %) gone down after the earthquake. Then, he faced challenge in storing whatever was produced as he did not have space for storage, and moisture, rodents and rain further damaged his stock.

"I heard Oxfam was going to provide a grant of Rs 6500 to construct granary to earthquake-affected people who lost their houses and grain storage structure, so I contacted them," Tamang says.

In order to support people like him whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and were affected by earthquake, Oxfam has provided support for granary construction. The beneficiaries need to use local materials to construct the granary themselves. Oxfam provides



Bhim Bahadur Tamang sorting maize in his newly built granary. Photo by: Oxfam

technical support to design the granary, and after construction, provides them Rs 6500 as support.

It took Tamang six days to construct the granary for which he also employed one unskilled labor. He collected local materials like wood, bamboo, and stone for construction. "Excluding the cost of these local materials, my total expense was Rs 7000. I took some loan and bought iron sheets and pins from the market. I completed the construction and informed Oxfam to verify the constructed granary so that they could provide me the grant," says he. "I thank Oxfam for this innovative idea. Now it's very easy for me to store maize, millet and rice in my granary and use them as per my need."

*"I thank Oxfam for this innovative idea. Now it's very easy for me to store maize, millet and rice in my granary and use them as per my need."*

Until mid August 2016, 609 farmers have benefited from the granary support scheme, and this intervention has been appreciated by government authorities too. Ramesh Bhandari, a member of the joint monitoring visit from DADO (District Agriculture Development Office) said, "This intervention of granary support is very useful for farmers and it should be replicated in other village development committees too."

**Rosan Subedi, Sindhupalchowk**

## TRANSITIONING FROM OPEN SPACES TO TOILETS



Oxfam and partners discuss the importance of constructing toilets in Nuwakot.  
Photo by: Meena Napit/Oxfam

Until some time ago, if you wanted to attend nature's call at the house of Surendra Singh Tamang (51) and his wife Fulsani Tamang (48) of Betini village development committee of Nuwakot, they would show you a nearby bush. But that is not the case anymore; they have built a toilet close to their house.

It was the wish of Oxfam and its partner KCDC (Kakani Community Development Center) to bring awareness in this region

inhabited mostly by the Tamangs. For this, Lilamaya Tamang, social mobilizer of KCDC constantly encouraged the Tamang duo to start using toilet.

Oxfam and KCDC provided them cement, a squatting pan, iron sheets, pipes, siphon, nails and other materials needed to construct a toilet. Then they collected sand, wood, door on their own and built the toilet in just three days. They have kept the toilet clean and they have a

bucket full of water inside. Nobody needs to teach them any more to wash their hands with soap and water after using the toilet. They also replenish the toilet supplies such as toilet cleaners, brush, soaps as soon as they are finished.

But this change did not happen overnight. Fulsani, for instance, had a long experience of using open places for toilet purpose, she found it difficult to use the squatting pans. She said she felt shy using the toilets earlier, and started being comfortable only gradually. Her husband has also changed himself, and he now takes part in cleaning campaigns. He says he now understands the

*“I now know that maintaining hygiene can save lives,” Surendra says adding, “And I ask all those who have not built toilets to make one.”*

**Surendra Singh Tamang**



A septic tank built next to Tamang’s new toilet.  
Photo by: Sri Krishna Basnet/Oxfam



Surendra Tamang’s newly constructed toilet. Photo by: Sri Krishna Basnet/Oxfam

importance of drinking clean water and storing drinking water in closed and safe containers, along with the knowledge of using water purifiers.

“I now know that maintaining hygiene can save lives,” Surendra says adding, “And I ask all those who have not built toilets to make one.”

In order to promote hygiene and good health, Oxfam has been helping people in different communities construct toilets, and also complementing government’s campaign to make open defecation free (ODF) areas. Since April 2015, Oxfam and its partners have built more than 2000 household latrines in earthquake-affected districts.

**Sri Krishna Basnet, Nuwakot**

## CASH FOR WORK CONTINUES TO MAKE POSITIVE IMPACT IN PEOPLE'S LIVES



Villagers in Nuwakot working on a pathway as a part of Cash for Work programme. Photo: Sujan Ghimire/Oxfam

Oxfam in partnership with Prayas Nepal and Action Nepal implemented Cash for Work activity for 5389 households recently in six VDCs of Dhading. A total of 80 beneficiaries worked physically for 22 days, earning a daily wage of Rs 536. The project was widening four-kilometer trail between Belbhanjyang and Mayatar. "It is much easier and safer for me to walk to school as the road is now widened," says eleven-year-old Nirajan BK, a grade-two student at Bel Bhanjyang Primary School

in Dhading. The dangerously narrow roads, on the edge of a hill have been expanded by six feet.

