

# WHAT'S UP

NEWSLETTER, OXFAM IN NEPAL



OXFAM



Riverine communities from Nepal and India interacting about conservation of Mahakali river.  
Photo: TROSA Partners/ Oxfam

## SPECIAL EDITION



Image: freepik.com

## WATER GOVERNANCE

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## WATER GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME AT OXFAM

Oxfam's Water Governance programme works to achieve sustainable solution to community water management. The program aims to address the challenges of water insecurity for poor, socially excluded, and vulnerable women and men and achieve systemic change for sustainable and equitable access to water, sanitation, and natural resources. The programme addresses poverty by strengthening the essential WASH services' governance and increasing access to resources for the riverine communities'. Due to climate change, natural resources such as water are depleting. Therefore, the program seeks to optimize water resources at the catchment level and its effective governance to ensure that no households are deprived of safe access to WASH facilities.

## MAHAKALI SAMBAD: A DIALOGUE FOR CONSERVING MAHAKALI RIVER

Since the beginning of human history, rivers have played an important role in the growth of civilizations. The importance of rivers for the survival of humans cannot be overstated as it still supports our livelihood and economy. Oxfam's TROSA project which is funded by SIDA, supports the riverine communities living along the Mahakali river basin through increased access to, and control over riverine water resources. The Mahakali river, which acts as an administrative boundary between Nepal and India, provides valuable resources to the community living along the riverbank in both countries. But, the increasing risk of depleting water quality and conflict among the communities sharing the same water resources are threatening the existence of the river and affecting the livelihoods of the people. Addressing these issues requires the involvement of different stakeholders with varied interests in the river. So, to foster a peaceful resolution over access of water resources and to conserve the depleting quality of Mahakali river, TROSA project has been conducting a discussion platform called the 'Mahakali Sambad'. The dialogues, which have been running since 2018, brings different stakeholders from Nepal and India including

government officers, Civil Society Members, journalists, private sectors, and local residents. Through these dialogues a number of issues on Transboundary Water Governance have been identified with the government of Nepal and India.

The latest round of Mahakali Sambad was organised by Bhimdutta Municipality in coordination with TROSA-Oxfam in Nepal and partners, on 22 March 2021 in Khalla Machhati, Bhimdutta, Kanchanpur. During the session, the participants discussed about creating an enabling environment for private sectors to protect Mahakali river. The discussion also gave emphases on prioritizing local communities while establishing business along the river. The participants of the dialogue were the representatives of local governments from Nepal side, CSOs of Nepal and India, private sectors of Nepal and India and Women Empowerment Center members.



*A member of Women Empowerment centre expressing her point during a meeting . Photo: TROSA Partners/ Oxfam*

## RAFTING PROMOTION IN MAHAKALI RIVER

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Local Governments of Dashrathchand Municipality- Baitadi district, Parshuram Municipality- Dadeldhura district and Bhimdutta Municipality- Kanchanpur district of Mahakali Basin and Private sector Karnali Rafting Adventures and TROSA partners on 12 February 2021, Dhangadi, Kailali. The MoU aims to support building ownership and contribute to sustainability of rafting in Mahakali Basin from upstream to downstream. The local governments from the three districts have committed for its regularity and sustainability lining it with other income generation activities for communities of Mahakali Basin. Besides, the MoU will also help facilitate inter-district rafting event in coordination with the Local Governments and the Private Sectors.



*Group of people rafting in Mahakali river during World Water Day. Photo: TROSA Partners/ Oxfam*



*Stakeholders during rafting inauguration event on World Water day. Photo: TROSA partners/ Oxfam*

## ROW WITH THE FLOW

On World Water Day, TROSA project along with the Mayors of Dashrathchand, Parshuram, and Bhimdutta Municipalities from Baitadi, Dadeldhura and Kanchanpur districts came together to inaugurate the inception of rafting in Mahakali river. Oxfam's TROSA project had been advocating with the local governments to permit rafting in Mahakali river to promote tourism, expand livelihood options, engage private sector and promote ownership of Mahakali river by the local community. The inauguration marks as a historical event in Nepal, as the local government approved and committed to promote rafting for the first time in Mahakali river. During the event, the government and the private sector from India and Nepal committed to support income-generating activities for riverine communities in Nepal and India. The commitments from private sectors of India and Nepal have improved trans-boundary water cooperation between the two nations as the community and the private sector have increased ownership in resource utilization and conservation of Mahakali river.



