

OUR SUCCESS STORIES



असल छिमेकी नेपाल
Asal Chhimekee Nepal

THE SOCIAL INITIATIVE OF POKHARA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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Asal Chhimekee Nepal (ACN)

Simpani, Pokhara, Nepal

Post Box no : 263

Phone no : 977 61 522516, 534159

Website : www.acn.org.np

Email : info@acn.org.np

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Dear Reader,

The Maoist led Civil War was at its peak in A.D. 2000, which caused social conflict and insecurity, unstable politics and a fragile economy. The rate of daily bloodshed throughout the country was so high that the people dreaded coming out of their own houses as there was no certainty of returning. People feared being killed—by the Government's army or by the Maoist's—but this had become the daily lifestyle for the citizens. The decade-long insurrection for destitute and underprivileged people's rights and welfare resulted in the deaths of over 17,000 including civilians, insurgents, as well as army and police personnel.



A community of a few churches in Pokhara (Pokhara Christian Community) came forward with the desire to serve people during this chaos, and to develop social awareness as well as help bring financial and communal transformation. Thus, Asal Chhimekee Nepal (ACN) was established on 17 January 2003 and it started growing thereafter.

For sustainable transformation, the intentions and approaches behind the service are as important as the act itself. While planning a program, it is necessary to consider the involvement of the target group and to empower them, otherwise, the effort put into transforming the community becomes short-lived. Reflecting on this principle, we have always attempted to bring sustainable change. The collective positive-transformation stories from the beneficiaries signify our success to some level. We are proud and overjoyed to listen to such accounts. The story of a positive change in a person is also part of ours since we worked together in the process. They are the rewards for our selfless service of love. It is not to say that we have not fallen short in our perceptual approaches or in our behavior, but these stories motivate the organization to improve and move forward in the days to come.

The tales of our lives are not merely stories but principles of life. A person's story of changes in life can be exemplary principles for another. Therefore, I hope that these stories become sources of inspiration to the readers more than they are the results of ACN's work. I am grateful toward everyone—mentioned or unmentioned in this book—who inspired us and helped us learn and grow. Last but not least, I am thankful toward everyone who helped bring together this book of stories of change.

Raju Adhikari
Executive Director
Asal Chhimekee Nepal

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A ALWAYS BE PREPARED

Sonu Thapa Magar (33) lives on the banks of the Seti River in Hemja, Pokhara. Her community makes a living by selling sand taken from the river bed. Sonu's husband works abroad. She sells sand as well as she cares for her young children.

ACN organized a birth preparedness program in her neighborhood's Self-Help Group (SHG). At that time she was pregnant again so she was very much attentive during the program with the hope that she could avoid problems this time. The program covered a wide range of subjects including getting registration for national health insurance, maintaining sanitation and hygiene, provision of nutrition, and birth preparedness.

Sonu told us, "The program was very useful to me, not only did I gain extra knowledge on how to take care of my baby and myself, so that we stayed healthy, but it also taught me the importance of saving money so that when time came for the delivery, there would be extra money available for me and my children if it was needed. Unfortunately, I had complications during my delivery and ended up having an operation. The expenses increased because I needed surgery, but as I had saved some money, I was able to have the operation immediately and could cover all the medical expenses straight away."

Sonu expressed her gratitude to ACN, "I was very happy, I had attended this program because this time my baby and I were healthier than on previous time and because I had money to pay for hospital costs, I didn't have to the same problems I had with earlier births. "



ENCOURAGED AND CONFIDENT JHAKKU

Jhakku has three children and she is keen to make sure they received a good education. However, her husband's salary at the local rice mill was not enough to cover the cost of school fees, uniforms, stationery for the children and other need. They live in a Baraulitar village of Kawasoti-17, Nawalparasi and so Jhakku decided she would like to add to the family income by buying a cow and selling milk.

She asked her neighbors and friends for a loan to buy a cow. They were skeptical of her ability to repay them, as they knew she had no experience with livestock, so they didn't lend to her. Jhakku remained determined to do something more for her children so she sold the one and only gold jewelry she had and she bought a cow. However, it did not go as planned; the cow produced much less milk than she had hoped it would and she earned very little.



