

### Learning about New Building Codes



36 YEARS OLD MANU TAMANG FROM KHOPLANG VDC IN GORKHA DISTRICT STANDING IN A CONSTRUCTION SITE SHE IS CURRENTLY WORKING

Manu Tamang walks up through a narrow pass that leads to a semi constructed building, where a group of men are eagerly waiting for her to take advice on building a strong house. She stands among them confidently and starts to answer their questions with intricate details about the recent building codes, use of proper construction materials and techniques to construct an earthquake resistant house. The house owner feels lucky to have received Manu's time to construct his house which was destroyed by the earthquake in 2015. Impressed by Manu's skills, hard work and attention to details, the house owner tells us, "We are so pleased that we have a trained mason like Manu who is helping us construct a strong house".

Manu has been a construction laborer from the time when she was just 16 years old. However, she was never given an opportunity to work directly on building construction. "I was only told to pick up bricks and sands, and pass it to other skilled masons who were directly involved in plastering, constructing pillars and developing foundations; but I always wanted to learn those skills to improve my income and support my family", says Manu.

The combined income of Manu and her husband were not enough to fulfill the needs of their three children. "My eldest daughter had to drop out of school because we could not afford to pay for her school", says Manu.

Desperate to increase her household income, Manu decided to sign up for the seven days masons training provided by CARE and its partners with the financial support from ADH.

Although Manu has been a construction labor for past 20 years, she tells us that the training has been very helpful in upgrading her knowledge. She says, "There was a different system of constructing houses before the earthquake, but now new building codes have been enforced; with this seven days training, I have learned about complying with earthquake resistant building codes while constructing houses".



As Manu has become a trained mason, her daily wage rate has increased to NRS 1000 (USD 10) per day, which is almost double of what she used to earn before the training.

With the improvement in her family's earning, Manu is currently saving money to reconstruct her own house which was destroyed by the earthquake. In addition, she also wishes to let her children continue their school. Remembering her eldest daughter who had to drop out of school, Manu says, "I hope my children never have to drop out of school again". Manu's role in constructing houses in her village depicts the increasing role of women in reconstruction. She tells, "People did not use to trust women masons like me earlier, but after we received the certificate of trained masons, we have started receiving request from many people to construct their house", says Manu.

### An Inspiring Farmer



SAMJHANA GIRI DISCUSSES FARMING METHODS WITH OTHER WOMEN FARMERS

Samjhana Giri, a farmer from Sindhupalchowk, shows her soil laden hands, as she tends to her tomato and chili crops cultivated in her poly house. She is proud of her soil covered hands. “I am a farmer”, she says, “I was born and raised in this soil and I am happy that my livelihood depends on it.”

Samjhana was raised into a farming household and has always been a farmer. Her journey, however, has been difficult. Her family lacked access to modern farming equipments and knowledge regarding new farming techniques, which affected their productivity and thus, their livelihood. “Times were difficult. There was no money to buy even the bare necessities.” Moreover, she had to take the sole responsibility of raising her son. She did not have any support from her husband. The earthquakes worsened their already fragile condition. They lost their house and their belongings to the disaster, which added to their financial burden.

Samjhana was saddened and overwhelmed by the earthquake, but she was not defeated. She began exploring ways to use farming to improve her family’s livelihood. “I found out about the training on nursery management, poly house farming, integrated pest management, and natural cultivation methods through CSRC and CARE Nepal, and I was happy to receive the opportunity”, says Samjhana.

She has excelled in putting the knowledge she received into practice. We sit in front of her house overlooking the farm and her efforts are visible. She currently grows tomatoes and chilly in the poly house supported by CARE Nepal. She diligently uses natural cultivation methods and expresses happiness at her ability to use improved farming techniques. “I feel proud that I have been able to continue my parents’ profession, but with knowledge about new and improved techniques”, says Samjhana.



Her efforts are laudable – she has been able to multiply her knowledge by effectively putting her knowledge into practice and has been able to become financially strong and independent. Moreover, she has been able to multiply the impact of her efforts and support her family and community.

Samjhana works in her farm and grows food for her household. She sells the tomatoes and chili she grows and has been able to earn Rs. 30,000 (USD 300) from them. “Selling my products have been especially easy due to the collection center built by CSRC and CARE Nepal. I take my products every Sunday to the collection center, which makes selling in bulk easier”, adds Samjhana. She has been able to send her son to school with the money she has earned and buy necessary household income. “I feel proud to be able to support my mother and my sister”, says Samjhana.

