Story of Smile

Earthquake Response Operation

Nepal Red Cross Society
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Cover Photo : Huma Sathigare, a trained mason from NRCS smiles to have dignified work with increased income.

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MESSAGE

Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) is proud to be a part of national recovery efforts after earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015. Being an auxiliary to the government in humanitarian field, NRCS has been working closely with the government in 14 most affected districts where integrated earthquake response operation has been implemented.

The NRCS has reached out to millions of people with different types of support after earthquake. We are extremely happy to see number of success stories with the execution of recovery programme in earthquake affected communities.

We feel greatly delighted by seeing happiness on the faces of beneficiaries and their satisfaction. It gives us immense pleasure when we see the changes in the lives of the people by the support we provided.

We would like to thank the government, partners, and other stakeholders for their invaluable support and engagement in our recovery operation.

We also take this opportunity to congratulate all concerned for their tireless effort to publish this story book. We understand there are many more stories to share. But these are certainly the reflection of some successes of the earthquake response operation. This undertaking could not have been possible without participation and assistance of many people whose name may not be enumerated. Their contributions are sincerely appreciated and acknowledged.

We would like to express our thanks to Mr. Umesh Prasad Dhakal, Head of ERO for his supervision and guidance. Likewise, our sincere appreciation goes to PMER-IM, CEA-GESI-communication team of NRCS, IFRC and in-country Partner National Societies for their valuable input in finalizing the story book. Ms. Tara Devi Gurung, PMER Coordinator deserves special thanks for her untiring and professional engagement in the book publication process. We are equally thankful to Mr. Rukmagat Kafle, Programme Officer for his significant work in designing the book. Our district team equally deserve thanks for their contribution. We whole heartedly recognize all involved and acknowledge their support.

Dev Ratna Dhakhwa
Secretary General

Sanjeev Thapa
Chairman
Following the earthquake of April 2015 and subsequent aftershocks, the NRCS has been implementing earthquake response operation (ERO) in 14 most affected districts. The operation has been carried out through integrated approach where shelter, water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, livelihood and institutional capacity building (ICB) are the key components. Cross cutting issues such as community engagement and accountability, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting (PMER)-information management (IM) have also been addressed significantly.

ERO is the largest disaster response operation, the NRCS has ever carried out. NRCS has been implementing ERO in close coordination and collaboration with National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) and other concerned government authorities at all level. From the emergency relief to the recovery phase, the NRCS has been able to reach millions of people. Many successes have been observed and we are happy to see the positive results of our interventions.

To document some of the testimonies, we have endeavored to present this book capturing some successes from the field. This is a collection of successes from different sectors we have involved.

I would like to thank all the colleagues for their hard work to publish this book and congratulate the team for this collective achievement.
NRCS partners
For integrated recovery programme
Dolkha - Consortium between Swiss and Austrian RC
Kathmandu Valley - British RC
Gorkha - Consortium between Belgian (Flanders), German and Netherlands RC
Dhading - Korean RC and consortium between Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Monaco RC
Makwanpur, Nuwakot and Rasuwa - Consortium between American, Canadian and Spanish RC
Kavrepalanchok - Korean RC and consortium between Danish, Austrian and Canadian RC
Sindhupalchok - Japanese RC and consortium between Norwegian, Australian, Canadian and Finnish RC
Sindhuli, Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga - IFRC

Partners for components support
Tanahun and Lamjung - Consortium between Danish and French RC
Malaysian Red Crescent Society, Red Cross Society of China, Singapore Red Cross Society, Thai Red Cross Society
Following a series of earthquakes and aftershocks that hit Nepal on the 25 April 2016, the NRCS started working together with its partners to provide support to people across the government-identified 14 priority districts. To provide clear information and to receive feedback on programmes from the communities a two way feedback response mechanism was established. One of the most important tools established for promoting accountability is the Namaste Red Cross hotline.

Bhagwan Adhikari from Sindupalchowk is happy with NRCS hotline service for saving his money. He says, "I called the NRCS Hotline number, 1130. I made a complaint that a government engineer took NPR. 10,000/- for providing technical assistance in my shelter reconstruction. My complaint was forwarded to the concerned municipality of my district. After some days I got a call from the municipality and my NPR. 10,000/- was returned. The Engineer was not supposed take money from me as the technical assistance should have been free of cost."
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Story collection: Rajan Bhandari, NRCS Hotline Volunteer
Photo: Prawesh Neupane and Krishna Nepal
Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), like other many organizations was using traditional tools for planning, monitoring and reporting in the past, which was largely following paper-based system. While operating in bundles of registers, NRCS had a challenge in processing the data and maintaining data quality. Tracking information and progress in the recovery operation after the Nepal Earthquake was even overwhelming task. In fact, NRCS had tough time to keep track of numerous targets and indicators with the programing spread across all 14 of the most-affected earthquake districts.

In early 2017, Nepal Red Cross Society in partnership with the American Red Cross developed a robust Management Information System. With this, social mobilizers and district-level staff can update progress via mobile app directly from the field. Now the information is updated in real time, and manual input work and transfer errors from older paper-based information systems has been subsistent reduced. Data is displayed on a common online dashboard, which is accessible to the National Society Headquarters, District Chapters, IFRC and the Partner National
Societies. It has been a huge effort to promote transparency and enabling better coordination between recovery partners. The MIS has been a very effective tool not only to access overview of up-to-date data but also enabling better planning, programmatic analysis and decision-making.

MIS supports to strengthen NRCS’s Information Management (IM) capacity and improving its digital connectivity in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Implementing MIS in the Emergency Response Operation (ERO) was very encouraging. It was an important initiative managed by NRCS to develop such a powerful tool for the institutional capacity building. As popular saying, “Rome was not built in a day” the MIS developed in the recovery programming has laid a strong foundation at NRCS to opened up a thought to establish more comprehensive MIS for regular operations of NRCS.

EXPERIENCE SHARING ON THE USE OF MIS

As part of the livelihood assistance, 3,000 families have been identified in Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Makwanpur for cash grant support, where vulnerable families have been selected as program beneficiary. The MIS has been proved as one of the dynamic and user-friendly tools not only to keep track of beneficiaries’ data for progress monitoring but equally useful to assess the resource utilization on the ground. District based Livelihood Officers are instrumental in inputting and processing data on a regular basis.

Being based at headquarters level, I stopped checking my computer folders and emails to find the progress status after our intervention. I always start my work with MIS dashboard opened in my computer. The upward climbing graphs and indicator figures tell me on what has been achieved on a real time, and also reminds me what I should achieve more to accomplish the overall goal. Clearly, the MIS is very helpful in making programmatic analysis and for better planning. Now, I feel much more confident on the information, and also feel that the livelihoods related information are on my fingertips and making my life so much easier.

Story collection: Deepak Dawadi, Eveeta Shakya and Shristi Tamrakar
Photo: Ananata Kumar Baniya
NRCS, Dolakha has constructed eight demo houses in eight different VDCs (Lamidada, Babare, Melung, Sahare, Hawa, Chyama, Sunkhani and Sundrawati) and three pilot houses in Susspachhemawati VDC, Lamanagi VDC and Bhimeshwor municipalities. The objective of construction of these houses was to aware people on earthquake resistance techniques for safe construction. All these houses were constructed by trained masons.