Forty-seven-year-old Keshari Maya Magar is also relieved. "It was risky for me to take my livestock for grazing earlier but not anymore," she says. Also improved road has now increased people's access to fodder for their livestock. Farmers of Belbhanjyang had to walk more than an hour to reach Malekhu to sell their

produce, risking their lives. "I would have to walk for 90 minutes to sell vegetables in the nearby market but now it takes only 45 minutes after the road was widened,"

*"I bought a goat from the money I received from CFW and now I will earn more in future by rearing it."*

**Ram Krishna Devkota**

says Ek Bahadur Magar of Belbhanjyang. Now, motorbikes can also be used for commutes in these areas.

In order to help people affected by the 2015 earthquake, Oxfam in Nepal with its partners started providing temporary jobs to the people so that they could earn for themselves and at the same time, their community structures would also be built back better.



School kids now have a little expanded road. Photo by: Oxfam



Ram Krishna Devkota and his wife. Photo by: Dinesh Tamang/CARDSN

## Reaching out to the vulnerable

"I bought a goat from the money I received from CFW and now I will earn more in future by rearing the goat," says 68-year-old Ram Krishna Devkota who lives with his speech-impaired wife in Samundradevi VDC in Nuwakot. Their house collapsed in 2015's earthquake, killing goats and destroying food grains. They own a few ropanis of land but lack irrigation facilities affecting the yield as a result their daily dietary requirements are also not met.

They live on their own as their only son does not take care of them. Meeting their ends meet has been a challenge after the earthquake. Through Cash for Work, however, Devkota was able to earn nearly Rs 19,000. He worked for 40 days earning

Rs 460 per day (government has set different wage rate for different districts). Because of his age, he was allowed to do light works such as providing water for other workers, providing them tools to fix community's trails and irrigation canals.

He wants to rear the goat he bought and sell it next year during Dashain when the demand for goat meat will be high. The CFW is also aimed at helping people meet their daily dietary requirements by giving them temporary job. Since 2015, more than 17, 000 households have been benefited through CFW in Nuwakot and Dhading districts.

**Raj Kumar Pandey, Dhading**  
**Neeraj Tharu, Nuwakot**

## CLASSES MISSED NO MORE!



Students getting hands-on training to make sanitary napkins. Photo by: Dipika Joshi/Oxfam

“After the earthquake there were no latrines for us in the school. We would be in the same sanitary cloth for the whole day. And if we felt like it was going to stain our skirts, there was no other option than to go back home by wrapping a shawl

*“I did not have my periods and I was not aware of things to do during menstruation. I was very shy to ask others.”*

**Amrita Gurung**

around, missing classes,” recalls Sangita Gurung, a tenth grader at Manikam Devi Higher Secondary School in Laprak VDC of Gorkha.

Oxfam and its partners are not just raising awareness to maintain hygiene during their special times but also building infrastructures to ensure that this no longer continues. Oxfam in coordination with school management constructed eight latrines at Sangita’s school. Among those, four were for girls.



Students in Gorkha discussing the importance of menstrual hygiene management. Photo by: Oxfam

“There were six latrines before the earthquake out of which four were for students, among them one was for girls,” says Sangita Gurung, 15. The latrine had a place to throw used sanitary pads but when it would be full as there was no system to dispose it.

As an integral part of constructing girl friendly latrines in schools, Oxfam has been supporting the installation of incinerators to destroy the pads. The designs of these incinerators vary according to the requirement and location of the school latrines. “We no longer have to miss our classes because of our periods,” says Sangita thankfully.

Positive changes have been seen in Kathmandu valley too. At Kirtipur Secondary School in Kirtipur, the construction of girls’ friendly Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities has significantly brought down the

absence of female students. Bhawana Lama a student of grade 10 at Kirtipur Secondary School in Kathmandu remembers, “Earlier there were pads thrown everywhere around the toilets.”

The sanitary depot and the operation and maintenance fund set up by Oxfam and its partner is also found to be working well in these schools. The fund is collected every Friday during school assembly. It is used for extracurricular activities and for replenishing the stock for sanitary pads.

“I am thankful to Oxfam/Lumanti for the support to female students which is why we can attend school freely during menstruation period,” says Anisha Tamang. The students have found convenient way to maintain hygiene with the installation of water tanks, hand washing platform and containers. “The condition of toilets is far better now due to the sufficient water,” says Tamang.