What she is also proud of is the support that she has been able to provide to her community members, especially to other women farmers like herself. Samjhana co-chairs a women farmer’s group, holds regular meetings and discussions, and trains her group members on natural farming and improved crop production methods. “My fellow farmers come to me with questions, and I feel happy to help them.” Samjhana also talks about discussions among farmers that takes place at the collection center. “We go to drop our products, talk about each other’s farming techniques, and what works and does not work. We learn from each other and we give suggestions.” During group meetings, Samjhana not only talks about farming methods. We witnessed her motivating her fellow farmers to be leaders and to be proud of their profession. “Let us love the soil that has given us so much and try to make the most of it”, she says to her group members.

Samjhana’s plans for the future involves learning new techniques, improving her productivity, and her making her family financially stronger. “I want to be remembered as a lead farmer in the community.” Moreover, she envisions a self-sufficient community. “I want my community to grow its own food and prioritize local food supply. I also want all of us to produce surplus to be able to supply to non-local markets. I am doing all that I can and will continue to work more towards making my dream a reality.”



### Back in those Days



SANTA MAYA GHALE, A 70 YEARS OLD FCHV SITS OUTSIDE HER LAWN AS SHE TALKS TO CARE STAFF ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE AS AN FCHV.

*70 years Santa Maya Ghale, a Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) from Uhiya Village in Gorkha District shares her experience about maternal health practices back in those days when she was a young FCHV.*

Santa Maya Ghale has witnessed everything – from babies being born in farms and cow sheds to an unattended mother tearing out a piece of her own cloth to wrap her baby immediately after the birth.

As an FCHV, Santamaya had spent 15 years of her life trying to make pregnant mothers aware of topics such as consumptions of iron tablets, delivering babies at health post, and visiting health post four times for conducting Antenatal Checkups.

However, her words were often considered impractical in a village where health posts and medical attendants were absent. “People used to tell me what is the use of these knowledge if there are no facilities in our village. I used to struggle to find an answer to that question”, says Santa Maya.

The only time Santa Maya remembers people taking medicines and vaccination is when few nonnative volunteers would occasionally visit their village. “The children in our village would run away whenever they saw a non-native person, because they were scared of vaccination”, says Santamaya and laughs infectiously.

However, with the relentless effort of many FCHVs like Santamaya, she thinks that people have been gradually changing their attitude towards maternal health. “It’s much easier for pregnant mothers these days as they can easily access health posts and get access to iron and vitamin tablets”, says Santa Maya. “But I am also worried that people will forget these knowledge since our health post was destroyed by the earthquake”, she adds.

As the only health post in the village was severely damaged by the earthquake, CARE Nepal with the financial support of MOFA Luxemburg is building a health post with birthing center and sanitation facilities to encourage the mothers of Uhiya village to adopt safe maternal health practices.

“The new birthing center facilities will surely help the women in the village as they won’t have to walk for days for their treatment. However, we need to encourage the young women



April 26, 2017  
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in our village to use these facilities as most of them are very shy to talk about their problems during pregnancies”, adds Santa Maya.



### Young Minds to the Community Rescue!

Young students from a rural village in Sindhupalchowk have become community role models as they have been raising awareness about different social problems in the community through street dramas. Influenced by the orientation programs given by CARE Nepal and MANK (CARE's partner), they took a stand to speak up against Gender Based Violence and other similar issues through street dramas. Their story is truly a praiseworthy and an inspiring one.



Jugal Baal Club is a club initiated by the students of Shree Bhim Viddhyashram Secondary School, Banskharka 4, and Sindhupalchowk. The club currently consists of 36 school students. It may seem like a common group of school children but the work these students have done is exceptional.

The students of this club are now active members of the society; they have been helping to raise awareness on different issues like Gender Based Violence (GBV), Violence against Children among many others. However, the reason behind their success is their entertaining way of disseminating information on various issues such as GBV.

The club uses effective ways like street dramas with a hint of humor and taste of reality of the problems faced by the community. When asked about how the idea came to their mind, Shyam Shrestha, 15, president of the club shared, “all credit goes to CARE Nepal and MANK. We were first given orientation on GBV and other issues in our school after the earthquake. Although the club was already formed a couple of months before the earthquake, we had not started doing any sort of works. However, after the earthquake received orientations and became aware of the malpractices maybe that have been



happening in our community. This inspired us to do something to inform people about the problems that have been in our community like GBV. Not only did we receive orientation about GBV, we also received ideas for conducting street dramas. The club performed their first drama on the occasion of Dashain, the biggest festival of Nepal. They took GBV as their theme and showed different problems of a person who is being physically, mentally victimized and the ways to solve them in order to get her out of her misery. The drama was very detailed with the description of legal procedures to follow while tackling GBV.

‘We write all of our dialogues ourselves and try to make it more interesting by presenting it in a comic form. All the needed technical information, about the legal procedures is given by CARE Nepal and MANK’, shyly smiles Muna Shrestha, another member of the club. The club performed 3 more dramas after the first one. The themes of those included Violence against Children and how are they being forced to find employment and work against their will.