People in Susspachhemawati and Lapilang VDC were initially not aware of earthquake resistance techniques. After earthquake held in April 2015, they had thought that house made up of mud and stone cannot be earthquake resistant. For the earthquake resistant building use of cement and modern equipment is compulsory. However, after the construction of model houses in Dolakha district, the perception of people has been changed. Seeing the construction techniques of these houses, they have come to realize that houses can be earthquake resistant even with the use of local material available in village. They have been encouraged to construct their house with the use of earthquake resistant techniques used in the construction of model houses.

Consequently, the model house construction in Dolakha district was one of the best example of engaging and motivating people in safe shelter construction.

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Huma Sathighare tried her luck everywhere. She helped her parents with their tea shop in Palpa. That did not turn out to be a success. She tried her luck abroad. She went to Qatar. Qatar also did not work for her.

She ended up in a cow firm working from 3:00 am in the morning to late evening. Her husband was also working in the same farm. Couple would make about NPR. 30,000/- per month for their extended hours of hard labor.

Couple’s hard work caught an eye of a mason. He suggested them to try their luck in construction business. Another benefit of construction business was they would get more time to spend with their children who still need some care and support.

Couple shifted to Sangla and started working as labor, helping head mason there. Huma wanted to learn about construction but ended up supporting the mason with passing bricks, iron rod, motar etc.

One day Huma and her husband came to know the Red Cross was organizing mason’s training in the community. This is what they needed to do what they wanted to do, real construction. Both of them applied only Huma was selected. She did a week long mason training.

After the training she knew how to do the job still it was difficult for her to find the job. She said, ‘Although I know how to construct and mobilize other semi-skilled mason it is difficult to get the leading role in construction’.

Being a mason has traditionally been seen as a man’s job in Nepalese society. It is difficult for women to find employers who would trust them. But women’s participation in masons’ training conducted by the Red Cross is changing all that.

Her neighbor who knew her trusted her for the first time to lead his house construction. She and her husband worked together in the project. They hired labourers and completed the project. After that it was bit easier for them to get other work but her husband got injured during the construction. That was again a hurdle on the way to success. Huma managed to keep working.

She reflected, it has been very difficult to convince house owners to allow masons to undertake construction work incorporating techniques from the masonry training. To build stronger houses higher resources are required. Despite her difficulties Huma is doing her best and continues to build stronger houses using the skills she learnt in the training.

**Story collection:** Preeti Ghimire and Sujana Sapkota, NRCS Kathmandu

**Photo:** Narendra Shrestha, Communication officer, NRCS
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For Shankar Bahadur Prasain, age 32, the cost of building a new home after the earthquake was always going to be a critical issue. He is a farmer who also works as a watchman for the local Bhadarikhola Drinking Water Project. He became homeless for several months when the earthquake destroyed his home three years ago. His four family members including a one-year-old infant, two daughters and his wife spent a whole year in a temporary shelter, which was a hard time for them all. Prasain thought of building a new home. However, he had no idea how to do it and didn’t have sufficient money. The crops from his small piece of land were not enough to eat for a year and his salary as a watchman just meets the family’s daily needs. So he decided to build a new house using the salvage from his destroyed home. With the supervision of technicians from Nepal Red Cross Society, he built a new, two-room, earthquake resistant house, with which he is very satisfied.

“I myself put in all the labour to build my home and used all the materials according to the technicians’ advice,” said Prasain. He believes a potential future earthquake would not cause his home to collapse again. “I didn’t know we could build homes this strong even using local materials.”

Prasain, who devoted most of his leisure time to the construction, puts the total cost at NPR. 189,500/- excluding the cost of his labour, which he says totaled 32 days. Factoring that in at a cost of NPR. 600/- per day brings the cost to NPR. 2,08,700/-, according to Prasain.

He has already received shelter cash grant from the red cross to earthquake survivors and his earthquake resilient home now has solar power for light and improved gas for cooking.

Now, his home is completely ready to live in. Prasain is one of a small number of people who have managed to build earthquake resilient homes, investing a small amount of money and using their own labour.
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SALVAGE AND SAVING – MOVING TOWARDS RESILIENCE

Story collection and photo: Ananata Kumar Baniya, PMER Officer, NRCS Sindhuli
When I think about the earthquake now..." Parbati Ghale’s voice trails off before she continues. "At the time, I thought my life was over. I was so worried – what would I do with my children, where would we live, how would I raise them without a husband who could earn? But now I’m at peace.

The April 2015 Nepal earthquake was particularly devastating for Parbati and her three sons. It took not only her home – as it did for 443 of the roughly 500 families living in the area of Thulogaun, Rasuwa – but also her husband’s life. He was one of 54 people who died in this small hillside community on that spring afternoon.

Living in a temporary shelter built in the remains of her old home, Parbati wasn’t sure how to start rebuilding. The NPR. 300,000/- shelter reconstruction grant from the Red Cross would help, but it wouldn’t cover everything. Then, in February 2017, the Red Cross invited Parbati and her neighbours to a meeting.

“They called us together and said: you should form a group,” says Parbati. The idea wasn’t a new one. For generations, families living on these steep, rocky slopes have taken turns helping each other with everything from harvesting crops to preparing for weddings to building houses. But in the aftermath of the earthquake, when every home in the area had been destroyed, everyone was at a loss where to even begin.

The Red Cross team talked the homeowners through the rebuilding process, and helped them work out how much they could save if they took a ‘parma’ or “alo-palo” – literally turn by turn – approach, contributing unskilled labour to each other’s build sites rather than hiring workers. Volunteers helped map out a rotating schedule. The Red Cross also helped motivate homeowners to join a group by providing a small stipend for snacks for each build team until the foundations were complete. This is part of the Utthan earthquake recovery program’s...
’community mobilization’ approach, which helps communities articulate their needs and then find the resources – both from within their own community or from other sources – to address them.

The Alo Palo groups helped residents in Thulogaun unlock an underappreciated and overlooked resource: the power of women working together. Like in many other communities in Nepal, building is traditionally considered men’s work. However, men are in short supply; some households, like Parbati’s, are headed by widows or single mothers, and in many others the young men have gone abroad to earn money to send back to their families. Together, women found the confidence to work on build sites – breaking rocks for gravel, mixing and carrying cement, and digging foundations. “The Red Cross really advocated for involving women in the reconstruction,” says Sushma Ghale, a member of the same Alo Palo group as Parbati.

Sushma and Parbati’s neighbor and fellow group member Padam Bahadur Ghale estimates that he would have spent an additional NPR 100,000/- on labour costs if his family hadn’t decided to exchange labour. He’s also proud that everyone in his group has a rebuilt home; “In our area, if a neighbor is in need, we don’t just look after ourselves.” Suntali Nepali, a member of another one of the 17 Alo Palo groups that formed all over Thulogaun, agrees. “It’s because of these groups that the pace of rebuilding really picked up here,” she says, “and it’s made the bonds between neighbours even stronger.”

“Without the labour exchange, I would only have had enough to rebuild if I took loans. But this way I didn’t have to take loans, the reconstruction payments were enough,” says Parbati. When the family was ready to move into their new, cement-and-brick two-room home, Parbati’s school-aged sons made their own contribution: painting every single brick of the new house a different color.

