

WHAT'S UP?

NEWSLETTER OXFAM IN NEPAL

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OXFAM



Chima Rana attending to a customer at her shop. Photo: Rachana Mukhia/Oxfam

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The Year That Was

As the year 2023 comes to a close, Oxfam in Nepal would like to take a moment to reflect on the achievements of this year. 2023 has been a significant and successful year for us. We continued to work towards our vision of a just society without poverty. The various projects we implemented in partnership with our local partners were directed towards this end.

The year saw the launch of some meaningful projects including:

Yuwa Sanga Hamro Sahayatra

Oxfam is stepping up to promote local dance, songs, arts or rituals and culture among youth through this one-of-a-kind project supported by YG Entertainment, South Korea. Oxfam and implementing partner Yuwalaya intend to ensure preservation of indigenous culture and music and promote its use as a tool for awareness raising. Likewise, Tharu community from plains in Kailali are engaged in preserving indigenous music, art, and dance. We will focus on these communities to promote and empower them.

Transboundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA) Phase II

The multi-national TROSA project launched its second phase. The first phase of the

project was implemented from 2017 to 2022 in four regionally significant river basins shared between Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Nepal. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) funded project has helped in creating positive momentum for transboundary cooperation on shared water resources in South Asia. Building up on the achievements of Phase I, the next phase aims to help empower vulnerable riverine communities and women, and advocate to promote policy solutions.

Likewise, 2023 also saw the end of some of our impactful projects such as:

Sowing Diversity, Harvesting Security

This five-year project, also supported by SIDA was launched in 2019. The project aimed to contribute towards improving food and nutrition security and resilience by enhancing capacity of smallholders, women, and indigenous farmers to access, develop and market seeds of climate-resilient crops and varieties along with policy advocacy for strengthening farmers' seed systems and implementation of Farmers' Rights. The project was successful in promoting and preserving local seeds and

establishing community seed banks.

Enhancing CSOs Role as Key Development Partners for Climate Resilient Policies and Practices

The three-year European Union co-funded project proved to be a trailblazer in many aspects. Besides enhancing the knowledge and understanding of local CSOs/CBOs, local elected representatives, government officials, and the target groups on climate change risks and policies, the project supported various green enterprises such as women-led cloth bag enterprise and community-led leaf plate enterprises. In addition to this, the project undertook bio-embankment construction at a few sites to protect the families residing nearby the river from flood risk.

Reminiscing the successful year that was, Oxfam in Nepal would like to thank the entire team, our local partners, and donors for helping us bring change in the lives of our project participants. We would also like to wish everyone Happy New Year 2024.

With a commitment to continue working towards ending inequality, Oxfam in Nepal would like to invite you to read the newsletter to learn more about the past year.

Journey from Labor to Entrepreneur

- Anila Chaudhary, NEEDS Nepal



Chima Rana waiting for customers at her shop. Photo: Rachana Mukhia/Oxfam

Chima Rana from Badi Basti, Bhimdutta Municipality-9 in Kanchanpur district, Sudurpaschim Province is a single woman. After her husband died 10 years ago, she was left alone to take care of her son and daughter.

She moved to her parents' house as it became difficult for her to earn a living and take care of her two children. She lived with her parents for a long time. She had to undergo many hardships to make a living. She worked as a daily wage laborer. As time passed, her son grew up and went to India to work as a painter.

Chima later became a member of Himal Women Empowerment Center (WEC) formed under Building Economic

Resilience in Seasonal Migrant Families (BERSMF) project – a project focused on strengthening women's economic competency and rights. BERSMF is a Civil Society Cooperation Programme (CSCP) in partnership with KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency). The project is being implemented in Bhimdutta Municipality by Oxfam and National Environment & Equity Development Society (NEEDS) Nepal.

Chima learned about saving, insuring, and utilizing money through Financial Literacy classes she attended at WEC. She regularly saves 100 NPR at WEC and actively participates in group activities.

“Previously, I did not know how to write my name. But now, I can write my own name. Regular participation at WEC has also helped build my self-confidence,” Chima shares.

As a poor single woman and regular WEC participant, she was chosen by WEC for business support. She received a 7-day business start-up and improvement training and was also supported in opening a grocery shop by the project. She now earns 500 NPR per day from the shop.

Chima credits WEC for helping with establishing her business and at the same time expresses gratitude towards Oxfam and NEEDS Nepal for supporting her in starting her own business.