The club does not limit itself to performing drama only. It also helps the students who come seeking for help regarding the various problems they face which mostly includes GBV problems. The students of the club interact with the person and try to find out the problems and come up with the possible solutions.

“One of our classmates, who belonged to a poor family, was being forced by her family to dropout in order to go to the city to work. As her father spent most of his days drinking, it was getting difficult for the family to meet the basic needs. She came to our club and shared her problem. We then went to the father and explained him that he should let his daughter study and how education helps to make her future bright.’ Niruta Shrestha shared. “He has been drinking less since we talked to him and the daughter is continuing her studies.”

One of the most impressive things about Jugal Baal Club is that they have some savings which they use to help the students who cannot afford the tuition fees. They also help to clean the community and help in maintenance of roads during monsoon season. The response of the community towards the club is also very appreciable. The school acknowledged their work by awarding them with stationeries such as calculators and exercise books. CARE Nepal and MANK is happy to provide them with guidance of any sort or resources.

‘The most satisfying thing about working in the club is the amount of love and respect that the school as well as our family and community are giving us. Our parents have been very supportive and are encouraging us to do these works. And one of the most important factors for the warm attitude of the people is that they got awareness from the orientation provided by CARE Nepal and MANK. This made them realize that there are many problems in our community which needs to be addressed.’ Purna Tamang smilingly said.

Following their footsteps, many schools in the nearby regions have started a club as well. The club plans to continue the work in the future and has been involving the younger students so that the works of the club continues in the coming days.

### Accessible Toilets for Elderly People

In the village of Barpak in Gorkha district an elderly woman had struggled for several months to use proper sanitation facility as the earthquake destroyed her toilet along with the rest of her house. Buddhini Ghale, who is also 80 years old, had to walk 20 minutes everyday to defecate in open fields, bearing the pain in her knees caused due to old age.

Before the earthquake, Buddhini had somehow managed to use the toilet by taking support of the walls. However, when her toilet was destroyed, she was compelled to defecate in open.

“It was difficult for me to defecate in the open; my daughter had to accompany me everyday”, recalls Buddhini.

Buddhini’s case represents the suffering of many elderly people and people with disabilities after the earthquake. According to the national census of Nepal conducted in 2011, 2% of the total population in Nepal comprises of people with disability, and almost 8% of the people are above the age of 60. In addition, a study conducted by Helpage International estimated that the earthquake in 2015 and its aftershocks affected over 600,000 elderly people in Nepal.

In line with CARE’s strong focus on vulnerable population, elderly people like Buddhini have received support to reconstruct their toilets. With the support of Australian Development Agency, CARE and its partners have supported community members in building disability friendly and accessible toilets for unerable households in Barpak village. The toilets have rods installed at the entrance and near the pan of the toilet. The toilet can also be accessed through wheelchair.

After constructing the toilets with the support from CARE, Buddhini no longer has to defecate in open, which she thinks contributes to healthy living. “Defecation in open was a compulsion for me during the initial months after the earthquake, but now I can use my own toilet which will prevent us from communicable diseases”, says Buddhini.

For many elderly people like Buddhini having an accessible toilet means that they no longer have to walk long distance to deficate in open. “I no longer need my daughter’s support, I can use toilet by holding the rods installed aside the toilet pan”, adds Buddhini.



BUDDHINI GHALE TAKES SUPPORT OF THE ROD TO ENTER THE TOILET

### Equal Wage for Equal Work



KUM MAYA GHALE (BLUE) PARTICIPATES IN CASH FOR WORK ACTIVITY TO CONNECT WATER FROM THE NEARLY SOURCE

Traditional gender roles in Nepal often prohibit women from being economically active and contributing towards the livelihood of their families. As per the Rapid Gender Analysis conducted by CARE Nepal immediately after the earthquake, 74.8% of unpaid family labour force were female, indicating that large number of women do not have access to economic resource.

Nepalese women comprises of 15% of the total Nepali workforce. However, wage discrimination for labour work is very common due to the fact that men are seen as physically stronger than women.

30 year old Kum Maya Ghale from Barpark, Gorkha district in Nepal serves as an example of wage discrimination based on gender. As her husband went to Kathmandu for better job opportunity, Kum Maya has had to work in her farm, which only produces crops enough to feed her family .

In her spare time, Kum Maya also works as a labour by cutting and lifting stones used for construction. However, in her experience of working as a labourer, she used to get paid less than men. “For the same kind of job of cutting and lifting stones men were paid NRS 500 per day, however I just received NRS 200 in a day for doing the same work”, says Kum Maya.

Considering the above problems, CARE Nepal and its partners, with the funding support from Austrian Development Agency (ADA), conducted Cash for Work Activity by employing local laborers; they are working to rehabilitate water systems in Barpak. CARE Nepal has ensured more than 50% of women participation in cash for work for the construction of water systems. All the workers were provided NRS 700 per day regardless of their gender.

