



SUCCESS STORY

USAID-NFRP improves standards of living for Terai women and their families

Laxmi Tharu, 37, of Chakhapur village, Rajapur VDC (Bardiya district) joined USAID-NFRP in February 2009 as a participant of the 14-month sanitation, hygiene and nutrition (SHN) program. To date, a total of 25 women and 25 school children have been trained in Chakhapur, and the program has facilitated the installation of 20 demonstration kitchen gardens and 20 improved cooking stoves.

After completing the first round of kitchen gardening training, Laxmi “enthusiastically began the following day to prepare [her] field for her own kattha (330 m²) of demonstration kitchen garden. “I am very satisfied with the highly nutritious vegetables that I am able to produce. Our first harvest was in April 2009 and now we can continue regular vegetable production for three crop cycles per year”. Laxmi is also passing the hands-on knowledge gained through USAID-NFRP to her neighbors by “educating them on the importance of balanced diets and teaching practical ways to improve nutrition through low cost kitchen gardening”.

As an important step toward reducing indoor smoke inhalation and excessive fuel wood consumption, Laxmi was trained in the installation, use and maintenance of improved cooking stoves. Laxmi notes that the stoves “allow for quicker cooking times, reduced smoke by venting it through flumes, and less time spent collecting wood”.

Laxmi, a mother of three, believed that the program’s benefits should also be extended to her daughter, and so decided to include her in the trainings to broaden the impact on the entire family. Immediate results were seen when Laxmi’s husband and two sons constructed a low-cost outhouse based on the design promoted by USAID-NFRP. Now all family members take an active role in maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation in the household, including channelizing kitchen wastewater to irrigate their garden and composting organic waste for fertilizer.

With greater awareness and more confidence, Laxmi Tharu has developed into the role of a community-level promoter for SHN issues, and reports that “apart from improving my own life, I am able to disseminate these skills to others to improve theirs”.

This report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of Fintrac Inc. and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



Photos by Fintrac Inc.
Laxmi Tharu preparing a mid-day meal for her family.



Outhouse independently constructed by Laxmi’s husband and two sons.

“I am highly satisfied with what I have been able to produce in my kitchen garden. Our first harvest was in the third week of April 2009. Most of what we produced was consumed by my family and some was given to nearby relatives. A small surplus was sold in the local markets of Rajapur VDC. Bitter gourd, cowpea and okra were sold at the retail market price of Rs. 50-60 per kg, cucumber at Rs. 40-45, and green vegetables for Rs. 20-25. In all, we earned Rs. 750. A small amount, but this is first time we have ever been able to sell surplus products from only one kattha of land. We never thought that a one kattha kitchen garden could be used for more than just our own home consumption.”

— Laxmi Tharu, 37, Bardiya district