*Participants from exposure visit being briefed about gauge pole in Narayani river. Photo: TROSA partners/ Oxfam*

## CITIZEN SCIENCE TRAINING

The Citizen Science is an approach implemented by TROSA project to empower the community people to advocate about water pollution in Mahakali river.

The project trains the local citizens living in Mahakali basin to measure the quality of water in Mahakali river. These test results are used to generate evidence about water pollution and empower the locals to advocate about curbing pollution in Mahakali river.

To encourage this advocacy effort, TROSA project conducted a three days refresher training to build capacity of 42 citizen scientist from Dhangadi and Mahendranagar from 12 to 14 February 2021.

The scientists were able to test the 12 parameters of water quality including data upgrading, latitude, longitude, and action plan. After the training, the citizen scientists tested the water at 22 different sites of Mahakali at Baitadi, Dadeldhura, and Kanchanpur districts. Their tests reflected fecal coliform in the water, which shows practices of dumping fecal sewage directly in the river. Besides, the test also revealed that large inputs of wastewater, uncoordinated rapid urban expansion, different anthropogenic activities, agricultural run-off and fertilizers, road construction beside the river, haphazard extraction of sand and stones from the river, direct discharge of sewage and drainage, etc. were the main reason of water pollution the Mahakali river.

## EXPOSURE VISIT

TROSA project organized a week long exposure visit at Gandaki and Koshi basin for the citizen scientists, Women Empowerment Centers members, social mobilizers, TROSA partners and Oxfam TROSA team. The exposure visit was conducted to strengthen the inter-basin community-to-community relation, understand and learn the working strategy of communities and Civil Society Organizations of Susta, Gandak and Koshi river basin and explore the achievement of TBWG project in the Gandaki and the Koshi River. After a week-long exposure visit, the team developed an action plan to lobby for the promotion of income-generating activities, link with cooperatives, practice off-season vegetable farming, etc. Besides, the exposure team learnt about Flood Early Warning System in Mahakali basin, and the approaches used by Citizen Scientists to lobby for river conservation.



*A citizen scientist testing water quality in Mahakali river. Photo: TROSA partners/ Oxfam*



**42 CITIZEN SCIENTISTS WERE PROVIDED REFRESHER TRAINING**

**40 OF THE TRAINEES WERE WOMEN**

## PROPOSAL WRITING TRAINING

TROSA project organized a three days proposal writing training for social mobilizers and Women Empowerment Center members in Baitadi district from 22 to 24 February 2021. The training was conducted to enable the participants to develop their own proposal and submit it to the local government and stakeholders. Besides, the participants also visited a lift irrigation project which funded by the government and proposed by the members Women Empowerment Centers. The training was conducted at a strategic time which coincided with government's seven step planning process. This training encouraged and enabled the participants to develop and share 31 proposals across three districts.

Through these trainings and planning process supported by TROSA partners, the WEC members could receive projects for livelihood development and sustainable water governance worth 18,662,000 from the government.



**WEC MEMBERS RECEIVED PROJECTS WORTH  
NRS. 18,662,000 FOR LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND  
SUSTAINABLE WATER GOVERNANCE**

## TROSA PROJECT AT A GLANCE (ACHIEVEMENTS OF LAST SIX MONTHS)



**3436** people reached through different project activities like WEC meetings, awareness raising activities, lobby meetings, government planning process, and livelihood programs



**1075** activists, community leaders, WEC members were sensitized on women's rights, water governance, and leadership development



**311** government officials engaged through advocacy meetings, seven steps planning process, and Mahakali Sambad



**83** individuals from private sectors including rafting companies, hotel associations were engaged with transboundary communities to conserve Mahakali river



enhanced knowledge of **10701** youth activists on Water Governance, and Women Empowerment



Coordination with **366** individuals from Civil Society Organizations and like minded organizations for leveraging resources to conserve Mahakali river and promote livelihood.

## REPAIRING WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS

Ganesh Prasad Thakuri from Benighat, Majhimtar is often seen walking along the hilly trails of his village, inspecting the water supply pipes. These pipes are a valuable resource for the community as they deliver water to the people from the source.