Story Collection: Jemima Diki Sherpa, American Red Cross and NRCS Rasuwa, ERO team

Photo: Jemima Diki Sherpa, American Red Cross
“Wow! What a nice house”. While visiting Thulogaun VDC ward no. 9 Rasuwa, our eyes stuck in an attractive house. The time when we reached the home, Patali Gurung, age 50, was in her kitchen. With our voice of requesting words to come out, she came and smilingly offered to sit on the bench. We started our conversation. While talking we came to know that she lost her husband 12 years ago. She struggled a lot to bring up her sons at the time. Hardly, she used to manage her daily life. However the life was going fine, suddenly the massive earthquake left her life more struggling. Everything was damaged including her house, food items and livestock. The life remains struggling again.

As a saying ‘Hard time doesn’t remain always’ she also got a good day when Nepal Red Cross Society supported her to construct the house. Like others in the community, she also received the first tranche, but due to lack of enough manpower in the community she could not start the construction. She says, “We were unable to start the house due to lack of manpower in our community. Red Cross started to make groups of community people and started Aalo-Palo system which was not so new term to us, but it was not in practice since 10-12 years. Red Cross helped in re-starting the intervention again in our community.” When we made a query on Aalo-Palo, she added, “We make the group of people, and work in turn-wise basis. We work in neighbor’s house with free of cost till the house’s DPC level is completed by which they don’t have the problem of manpower to start construction.” Total amount of NPR 3,00,000/- per household was provided by Red Cross in 4 tranches.

She is now happy that they are living in a safe house. “Previously while living in temporary shelter made of CGI, we faced maximum problem during rain, cold, wind storm and even fare of snake bite. Last time, when a small quake hit, we even didn’t feel that. New house is very good” she said proudly. She received all the tranches and technical support in time. Now, she is aware in Build Back Safer and explained some of the points as well.

The house was colored properly and the surrounding was also clean. She is aware of hygiene and sanitation too. We came to know that she is also a member of ‘Safa Gaun’ (Clean Village) group. She even participated in the hygiene promotion sessions conducted by Red Cross. She said, “We have to keep our surroundings clean, if we keep it dirty then we may suffer from different diseases”.

Joyfully, she thanked Red Cross. She says, “Red Cross has done a lot in our community. If we were not supported on time then we could not have completed our house. They even conducted different hygiene promotion sessions.”

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Story collection and photo: Agni Sharma Timalsina, PMER Officer, NRCS Rasuwa
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Story collection and photo: Agni Sharma Timalsina, PMER Officer, NRCS Rasuwa
Mr. Lok Bahadur Sarki, age 55, lives with his wife and four children in Prapcha VDC, Okhaldhunga district. He has been earning his living as a mason for 25 years. Lok Bahadur’s life was going well his family, but it became harder after his house was destroyed by the devastating earthquake in April 2015. Furthermore, geologist declared that the location was vulnerable to construct shelter due to possibility of landslide. Therefore, Lok Bahadur purchased land in Prapcha VDC, ward no. 4 and constructed house by taking loan. It had been difficult for him to pay loan and its interest.

Meanwhile, NRCS conducted seven-day mason training in Prapcha VDC. Lok Bahadur was one of the participants in the training.

“For last 25 years, we hav been employing the same traditional technique to build homes. After the training, we learnt that by applying certain changes, we can construction a house that will not collapse easily by earthquake,” said Lok Bahadur said.

Lok Bahadur has been using his skills acquired from the training to build earthquake resistant houses. He emphasizes, “Building an earthquake resis-tant house is not a complex thing and is not expensive rather adding sim-ple new techniques to a traditional approach can make a building safe during earthquake.”

Lok Bahadur has not only been applying the earthquake resistant techniques in house construction but also sharing his ideas that he learnt from training to other masons who did not get chance to participate in the training.

Since taking mason training he has always been busy in reconstruction of damaged houses. He and his team built 21 houses and 9 toilets in one year. All the houses were earthquake resistant and certified by DUDBC for cash grant.

Before mason training, he was hardly trusted by people for masonry of their houses but the mason training has made him skillful that everybody in the village want their house to be built by him. Before mason training, he used to earn NPR 500/- per day but now he earns NPR 1,000/- per day. The increased in income has been helpful for him to pay his debts in installment.

Story collection and Photo: Indra Pathak, PMER Officer, NRCS Okhaldhunga
Anantalingeshwor-10, Bhaktapur always had a problem with its water system. There was never enough water in the village which made washing, cleaning, and bathing difficult. The police even had to intervene in some quarrels over who gets more water. The mismanaged water system was fully damaged by 2015 Earthquake leaving women, in particular, to suffer.

Two years after the earthquake the village had their water system restored and improved. Mandhara and Santang water schemes in Anantalingeswor, Dadhikot 10 has changed the lives of people for the better, supplying enough water for the whole community. You no longer see people, queuing for water in the village. They can immediately get the water from taps.

These water system restoring projects were supported by the Nepal Red Cross Society. Construction of the schemes used the cash for work approach where local people were paid from Red Cross for their labor.

*Story collection: Tejeena Subedi, PMER officer, NRCS Bhaktapur*
*Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication officer, NRCS*
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WATER BRINGS PEACE

Story collection: Tejeena Subedi, PMER officer, NRCS Bhaktapur

Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication officer, NRCS
SPREADING HAPPINESS WITH WATER

Fifty-year-old Hari Maya Tamang from Rampur has a huge smile as she talks about how she can now sleep till 5 in the morning. For many, this may still be too early to start the day but Hari Maya was used to starting her day at 2 AM. Rampur village in Ramechhap district had such a huge water shortage that several families had to leave the village due to lack of water.

Hari Maya’s husband, who is the head teacher in a local school adds, “School children suffered a lot. They walk a long way to go to Aitebare Khane Khola to collect some water before school. People in the village could hardly get 4 hours of sleep”.

Nepal Red Cross Society, under its Earthquake Response Operation, supported the Aitebare water scheme. In this scheme water had to be pumped up to the village from the water source 450 m down the hill. The project sounds challenging, but the community devoted itself to the project and made it happen.

Nepal Red Cross Society provided the technical assistance and construction material for this project. Under the Cash for Work scheme, locals get paid by the Red Cross for working on the water supply project. The community also contributed money as well as voluntary labour for the construction. Because of this joint effort, people have taps on their doorsteps. The first day of running water was greeted with celebrations.

27 taps have been installed in the village, as an effort towards realizing the Red Cross mission of relieving human suffering.

Story collection and photo: Arun Rai, PMER officer, NRCS Ramechhap
Fifty-year-old Hari Maya Tamang from Rampur has a huge smile as she talks about how she can now sleep till 5 in the morning. For many, this may still be too early to start the day but Hari Maya was used to starting her day at 2 AM. Rampur village in Ramechhap district had such a huge water shortage that several families had to leave the village due to lack of water.

Hari Maya’s husband, who is the head teacher in a local school adds, “School children suffered a lot. They walk a long way to go to Aitebare Khane Khola to collect some water before school. People in the village could hardly get 4 hours of sleep.”

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27 taps have been installed in the village, as an effort towards realizing the Red Cross mission of relieving human suffering.
“We used to have to go all the way to the stream for everything—to get water for the cows, to bathe, to wash clothes, to keep the baby clean,” says Aetaram Thing. He and his wife Sushma live in Saramthali, Rasuwa, where they care for their 5-month-old daughter Sofia and Aetaram’s aging grandparents.