Glimpses



Photo: Susma Panta/Oxfam

Glimpse of TROSA (Transboundary Rivers of South Asia) Phase 2 Inception Workshop held from 27 February – 1 March 2023 in the presence of regional and country partners and development partner, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

Oxfam in Nepal in coordination with Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) conducted a Multi-stakeholder Consultation Workshop on Watershed management on 10 March 2023.



Photo: Susma Panta/Oxfam

The youth of Karnali Province submitting a 20-points charter reflecting the issues youth to the Minister of Social Development on 8 May 2023.



Photo: Sarmila Thapa/Yuwalaya

Anjil Adhikari, Acting Head of Program and Partnership sharing about Alternative Management Model project at World Water Week, a week-long global water conference organized by Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).



Photo: Susma Panta/Oxfam

Glimpse of the 5-day proposal writeshop supported by Oxfam for project partners from 25-29 September 2023.



Photo: Sudhir Bhattarai/Oxfam

s of 2023

Oxfam in Nepal signs an MOU with Water Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) to establish a framework for Water Resource Management on 17 October 2023.



Photo: Raja Ram Maharjan/Oxfam



Photo: Susma Panta/Oxfam

Rajan Subedi, River Basin Manager, Oxfam in Nepal presenting during Mahakali Sambad (Dialogue) organized by Bhimdutta Municipality on 30 November 2023.



Photo: Rachana Mukhia/Oxfam

Adama Coulibaly, Oxfam International's Global Programs Director, interacting with project stakeholders during his visit to Nepal from 1-6 December 2023.



Photo: Susma Panta/Oxfam

"Water Supply System In Nepal: How To Build Better, More Sustainable Service? -II" booklet was launched by Hon'ble Minister Mr. Mahindra Roy Yadav during a workshop on Alternative Management Model Project and Rural Water Supply Management Board Modality on 19 December 2023.

Niranjan Pudasaini from LI-BIRD, Oxfam's implementing partner, presenting the achievements of Sowing Diversity Harvesting Security project during the closing ceremony on 20 December 2023.



Photo: Rachana Mukhia/Oxfam

Sustainable Income through Riverbank Farming

- Sanu Thapa, Himalaya Conservation Group Nepal

Ramjanki Krishak Samuha is a group of 12 households from Tharu community living along the bank of Bandra River in Saptari District, Madhesh Province. The group is highly dependent on farming, however, due to unpredictable climate coupled with flood and soil erosion, their crops often fail to yield good harvest.

Oxfam in Nepal's Enhancing CSOs Role as Key Development Partners for Climate Resilient Policies and Practices (ECCSO) project stepped in to help Ramjanki Krishak Samuha utilize Bandra riverbank soil for farming. Initially, the group was skeptical. Nonetheless, they decided to give it a try.

The group cleared the riverbank and planted various crops such as watermelon, gourd, okra/lady's finger. RDC Nepal, Oxfam in Nepal's implementing partner, supported them with

quality seeds and essential agricultural tools. They further adopted organic farming methods by minimizing the use of pesticides. They chose to cultivate bitter melon and cucumber as it has high market demand and can be harvested with minimum irrigation. The cucumber and bitter melon have flourished abundantly.

Balak Das Chaudhary, Member of Ramjanki Krishak Samuha said, "Previously, we earned around 4000-5000 NPR per month. But with the support from the project, we now earning 17000-18000 NPR per month."

The group is elated with the success of riverbank farming initiative. They have also shared their knowledge and experiences with neighboring communities, inspiring them to try riverbank farming.

Key Achievements of the project:

- Direct reached 50,086 individuals (Male- 48.9% & Female – 51.1%)
- Coordinated and engaged with a total of 194 CBOs and CSOs. Supported local governments in preparing four disaster and climate related plans i.e. Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan (LDCRP) where respective local governments also contributed 29% of the total cost (i.e. 4100 Euro).
- Mitigated the flood risk of 1015 households with bioengineering work integrated with nature-based solution through five different bio-embankment schemes.
- Supported 70 CBOs and CSOs reaching out to 861 families directly with climate smart initiatives support.
- 107 CSO members (34.2%) declared that they were adopting climate smart practices. Succeeded to exceed the target of 70(22.4%), where baseline value was 0%.



