



# Evidence of Change

## An Anthology of Success Stories 2016



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION  
NEPAL

A member of



Evidence of Change: An Anthology of Success Stories 2016  
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*Cover Photo: Bhutanese Refugee Camp, Beldangi, Jhapa.*

## Message from the Country Director

Dear readers,

It is my pleasure to share with you the 'Evidence of Change: An Anthology of Success Stories 2016' that encapsulates some of the major positive changes we have brought into the lives of the poor and marginalized people.



We have been documenting successes, good practices, and lessons learnt, and sharing them widely. We have presented the stories of the most marginalized communities like the Musahar, Santhal, people with disabilities and the Bhutanese refugees in this collection.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Nepal has been working with the Mushars - the Tarai Dalit - who are one of the poorest and have long been marginalized. The Santhals are the ethnic people who have been living on the fringes of the society. This booklet also documents how people with disabilities have overcome the social stigma and discrimination and have been able to sustain their families and live a dignified life.

We have been working for the Bhutanese refugees since 1991 with the support of the UNHCR and the WFP. The Bhutanese refugees are one of the most vulnerable people. The 19 stories of change are but just the representative cases from among our rights holders from the eastern part of Nepal.

Besides working on a community empowerment approach through local partners, one of our strengths is to collaborate and coordinate with the government agencies at the local and national levels. This success is the combined result of the cooperation among the communities, supporting partners, government agencies and the implementing partner organizations.

Happy reading !

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Prabin Manandhar'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Prabin Manandhar  
Country Director  
LWF Nepal

## Acronyms

ACT Alliance	Action by Churches Together Alliance
ALWS	Australian Lutheran World Service
BRCF	Bhutanese Refugee Children Forum
CAC	Citizen Awareness Centre
CBDRM	Community-based Disaster Risk Management
CBI	Cash-based Intervention
CBOF	CBO Federation
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CFUG	Community Forestry Users Group
CPWG	Child Protection Working Group
DDC	District Development Committee
DDRC	District Disaster Relief Committee
DMC	Disaster Management Committee
DMP	Disaster Management Plan
DMT	Disaster Management Team
DPNet	Disaster Preparedness Network
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRRP	Disaster Response and Recovery Plan
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
EMP	Environment Management Plan
EWS	Early-warning System
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HH	Household
HMC	Health Management Committee
IGA	Income-generating Activity
KVS	Koshi Victims Society
LCWS	Lutheran Community Welfare Society
LDRMPG	Local Disaster Risk Management Planning Guidelines
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
NPR	Nepali Rupees
PCVA	Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis
PM&E	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PWD	People with Disabilities
SMC	School Management Committee
TF	Task Force

## Glossary

- Bigha** Unit of measurement of land in the Tarai. One bigha is equal to 72,900 square feet.
- Dalit** A person considered as the “lowest caste” in the Hindu caste hierarchy. The Dalits are also often referred to as untouchables.
- DDC** A committee of members elected to serve as the executive body of authority in each of the 75 districts of Nepal. Candidates for election to a DDC represent the Village Development Committees within that district.
- Janajati** Indigenous nationalities of Nepal. As per the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities Act, 2001, the Government of Nepal has recognized 59 indigenous nationalities in Nepal.
- Kattha** Unit of measurement of land in the Tarai. One Kattha equals to 3,625 square feet.
- Musahar** A caste-group within the landless Tarai Dalit community.
- Santhal** A caste group within the poor and marginalized communities mostly in the eastern Tarai of Nepal.
- VDC** A committee of members elected to govern a village development area. Candidates for election to a VDC represent the wards into which a VDC area is divided.

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# The Lutheran World Federation Nepal

Founded in Lund, Sweden in 1947, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. LWF has 145 member churches in 98 countries all over the world, with a total membership of nearly 740 million. The Department for World Service (DWS) has field offices in more than 25 countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. It is the internationally recognized humanitarian and development arm of LWF that works to give assistance to those in need, irrespective of their race, sex, religion, nationality or political conviction. Its Secretariat is in Geneva.

## Nepal Program

LWF has been working in Nepal since 1984. LWF Nepal has intervened with disaster relief and rehabilitation in response to a number of emergencies, and worked with the Bhutanese refugees since 1991. Its development program has evolved from service-oriented sectoral and community development approach towards empowerment and human rights-based approaches, increasingly working with the most disadvantaged groups. LWF has shifted its intervention modalities to work with local partners (CBOs, CBO Federations, NGOs) as well as with government and civil society groups and movements to influence policy and practice at national level.

**Vision** People in Nepal, living in a just society in peace and dignity, united in diversity and empowered to achieve their full potential, claim their universal rights, meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life.

**Mission** Inspired by God's love for humanity, LWF Nepal responds to and challenges the causes and effects of human suffering and poverty.

## Core Values

- Dignity and justice
- Compassion and commitment
- Inclusion and respect for diversity
- Transparency and accountability

## Focus Group

LWF Nepal works with disaster-affected and marginalized and vulnerable people. While working with disaster-affected people, it focuses on communities that are most vulnerable to natural disaster including climate

change effects; and communities and individuals who are victims of natural disaster or forcibly displaced (including refugees, internally displaced, and host communities), especially the most vulnerable. Similarly, it also focuses its interventions on bonded labor and ex-bonded laborers of various types; disadvantaged indigenous and minority groups; Dalits and landless. LWF Nepal accords priority to women, children and people with disabilities.