ACN organized training on animal husbandry in her Self- Help Group (SHG), in which she participated. The training taught her how to increase milk production and how to manage cowshed effectively. Jhakku was very encouraged by her new learning and applied for a revolving fund loan from ACN to buy three more cows.

Jhakku said, "I took everything I learnt in the training and put it into practice. Now my cows are producing 30-60 liters of milk each day and as the production increased so did my income. Now I am making a profit of about RS 30,000 (\$250) every month."

Now, the savings she brings to her SHG every month is from her own income; she also provides loans to people in need. Her reputation in the community has grown, as people can see how she has made a success of her business. With her earnings she has not only managed to provide money for her children to go to school and other need of the family, but she has also bought a motorbike for her husband - which made him very happy. She described the changes to her life, "The training from ACN and the support from the SHG have increased my confidence and encouraged me to grow my business. I would like to thank my SHG and ACN for supporting and encouraging me to do all this."

N O MORE STRUGGLE FOR WATER



The well in Setapani had nearly dried up. Each summer the situation got worse and until only four buckets a day were available. Twelve households in the village could not afford to install a water tap and so were in competition for this small amount of water. Those who arrived late would have to walk a long way to reach the next nearest well. Collecting water is seen as woman's work in Nepal and so one woman from each household had the job of fetching water each day. It used to take hours to supply enough water for each household's needs and created tensions and bad feelings among the women.

They heard that ACN had helped to form a Self Help Group (SHG) in the neighboring village and supported women to build a well that was capable of providing enough water for everyone who needed it. The women in Setapani wanted this for themselves. So with help from ACN they formed a SHG of their own called Unnati (Prosperity) and asked ACN to help them build a well.

Gita Pulami, a group member recalls how difficult it was at the beginning to dig the well. She noted, "ACN told us they would help us with materials for the well, but we would need to dig the hole ourselves. Most of the men in our village work abroad or have to go for work. So we could not find men to dig the well. We were struggling a lot to get enough water for our families so we decided to dig the well ourselves. Finally, we were able to get water after digging a 40 feet deep well!"

Tika Thanet, another group member explained the difference the well had made, "The water from the well tastes sweet and we no longer need to worry about who reaches the well first. We also don't need to spend hours each day fetching water; we are very happy."

Deukumari Mahato, the group facilitator told us, "We started the SHG so that we could build a well; however, as ACN supported us to build the well we realized that Self Help Groups bring many benefits. We used to think that women can only look after the house and children, but now we have learned how to work together, we have begun to develop our community in many different ways and make it a better place."

A CLUB MEMBER NOW A FACILITATOR



Sunita Chhetri (19) lives with her parents who work as daily wage laborers. They moved to Masinabagar, Pokhara (a slum area) when Sunita was 13, hoping to find enough work to provide for their family. Sunita was an outgoing friendly girl and soon made friends. They introduced her to a children's club called Namuna, which ACN had formed in the area where they lived.

Sunita flourished at the club, she loved taking part in the activities, particularly the singing and dancing, but she was also always ready to help other people. After seeing her involvement in the club, the club facilitator gave her the chance to participate in a street drama. She acted very well in the drama and also helped to organize that event. Other people at the club and from her community began to appreciate her and this motivated her further and eventually, she became a chairperson of the club. She assisted in running children's club as a chairperson of the group for two years.

While she was the group Chairperson, she used to say that later she would want to work as a facilitator of the club among children and help them become aware of children issues and rights. She enjoyed working among children so much that she kept coming to the club and encouraging younger children even after she graduated from the club at 18 years old. By seeing her interest and ability, ACN selected her as a club facilitator of the same club when she applied for the post.

It has been a year now, she is working as ACN's Children's Club facilitator. Sunita is now a champion for the younger children; teaching them about child protection issues, trafficking, and child rights and encouraging them to stay safe and be careful. She has become a role model in her community and has made her mother proud.