“I used to feel unhappy when men were paid more than women for doing the same job. I believe women are equally capable and they should get equal wage for equal work”, adds Kum Maya.

Women like Kum Maya are working to connect pipelines from the water source to their village of Barpak where many water sources have dried up and water supply systems were damaged after the earthquake. The undergoing water pipeline construction is expected to fulfill the water needs of over 500 households in Barpak village.



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With the earnings from the cash for work activity, Kum Maya plans to pay back petty loans she took from her relatives and neighbours. “I am very happy to be a part of this construction work as I can earn my livelihood and at the same time I can help connect water for the people in my village”, says Kum Maya. For Kum Maya the most fruitful part of working in CARE’s cash for work activity was living a dignified life where she is treated equal to men. “People used to tell me that women should get paid less because they are physically weaker than men. I think those people are wrong because women have also lifted heavy objects like stones to construct this water pipelines”, says Kum Maya.

### Learning to Construct Brick by Brick



30 YEARS OLD KOPILA NEPALI FROM GANKHU VILLAGE IN GORKHA DISTRICT WORKING ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE IN HER VILLAGE.

30 year-old Kopila Nepali pulls out a large piece of iron rod and starts taking measurement to cut them into even sizes. She is currently preparing rods to construct strong pillars that would make her client's house strong.

The last few months have been busy for Kopila as the demand for skilled masons like her have been increasing after the earthquake.

She is usually seen on different construction sites

mixing concrete in right proportion, pouring them in different stages of construction and taking measurements of walls, woods and rods.

However, these skills were unknown to Kopila before she attended a seven days masons training provided by CARE Nepal and its partner with the funding support of ADH. "I was working as a mason before the earthquake, but people hardly called me to construct their houses as I had very few skills on masonry", says Kopila.

She adds, "For most of the time I had to stay idle which meant that I was losing out on income generating activities". However, when CARE Nepal came to Gankhu village with its program to train masons, Kopila was interested to sign up for it. "My husband encouraged me to attend the training because he realized that the demand for trained masons will escalate in the years to come", says Kopila. She adds, "I am lucky that my husband is supportive; many men in the village do not let their wives work".

Kopila's husband, who just returned to Nepal from foreign employment, is supporting Kopila with household work when she goes out for work. With the combined income of Kopila and her husband, they are able to afford education of their three children and purchase grocery for their house.

With her own determination and support from her husband, Kopila is confident that she will get an opportunity to work as a lead contractor one day. She says, "Anything is possible if we have determination; I want to learn new skills by practicing masonry and progress in my profession so that I can make a good living out of it". Moreover, the role of her husband in supporting Kopila can sketch a picture of a society where gendered discrimination of work is not as strong. As she smiles thinking about her husband, she tells us, "He cooks



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food for us and take care of the children when I am out for work. Although few men still tease us about the work we do, my husband tells me to ignore them and continue with my work”, adds Kopila.

### A New Source of Livelihood



NIRMALA POKHREL FROM KHOPLANG VILLAGE WORKING IN HER FARM

36 years old Nirmala Pokhrel from Gorkha district is seen busy working in her farm, planting vegetable seeds and watering them.

The scenario, which we see now, challenges the age-old practice of only men working in the farm and earning income. Before, Nirmala's family's livelihood was dependent only on her husband's wage.

However, after receiving training on improved production techniques through the program funded by TAIWAN ICDF, Nirmala has started vegetable farming in her two ropanis (42 square feet) farm. She tells us

that vegetable farming has become a major source of livelihood for her family these days. Moreover, most of the vegetables in her farm are grown for commercial purposes, and she have been able to earn NRS 15000 (USD 150) by selling these vegetables. Nirmala was interested in receiving commercial farming training and kitchen gardening training provided by Taiwan ICDF project due to the market opportunity she saw in selling vegetables. With the knowledge she obtained from the training, Nirmala has been planting vegetables like cauliflower and cabbage in her farm.

Initially, Nirmala had faced challenges to irrigate her farm due to shortage of water in her locality. But with the plastic pond and training provided by the programme, she was able to harvest rainwater to irrigate her farm even during dry season. This has been possible due to the irrigation canal reconstructed using cash for work.

In addition, the project has also facilitated interaction of farmers like Nirmala with the agricultural technician of CARE and its partner on various topics, such as selection of crops variety and methods to cultivate these crops for improving her farm produce. Moreover, she has also been able to interact with other farmers in her village as she has joined a farmer's group called Namuna Farmer Group, which has also helped her save money; she is saving RS. 100 every month through the group.

The project has had significant impact on her livelihood as she tells us that just a year before, she had to purchase vegetable from the market for her household consumption. But today, she has surplus production in her farm which she can sell to earn her livelihood.