

# WHAT'S UP?

## NEWSLETTER OXFAM IN NEPAL

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OXFAM



*Tikeshwori Malla working in her farm. Photo: Kishor Sharma/Oxfam*

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# Oxfam for a just society without poverty

October is considered the best month to visit Nepal. With moderate temperature and clear skies, October offers the perfect weather for trekking and best panoramic views of snow-clad Himalayas for tourists. The month holds a special significance for Nepalis as well; it marks the longest and grandest Hindu religious festival – Dashain festival. Dashain is all about family reunions, exchange of gifts and blessings. With a promise to uplift our spirits, the festival offers us the perfect getaway from our daily routines. And Oxfam in Nepal would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone celebrating a very Happy Dashain!

Festivities aside, the month of October is also marked by a lot of international days such as – International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction on 13 October, International Food Day on 16 October, International Day of Eradication of Poverty on 17 October, and International Day of Climate Action on 24 October. These international days serve as a reminder to reiterate our commitment for a just and equitable society. Oxfam in Nepal has been supporting the people of Nepal for more than 40 years through various development, humanitarian, and influencing projects.



*Oxfam has been promoting resilient livelihoods and financial security of young people, women, and marginalized groups, in urban and rural areas. Nepali people from marginalized castes and ethnic groups and socially excluded groups have long suffered from discrimination, unequal redistribution of resources, and discriminatory social structures.*

Therefore, this edition of newsletter delves on our current initiatives that are in line with the various international days observed in October.

Oxfam has been promoting resilient livelihoods and financial security of young people, women, and marginalized groups, in urban and rural areas. Nepali people from marginalized castes and ethnic groups and socially excluded groups have long suffered from discrimination, unequal redistribution of resources, and discriminatory social structures.

Likewise, Nepal remains extremely vulnerable to natural disasters amplified by the impact of climate crisis. Our efforts are directed towards improving coping capacities of communities to disasters and climate emergency through resilience livelihood, anticipatory actions and preparedness, local humanitarian leadership and river basin approach.

We invite you to read the newsletter to learn about our various activities and to keep yourselves abreast of the latest developments. We thank you for your continued support.



# Vegetable Farming For Income Generation



*Women sorting and grading vegetables in Jukepani. Photo: Dipesh Dhami/RUDES*

Jukepani, a village in Patan Municipality, Baitadi District of Sudurpaschim Province is in recent times covered with green vegetables. However, not too long ago, majority of youth from the village would go to India for employment. Since the past three years, villagers are making a good income through commercial vegetable farming.

Tikeshwari Bista, who has been involved in farming for a long-time, shares, "Previously, when I was growing vegetables using traditional farming methods, I would earn just 25-30,000 NPR. Now, I can easily earn up to 300,000."

Bista credits the increase in income to various trainings she received under Oxfam's Gender Responsive Economic Empowerment (GREEN) project.

GREEN is a multi-year project implemented by Oxfam and Rural Development & Environment Management Society (RUDES) to support income generation through climate smart agriculture technologies and climate resilient entrepreneurship development.

Along with training, Women's Empowerment Center (WEC) – a platform to promote women leadership in rural areas has also been established. "The project has supported WEC members with seeds for vegetables such as cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, etc. besides linking us with cooperatives for loans at discounted interest," informed Kanti B.K., Coordinator, Kakarbashi WEC.

Bindu B.K., who has been cultivating commercial vegetables in an area of 3.5

hectare said, "Recently, women have also started getting involved in vegetable farming. Women who are usually busy in household work are attracted in the business as it makes them financially independent."

Nirmal Bhat, who used to work in India to support household expenses, has been doing tomato farming for the past few years.

"There is more joy in agriculture than any other profession," Bhat claims.

Through farming, Bhat's economic and social status has gradually started to change. He has enrolled his children in a good school. He also helps his neighbors financially when in need.

"It is all thanks to the support I have received through the project, I could turn my life around," Bhat remarks.

# Seeds of Hope: Pahalman's Journey to Prosperity

by Lalita Ale, LI-BIRD and translated by Lok Prashad Poudel, Oxfam in Nepal

Pahalman Chaudhary, a 41-year-old resident of Kailari Rural Municipality, Kailali District, Sudurpaschim Province, underwent a remarkable transformation in just two years. Contrary to the general notion that small landholding farmers cannot engage in seed production, Pahalman stands as an example, demonstrating himself as a successful seed entrepreneur. His is the kind of story that asserts the

importance of struggle and perseverance in life.

Only a few years ago, Pahalman would cultivate rice and wheat in the small land he owned, and the produce was just enough to feed his family of six. He did not have any other income to provide for the education of his son and daughter. He failed to meet his children's demands for clothes and delicious food during festivals. This would make him upset and unhappy.

An encounter with Lalita Ale, Technical Assistant at Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD), a non-governmental organization working to improve livelihoods of smallholder farmers, and Oxfam's partner in Sowing Diversity Harvesting Security (SD=HS) project, gave him the opportunity to learn about Farmer Field School (FFS), seed production, and cooperatives involved in seed production and marketing.