VICTORY OVER ADDICTION

Babita was born in Dharan in Eastern Nepal. Her father worked for the British Army and was away from home for long periods of time, so she was brought up by her mother. Her father sent money back for the family and they always had everything they wanted. At first, this led to a happy childhood and she also studied hard, but later things began to crumble.

Babita writes, "When I was in Grade 9, I started smoking and this soon led to me taking soft drugs. I couldn't keep my habit hidden for long and eventually, I was expelled from school. I attended a number of other schools but I could not give up my addiction and eventually the drugs I took grew stronger and I began injecting myself. My mother pleaded with me to stop and I tried to stop on a few occasions, but she couldn't bear seeing my withdrawal symptoms so in the end she began to buy drugs for me so that I would not have to suffer. I became lost in my addiction and for nearly five years I could see no way out, even though my brother found two rehabilitation centres for me.



However, my brother did not give up looking for someone to help me and eventually he took me to Nawajeewan Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre run by ACN. This centre was different from the other places I had been. Although there was no chance of taking drugs and even smoking was prohibited, I did not feel as if I was in jail, instead it felt as if I were in a caring family. This loving environment helped me to become drug free. It was possible due to individual and group counselling sessions and various classes; I have learnt how to distinguish between right and wrong. I understand now where I went wrong and they have shown me how to put these things right; how to deal with society and my family and how to stay away from bad company.

I have now been drug free for five years. I am very happily married and with a young son and I have good relationships with my whole family. Today, I can say proudly that I have overcome my addiction. I would like others to learn from my mistakes and not to repeat it. I urge anyone reading this story to stay away from bad company and to listen to their elders. Lastly, I would like to say thank you to Nawajeewan for providing me with a new life."

RUNNING OWN BUSINESS



Many Nepalese believe that if they could get a job abroad, it would be easier to support their family, so they leave their husbands or wives and children and set out for a new life. Sita Gaire from Nayagau, Pokhara who certainly believed this and at the age of 24, she went to Oman to work as a housemaid, leaving her three year old daughter at home in Nepal.

After four years of hard work with poor pay, she questioned why she was there. She was not providing enough money for her family and she was alone. She decided to return to Nepal. She undertook a tailoring course and soon began working for someone in a shop. It was better than before, she was now able to be with her family, but her wages were still low (NRs 4,000-5,000) and not enough, she was continuously trying to find a new way to improve her situation.

One day, someone who knew her circumstances, told her about ACN's Self-Help Group (SHG), which was formed in her neighborhood to support groups of women like her who wanted more from life. Sita joined a SHG near to her house. She gained inspiration from the other women's stories and started to feel more confident and empowered to take action. She believed she had found the solution she was looking for.

With ACN's encouragement and the support of the SHG, she decided to open a tailoring shop. ACN provided her with a loan from their revolving fund (NRs 50,000) and she added to this some money from the SHG savings scheme (NRs 20,000) and set up her own tailoring shop. The shop was a great success. Her income increased threefold and now she has not only paid back her loan, but is managing to fully support her family with the income from the shop. The quality of her work is much appreciated and her orders have now increased so much that she has to employ two assistants.

From a lonely existence in Oman where she struggled and failed, she has now become a successful business woman with big plans for the future. She is very grateful for the support and guidance she received from ACN, which has led her to this amazing turnaround.

S TRUGGLE FREE KALPANA



Many women in Nepal are unable to read and write, particularly in rural areas. This puts them at a great disadvantage and often prevents them from getting involved in community life. One such woman was Kalpana Thanet, who lives with her husband and three children in Kawasoti, Nawalparasi district.

She recalls "Shopkeepers used to cheat me, as I couldn't calculate amounts in the market. I also found it difficult to find places when I was out as I couldn't read the signposts and sometimes I got lost". This problem led her to join the literacy class run by ACN in here village and she was able to read and write. But this was only the beginning; ACN then developed the literacy class into a Self Help Group (SHG) for the women so that they could make the most of the women's new found confidence.