## Core Commitments

- a) Human rights: Human rights are at the core of all that LWF Nepal stands for, its actions and operations.
- b) Impartiality: LWF Nepal assists disaster-affected people, irrespective of caste and ethnicity, gender, age, religion, race or political conviction. Assistance is provided in response and relative to need, without discrimination or favoritism.
- c) Inclusion and participation: LWF Nepal is committed to be inclusive, and to enable the full and equitable participation of women and men, people with disabilities, indigenous and minority communities and Dalits in all programs and decision-making processes.
- d) Accountability: As guided by the LWF/DWS Accountability Framework, we are committed to maintaining high level of staff competence and professionalism, and continued affirmation and adherence to Core Humanitarian Standard, Sphere as well as being accountable to the populations and communities our programs assist for, maintaining the highest standards.
- e) Gender justice: LWF Nepal includes gender perspectives in all aspects of its work and undertakes specific advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives to change attitudes and practices as well as to institutionalize gender justice.
- f) Climate justice and environmental sustainability: We are committed to incorporating environmental concerns into all development decisions and operations aiming at behavioral change, increased resilience and reduced vulnerability and shall apply the Climate Adaptation Framework Tool across all programs.

## Thematic Areas

Disaster Risk Reduction, Emergency Preparedness and Response  
Sustainable Livelihood  
Community-led Actions for Governance and Justice  
Organizational Effectiveness



## Improved shelter makes Buddhi Maya happier

Buddhi Maya Limbu, 67, is a single woman living at Beldangi Bhutanese refugee camp II. She lost her husband 43 years ago when she was 24. She has been living a lonely life. She never thought to marry again, although there were none to look after her. Previously, she lived in Beldangi camp I. In addition to her loneliness, she also suffered from arthritis and needed care and support from her neighbors during hard times.

Buddhi Maya gets emotional and says, “The neighbors collected money and took me to different hospitals for treatment and now I am fine. Considering my vulnerability, my neighbors approached LWF Nepal for my better settlement in Beldangi camp II.”

LWF Nepal has been constructing a number of semi-permanent shelters at the refugee camp. These shelters are an improvised structure which is stronger, have easier access, are well ventilated, have attached bathrooms and are spacious and protective. These are built at a low cost using available natural resources.

Buddhi Maya has now received an improved shelter with water and solar lamp. It is closer to various service centers like health, and ration distribution and elderly recreational centers. It has eased her daily life at the refugee camp.



*Buddhi Maya at the veranda of her improved shelter at Beldangi.*



*Buddhi Maya sits inside of her improved shelter.*

She is happy to live in the structure which has always been a dream to refugees like her. Buddhi Maya is now happy and excited that she feels that life is getting easier for her and that her future can be easier if she continues to stay in the camp .

She says “Now I have no worries to meet my daily basic needs. It has been easier going to toilet. I received bed set, winter and summer clothes including footwear recently. I am also fortunate to get help from my neighbors who were always supportive to me since long. I am thankful to LWF Nepal for the continuous care and support to me. I am getting old and my eyesight is getting weak. But I still can weave sweaters if I got financial support. I can earn some additional income for my livelihood,” she adds.

## Kitchen garden becomes source of inspiration

Birkha Bahadur Tamang, 64, resident of Beldangi Refuge camp II, is one of the farmers of Reclamation Gardening Program (RGP). 6 years ago, he was in Timai Bhutanese refugee camp. At that time, he had leased a piece of land from a host community member and started vegetable cultivation. In 2010, he shifted to Beldangi camp II, but continued farming vegetables on RGP from 2012.

Before involving himself in the RGP, he used to work as a daily wage earner and buy basic food items as well as vegetables for his family from the income. He got land, source and idea of vegetable cultivation from the RGP implemented by LWF Nepal. He started growing broad leaf mustard, gourds, brinjal, coriander, onion, cauliflower, cabbage and tomato, etc.

Currently, he is cultivating broad leaf mustard, onion, coriander, tomato and cauliflowers. He works every day in his small kitchen garden to produce vegetables. He collects cow dung from the camp periphery and manure provided by RGP and uses them in the kitchen garden. His wife and



*Birkha Bahadur Tamang at his kitchen garden.*



*Vegetables cultivated by Birkha Bahadur Tamang.*

daughter-in-law also assist him in his work. He no longer buys vegetables from the market.

He is one of the active members of community garden. He says, “I always worked in garden and thought about producing more vegetables in a small piece of land and shared my experience to my neighbors and encouraged them for vegetable cultivation. I am getting continuous support like seed/seedling, watering can, irrigation support, tools, manure and insecticides from RGP.”

Besides being self-dependent on vegetables, he also earns some money selling the surplus produce. “Now, I do not need to buy vegetables for my family. Last month, I sold green vegetables such as coriander, gourd and broad leaf mustard worth NPR 1,550 (€ 13.60). Other vegetables like sponge gourd, chilli, tomato, brinjal, cucumber, bitter guard, bottle guard are consumed by my family and also sometimes given to my neighbors,” he says.