However, Ganesh has always been concerned about the functionality of these pipes as many required repairs. Although he has been engaged in the repair and maintenance of the pipes, his individual effort was not enough to meet the repair needs of his village. He would constantly talk about repairing water supply system with the Water supply system chief in his village.

Ganesh's concern about the water supply system reflects what many people in Nepal have been facing for a long time.

In Nepal, only 25% of water supply schemes are functioning well. 36% need minor repairs and 39% need major repairs, rehabilitation, or reconstruction.

As regular repair and maintenance of water supply system are essential, skilled plumbers like Ganesh can play a crucial role in ensuring the regular availability of water in the communities.

Oxfam's Alternative Management project, which is funded by Poul Due Jensen (PDJ)/ Grundfos Foundation, aims to deliver safe water through a reliable service model that operates to keep rural water supply functional through proper engagement of service providers in operations and management of water supply scheme.

When the project announced its inception in Benighat village, Ganesh was very excited at the news. "I was thrilled with joy knowing that Majhimtar has been selected to test alternative Management Model", says Ganesh.

Ganesh attended the Village Maintenance Workers training provided by Oxfam and its partner FOCUS Nepal, to transfer technical knowledge on



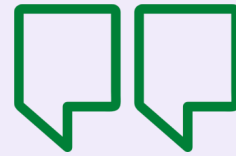
*Ganesh Prasad Thakuri inspecting water pipes in Benighar, Majhimtar. Photo: FOCUS Nepal/ Oxfam*

maintaining water supply scheme.

The training has not only improved Ganesh's plumbing skills but has also provided him with income generating opportunity as he is often seen repairing pipes in houses, schools and hotels.

With his dedication to serve Mahjimtara community, Ganesh is often seen as a role model in his community. Capitalizing on his popularity, Ganesh plans to empower the youths of his village by teaching them plumbing skills.

## VOICES OF STAKEHOLDERS



Sanju Baithake, Teacher,  
Shree Janta Primary School, Rautahat



With Oxfam's and RDC Nepal's support we were able to organize Sanitation and Hygiene programs at schools which has helped our children understand importance of hygiene and learn proper steps of handwashing.

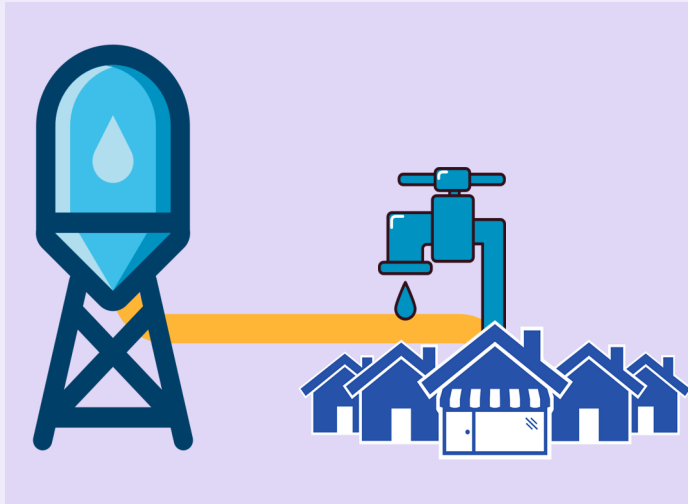


Saif Narsulla  
Ward Chair person  
Rajpur Municipality Ward no. 2

With the support of Oxfam and RDC we are implementing Fatwa Mahasur Drinking Water and Sanitation project in our ward. We have completed tasks like constructing water tanks, compound walls, installing solar system. I would like to thank the donor, Oxfam, RDC, and the water user committee for supporting us.



## CONSTRUCTING WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES



# 53

**WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES WERE  
CONSTRUCTED AND HANDED OVER  
TO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH  
PURNIMA PROJECT.**

Purnima project supported by FCDO and implemented by Oxfam through Mott MacDonald in partnership with local organization in Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Lalitpur works to enable communities to access, manage and sustain gender responsive WASH facilities

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

## FEEDBACK?

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

Please contact: **Grishma Raj Aryal, Media and Communication Officer at**

**[garyal@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:garyal@oxfam.org.uk)**

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