Before joining the SHG Kalpana's family struggled for living. They had a small piece of land but it didn't produce enough food to feed, educate and keep their three children healthy. Her husband, a carpenter, travelled far to find work, but it was still not enough to meet their needs. Often, they had to take loans in high interest rate to manage expenses. In the past, as she had no cash income source, she was having difficulties saving money in the SHG.

ACN then conducted various livelihoods and empowerment training for the group. Training challenged Kalpana to act, "After participating in many training, I felt, I should do something to further my financial independence" she told us, "So I registered a buffalo farm and started buffalo farming." Kalpana was given a loan from ACN's revolving fund to buy two buffaloes. Things went well; she is selling milk and her crop farm production has increased as she is utilizing buffalo manure fertilizer. Before long, she was able to purchase more buffaloes. She explained, "I now have my own farm with 12 buffaloes and I am earning well. My husband works with me at home now and we are able to meet the needs of our whole family."

Kalpana marks her success was due to the opportunities given by ACN, "They taught me to read and write and they encouraged me to become independent." she told us and for this she is very thankful.

U MAKANTI-RESTORING PEACE IN COMMUNITY

Years ago, due to poverty, Uma and her husband were in search of a place to live and they came to settle in Setapani, a slum village in Nawalparasi, southern Nepal. They had no land of their own for farming, so her husband went abroad for foreign employment.

Due to her fear of other people making fun of her if she was unable to perform well, Uma was not able to learn and do anything new. Despite Uma's poor opinion of herself, her friends appreciated her kind heart and liked the way she treated all people with equal respect and love. Therefore, when ACN formed a Self Help Group (SHG) in her community, her friend asked her to volunteer as the Chairperson of the SHG.

Though she became the Chairperson of the group, due to her fear and low self-esteem, she used to avoid meetings and trainings. So, the group was not functioning well. However, She told her husband that she was involved in the SHG, he got angry. He told her that he did not want her to go out. When her husband became upset with her on this matter, she, once considered leaving the group also. But, she did not, because she was beginning to see the benefits of the group.



She continued participating and attending meetings and trainings. As she did this, her confidence grew and her capacity as a leader also developed. After some time, she was given the opportunity to attend trainings on reconciliation, organized by the local government. From this foundation, she was eventually elected for the role of reconciliation mediator for her municipality. Uma explained her role to us, "I am now actively engaged in resolving conflicts related to domestic and gender-based violence, child marriage, polygamy and care of the elderly. I am working together with the Vice Mayor (local government officer). It feels very good to be able to support people who are deprived of justice."

When Uma's husband returned home, she shared with him what she had been doing and her husband also heard about her work in the community. After this, she told us his attitude was completely changed and instead of being against her, he encouraged her saying, "You are doing good work and should continue. Also, I can see you are having trouble travelling to some out of the way places, so I will buy a scooter for you when I am next home."

Uma now feels confident, "In the past, nobody recognized me and nobody believed in me including my husband, but now I have been able to soften my husband's heart. I am thankful to ACN as they helped me become strong and to identify my passion for justice. Now people call me when there is a conflict and I know what to do." Uma's passion has not only changed her life but also helped many to restore relationship and peace.

WE HAVE A TOILET AT HOME!



30 years old Dewa Harijan lives in Sarawal-6 Nawalparasi with his wife and three children. He used to work as a daily wage laborer.

Dewa once, badly fractured his leg at work and he had to sell his land to pay for treatment. This led to financial problems for his family. His damaged leg prevented him from going back to his previous job so with the small amount of money he had left, he opened a shop selling a few groceries in his house.

He was pleased that he had found a way to meet the basic needs of his family, but with two growing daughters and a son, he wanted to build a toilet for his family, but could not afford it. He told us, "We didn't like having to use other people's fields as a toilet. We were afraid of snake bites and we were ashamed if we encountered people when we were outside."

Although the local government had a scheme to help with construction materials and he received the materials but he didn't use it as he couldn't afford the labour costs.