Not having access to a water system meant walking nearly half an hour for everything that requires water—needs that starts early in the morning and continue on all day. This is a task that often falls largely on women in hillside households in Nepal. “We need a bucket of water to wash our faces and another bucket of water to make tea as soon as we wake up,” says Sushma.

After disasters like the 2015 earthquake, a lack of toilets, poor water access, and difficulty maintaining hygiene in temporary living conditions put communities at risk of disease and infection. When the Red Cross worked with the community to build a new water scheme, the young couple was happy to volunteer their labour, carrying sand and cement and helping break gravel. “It was difficult, but you can’t get to happiness without bearing a little bit of hardship,” says Aetaram.

The family now has a water tap in their front yard. It has not only cut out the time and effort that it takes them to complete household tasks, but has also allowed them to start a small kitchen garden, where they grow vegetables and chilies, all watered with a pipe running from the tap. The vegetables take up to 30 buckets of water a day, so growing them would have been impossible when the couple was carrying water from the stream. Having their own vegetables means more nutrition for the growing family, and even a little extra to sell or exchange in the village.

After the water system was completed, the couple also received materials, financial and technical support from the Red Cross to help construct a toilet. “When we didn’t have a toilet we had to go in the ravine,” says Sushma. “There was a lot of sickness, because it was dirty.” “The earthquake all the houses and toilets collapsed or were cracked and damaged,” says Aetaram. “Now with help from the Red Cross, every house has a really good toilet.”
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Story collection and photo: Jemima Diki Sherpa
American Red Cross
WATER BECOMES CONVENIENT

Ever since the 2015 earthquake, fetching water had been a difficult task for Dhanamaya Thami, but all that’s now changed thanks to the reconstruction of her community’s water system by the Red Cross.

“I fell over twice while fetching water,” says Dhanamaya, 73, who lives in Suspa Chhemawati Village Development Committee, Ward No. 5 of Dolakha district. Due to the damage inflicted by the quake on the Ruchil drinking water supply system, she and the rest the community’s 80 households had to walk for 45 minutes to the water source.

But Nepal Red Cross Society’s Dolakha district chapter has now reconstructed the system. So residents can get their drinking water 24 hours a day from the tap stand just two minutes’ walk away. With a big smile, Dhanamaya says: “It’s not such a struggle any more to get drinking water.” Her life has suddenly become that bit more convenient.

Story collection and photo : Tashi Lama, PMER officer, NRCS
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Story collection and photo: Tashi Lama, PMER officer, NRCS
“A toilet is necessary for a healthier life but unfortunately my toilet was destroyed by the earthquake,” says Mahili Dahal. “I am glad that I could rebuild my toilet with the support of the Red Cross,” she added.

Mahili Dahal, age 49, lives in Melamchi Municipality ward No. 12, Sindhupalchowk district with her daughter and son. “After the earthquake, we used to defecate in the open and had to face embarrassing situations. But we have a toilet now. I will let my neighbors use my toilet until their toilets are constructed,” she added.

Nepal Red Cross Society has been supporting households to construct toilets in 14 districts worst affected by the earthquake.

Story collection: Prawesh Neupane and Manorama Gautam
Photo: Prawesh Neupane PMER officer, Sindhupalchok
SANITATION FOR A HEALTHIER LIFE

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Photo: Prawesh Neupane PMER officer, Sindhupalchok
With 538 students, Shree Mahindra Lila Secondary School is one of the largest and oldest in Gorkha District established in 1962. Severely damaged in the earthquake, the school was forced to relocate to a safer place, needing class rooms, science laboratories and many other facilities to be built from scratch. The Nepal Red Cross Society has supported the construction of child friendly toilets for the new school, which represent a major improvement.

Before the earthquake, the school had two boys’ and three girls’ toilets and students had not choice but to go out into the open because the facilities were so inadequate.

“The students used to have to go outside to defecate or some would go into the nearby jungle or bushes and I was always worried about the children’s safety and personal hygiene,” the school’s principal said, adding that school authorities had been unable to get support for toilets from the local education office. With toilets provided by NRCS which are girl-friendly, child-friendly and disabled-friendly,” our entire school family would like to thank the Red Cross.”

The new toilets are built to standard and approved designs, with a 1,000-liter tank to provide running water. They contain urinals, bathrooms and separate toilets for girls with space to clean themselves and dispose of sanitary pads during menstruation. These facilities help to address what has been a cause of absenteeism among female students. In addition to providing the “hardware”, NRCS has also conducted several sanitation sessions at the school, demonstrating correct hand washing techniques and distributing hygiene kits.

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Photo: Ananta Baniya, PMER officer
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Photo: Ananta Baniya, PMER officer
Pokhari is a small remote village in Barpak Grokha which was badly affected by 2015 Earthquake. This Gurung village of 495 people lost its water system in the earthquake along with its houses. The village also became difficult to access after a landslide swept away the road. Water came top of the long list of problems. There was an epidemic break out; people suffered from diarrhea as a result of poor sanitation.

The village made it to the list to get support from Red Cross to restore its water system. Problems did not end there. After being identified to get support there was no water resource nearby. Difficult and steep terrain was also causing problems for water scheme construction. Communities did not give up. They discovered a water source 7km away from the village. A committed group of people devoted themselves to the project. The project finally started in rainy season, but the rains did not stop them. They constructed one Reservoir Tank that could hold 12000 liters of water and 17 taps in the village. Now there was enough water in the village people started building their houses, growing vegetables and other cash crops.

The president of the water user committee shared an example of his friend starting to grow cash crops after water became available in the village. He expressed his gratitude to the Red Cross “Our children were going to fetch water instead of going to school before. Now things are changed. Children are at school, people are looking for their livelihood opportunities, and reconstruction is in progress. Availability of water changes many things for the positive.”

POKHARI PEOPLE FEEL RELIEVED WITH WATER SUPPLY SCHEME

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Story collection:
Roshan Darmal, PMER officer, NRCS, Gorkha

Photo: Ananta Baniya, PMER officer
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CAMP PROVES LIFE-SAVING

Bimala Bisunkhe is single woman and mother of a disabled child. She lives in Kaprechhap, Godawari Ward No. 4, and participated in reproductive health camp run by NRCS in September 2017. Bimala used to work in the hotel for the day to day earnings, but she had been facing difficulty continuing her work as she has had pain in her lower abdomen, and has not been able to afford a health checkup. She participated in the health camp after hearing about it from a social mobiliser. To her surprise she found that she had a 2nd degree of prolapse. Bimala was relieved when she found that she could get free treatment through the Red Cross in coordination with DPHO, Bishankhu Narayan health post and Women’s for Women reffered her to Manmohan Memorial Teaching Hospital. She visited hospital in January 2018 with the support of Red Cross Social Mobilizer and successfully underwent the operation. Knowing the poor financial status the ERO team collected NPR. 8,000/- for her to get the medicine she needed to recover. After a month of rest, was able to start work again.

She expressed her happiness and is very loyal to the Red Cross for giving her a new start. Bimala Said, “The Red Cross will now remain as God for me, I received treatment that was impossible for me in terms of managing money, I got recovered soon and now have confidence to continue my job, take care of my disabled son and hope this will make my life easy.”