*Pahalman Chaudhary awarded by Janabatawaran Multipurpose Cooperative. Photo: Lalita Ale/LI-BIRD*



SD=HS aims to address climate change impacts threatening biodiversity loss and local seed systems and improve food and nutrition security and resilience against changing climate by enhancing access of smallholders, women, and indigenous farmers, developing and marketing seeds of climate-resilient crops and varieties along with policy advocacy for strengthening farmers' seed systems and implementation of Farmers' Rights. It is implemented in four districts of Sudurpaschim Province – Daddeldhura, Doti, Kailali, and Kanchanpur.

Equipped with necessary information from Lalita, Pahalman became a member of Farmer Field School two years ago, where he learned about seed production. He later went on to become a facilitator for seed production and marketing at FFS.

He attributes his newfound self-confidence to his involvement with FFS. He remembers how difficult it was for him to speak in public despite always nurturing a dream of becoming a good speaker. It was FFS that helped turn his dream into a reality.

"The various trainings I received at FFS helped improve my public speaking skills. Previously, I would get nervous and faced difficulty in articulating my ideas and opinions in public," shared Pahalman, adding, "I

have also gained knowledge about quality seed production and marketing."

LI-BIRD has enhanced the knowledge and skills of FFS members and seed-producing farmers. Farmers learned about various techniques for producing quality seeds of rice and wheat, disease and pest management, seed storage, and subsidized machinery support like fertilizers spreaders, spray tanks, seed grading machines, and weedicide, which played a crucial role in seed production.

Describing about fertilizer spreader introduced by the project, Pahalman said, "It saves time, evenly distributes fertilizer, and has freed me from the discomfort of skin problems caused by manually spreading fertilizer."

Initially Pahalman did not produce seeds as he was still learning and the land he owned was not adequate for seed production. Later he leased 2 bigha land and started rice and wheat seed production. He also became a member of Janabatawaran Multipurpose Cooperative after learning about it while working at FFS. Although the cooperative had been established and operational for many years, he was unaware of it.

The cooperative purchases all the seeds produced by farmers like him.

"In my first year, I sold 28 quintals of wheat seeds for NPR 196,000 and 22 quintals of rice seeds for NPR 46,200," claimed Pahalman excitedly.

He deposited part of his earnings at the cooperative while part of it was used to pay off the tractor installment, he had purchased a few months ago. He also indulged himself into getting a mobile phone, something he could not even have dreamed of.

Today, Pahalman serves as a leader farmer in his community; he advises and has inspired many farmers around him. He was nominated as Vice-Secretary at the cooperative and was also awarded Best Seed-Producing Farmer at the cooperative's 10th General Assembly this year.

Pahalman has shared his commitment to continue seed production and further improve his skills. He claims that just as a healthy body allows room for creativity, healthy seeds lead to higher yields and provides nutritious food. He regrets not having started earlier but emphasizes his desire to pass on his knowledge and experience to young farmers and inspire them to get involved in agriculture business.

## #DisasterRiskReduction

Oxfam has a long track record of working in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) sector at rural and urban areas in Nepal through disaster preparedness and mitigation, anticipatory actions, early warning systems, humanitarian response, shock responsive social protection, and support to development of guidelines, policies, plans. Oxfam's current highlights in the sector are varied and some of which are summarized in the articles below.

# Strengthening Community Preparedness, Rapid Response and Recovery



*Emergency Preparedness Training conducted by NEEDS with Oxfam's support. Photo: Ishwar Upadhyay/NEEDS*

Riverine communities of Mahakali River face acute problems of floods and landslides during monsoon season. The dynamically changing scenario of disasters and the unprecedented magnitude and impacts to communities pose a major challenge.

Limited or non-functional local Disaster Management Committee, local Emergency Operation Centre along with absence of skilled local communities for disaster response are the key issues that Oxfam's SCOPR3 project

aims to address at the project locations.

Oxfam and partner National Environment & Equity Development Society (NEEDS) Nepal are working in Kanchanpur and Dadeldhura districts of Sudurpaschim Province to ensure that communities prone to recurrent disasters are better equipped to co-lead relief and recovery efforts in collaboration with local authorities.

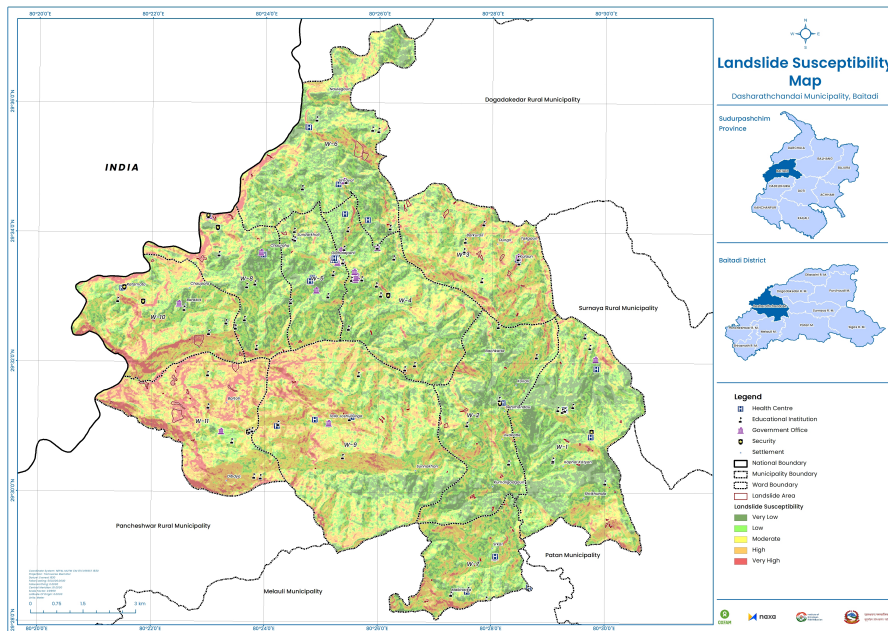
We have enhanced the capacities of 'off the radar' communities and established

Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMC) to anticipate and timely respond to recurring multi hazards.

Likewise, 40 CDMCs have been formed and are affiliated under government legal entity. At least 120 Task Forces have been formed and trained on First Aid and Search and Rescue. And, 31 communities have established Emergency Response Fund (EFR) of NPR 0.85 million through their own initiative.



# Landslide Susceptibility Mapping for Advanced Preparedness and Response



## iii) Landslide Early Warning System (LEWS):

Pahiro Alert, community-level landslide early warning app was initially developed under START Network's support by Plan International, NAXA Pvt. Ltd. and Institute of Himalayan Risk Reduction (IHRR). Oxfam in consultation with NAXA/IHRR JV has added significant updates to the existing app along with landslide susceptibility maps.

## iv) Capacity Enhancement:

We have provided targeted training and capacity enhancement sessions for municipal officials, community representatives, and local stakeholders. These sessions were aimed to familiarize participants with mobile app usage, installation protocols, and understanding of landslide early warning systems.

This pilot project has set the foundation for an effective early warning system for landslide hazards. Establishing an effective system takes years of engagement, iterative process, and testing. Therefore, Oxfam is continuing the project to further enhance stakeholder engagement and refine landslide susceptibility mapping techniques.

The occurrence of landslides remains a pressing concern and data have shown that casualties caused due to landslide are in increasing trend. Therefore, to enhance the preparedness of communities, Oxfam piloted a project "Landslide Susceptibility Mapping for Advanced Preparedness and Response" across two municipalities in Baitadi district.

Oxfam and Rural Development & Environment Management Society (RUDES) take a holistic approach to improve landslide risk management in piloted areas through the following activities:

## i) Community Involvement:

We have successfully engaged local governments and community members through workshops, consultation meetings, and training sessions. This has resulted in awareness of landslide risks and early warning systems among stakeholders.

## ii) Landslide Inventory and Susceptibility Maps/Plans:

Comprehensive landslide inventories have been compiled for both municipalities, identifying high-risk zones. Landslide susceptibility maps/plans were developed factoring in elements such as topography, geology, and historical landslide events.

## #ClimateAction

Climate action is a growing priority among policy makers and government officials in Nepal.

Oxfam began its work on climate action in Nepal from 2009 with the study report 'Even the Himalayas have Stopped Smiling Climate Change, Poverty and Adaptation in Nepal'. The report was a pioneer in bringing stories of climate change impact. Since then, we have continued to work in the sector with special focus on climate adaptation activities, disaster risk reduction projects, mobilization of civil society organizations in policy advocacy, and development of quality research papers. One of our current projects underway in the sector is:

## Climate Change Adaptation and Advocacy Project (C-CAAP) in Nepal

The project is built on the foundations and learnings from Oxfam's existing and past projects on climate action and is implemented in Rautahat District of Madhesh Province.

Oxfam and Rural Development Centre (RDC) have actively engaged with established and capacitated Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Women Empowerment Centers (WECs), Farmers' Groups, Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs), Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), Youth Groups etc.

These community organizations are vital channels to reach the most marginalized,

climate-affected in the project area and to bring the voices from community. Additionally, Oxfam and RDC will also aware communities and technically and financially support them to adopt climate smart practices, technologies, and tools, including indigenous and local practices. Oxfam has been generating tangible evidence of climate smart practices through action research and climate action initiatives at the community level will serve to generate tangible evidence for influencing and advocacy efforts at provincial and federal levels, regional and global level.

Oxfam's target for influencing work on climate action encompasses local government bodies, provincial government authorities, federal government agencies, as well as international stakeholders. With this comprehensive approach we aim to maximize impact and promote climate-resilient development across various levels of governance and international cooperation and advocate for climate change financing including loss and damage.



*His Excellency Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, Nepal's Ambassador to China speaking at "Roundtable and Photo Exhibition on Climate Change in Nepal" event organized by Embassy of Nepal in Beijing in collaboration with Oxfam. Photo: Oxfam Hong Kong*

If you have any concerns or queries regarding safeguarding, please contact the following number **16600150076** or send an email at [speakup@oxfam.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:rmukhia@oxfam.org.uk)

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