In 2017, there was a devastating flood in the Tarai region of Nepal. Dewa's family was also badly affected by the flood. After immediate relief response work, ACN supported them in recovery of livelihood and health. For this ACN contributed to water, sanitation, and hygiene area of that village. ACN always works closely with local communities to ensure that those who are financially marginalized are targeted for support. After a survey of the area, Dewa's family was chosen to receive help from ACN to construct a toilet. Dewa was excited, "ACN helped us to construct a toilet. We are so happy to have toilet at home. Now we no longer need to feel any shame."

RITA'S JOURNEY TOWARDS SELF-CONFIDENCE

My name is Rita (name changed) and I am 50 years old now. 16 years ago, my husband died due to AIDs. He left me HIV positive with three small children. I was alone to take care of my children and myself. I didn't have my own house or any work. We were living in a rented house. Day-to-day I struggled to find enough food for us to eat. Due to worries of how to raise my children and not being able to fulfill daily needs and expenses of my children's education, my health deteriorated, and I had to visit the hospital for treatment regularly.

After seeing my condition, a nearby church and some Christian families began to support me and my children's education. This was very kind of them, but I did not like being completely dependent on support from other people. What I really wanted was to do something for myself; however no one seemed to trust me enough to give me money to try something new.

I was about to give up my hope when I was introduced to ACN. I came to know that ACN ran a support group for people living with HIV that met once a month. I joined the meetings and as we shared our stories with each other. As doing this, I found that I was not alone. By sharing and listening to others, we have been able to forget our own pain to some extent. We encouraged and supported each other and after some time, I regained my self-confidence. Again, I decided to do something for myself. This time it was different. I took some loan from ACN and first started farming tomatoes. This went quite well and helped to cover my daily expenses. Then I also expanded kitchen gardening, followed by rearing goats and chickens. Now I have a much larger income. I have paid off all my loans and can provide everything my children need. Everything is going well.

I want to tell anyone living with HIV who is reading this today, to look for the kind of support that ACN provides. Life is much easier to live when you receive love, encouragement, counseling, and support.

THE STRONGEST ONE YET!

The Health post at Ampipal has seen its share of troubles. Originally built in 1995, it was swept away by a flood and landslide in 2002, rebuilt by a supporting organization and then destroyed again by the earthquake in 2015.

Parvati Baniya has worked as a Health Assistant in Ampipal Health Post, Gorkha for 15 years. "The health post is more than just a job for me." She said, "I planted many trees and plants around the building, but they were all destroyed in the earthquake. It was very sad."

A few months after the earthquake, the Health Post restarted in a tent. However, work was not easy and there was not enough medicine to go round. The villagers thought it was unlikely the health post would be reconstructed this time. However, after negotiations with the government, ACN had taken the responsibility to reconstruct five health posts in Gorkha including Aampipal.

In 2017, ACN handed over the newly reconstructed Health Post building to the community. On handover day, Parvati said, "Not only the health post was reconstructed but we received furniture, modern equipment and essential medicine from ACN as well. It made us so happy." As she monitored the construction work, she noted that the new building was much better and stronger than the old one. It is now not only earthquake resistant but also gender and disability friendly. Parvati said "The new building encourages me to work even harder and I promise to take good care of it."



LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR DREAMS TO COME TRUE

Anita's parents arranged her marriage when she was in Grade 9. She told us, "I only had one year before my year 10 exams therefore, I wanted not to marry, but I had no choice. I was so worried about my studies. I had a dream of higher education. After my marriage I moved in with my husband and in-laws and I couldn't share my thoughts with them. Instead, I watched others going to school and dreamt of joining them."

However, things turned out better for Anita than she hoped. She explained, "My in-laws saw my desire to continue my studies and they encouraged me to start my education. My husband also agreed even though he had little education himself. He could see the benefit of completing my education right up to year 12."

But this was not the only obstacle that Anita faced. Anita lives in Shreenathkot, not far from the epicenter of the major earthquakes in 2015. Her school, Janakalyan High School, was almost completely destroyed at that time and could not be used. A temporary structure was built, but Anita recalled, "We were not able to concentrate well in the temporary classrooms; metal roof was too hot in summer and too cold in winter."