Story collection : Sabita Basnet, Social Mobilizer, NRCS Lalitpur
Photo : Narendra Shrestha, Communication officer, NRCS
Rajani Shrestha never imagined, when she agreed to go with friends to a Reproductive Health Camp, organized by the Nepal Red Cross Society in November, that the decision would lead to a life-changing diagnosis of cancer of the womb.

She told the doctor during her checkup that she was experiencing no serious sexual or reproductive health problems. But to her surprise, Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA)-a cancer screening technique widely used in low resource settings-came out positive, indicating suspected first stage cancer of the womb.

After a sleepless night, Rajani, 41 visited Kathmandu’s Nurshing hospital for confirmation of the diagnosis, revealing a swelling of the uterus with a growing tumour. Following gynecologists’ advice, Rajani had immediate surgery to remove the growth.

Rajani, married for 26 years, is still resting while the scar from the operation, which cost her 75,000 NR, heals. But she feels she has got a new life after the diagnosis and treatment.

“If it hadn’t been for free health camp, my tumour would have got worse and I might have lost my femininity.” The service provided by the Red Cross has left an unforgettable imprint on her mind, providing benefit to her and all the women in her community.

Altogether 122 women from 4 wards of Goldhunga including Rajani’s home village of Dagurne pani attended the camp.

*Story collection: Gita Kumari Pokhrel, Social Mobilizer, NRCS Kathmandu*

*Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication Officer, NRCS*
Dolhari Khatiwada, from Harkapur VDC in Okhaldhunga, had problems in getting married because of his disability. At the age of 40, he finally found someone and the couple was blessed with a baby girl, whom they named Laxmi, after the Hindu goddess of wealth.

In 2017, Social Mobilizers from NRCS conducted door to door visits in Harkapur to assess the nutrition situation for pregnant/breast-feeding mothers and infants. At the time of the visit to Dolhari’s home, Laxmi sat on her grandmother’s lap and never took her eyes off the visitors.

Based on her size and other inspections, Laxmi’s nutrition status was found to be alarming. The mobilizers suggested taking Laxmi to the Health Care Center in Rampur VDC. The family took the advice and Laxmi was treated at the Health Care Center. The family was also briefed on the appropriate diet for ensuring proper nutrition in the future.

Laxmi’s condition has now improved and the family is happy. In the same winter, NRCS launched Nyano Jhola distribution programme to protect infants from cold. Nyano Jhola was distributed to all the infants in the working areas.

Laxmi was the first one in her village to receive clothes. There are many infants like Laxmi who have benefitted from the NRCS door to door service. Families did not realize that their babies were in a situation where they needed medical attention. After being advised by the mobilizers conducting the door to door visits, many have visited the nearest health center and benefitted from it.

The number of people visiting health centers for pregnancy checkup, delivery and vaccination has increased in the area.

The local people appreciate such interventions and wish that they will continue forever.

**Story collection**: Hari Khatiwada, Social Mobilizer, NRCS Okhaldhunga
**Photo**: Ananata Baniya, PMER Officer, NRCS
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Raj Kumar Mandal, an engineer, who’s working on a nearby school construction project has only been in town for five days and already he’s got sick with diarrhea and is on a drip in the emergency room. He’s one of about 440 patients the hospital has treated since it opened a few weeks ago. It’s the only hospital of its size for many kilometers around. Local health authorities hope it can be further upgraded in due course to provide general surgery as well as general care. The hospital complements dozens of health posts all over the quake-hit region which the Red Cross has rehabilitated or reconstructed.

Baby Krishtila Tamang is looking much more perky now after several days being treated with antibiotics for pneumonia in this hospital, newly built with Red Cross support in the town of Dhunche. Here she is with her grandmother Biba and one of the hospital cleaners, who’s clearly bonded with her. But it’s been a worrying few days for Biba, who’s taken turns with her father Tenzin in looking after her. Krishtila’s mother died when the baby was only 20 days old. The family are still living in a temporary house made of corrugated iron and Bina blames the cold temperatures for the baby’s illness.

A HOSPITAL MEETING REMOTE VILLAGERS’ HEALTH NEEDS

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Samudra Lama, age 26, has brought his five-year-old daughter Smarika to see the dentist because she has a toothache. He says: “It’s very good to have this kind of hospital” in Dhunche. With them is the girl’s young uncle Dison Waiba Lama. The dental surgeon is one of several doctors at the hospital, mostly young physicians assigned by the Health Ministry on their first or second posting. The job holds plenty of challenges for them, with many decisions to be made about how to treat difficult cases and which patients need referring to a bigger facility in Kathmandu.

Story collection and photo: Francis Markus, Communication Consultant
DELIVERY SERVICE PROVIDED BY HEALTH POST

Suku Maya BK, age 30, is a resident of Bhotenamlang VDC of Sindhupalchowk district. She gave birth to a healthy baby boy of 2.6 kg weight in Bhotenamlang health post. He is her second baby. After her first baby, she had a tragedy with a case of miscarriage due to lack of proper medical care. After reconstruction of Bhotenamlang health post by Nepal Red Cross Society, she had received regular antenatal care (ANC) service from the health post.

According to her, she has become able to go through normal delivery due to the proper health care that she received from the health post. She says, “if there would not be this health post, I would have to reach Melamchi health post for my delivery which was not possible for that time being. I could have died either.” But because she had received regular medical checkup from her pregnancy period and timely delivery service from Bhotenamlang health post, she has been able to give birth to a healthy baby. Besides, she had also received the winter baby kit distributed by NRCS through to the health post.
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VOICE OF PATIENT SERVED BY BHO TENAML ANG HP

Phool Prashad BK, age 50, a resident of Bhotenamlang, Sindhupalchok district. He lives with his wife, son and daughter in law. He is a patient of pain on the side of stomach (Jhaska) and is being treated from Bhotenamlang health post. According to him, his daughter in law is five months pregnant and she is also receiving a regular ANC service from the health post. He expressed his happiness with the service of health post. The community people are happy with the construction of health post as they don’t have to reach Melamchi for medical treatment. The health post is providing them proper medical care with free medicine and checkup.

Story Collection and Photo:
- Prawesh Neupane, PMER officer, NRCS Sindhupalchowk
- Tashi Lama, PMER officer, NRCS headquarters
Ganeshmaya Dannekhu, age 72, wakes up every morning at 5am to clean her small shed and feed and milk her cow. She then sets off for the local dairy to sell her milk, arriving no later than 6:30am. With typically nine litres of milk to carry, it’s a strenuous 20-minute walk to the dairy from Jhaukhel, her village in Nepal’s Bhaktapur District. Many of the buildings in the village were severely damaged by the massive earthquake that hit the region in April 2015.

Like many villagers in the area, Ganeshmaya lost her home in the quake. A widow with no children, she was taken in and helped by neighbors until she was able to build a small hut for herself.

Ganeshmaya says her life has seen many ups and downs since her husband passed away 30 years ago, but the earthquake brought new challenges that made it even more difficult to survive. Plus, she was finding it increasingly hard to grow crops on her land. However, the situation changed dramatically when she was selected to receive cash assistance from the Nepal Red Cross Society as part of a programme to help earthquake survivors revive or establish new livelihoods after the disaster. The programme meant Ganeshmaya could combined NPR. 19,000/- from the Red Cross with her own savings, so she had enough to buy a milking cow that gave birth to a calf several months later.