He said that it became possible due to the support of LWF Nepal and was thankful to the organization. “It has increased my self-confidence and I can even earn money by selling vegetables. Kitchen gardening program is not only for improvement of nutrition but also for financial status,” he adds.

## Conservation also generates income

A large number of poor and marginalized people of Saptkoshi Municipality-3 Sakhuwani, Saptari, used to face flood, river erosion and inundation of hundreds of hectares of cultivated land in rainy seasons. Annually, the river has been cutting land and moving closer to the communities, thereby creating high risks of displacement.

The community had to live with repeated fear of flood, soil erosion and water logging during rainy season every year. Therefore, LWF Nepal and its local implementing partner Koshi Victim's Society (KVS) jointly implemented Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) project in those communities along with the most vulnerable communities downstream the Triyuga River.

In addition, LWF Nepal has been implementing DRR program since 2011 to mitigate the risks of flood in the district. Community people, members of Disaster Management Committees (DMCS) actively participated in several awareness raising activities, training in natural resource management, DRR, participatory capacity vulnerability assessment, mock drill, and exposure visits among others.



*Conservation area of the Triyuga Riverbed, Fattepur, Saptari district.*



*Shreekant Chaudhari, DMT Secretary.*

Several capacity-building activities have supported them to enhance their knowledge, sensitize them to community-based DRR process and methodologies. Thus, the community people have been united to conserve open grazing land on the banks of the Triyuga River. The project provided some saplings for the area which further encouraged people for conservation.

Over the period, different types of plants have grown in the area and they have been quite supportive to control the water speed, soil erosion and to filter sand of running water and to protect the conserved area and the nearby communities from being inundated. The 2 hectare river bank has protected more than 50 Bigha of fertile land from river cutting, soil erosion and water logging.

Shreekant Chaudhari, Secretary of Sakhuwani Disaster Management Team (DTM), Fattepur, is leading this conservation efforts. He has given his time and money to the conservation. In the spring season, the communities sell the fodder and plants of the conserved area and earn an income for the conservation. They have saved NPR 14,160.00 (€ 124) so far.

## Janaki drives cooperative to a new height

Janaki Chaudhary, a resident of Piprapurwa, Saptari district, is the manager of Pipra Mahila Sanakisan Agriculture Cooperative. The cooperative is situated at Baluwachok, Saptari. The cooperative, registered in 2014, has been able to mobilize more than NPR 1,700,000 (€ 1,491).

Speaking about her and group's phenomenal success, she says, "I am a struggler. Earlier, I was studying Bachelor in Kathmandu. I came back home due to financial crisis. I tried to get a job, but could not as I had no experience. I just tried to work as a volunteer in this cooperative in 2014. When I started, there was just NPR 350,000 (€ 3,070) as a saving. I wanted to increase the deposit. I approached the shareholders. I just divided them into 7 groups and asked them to deposit regularly. Fundraising started."

Later, she became familiar with Koshi Victims Society (KVS) staff. She got an opportunity to participate in cooperative management training. Later, she used the knowledge and skills gained through the training. In coordination with KVS staff, Janaki was successful to mobilize all DMCs, DMT and task force (TF) members making them shareholders. She divided them into 76 groups.



*Janaki Chaudhary (left sitting) with cooperative members.*



*Janaki working at cooperative office.*

Janaki has not only improved the financial health of the cooperative, but also brought forward the women who otherwise would not have left their homes. Those shareholders have enhanced confidence and increased savings. Now the cooperative can disburse loan to the needy and the marginalized people particularly to women.

The shareholders can borrow money from the cooperative according to their needs. They can buy household commodities, pay the fees of their children and treat their family members if they fell sick. They no longer have to rely on the local money lenders who charge them very high interest on loans.

The cooperative has organised the community people in different groups and mobilized for DRR and emergency preparedness and response, she says.

## Community-led DRR saves lives and crops

Jawahar Chaudhary is a 38-year old man who lives at Odraha VDC of Saptari district. Odraha is one of the flood-prone VDCs. Frequent floods in this area damage the standing crops and erode agricultural land, adversely affecting the livelihood of the already poor and marginalized communities. In order to mitigate the impacts of regular flood, the community people have joined hands and formed a Disaster Management Committee (DMC).



*Jawahar Chaudhary participates in a mock drill.*

Jawahar is the chairperson of the DMC, and a member of the cross-border citizen forum. He is also a member of early warning task force team. Jawahar participated in mock drills and simulations with other DMC members. During the training, Jawahar learned how to prepare for flood. Jawahar also saw that the cooperative in his community was becoming strong and because of that he saw that his neighbors had begun diversifying their livelihood.

Before 2015, there was frequent flood at Jawahar's community that destroyed much of the agricultural land the community relied on. The Triyuga River near Jawahar's house would destroy embankments that were used to protect the agricultural land and their houses. This would often destroy up to 30 Bighas of land used for cultivating paddy. The floods occurred often during the harvest time.

But in 2016, things changed because of the training that Jawahar and his neighbors had received. They got sirens to warn the neighbors as soon there was flood in the river. Jawahar and his neighbors heard the siren and came together to repair the embankment by using bamboo and sandbags.

The embankment was saved and so was 20 Bighas of agricultural land and 325 HHs in the area. The community's diversified livelihood also helped them increase their economic resources and allowed them more flexibility when recovering. Their efforts increased their security in the face of floods and helped them to cope with and recover from disasters.