The upgraded reconstruction of Janakalyan Higher School has been inspiration for Anita and her friends, "We are so happy to have such a strong, well laid out new school. It has motivated us to work hard and do even better in our studies." Her vision has also expanded, "Now I don't only want to complete my own education, but I want to become a successful lady who can give other children the opportunity to study just like I have." With the new school design making it easier for girls and those with disabilities to access and attend, this dream may well come true.



G OVERNMENT SERVICES ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT THE VILLAGE

The massive earthquakes in 2015 wreaked havoc in Shreenathkot. The school, health post and the local government office (ward office) were all destroyed. The local government office was built traditionally stones held together by mud and when it collapsed nothing could be salvaged from the debris.

A member of the community, Krishna Gurung, who lived close to the office explained, "The government officials undertake many important tasks in the community. They register births, deaths, and marriages, they grant citizenship cards and migration papers and they write recommendation letters for us, so without the local government office and official in Shreenathkot there were many problems to perform government official tasks." Due to the unavailability of the office building, government official used to work from the Gorkha bazaar and visited Shreenathkot occasionally. During his visits, he had to work and conduct meetings in open spaces.

ACN was already actively working in Shreenathkot on other projects after the earthquake and so the villagers saw the opportunity to overcome their problem. They approached ACN but the land where the building had been was unusable and the local government office had no other land in the village. However, ACN agreed to reconstruct the office if the villagers would provide the land. The villagers discussed the issue and donated a site for the new building.

Krishna was overwhelmed with joy by the help that ACN had given to their community. He told us "ACN has done so much work for us. They began working in the health sector organizing free-health camps and awareness programs, then they constructed a health post and a school and now we also have the building for the local government office. It is such a privilege to have a well-furnished newly reconstructed local government office building in our village and to see everything running smoothly again. I don't know what we would have done without them."



THERE IS GOD FOR HELPLESS



Bir Bahadur Gurung lives with his wife in Gorkha. Bir Bahadur and his wife have had a hard life. Their only child, the son was their hope for the future. He went to work in India, but contracted HIV and so returned to Nepal with his wife and three children to make a life there. Then disaster struck, the earthquakes that rocked Nepal in 2015 destroyed their home and took the life of their son also. As there was nowhere for his daughter in law and grandchildren to live, she moved to Pokhara and Bir bahadur started to live in a temporary shelter. Then disaster struck again and their grandson was killed in a bus accident in Pokhara.

Bir Bahadur felt hopeless, he told us, "I don't know why God was treating me so cruelly". He then went on to describe the list of problems he faced; the loss of half of his land to road construction, the irregularities of his citizenship registration that prevent him from receiving the elderly allowance and most of all the ruin of his house. He said, "I rear some goats and sell them to make a living. Also, my wife receives the elderly allowance from the government which is great support for our survival."

Although Bir Bahadur used to be a mason, at 80 his strength was declining and his wife has arthritis and couldn't help him build. He told us "I began slowly to try and rebuild my house from the rubble, but it was too much for me and there was no help from anywhere. I had just about given up hope and though tve will have to spend the rest of our lives living in a sack."

In this situation, ACN reached out to them with support. ACN provided reconstruction materials, food items and facilitated for them to receive government subsidies provided to the earthquake affected people.

Bir Bahadur was very grateful, he exclaimed: "Now I believe there is a God and that he provides help for helpless people like us, because God sent Asal Chhimekee Nepal to support us. We have now moved into our new house and I am so happy. Thank you ACN for coming to us."



MASON TRAINING BOOSTED CONFIDENCE

The scale of devastation after the earthquakes in 2015 was immense. Thousands of buildings were destroyed or damaged and there were not enough people with the right skills to cope with the reconstruction. In response to this situation ACN designed and conducted a skill development training project. ACN's aim was to build a strong skilled workforce to meet the challenges of reconstruction.