“My days of happiness started with this cow,” Ganeshmaya said. “I no longer have to beg for pennies to buy food or medicine. I don’t know exactly how much I make, but I can tell you it’s enough for bread and butter.”

The Red Cross team helped Ganeshmaya to calculate her earnings and she was pleased to discover that her average monthly income from selling milk was NPR. 8,100/- “This cow is a great blessing to an old granny,” she said. She also thanked her visitors for giving her courage and a helping a hand. The cow was not just a lifeline, she said, but also helped her gain the respect and friendship of fellow villagers because of her hard work and success at such an advanced age.

Story collection : Roshan Darnal, PMER officer, NRCS Gorkha and Laxmi Khanal, NRCS PGI officer
Photo : Narendra Shrestha, Communication officer, NRCS
Kedar Karki, a resident of Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur, happily shared that “motivation and the support received from NRCS Lalitpur ERO program has built my confidence and helped me make livestock husbandry a business for my family”. In the 2015 earthquake Kedar lost not only his house but also his families main source of income; his cow. The family turned to daily wage labour to survive.

After receiving cash support from the Red Cross, Kedar bought 2 cows. He says “when I got the information about animal insurance during the technical training, I felt confident to takeout a loan to buy more cows because I will have a refund from the insurance if something happened to my cows.” He further says “Earlier, lacking knowledge, I had lost livestocks and could not recover. With the support of NRCS myself and my community became able to receive government support on livestock insurance and have linked up with government facilities.” Now Kedar has his plan to establish cow husbandry as business. He now has 4 cows, increasing milk production and meaning that he can sell it at the local market. Now Kedar’s family has started a tea shop in their village where they use their own production making tea and selling milk. He says “earlier I had to take milk to market but now it is easier, most of the milk is consumed in the shop”.

Story Collection: Hari Govinda Maharjan, Social Mobilizer, NRCS Lalitpur
Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication Officer, NRCS
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When the earthquake struck Nepal in April 2015, it not only devastated Krishna Pratap Maharjan’s home. It also knocked out the family woodcraft business, run by his elder brother, which employed him.

It took Krishna, who lives in Karyabinayak 12, and his brother more than three months to get the work going again, once the family moved into temporary shelter. So when he heard that the Red Cross was providing Livelihoods support, he was quick to apply and has been using the additional resources to upgrade his small business. He used the first installment of the support, NPR. 10,000, to buy a wood-cutting machine and fresh supplies of wood, also using some of his own funds. The second installment also helped to buy more equipment.

He says the new machinery has made his work more efficient and has increased his brother’s trust in him and also his income. From an average NPR. 20,000 to 25,000, it has now gone up to NPR. 30,000-35,000. Beside the cash support Krishna, 29, says he also found the one-day technical session on starting and improving small businesses very useful and plans to start out on his own in the future, potentially providing employment to other local young people as well.

Krishna, whose parents are farmers, is one of the people who’ve received livelihoods support in the area under Nepal Red Cross’ Earthquake Response Operation Programme.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SMALL BUSINESS

Story collection: Sachina Lama, Social Mobilizer, NRCS Lalitpur
Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication Officer, NRCS
When the earthquake struck Nepal in April 2015, it not only devastated Krishna Pratap Maharjan's home. It also knocked out the family woodcraft business, run by his elder brother, which employed him.

It took Krishna, who lives in Karyabinayak 12, and his brother more than three months to get the work going again, once the family moved into temporary shelter. So when he heard that the Red Cross was providing Livelihoods support, he was quick to apply and his been using the additional resources to upgrade his small business.

He used the first installment of the support, NPR. 10,000, to buy a wood-cutting machine and fresh supplies of wood, also using some of his own funds. The second installment also helped to buy more equipment.

He says the new machinery has made his work more efficient and has increased his brother's trust in him and also his income. From an average NPR. 20,000 to 25,000, it has now gone up to NPR. 30,000-35,000.

Beside the cash support Krishna, 29, says he also found the one-day technical session on starting and improving small businesses very useful and plans to start out on his own in the future, potentially providing employment to other local young people as well.

Krishna, whose parents are farmers, is one of the people who've received livelihoods support in the area under Nepal Red Cross' Earthquake Response Programme.
Saraswati Aryal is a single woman. She lives with her son Balaram Aryal, age 21, in Jitpur, Tarkeshwor Municipality, Kathmandu. Saraswati is suffering from illness which makes her unable to speak. Goat keeping is one of a few jobs she can do.

Saraswati and her son could not afford to buy their own goat so they were keeping a neighbor’s goat, but the agreement was not very good for them. Once the goat gives birth, the goat is to be returned to the owner. So, Balaram and his mother could get only half of the kid’s worth.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross was supporting communities with livelihood cash grant under the earthquake recovery programme.

Balaram met the criteria and received the conditional cash to support his livelihood. That was a perfect condition for him. He used the grant to buy goats. This has been of great benefit to the family and they have already sold two.

It’s the same job for Saraswati she still collects the fodder for the goats but the difference is she does it for their own goats now.

Currently they have make shift shed for the goats. They plan to build a proper goat shed after making enough money from selling the goats. Their business is likely to grow as there is a huge demand of goat meat in Nepali market.

*Story Collection: Aakriti Basnet, Social Mobilizer, Kathmandu
Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication Officer , NRCS*
GOAT KEEPING - AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN LIVELIHOOD

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Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication Officer, NRCS
VEGETABLE FARMING FOR IMPROVING LIVELIHOOD

Fu Chheri Sherpa, age 57, from Chitre, Okhaldhunga, was a renowned farmer in the area. He produced vegetables and sold them in the local market making a good amount of money. The earthquake of 2015 not only destroyed his house, but also interrupted his livelihood.

NRCS is implementing an integrated programme under Earthquake Response Operation in his village.

Under the livelihood component, NRCS provided a 3-day training on seasonal and off-seasonal vegetable farming. Along with the training, each participant was given NPR. 5,000/- to start livelihood activities. The money could be used for the construction of plastic tunnel and to purchase seeds and fertilizers.

For Sherpa, this was a very good opportunity. He restarted his interrupted vegetable farming business with a new level of skills and knowledge gained from the training. He grew tomatoes, green vegetables, cauliflowers, cabbages, etc. He is now making more than one hundred fifty thousand annually from his business. This amount is more than enough to cover his family expenditure. He is also saving some of his earnings for the future. He said, “I feel grateful to Nepal Red Cross society for their generous support to strengthen our livelihood.”

There are many farmers in the village whose livelihood is improved by the skills they learnt in the training, and the money to launch their livelihood projects.

Story collection : Mingma Chooki Sherpa, Social Mobilizer, NRCS Okhaldhunga
Photo : Ananta Baniya, PMER officer, NRCS
Vegetable Farming for Improving Livelihood

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IMPROVING LIFE STEP BY STEP

For Sangita Majhi, age 34, life since the earthquake in 2015 has brought plenty of challenges and she has not always found it easy to focus on such issues as health and hygiene. But thanks to information provided by the Red Cross, she has now been able to improve her family’s welfare.