## Bishweshwar flies high through poultry farming

Bishweshwar Rishidev was one of the marginalized, poor and oppressed Musahars of Rangeli-9, Jhungi Tole, Morang district. Now his identity has been changed. He keeps poultry with the support of his family members. His strong will and a small external support of LWF Nepal helped Rishidev transform his life to a micro-entrepreneur. With enhanced capacities and confidence, he is a role model to his villagers.

Bishweshwar has six family members: 3 sons, his wife and his father. He got a small hut given by the government a few years ago. There are 38 families which live in such huts because of extreme poverty. Daily wages in nearby market was the only means of sustenance of their families. His wife used to work as an agriculture labor in surrounding villages. It was very hard for them to find work.

In 2015, Lutheran Community Welfare Society (LCWS), a local partner of LWF Nepal, implemented community empowerment and livelihood programs through transformative empowerment education. It formed community groups for the empowerment education and sensitization on social issues to the community.



*Bishweshwar earns income as well as respect with his poultry.*



*A sight of the poultry at the farm of Bishweshwar Rishidev.*

Based on the demand of the beneficiaries, the organization provided two-day training in poultry farming. The training introduced him to the basics of running a poultry (broiler) farm and poultry management practices, including the construction of a shed.

LWF Nepal provided NPR 25,000 (€ 220) as seed money and connected him with the wholesaler of poultry products and informed him on the grants available under government schemes for the people like him. He has sold four lots of chicken from his farm and wants to expand his business. He has earned NPR 140,000 (€ 1228) so far from the farm. Now he has leased a piece of land to expand the farm.

“I am happy with the returns and confident to invest more money to expand this enterprise,” says Rishidev. Now, his wife is an active member of Sabarimai Women Savings and Credit Group in the community. They have savings in the groups and are involved in different social and community works. Children go to a nearby school. “We no longer have to rely on local money lenders for our household expenses,” he adds.

He considers poultry farming as one of the most convenient businesses. “Being around my household, I can take care of my son as well as the birds and earn a decent income. I used to make NPR 200-300 (€ 1.75-2.65) by the labor work. Now I earn more than NPR 1,000 (€ 8.77) a day from this business. I can easily afford my child’s education and feed my family,” he shares.

## Musahars access health facilities at their community

The Musahars, being one of the poorest and marginalized tribal groups, suffer from many health problems due to poor hygiene and sanitation. Protecting and improving health, especially in poor communities, requires combined efforts of different actors including the communities, stakeholders, and development agencies.

In order to support the marginalized Dalit community, LWF Nepal has been implementing 'Strengthening People's Action for Food and Livelihood Security' with funding support from Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), and LCWS as a local implementing partner in four VDCs of Morang district.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) promotion is a major component of the project aimed at improving health service in the Musahar community. It has a functional coordination and collaboration with district level stakeholders including health institutions. In order to make the initiative more effective, an interaction among community people and district level



*Stakeholder representatives interacting with Health-in-Charge.*

stakeholders was organized at Jhungi Tole, on Musahar communities' access to health services.

“There isn't a single household in my community where basic health messages have not been shared,” says Nirmal, a social mobilizer of the project. In community-based programs, workers often volunteer to interact with people to protect their health and nutrition and to enhance their access to treatment.

The Musahars got an opportunity to interact with the duty-bearers and share their problems. During the discussion, they agreed to establish a health post at the community to ensure the Musahars' access to health services. The event also became a platform for raising awareness among the people for behavior change and to abandon harmful traditional practices like witch accusation.

“The community mobilizers have paved the way for us,” says Executive Officer, Ganesh Bahadur Karki of Rangeli Municipality, Morang. Now, a health post is operational in a room of nearby Ram Janaki Primary School and providing primary health services to the community people. An increasing number of people are visiting the health post, according to the health post in-charge.

As the number of people visiting the health post for regular check up has gone up, the cases of illness have gone down in the community.

## Manikchand defies disability, becomes an entrepreneur

Manikchand Rishidev, who lives in a small village of Morang district, is a 35-year-old person with a physical disability. He uses wheelchair while moving around. He has a 7-member family: father, mother, wife and 2 sons and one daughter. He was born with with a disability.

He belongs to a very poor family. He was grown up in isolation, neglect and stigmatized by the family and society for being a person with disability. He never went to school because of poverty and disability. Having an interest in maintenance and repairment of bicycle and motor-cycle since childhood, he got a chance to join a cycle repairing shop nearby a market place and learnt the skills of maintenance and repairment. He also acquired vocational skills.

In-between, he got married with a girl from the community and also earned respect from the community people. His wife and family members gave him proper care and support. However, he was totally dependent on the income of his wife from her daily wages. His wife approached a group formed by the LCWS with the support from LWF Nepal funded by the ELCA, for 'Strengthening People's Action for Food and Livelihood Security' project.



*Manikchand repairs a bicycle.*



*Manikchand Rishidev at his bicycle repairing shop.*

She showed her interest to receive business start-up support from the project to involve her husband to establish a bicycle repairing shop nearby the market. The family got NPR 20,000 (€175) from the project and started a business with some contribution from his father. He has used that money to buy more tools and machines, few spare parts of bicycle and has erected a tin-roofed shed nearby the market to run their business.