Madhumaya Sunar (36) worked as a laborer. She had worked on the field, laborer, and wall painting, etc. but she did not earn much. As a single mother with the responsibility to see her four daughters through school, she was always looking for opportunities to improve her situation. When Madhumaya heard that Asal Chhimekee Nepal was organizing a seven day basic training on masonry, she decided to join it. She tells,

"I knew that I could learn as well as a man could so I applied for the training. On the course, I learned to build earthquake resistant houses. They told us how deep the foundations should be, how to build pillars and how to mix the cement to make it strong."

ACN undertook follow up after their training to see if it had made a difference in people's lives. Even then, Madhumaya was thankful for the training she had received and explained to us the difference it had made in her life, "I am now earning much more than my other female colleagues. My employers trust me more than they did in the past and I have gained confidence in what I am doing. I can look to the future with more hope now, as it will be easier to find work and to provide for my daughters."



A NIMAL NEEDS TREATMENT TOO!



Bhakti Adkikari from Gorkha grew up surrounded by animals. Her parents kept cows, buffalos, goats and chickens. It was therefore natural that she also started to raise livestock later. She recalled, "I don't remember how many animals I have raised and sold and certainly there have been many over the years. Often animals died and did not grow well and I did not worry too much."

However, Bhakti is now 60 and she is unable to look after a lot of animals. Nowadays her whole livelihood rests on four goats. Among them one was not growing properly, she was worried. At that time, she was informed by the ward Chairperson about a free animal health camp run by ACN. She had never taken any animal to a veterinarian for treatment before but thought she would give it a try.

She said, "I went to the camp. I found many villagers were there with their animals (cows, buffalo, dogs and goats). At my turn, I told them the problem of my goat. Then they asked me if I had ever given any medicine for worms? I had not even heard about this before. They told me, 'Due to worm growth inside the animals body, animals can't grow well. So we need to give worm medicine to animals regularly.' I was surprised to hear that we need to give medicine to animals too. I never used to give medicine to animals. I never took any animals to veterinarian for treatment until the free camp.

They gave me worm medicine for my goat. I used to think that if my animal grew well then it would be nice, but if not, there was nothing I could do. Today I learned that if we are able to provide better care and treatment, we can see better growth in animals that brings more benefits. I remember in past days, many animals died and did not grow well. My most important learning is that animals also require treatment.

I would like to thank ACN for conducting free animal health camp where we could treat our animals and learn very important matters and also opened my eyes."

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY

Nine years ago, Goman Singh Magarati (31) went to Malaysia to earn for his family. But while in Malaysia, he lost his left hand while operating a machine at work. The company he worked for provided treatment and sent him back to Nepal. He now lives with his extended family of 13 members. On his return, the hope of his family for better future was dashed.

Despite his disability, Goman Singh did not give up. He had an interest in electrician work, so he began to work as an electrician with his friend. The people in his village liked to give him work because of his disability and they trusted him, so he was doing quite well.

However, Goman Singh was dissatisfied; he recalls, "If this is how well I can do now, how much better I could perform if I had proper training!" However, there was no training nearby and going outside for training was not easy, as he needed to be near his family.

After some time, Goman Singh heard that ACN was organizing a one month house wiring training for people of Gorkha. He was waiting for this kind of opportunity and was excited to apply for this opportunity. He applied for it and was accepted. He told us, "During the training I realized that I had been making several mistakes in my work before." However, he was a quick learner and by the end of the month his skills had increased significantly and says, "I could not express my joy when I passed the first level exam and got a house wiring certificate from CTEVT (Council of Technical Education and Vocational Training). Having a certificate along with the training has not only enhanced my performance but also increased my confidence."



ACN's training provided him with new skills, a certificate to prove his abilities and a complete set of tools for house wiring. This was a great gift for Goman Singh and has allowed him to face the future with less trepidation. He had returned from Malaysia with little hope for the future, but now he and his family could truly say that hope has returned.

ENTIRE VILLAGE BENEFITS FROM A TRAINED INDIVIDUAL



My name is Kalika and I am 50 years old. I am the head of my family. I live in Shreenathkot Gorkha with my wife, my father and four children. I am a farmer.