Toilets are now girl friendly with installation of pad incinerators. Photo by: Dipika Joshi/Oxfam

## Menstrual Hygiene

Thirteen-year-old Amrita Gurung of Gandaki Lower Secondary school in Kerauja, Gorkha, did not know much about menstruation cycle and how to prepare for it. “I did not have my periods and I was not aware of things to do during menstruation. I was very shy to ask others, but Oxfam organized discussion on Menstruation Hygiene Management (MHM) which was very helpful to prepare ourselves for menstruation,” she says.

Such sessions have helped to break the taboo that exists in the society. Anisha Tamang, a 9th grade student of Kirtipur Secondary School, says she and her friends can now easily ask for sanitary pads from her teacher. Orientations on MHM and consultations with teachers and child club members have helped to lessen the stigma surrounding menstruation to a large extent.



Women in Lalitpur learning to make alternate sanitary napkins. Photo by: Dipika Joshi/Oxfam

## Learning to make your own sanitary napkin

Gone are the days for Rima Gurung, 15 of Gandaki Lower Secondary school in Kerauja, Gorkha who had problems maintaining female hygiene

during her periods. She now makes her own sanitary napkins. “There is no market access from Kerouja and the sanitary pads available here are very expensive.”

Oxfam with its partner decided to reach out to these girls and conducted workshop on preparation of homemade sanitary pad with the help of locally available materials such as sari, shawls, threads and needle.

“I had no idea that we could make sanitary napkins at home,” says Gurung, “but now I am motivating

my friends to use the sanitary clothes available in the sanitary depot (set up by Oxfam).” She adds, “My queries have been addressed; now I can prepare reusable sanitary napkins at home and teach others on making one.”

Oxfam with its partners, ENPHO (Environment and Public Health Organization) and Goreto Gorkha have been conducting trainings on the preparation of alternative sanitary napkins in Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, and Gorkha districts. To promote women entrepreneurship (cooperatives run by women groups) in the future and to make these sanitary napkins available in local markets, women groups and mother groups have been trained. School volunteers and teachers have also been included in the training to promote the use of sanitary napkins. “We are happy to get this opportunity to participate in this training. I hope to train others as well and would like to request for further support with materials (cloth, scissors),” said a Primary teacher of Devi Higher Secondary School.

**Sabir Ojha and Samana Bishynkhe, Gorkha;  
Dipika Joshi, Kathmandu**

## MAKING INCOME THROUGH HOMEMADE NAPKINS



Padma Gurung sewing sanitary napkins at her tailoring shop in Gorkha. She sells them at NRs 25 per piece. Photo by: Sabir Ojha/Oxfam

Padma Gurung of Takumaj vdc of Gorkha district never thought she would be displaying sanitary napkins for sale at her tailoring shop one day. She never thought she would be sewing them herself and earning extra money too.

It all began after she got the training on making sanitary napkins by Oxfam and Unification Nepal. She was already working as Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) and was providing

services to the people in her community. She added further skills to herself, when she attended the training on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) where she learned the skills of preparing reusable sanitary napkins.

Padma, who had lost her house in the 2015 earthquake, had also received a grant from Oxfam and Unification Nepal to revive her business—her sewing machine was damaged in the earthquake. But



Sajilo Napkins, sewn at Padma's tailoring shop on display for sale. Photo by: Sabir Ojha/Oxfam

a very optimistic Padma did not want to waste any time to utilize her newfound skill. She was able to make extra income by sewing the homemade sanitary napkins Sajilo Napkin and selling them. "I usually have a lot of leftover cloths which would be wasted otherwise," Padma says, "But I can now turn these clothes into something useful and sell them at an affordable cost." She sells these napkins at NRs 25 (0.22 USD) per piece.

*"I usually have a lot of leftover cloths which would be wasted otherwise; but I can now turn these clothes into something useful and sell them at an affordable cost."*

**Padma Gurung**

"Most women in the village prefer clothes over the disposable sanitary pads as they can be washed and reused," Padma says. To tap this potential, she is now all set to expand her business by supplying Sajilo Napkins to two other villages—Takukot and Muchhok.

Girls stop by her shop asking for information on making the napkin. She counsels them and other costumers on the proper way of using the Sajilo Napkins and the importance of maintain proper hygiene and nutrition during menstruation. She has got a chance to strengthen her role of a FCHV too. "Unlike in the past, girls and women talk freely about the matters of menstruation these days," Padma shares.

In Gorkha, more than 2000 women like Padma have received training on making alternate sanitary napkins and 178 households have received petty traders' grant to revive their businesses affected by the arthquakes of 2015.

**Sabir Ojha and Sangita Regmi, Gorkha**







We believe that empowered, effective, organised citizens, and an accountable vibrant civil society will achieve change, transforming social and economic institutions which will eventually contribute to equitable, inclusive socio-economic development.



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