Now, Manikchand earns NPR 5,000 (€ 44) net per month from bicycle repairing. He has no difficulties in working for whole day and even till late evening, he says. He has planned to expand his business, engage his wife to help him, and to own a well-managed workshop in the marketplace for more income. He also wants to save some money for his future and construct a house for his family and live a happy life. Now, he is happy and feels proud that he is not a burden to his parents and has been able to earn respect from the society.

## Lukhi Murmu's dream of a house comes true

Lukhi Murmu, 38, and her husband Bhagat Murmu, 47, once homeless and poor, had hardly thought that they could have a home and become self-reliant to live a dignified life. Their dreams came true and are now happily living in their own house with 3 sons.

Bhagat Murmu was born in a Santhal family. Santhals are also called Satars. The Santhals are one of the most marginalized and backward ethnic minorities found in Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal. They have been residing at Sharnamati VDC-9, Madargachh village, Jhapa district since 25 years.

At the early age, he suffered physical and mental torture from his step mother. He went to many places in Nepal in search of work. He also went to Silong, India to work in a coal mine. He worked there for 2 years. Upon returning from India, Bhagat met Lukhi and got married. But they were desperate to own a house as he was living in his parents-in-law's house.

The couple worked as a daily wage labor in the farms of local landlords where they received minimal wage and sometimes they would end up with only little food instead of money. They were entirely dependent on landlords in times of needs. The landlords used to charge higher interest rate and they also had to work hard to repay the loan.

LWF Nepal in 2011 initiated the concept of model village through community empowerment and formed 3 groups. Bhagat's wife Lukhi Murmu became a member of Nawabaha Women's Group and started saving



*Lukhi Murmu in her house.*



*Lukhi cooks meal using biogas.*

NPR 25 (€ .22) per month. One of her friends encouraged her and she took a NPR 3,000 (€ 26) loan from the group and bought a calf.

After a year, she sold the calf for NPR 17,000 (€ 150) and bought a pair of bull. She worked on 30 Kattha land as a sharecropper. But unfortunately lightning killed one of the bulls and they were in trouble. They sold the dead bull to a local butcher for NPR 15,000 (€ 132) and took some loan from the group and bought a bull.

Their sharecropping was good. They bought 4 Kattha of land for NPR 45,000 (€ 395) from the earning of sharecropping and constructed a small hut. The project then supported them for a latrine construction. After the project was handed over to Social Network for Justice and Development (SNJD) in 2014, they were supported for piggery. Bhagat started working at a local furniture industry.

Lukhi borrowed NPR 30,000 (€ 27) from the group to start furniture making. She also participated in Empowerment Education Class organized by SNJD where she understood about her rights and also learned to read and write. She has done vital registration and acquired citizenship. LWF and SNJD supported them to install a biogas plant.

Lukhi saves NPR 100 (€ 0.88) a month in her group and NPR 1,000 (€ 9) a month in another cooperative. Lukhi and Bhagat say, “We had never dreamt of having our own house, an enterprise and a dignified life. It became possible by working in a group and support from LWF. We are always thankful to them for supporting us.”

## Kalu gets a new lease of life

Milan Village is one of the remote and backward areas of south eastern part of Kumarkhod VDC-4, Jhapa district. It is a small island. The entire village has 67 HHs, 65 belonging to the Santhals and 2 Limbu families.

Kalu Limbu, 32, is the eldest among siblings. He has 1 brother, 1 sister and parents Dil Bahadur and Man Kumari Limbu. By birth Kalu couldn't speak and walk properly and was bound to remain isolated and ignored at his own home. He left school while he was studying in grade 7. Besides receiving basic education from school, Kalu once got an opportunity to learn skills development training in stool (furniture for sitting) making from an organization working for people with disabilities.



*Kalu Limbu with his finished Muda at his home.*

From the very moment Kalu showed that he had talent for crafting bamboo and also stood first among the contestants during the final evaluation. The reward increased confidence and willingness of Kalu to do something. However, because of inability to invest in the enterprise, he couldn't materialize his dream job and remained idle and wandered around the village.

After some time, Kalu's mother became a member of a group formed by SNJD, an implementing partner of LWF Nepal in Jhapa district. Kalu's mother Man Kumari knew about a development program searching for people with disabilities interested in becoming small entrepreneurs. Man Kumari informed Kalu. He was selected and got NPR 7,000 (€ 62) to start stool making. Now he earns NPR 35,000 (€ 307) net profit annually.

Many people now know Kalu in the village and some come to his house to buy the products. Kalu also takes his product to the nearby local market during weekly fair. Kalu deposits all his earning and have recently purchased a calf worth NPR 4,000 (€ 35) from the savings.

After becoming self-reliant and recognized, Kalu got married with Krishna Maya Magar, a person with disability from Mahavara VDC. SNJD supported her to bring a water buffalo with her at Kalu's house. They have set an example in the society. Kalu feels extremely happy when many people come and inquire about his business and purchase his products.

Kalu's mother becomes emotional when talked about him. She says "I am really happy about Kalu. He has found a very suitable profession in his life. I used to wonder what would happen to Kalu after my death, but now I am much assured that he can live a dignified and happy life without my support."