The earthquakes in 2015 had a big impact in Shreenathkot and it gave me the desire to do something worthwhile for my family and for the villagers. ACN was very active here and one of the training they offered was a 35 day Animal Health Worker training. This seemed like the perfect opportunity for me to do more, so I applied and was accepted. I learned about basic animal health care, common animal diseases and how to treat them and how to prevent disease, including how to give vaccinations. After the training, ACN had arranged, the first level exam of the official vocational training centre. I passed the exam and now I am a certified Village /animal Health Worker.

After the training, I opened a veterinary shop in my village, where I treat and vaccinate animals and I also provide home visits to see animals. There is a veterinary centre in our Rural Municipality but it is far away, so villagers find it easier to come to me. I regularly treat around 20 animals a month and even more in the rainy season, as more animals get sick then. Treating animals, selling medicines, and giving vaccinations has given me a good income of NPR 15,000 to 20,000 per month. I have also been able to raise awareness about animal health care in the village. ACN's animal health worker training has changed my life. My village now recognizes me as an animal health worker and what I do makes a real difference. I give all the credit for this to ACN. I am very grateful to them.

DREAM FOR A HOUSE FULFILLED

Santu did not have the opportunity to go to school when she was young and she knew this had limited her options. "I am illiterate so I do daily labour work (manual)," she told us, "But my daughters are studying and they dream of going to university." Santu and her husband are separated, which means she is the only wage earner. To supplement her income her daughters join her in laboring during the holidays, but life remains a struggle and she feels the stress of trying to provide everything that her daughters need to stay in school.

In July 2018, a landslide swept Santu's house away. Fortunately, they were not harmed, but they had nowhere to stay. "As we are low caste, no one wanted to rent a house to us, so we faced many difficulties," she recalled, "I wanted to rebuild my house but I knew this would not be possible with the small amount of money I earned. So it was just a dream. We had lost everything including our dreams in the landslide. My life was shattered"



ACN were asked by the government to provide support for house reconstruction to 22 landslide affected families in Parbat where Santu lives. Santu's family was one of them. "ACN came and provided materials for the reconstruction of my house." Santu told us, "And now I have a new house - my happiness is inexpressible. It would never have been possible without ACN"

Santu knows that her troubles are not over, she still has to struggle to provide for her daughters and she fears that another landslide might strike, but something has changed for them as a family, "My daughters continue to work hard at school, but now they have more focus; they want to be able to serve families in need like us by working for a social organization. When I hear them talk, I feel so happy because ACN has not only helped us to reconstruct our house, but they have given my daughters a new dream. We will never forget its support and impact on our lives. This is priceless"

A HOPE FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Anu Gurung enjoyed her life in Kathmandu. Her family had a grocery shop that was providing for a good living. However, her in-laws lived in Simle, Gorkha an area which was significantly affected by the earthquakes in 2015 and she and her husband realized that they needed to have them nearby as they were getting older. So they moved to live in Simle. This was not an easy decision to make, she told us, "I found it very hard to adjust to the village environment. I was even more distressed that there was no hospital or even a medical shop nearby. Even the health post was two hours away on foot."



When Anu heard that ACN was planning to support the construction of a Rural Clinic building in her village, she was not sure that this would really happen in her village. She said, "I thought that ACN would probably come, stay for some time and then leave again, just as other organizations did in the past. I didn't have much



hope that they would make a lasting change. But I was wrong. I watched their progress from my new shop in Simle and was amazed. They have built the building for a clinic in just two and a half months then handed it over to the village!"

ACN's actions affected her deeply. She said, "Asal Chhimekee Nepal has touched my heart. I felt embarrassed and my heart hurts when I think about my hesitation because I was reluctant to come back to my own place. But ACN, despite being outsiders, have come here to help us."

Anu feels more confident living in the village now, she told us, "Having health facilities on our doorstep gives us a chance to have a healthy community. I am very thankful for this new hope".