Sangita, a resident of Gadwari, Manthali Municipality, Ramechhap makes her living from farming. She and her husband have two young sons currently studying at the local Karkala Devi English Boarding School. The family’s situation before the earthquake was comparatively good, but the disaster badly damaged their home and forced them to move into a bamboo temporary shelter.

Due a combination of pressures, health and hygiene was not on their priority list and her sons suffered from waterborne diseases and other common illnesses. Even her only goat was weak and frail.

All this started to change one day when she attended a weekly meeting organized by Nepal Red Cross, providing free information on health, hygiene and livelihoods.

“Before the Nepal Red Cross became active on these issues, most of the people did not pay attention to their health and hygiene, but due to constant work to motivate them, now the situation has changed,” says local Red Cross worker Susma Manjhi.

Sangita was also selected for the Commercial Goat Farming training conducted by the Red Cross, helping her to broaden her knowledge on proper goat rearing, techniques. As a result she now has 18 goats and earns a significant income from the business.

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Story collection and Photo:
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Kabiraj Chepang will never forget the devastation of the 2015. His home collapsed, leaving his family homeless but grateful to be alive.

The Red Cross arrived to help right after the earthquake, and Kabiraj remembers getting a tarpaulin that helped him provide immediate shelter for his wife and three children. Life after the earthquake was a struggle, and he was relieved when the Red Cross began implementing earthquake recovery work in his home area. Kabiraj was one of the first people to sign up for a seven-day mason training, an opportunity which he says helped him improve his skills and certified him to help with earthquake-resistant reconstruction.

“I used to work as an unskilled labourer on construction sites, and earned just NPR. 500/- a day. But now that I’m trained, I earn NPR. 1,200 per day,” says Kabiraj.

Another opportunity arrived for the family when they were selected to take part a Red Cross training and cash grant program to learn how to farm goats. Kabiraj attended the training and learned veterinary care schedules, nutrition, and proper shed conditions, and then purchased four goats. Now the whole family gets involved with the goats.

The combination of income from masonry work and their new goat farming venture has given Kabiraj the confidence that he can provide for his children. “Our lifestyle has improved thanks to the Red Cross,” he says.

*Story collection and photo: Manoj Chaudhary, PMER Officer, NRCS Makawanpur*
IMPROVEMENT IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Story collection and photo: Manoj Chaudhary, PMER Officer, NRCS Makawanpur
“The Kitchen Garden Promotion Training brought turning points in my Livelihood” This is the statement of Ms. Bimala Chapagain, age 43, a resident of Panchpokhari Thangpal, Sindhuplachok.

Ms. Bimala is one of the person affected by earthquake. She has three members in the family i.e. husband, herself and young son who studies in grade 12. This family is mainly depending upon agriculture and during leisure time for carpet weaving for their basic livelihood. She said, “due to the remoteness, she didn’t have access to the modern farming technique. So, she only cultivates maize, paddy, and finger millet in her land for their subsistence livelihood.”

She got to know that the tomato cultivation in plastic tunnel gives more profit as well as long term crop harvesting. So, she eager to have plastic tunnel in her farm. In the meantime, NRCS had conducted three-day Kitchen Garden promotion training to beneficiaries in different settlement of its project area of Thangpalkot and Thangpaldhap in Sindhupalchok district, where she got an opportunity to participate.

During the training there was practical session of demonstration of plastic tunnel. She was ready to make the plastic tunnel as demo plot in her land. Now she is using and cultivating tomato in off season and started small business. In the beginning, she didn’t have sufficient knowledge of cultivation practices so, she faced a problem of late blight disease. She got technical support from Livelihood Technician of NRCS and treated the plant disease within few days. Both husband and wife started to spend an hour each day in tunnel house to take care of the plants. The tomato plants started fruiting that motivated her to spend more time in her farm then the smiles came in her face. Now, tomato has become a good source of her income. She sells it in local market. She said proudly that she already succeeds to earn NPR. 7,600/- by selling 95 kgs of tomatoes in the local market within short period. The production of tomato is still ongoing and she is hoping to get more income in the same crop cycle. Now, she becomes model farmer in the area and inspiring to other farmers in the community to make plastic tunnel and motivate them to go for off season vegetable cultivation. She says proudly that the NRCS brought turning points in her life”

Story collection and photo: Basant Adhikari, Livelihood Officer, NRCS Sindhupalchowk
RESUMING LIVELIHOOD

Ram Bahadur Darji, age 53, has been working as a tailor for his livelihood. He started learning the handcraft of tailoring when he was only 8 years old in his father’s workshop. It quickly became his livelihood and identity. He was a tailor, a good tailor. Ram Bahadur grew up, met his wife, got married and had four sons. After some years, he decided to open his own tailor workshop in Kathmandu. Business went well and at some point, he had seven sewing machines and some employees. Things were going well and he could provide for his family and his parents. As the years passed by, his wife died and his sons got married and soon he had 9 grandchildren.

Though Ram Bahadur and his family survived without injuries in earthquake 2015, their house and workshop were completely destroyed. All seven sewing machines were buried under the collapsed house. He decided to go back to Jyamdi, where most of his family was living. The whole family, sons, daughters in-law and grandchildren had lost everything and was now living together in a temporary house. Ram Bahadur used his last savings to buy a sewing machine. With this machine he was able to do some tailoring and make some money, but it was not enough to provide for all 18 family members. When the NRCS started the livelihood support in Jyamdi, the family was chosen as beneficiary of the conditional cash grant. Ram Bahadur was not in doubt, when they were asked to choose a livelihood activity and develop a business plan. He is a tailor. When he received the conditional cash grant from the NRCS he bought two additional sewing machines, materials and fabrics and he was now ready to restart the business. He worked hard and he was soon making profit. As the only tailor in the community Ram Bahadur was sewing clothes and wedding-dresses to the whole community. As he knows everybody in the community, he offers people to make payment in arrears if they can’t afford new clothes.

Ram Bahadur is one of the beneficiaries who have benefited most from the conditional cash grant. He received NPR. 30,000/- to restore his business and has already, within the first year of the distribution, multiplied the amount many times. Making up to NPR. 2,000/- a day, he was able to buy some land after a couple of months with hard work. He has now started building a permanent house for his family with additional financial support from the government. His business has been growing and he now has 4 sewing machines. The family is still living in the temporary house, but they are looking forward to the day, when the new house is completed. All the 9 grandchildren, 7 boys and 2 girls are attending school and Ram Bahadur is very happy that he is able to support them.

Ram Bahadur is a busy man. December is the wedding season and when he isn't sitting in front of the sewing machine sewing wedding dresses, he is playing in a wedding band. He is smiling behind the sewing machine. There is hope for the future.
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Story Collection: Sunil Adhikari, Livelihood Officer, NRCS Kavrepalanchok
Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication Officer, NRCS
25 April 2015, the 7.8 magnitude earthquake not only shook the habitats and hearts of the people of Manakamana VDC but also destroyed the livelihood related infrastructures. Most of the people in this village are farmers. 40 households in Kalleri Village had more than 450 Ropani lands to grow their food. The land was irrigated by a 750m long canal which was partly destroyed in the earthquake. After the damage water started leaking. Not even half of the water reached the land to be irrigated.

Villagers did not have enough time for grieving over lost family members. They had to think of damaged canal that served as an only lifeline for the villagers to irrigate their land.

Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) under its Earthquake Response Operation (ERO) program was to support some communities. Its working area was decided in coordination with the government. After allocation Manakamana VDC happened to be NRCS working area. Damage caused to Kalleri fort Bhunte Kulo and its importance to the villagers was informed by NRCS Social Mobilizer. The project met the criteria to be supported by NRCS. The cost estimation was done by the technical team and 1.2 million Nepali rupees was estimated to be required to renovate the canal. Communities formed a user committee as the next step. The Committee members themselves were the beneficiaries as well as the workers. They not only renovated the canal for their land but also earned some cash during the continuous 27 days' work under the livelihood Cash for work activities. The skilled workers got NPR. 1000 per day and unskilled got NPR. 800 per day. That amount became very useful for their daily expenses.

The flow of water in the canal is not interrupted now. There is no leakage so the village is getting enough water for irrigation.

Yam Bahadur Thapa, a member of user committee and worker shared his excitement after the canal construction. He added, “Since there is enough water kalleri vilalgers have started Lafa Agro farm. We are using watersuppliedbythecanal. Theagrofarmhas been started in more than NPR. 70,00,000/- investment is producing fishes, pigs, vegetables and chickens.” More than 20 people got jobs on the farm.
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INCREASING INCOME THROUGH VEGETABLE FARMING

Bed Kumari Muakhiya, age 24, sells 4-5 Kg of tomatoes and earns around NPR 150 every day at local market in Suryamati VDC of Nuwakot district. She started growing vegetable in her farm after taking three-day training on vegetable farming from Red Cross. Before this, she along with her family used to earn their living by working as labor and engaging in traditional farming. The vegetable farming has diversified their income. She made an income of NPR 8,000/- by selling tomatoes in two months. She is also a member in a savings grouped formed by Red Cross and saves NPR 50 every week. She says “I am very happy that I participated in the training. I will continue to grow tomatoes as it has been increased my income”.

Story Collection and Photo : Rita Rai, Social Mobilizer, Nuwakot
GOMA EARNs UPTO THREE THOUSANDS PER DAY

Goma Shrestha from Sunkoshi, Sindhuli has been the sole bread winner of the family since her husband died 14 years ago, and has three kids to take care of. Remembering those days when she could not earn enough for the family, she says, “Meeting ends was a battle. Life was difficult”

Goma participated in a vegetable farming training provided by Nepal Red Cross Society. She also got twelve thousand rupees to help with her farming. She had 2.5 ropanis of farm land where she worked hard, but hardly made NPR. 5,000/- per month. After the training, she is making NPR. 3,000/- per day working on the same piece of land.

The land did not have proper irrigation system which greatly reduced the yield. From the money she received from NRCS, she bought a pump for watering her fields. For additional money, she took a loan, which she has already paid back with profits she made by selling vegetables. After proper irrigation and the utilization of new farming skills, her income has been beyond Goma’s imagination.

Improvement in her business has made her able to construct a four-room earthquake resistant house. NRCS is also been providing shelter reconstruction grants in her area. She is one of the recipients of these grants. She received three hundred thousand rupees in three installments, and also received technical assistance for the construction of an earthquake resistant building. She says the construction will cost around 1.4 million rupees. She plans to get additional land on rent to grow more vegetables, and plans to buy a hand operated tractor. She now feels confident that she will be able to afford a house, better food and proper education for her kids.

Story collection and Photo : Ananta Kumar Baniya, PMER officer, Sindhuli
During the business plan preparation workshop that was developed in September 2016, Sharmila Regmi selected small shop as a business. Before, she had a little snack stall under a tree in Kharelthok VDC (ward 4). Through NRCS support and the cash grant she received, she upgraded it to a little corrugated iron shop with wood racks and a gas cooker, which attracts a crowd of school children as soon as classes are over. “I am earning around NPR. 1,200/- each day. I have to pay the suppliers, but still I manage to save money. This is a really good opportunity for me. We are four members in my family and we can only produce enough food for six months in a year. With the income generated by this shop, I will be able to pay for the running costs of my family during lean season”.

Story collection and Photo: Sunil Adhikari, Livelihood Officer, NRCS Kavrepalanchwok
Nirajan Nepali, age 17, lives in Harkapur VDC of Okhaldhunga. He lost his house due to devastating earthquake in 2015. He belongs to Dalit, so called lower caste in Nepal. Nepal Red Cross Society has been working in this field of gender, diversity, protection and inclusion so that people from any group any caste, religion and sex shall get equal treatment in community during normal as well as emergency period. As a result, people like Nirajan are now living with dignity in the Red Cross programme area.

“In this village we are the single family of Dalit. Although we are still being discriminated in many small things in our community, the situation is changing gradually. Villagers help us in difficulties and invite us in many celebrations”, says Nirajan.

FROM EXCLUSION TO INCLUSION

"...villagers help us in difficulties and invite us in many celebrations."

Story collection: Pushpa Khanal and Shabnam Pokharel-Child Protection Officer
Photo: Sarita Dhungana- Social Mobilization Officer
A SIMPLE DEVICE OPENS A WHOLE NEW WORLD

These days, Ramnath Kharel, age 63, with his characteristic constantly smiling face, won’t miss out on any activity by the Red Cross or other social and government organizations in his community. But before he got his hearing aid, provided by the Nepal Red Cross Society, it was a very different story.

Mr. Kharel, who lives with his 90-year-old mother, his wife and daughter in Kharelthok, used to avoid participating in any of the social events in the community; he used to stay at home, doing household chores and some agricultural work.

“I have been unable to hear from childhood and cannot communicate with anyone so I have always been reluctant to go school and other social and public places.”

He said he has been forced to rely on traditional sign language and just a few words to communicate, even with the family, causing many problems at the time of the earthquake.

All the changes in Mr Kharel’s life began when he took part in an orientation session by NRCS for People with disability, accompanied by his daughter. There, PWDs were provided with Disability rights information, disability cards and other information.

After visiting an audiologist at Dhulikhel hospital for a recommendation on the correct specifications for the device, Mr Kharel was fitted with the hearing aid under the integrated recovery and resilience program run by NRCS Kavre DC supported a Danish Red Cross-lead consortium.

He says it has changed his life, enabling him instantly to hear people’s voices. Mr Kharel’s first words after the device was switched on were: “it’s noisy but I am so happy!”.

Kharel is also happy that he can now go anywhere without any fear because he can hear the calls of wild animals and other critical sounds, making him feel more confident. His only fear is that the device could stop working or get lost. His face becomes sad when he explains that “the only bad side of this device is that I have to hear the bad news of people being killed.”

Now equipped with his hearing aid, Mr Kharel also involved in self-care and Income generating training provided by NRCS to the PWDs and their care takers. He learned to make moda (Nepali tradition bamboo chair) and he says - “I will continue this business”.

Story Collection: Pradip Subedi, GESI officers, NRCS Kavrepalanchowk
Photo: Narendra Shrestha, Communication Officer, NRCS
**Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

**Humanity**
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality**
It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality**
In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence**
The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary Service**
It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity**
There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality**
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

The Fundamental Principles were adopted by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross, in 1965. In 1986, the XXVth Conference decided to include them in the Preamble of the Statutes of the Movement. The latter not only recall that every component of the Movement is bound by the Fundamental Principles, but also establish that States have to respect at all times the adherence of those components to the Fundamental Principles.