## Solar panels aid in the study of Santhal children

The Santhals, who are also called as Satars, are one of the most marginalized ethnic minorities found in Jhapa and Morang districts. They are mostly dependent on agriculture labor and sometimes work as seasonal labors for their living. Having a very low literacy rate, most of the Santhals are quiet, introvert and prefer to live a lonely life, following their own primitive traditions and culture.

In a tiny village of Madargachh of Sarnamati VDC-8 of Jhapa, Janmaghutu, Upalwaha and Bansbari are 3 small Santhal communities having 57 HHs.



*One of the Santhal HHs at Sharnamati VDC with a solar panel.*

Except for 2-3 HHs, others don't have access to electricity. Some Santhal children have started to go to school. However, due to poor economic condition and their inability to afford electricity at their homes, the children were and some are still bound to spend most of their evening either playing or sleeping early instead of reading at home.

SNJD, a local implementing partner of LWF Nepal, initiated various programs like awareness raising, and income generation with an objective of introducing positive changes in their lives. In this regard, 8 extremely vulnerable HHs having school-going children were supported with solar panels and light sets.

Things gradually started changing with an all-time availability of light. Women say that they now don't have to hurry for cooking dinner whereas children spend most of their evening time in their studies. In some homes more than 10-15 children come for combined study from nearby houses which don't have electricity. This has also contributed to improve unity and relationship among the Santhal families and many of the parents are happy to see their children spending their time on reading, which they had dreamed for.

With the installation of solar panels for lighting, the performance of children in school having solar lights at their homes, has improved.

## Panchami becomes independent despite disability

In her early teens, Panchami Rajbanshi of Mahavara VDC-6, Jhapa, suffered a massive stroke due to an infectious disease, bringing tears and sorrow in her beautiful life. She could never play and jump around the same way she used to. Instead, a crutch became her friend and a mind full of thoughts and confusions troubled her all the time.

Panchami is one of the 6 siblings: 4 brothers and 3 sisters. Being a 9-member family, it was never easy to get food and care from her parents who worked as a wage labor. Despite all the hardships and bitterness of life, Panchami managed to study up to grade 8 in a public school at Mahavara.

She decided to move ahead and joined one of the tailoring centres at Kunjibari. She spent NPR 300 (€ 3) per month and learned a 6-month basic course on tailoring. After completing the training, she was keen to own her own sewing centre. Her father sold one of the cows and purchased



*Panchami Rajbanshi at her sewing center.*

a small sewing machine for her. Her small sewing machine and lack of other tools couldn't make her business run in profit.

In the meantime, a man came in her life who promised to remain together forever and soon married her without parents' consent. Panchami was so overwhelmed to have a man despite her disability that she never thought of letting her parents know about her affairs. As soon as Panchami went to his house, she was dismayed to see that he had a wife and children. She immediately escaped and came back with disappointment and frustration.

In August 2014 SNJD, a local implementing partner of LWF Nepal, knew about her situation and involved her in one of the groups of an ongoing program called Nepal Development Program. She was supported with 1 interlock machine and knowledge about business promotion which made her easier to run the business.

Soon Panchami started to work as a professional tailor. Now she stitches at least 35-40 set of ladies and gents wears and on average earns NPR 8,000 (€ 70) per month. She has also begun saving part of her income and has been able to deposit NPR 9,213 (€ 81) in one of the cooperatives. During the period, she was able to repay a loan of NPR 10,000 (€ 88).

She has already paid 75% of the loan taken for purchasing a cow. Panchami says, "It doesn't matter who and what you are, but it is all about self-belief and hard work which can bring happiness in your life. I think that I can manage my life now with confidence and ease and nobody can steal my skills of tailoring".

## Santhal community claim public resources

Jaliya Village is located at the basin of Kocheni River at Babiyabirta VDC-3 of Morang district. Jharna Tole is a settlement of 19 Santhal families. All of them are poor and landless and are dependent on daily labor for their living.

Every year the Kocheni River inundates their settlement and damages their shelters, assets, crops and livestock. With very few maintenance and repair works, the river has gradually been posing threat to the community during the rainy season.

In 2014, LCWS started to work with the community and supported to form a group. Gradually the group members started to become organized and aware of the importance of saving and credit practices and began to deposit



*Spur construction at the Kocheni River.*

some amount of earnings in their group accounts. A participatory capacity vulnerability assessment (PCVA) was done where people identified the vulnerability and capacity status. They identified flood and river erosion as highly affecting disaster in their village. They formed Disaster Management Team and started to seek funding and other support to save their village.

They also established a grain bank in their community where all 19 members deposit and withdraw grains. They have also developed an operation guidelines of grain bank with the support of LCWS. The members of the group also initiated Transformation Education Program (TEP) in their community where they learned basic literacy and discussed on the other emerging issues and problems of the village. LCWS also supported the HHs with kitchen gardening and provided basic orientation and seeds to them. Now they produce fresh vegetables.

Later, they were able to get funding from VDC and LCWS to construct spur on the bank of the river. LCWS provided NPR 58,000 (€ 509), VDC NPR 25,000 (€ 220) and the community made a contribution worth NPR 42,000 (€ 369) to construct the spur on the bank of the Kocheni River. The river no longer cuts the land and inundates the settlement. Members of DMT regularly hold their monthly meetings and save money.