Farmer showing his produce from riverbank farming. Photo: Sanu Thapa, HCGN

From Farmer to Master Facilitator

- Lok Prasad Poudel, Technical Coordinator, Oxfam



Suresh Kumari Chaudhary sharing her experience during SD=HS closing event. Photo: Rachana Mukhia/Oxfam

Suresh Kumari Chaudhary is a 36-year-old woman from Nandgaon, Laljhadi Rural Municipality-3 in Kanchanpur district of Sudurpaschim Province. She never got an opportunity to study due to poverty. However, as a mother of three daughters and one son, she has ensured that her children get a decent education. Her eldest, middle, and youngest daughters are studying in 9th, 8th and 7th

grade respectively, while her son is studying in 4th grade. She and her family have been involved in agriculture for a long time. The main source of livelihood is the 0.31-acre land that they own. Her 39-year-old husband Subba Chaudhary has studied up to 10th standard.

Her relationship with Local Initiative for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD), Oxfam's implementing

partner, is rather an old one. She has been involved in various biodiversity programs of LI-BIRD since 2064 B.S. (2007 AD). At that time, there was no cooperative in her village. Recalling the old days, she said, "I would attend various meetings as a member of the village level committee representing all 9 wards. After working in the committee for a long time, the committee was transformed into Anmol Cooperative."

"Later, in 2076 BS (2019 AD), Sowing Diversity, Harvesting Security (SD=HS) program was implemented in my area. At that time LI-BIRD staff came and held group meetings for selection of facilitators," Suresh Kumari added.

When asked about the difference between Suresh Kumari before & after becoming a facilitator, she answers, "Earlier, I used to find it difficult to speak. I would feel shy to even eat in a place where there were many people."

Remembering the Food Fair, she participated in 2064 BS, she shares, "During the Food Fair in Dhangadhi, I did not sleep the whole night in the hotel. At night, when the hotelier knocked on the door, I was terrified," adding, "I have come a long way since. I worked as a Farmer Field School (FFS) facilitator for two years and

as a master facilitator for two years. I got the opportunity to participate in many trainings and meetings including 14-day FFS Facilitator Training, five-day Gender Journey, seven-day Training of Trainer Refresher Training. Through this, I got the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills related to agriculture in addition to other skills such as how to talk to people, how to communicate. Currently, I am the Treasurer of Anmol Cooperative. I was offered the role of the President, but I did not accept it as I feel that I have more to learn.”

After working as a facilitator, she is now well known among officials and employees of Agriculture Knowledge Center, Seed Quality Control Center, and Ward Office. This has made it easy for her to get information about various services available. She mentions, “As a result, our group was granted a small irrigation program from Agricultural Knowledge Center. Now, with the help of two tubewell borings and one water pump motor supported through the program, 30 to 35 households have access to irrigation facilities.”

Sharing about her livelihood, she said, “Earlier, the produce from our land was not enough to feed us.” Now, from the same land, she is producing food for her whole family as she has taken up seed production.

Talking about the difference between food production and seed production, she says, “Per unit production and profit from seed production is higher than food production.”

“Seed production has given me and my community a lot of happiness. At first, we did not know what seed production was. Others followed suit after seeing me producing seeds. I used to have a lot of free time when I worked as a farmer. My husband would help occasionally. In his free time, he would play chess, drink alcohol, chat with his friends, but after I started commercial seed production, he has started helping me. Now, he has stopped gambling, drinking, and unnecessary talking. In his spare time, he works as a hairdresser,” Suresh Kumari happily shares.

However, it was not always a happy situation. She had to face a lot of difficulties working

as a woman facilitator in her community. She was required to travel and attend various trainings and meetings. But her husband would be angry when she returned home as her neighbors would mock him for allowing his wife to leave home. The Gender Journey classes conducted by LI-BIRD was extremely helpful in changing her situation. The group invited the husbands to attend the classes where they got to learn about gender-based violence, domestic violence, women’s rights, etc.

Her husband, Subba Chaudhary, says, “When the wife is capable, the whole family benefits, and the children get the opportunity to learn good manners and behaviors. When women engage in social work, people initially mock their husbands but later praise them.”

“I cannot thank the project and LI-BIRD enough. It has given us a lot. We have learned about seed production which has changed our life. Using the knowledge and skills, I will continue to work on seed production,” shares a grateful Suresh Kumari.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding safeguarding, please contact the following number **16600150076** or send an email at speakup@oxfam.org.uk For feedback and complains related to programme, please contact the following numbers— NTC: **9851179358**; Ncell: **9801571204**



FEEDBACK?

Do you have programme updates, stories, pictures, videos to share? Or, any important questions on the newsletter?

Please contact: **Rachana Mukhia, Media and Communication Officer at rmukhia@oxfam.org.uk**

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