A task force has been formed at the DMTs and they have basic materials like spade, shovel, ropes, buckets and first aid kits to use during emergencies. Hanji Hasda, President of Jharna Tole DMT, says, “The people are now much confident and positive to work jointly for the development of the community. LCWS and LWF have opened our eyes and enhanced our capacity through various supports”.

## Disability doesn't deter Deepak to be an entrepreneur

Sheela and her husband Deepak are gradually improving their economic condition through hard work and positive thinking. They are now much motivated and optimistic to be a small entrepreneur within sometime after receiving support from SNJD.

Deepak Rajbanshi, a person with disability, had a very tough time when he lost his right hand while working in a thresher in 2008. Despite losing his hand, Deepak never lost his courage. His strength and hope became much stronger after Sheela married him in 2009.

Following a short happy married life, there was another disaster in Deepak's life. He lost his entire property, and 2 Bighas land to a massive flood in Mai River. The river displaced 84 HHs of the village and caused a great loss of their property.



*Deepak Rajbanshi repairing his rice mill.*



*Sheela Rajbanshi working in her Vegetable farm.*

Following the tragedy, Sheela and Deepak moved to the basin of Kamala Banyani River, 500 meters away from their previous settlement. A landlord provided them 1.5 Kattha land to stay in and work together. They both used to work as wage labors to earn their living. They soon started to produce vegetables in small scale and used to sell the surplus in the nearby market.

In 2014, SNJD conducted a well-being ranking from where they selected a total of 35 HHs and organized them into Titrigachhi Women's Group. Sheela became a member and received 2-day commercial vegetable farming training along with other 22 members. They also got seeds of cauliflower, cabbage, tomato and cucumber. They produce vegetables in their 1 Kattha land and sell the surplus. So far they have earned NPR 31,200 (€ 274).

Now Sheela and her husband are saving their incomes to set up an electric rice mill. For this they have already invested NPR 15,000 (€ 132) and have received authorization letter from the electricity department. Sheela says, "My husband has skills in operating the mill and I will continue my vegetable farming. We can help each other so that we can provide better education to our children".

## Grocery generates hope and income for Guni

Guni Marandi, a 24-year-old Santhal girl of Laxmipur, Babiyabirta-3, Morang, suffered from polio in her early childhood and became disabled. Poor education, lack of awareness of her parents and uneasier access to polio vaccination made her disabled in her teens. She was an average student in her school but passed the school leaving certificate examinations thanks to her hard work.

After completing school education, she became a victim of poverty due to the death of her father and her physical disability made her unable to move out of village for higher studies. As Guni turned 18, villagers disappointed her telling that she would not get a good match. They harassed her saying that she had to remain single throughout her life. Despite such harassment, Guni continued to better her career.



*Guni Marandi at her small shop.*



*Guni stands in front of her house.*

In the meantime LCWS included her in one of the groups it had formed in the village. She showed interest to make her living through a small retail shop at her village. LCWS provided her seed money to start her business. Now Guni runs a small retail shop at her village. Social animateurs visit her shop and inquire about the challenges and progress every month. They have taught her simple calculations.

When asked about her daily net income, she says, “In my calculation, I am earning a net profit of NPR 150 (€ 1.32) every day. This is the beginning and my transaction is also not so high. I will slowly increase my savings and invest more in my shop. I am confident that my shop will provide me food, cloth and shelter, if it runs the same way.”

## Ginger framing spices up poor people's lives

Hokalbari Jhoda, a remote and backward village in southeastern part of Mahavara VDC-5, in Jhapa district, is a small island between Kankai and Kamala Baniyani rivers. The village has 75 HHs with majority of Santhal people. Almost all of them are landless, poor and oppressed who depended on farm-based daily wage labor for their living.

A power mapping process conducted in 2014 identified that the cluster was one of the most flood-prone communities. And the people were vulnerable. As a preliminary intervention, the people were first organized into a women's group (Jhoda Women's Group) with 33 poor HHs (23 Santhal and 10 indigenous) as members. Transformation Education Programme (TEP) was immediately started to build awareness among the members about their rights and other legal provisions of state.

TEP classes also improved their basic literacy and gradually the number of vital registration increased among the members. After a year, the group started framing ginger on river bed.



*Women farmers of Hokalbari Jhoda observe their ginger farm.*



*A woman sits near the ring for toilet construction.*

Based on their interest and enthusiasm, NPR 154,948 (€ 1,360) along with irrigation and technical support was provided to 10 members after which they started ginger in 20 Katthas and river bed farming in 100 Katthas. They produced 6,643 kg ginger and 25,016 kg other vegetables from river bed farming in a year. They earned a net profit of NPR 160,800 (€ 1,410) and have saved NPR 52,000 (€ 456) and 1,143 kg ginger for plantation next season.

These initiatives not only provided livelihood and enhanced their economic status, but also motivated them to expand their farming. Thanks to the good income, 9 HHs have constructed toilets. Karmi Hemram leased 2 Bighas of land for NPR 175,000 (€ 1,535) by the income from ginger, river bed farming, NPR 20,000 (€ 176) borrowed from the group and some amount by selling his bulls.

They have now planned for river bed farming in the coming Autumn season. Goma Besra, chairperson of the group, says, “Ginger and river bed farming has brought our dignity back as we don’t have to work in others ginger field any more. We have become owner. And it would have not been possible without the support from LWF Nepal and SNJD.”

## Santhals lead infrastructure development

Gada Tole is located at Hoklabari-7 in Morang district. The Tole has Chisang River flowing from the eastern part which brings unexpected risk of floods during the monsoon. In Gada Tole, there are 25 Santhal families which are economically poor and dependent upon daily wage labor for their livelihood.

In 2014, LCWS formed a group named 'Mali Baha' at Gada Tole with the participation of 18 HHHs. Later, a DMT was also formed with 5 different task forces known as Gada Tole DMC. PCVA exercise was done immediately after the formation of DMC which identified some serious needs like lack of pure drinking water, road, toilet, etc.

Group members regularly save and borrow as needed. They meet monthly and discuss on social and economic issues of the community. They seek support of LCWS for major problems if they are beyond their capacity. They have been informed on and oriented to the local development planning process which has helped them to access local resources.



*A section of a gravelled road at Gada Tole, Hoklabari.*



*DMT member of Gada Tole Budharai Marandi (right) with his neighbour at Gada Tole.*

On initiative of Gada Tole DMC members, they submitted a plan to VDC in December 2015, seeking support for road graveling at their community. Many of the community people actively participated in the planning process. The VDC provided NPR 200,000 (€ 1,755) for graveling the 207 meter of road in Gada Tole.

Now it has been easier for the people of Gada Tole to travel especially during monsoon. They can transport their goods easily now. Earlier, neither ambulance nor other public vehicles could enter the village due to bad road. Thanks to growing awareness among the people, they are now more interested to be involved in the planning process at the VDC. Many have realised that their problems remain unheard if they keep silent. Now Gada Tole has been an example to nearby communities particularly for resource tapping.

## Roshni ultimately gets rights and light

Roshni Chettri was born in 1999 at Manipur of India. She spent her childhood with her mother at Manipur till her mother had a second marriage. She had lost her father in her early childhood.

Due to poverty and the entry of new person in her family, she was unaccompanied and was compelled to migrate and live with some unknown person in New Delhi, India, at the age of 8. Since she did not get opportunity to study in New Delhi, she came to Nepal and started living with her aunt as a maid.

Though she was a maid, she got an opportunity to study in a public school. She was happy in the beginning but gradually the family members started torturing her. She was forced to do all the household chores, but not allowed to communicate with her family. Later, she had to drop out.

Once, she went to meet her family and when she returned she was insulted and removed from the house. She also stayed for a year with her aunt but again faced similar problems. She was counted as a drop-out student in her school. She could not tell her family that she had dropped out of school



*Roshani Chettri at her hostel study room.*



*Roshani Chettri at her hostel garden.*

as her aunt would threaten her to kick off the house. She was facing very tough time and was emotionally broken.

Meanwhile, LWF Nepal in coordination with UNHCR, organized a life skill training to the members of Municipal Child Club and oriented them to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and transferred different other skills to the children. The members of municipal child network figured out the problem of Roshni while sharing the experiences of training with members. Then Roshni started seeking help from LWF to break free from the situation.

Meanwhile, her aunt removed her from her home and she became homeless. LWF Nepal and Damak municipal child protection committee wanted to support Roshni and decided to keep her in a hostel of Damak Municipality where she can get all the necessary facilities to continue her study and spend a dignified life.

Now, she is staying at the hostel and studying in grade 9. She is happy with the opportunity she has got and thanks LWF Nepal and municipal child protection committee for the support and care she has been receiving. She dreams of becoming independent in future and suggests other children to raise voice against child labor.

## Tailoring makes Sita a breadwinner

Sita Bhujel, 37, resident of Sanischare Bhutanese Refugee Camp, is living with her 3 daughters and 1 son. She came to know that she was married with a Bhutanese Refugee only after 5 years of marriage. Her parental home was in Parbat district of Nepal. They have no other source of income. Donor agency provided them food, education and health care.

But, it was not enough to fulfill the additional essential needs of the family. She found herself in trouble when her husband married another woman and started living separate (not legally) from Sita and her children. She had started to work in bricks factory as day labor.

It went well until she fell ill and became weak from hard work. She could not work for a long time because of weakness. Having little education and no skill in hand she could not get any other work. She faced a problem in fulfilling family needs. In the mean time, she came to know that, LWF



*Sita Bhujel in her tailoring shop.*



*Sita Bhujel with her daughter in kitchen garden.*

Nepal had been organizing free vocational training in her camp through Bhutanse Refugee Women Forum (BRWF). Without any delay, she filled the application for free training in tailoring. She was selected for the training. Although she had got an entry level tailoring course, with hard work and dedication, she was able to stitch items that were taught in the training. She was regular to the 3-month training.

After the completion of the training, LWF Nepal and UNHCR provided her a tool kit. She has setup a tailoring shop at her home, which is near the main road. She started to earn NPR 4,000-4,500 (€ 35-40) per month. She is happy with this income. She is now able to cover essential needs of her family with the income.

She says, “This occupation has helped me a lot and the training has brought confidence in me.” She is interested to get an advanced level of training. “If I got advanced level of training in tailoring, I will be able to be a self-reliant person,” she adds. She thanked LWF Nepal and UNHCR for support to her.

# Supporting Partners



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