

A photograph of three children playing on a yellow plastic slide in a rural, dusty environment. The child on the left is wearing a red sweater and a pink knitted hat with a small insect-like decoration. The child in the middle is wearing a striped sweater and has pigtails. The child on the right is wearing a blue dress. In the background, there are thatched-roof huts and a person working. The entire scene is framed by a large red circle.

# PROTECTING CHILDREN IN BRICK KILNS

STORIES OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES



Save the Children

This publication showcases stories of children and their families and the results of Protection of the Children Working in Brick Kilns in Nepal

This publication showcases results of Protection of The Children Working in Brick Kilns in Nepal and stories of children and families working in brick factories.

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## PROTECTION OF THE CHILDREN WORKING IN BRICK KILNS IN NEPAL (2013 – 2016)



'Protection of Children Working in Brick Kilns in Nepal' is a three year (November 2013 – October 2016) project funded by Save the Children and Comic Relief. The project is implemented in Bhaktapur, Ramechhap and Kavre in partnership with Child Development Society (CDS) with the goal to contribute in eradicating child labor from brick kilns in Nepal.

The project is implemented in 15 brick kilns out of the 62 brick kilns in Bhaktapur and 10 villages of Kavre and Ramechhap district. Save the Children also works in collaboration with the Department of Labor (DOL), District Child Welfare Board (DCWB), Brick Kilns Association of Bhaktapur and Federation of Nepal Brick Industries to make brick kilns child labor free.

Underprivileged and vulnerable families from different parts of Nepal migrate to the brick kilns of Kathmandu every year during the brick making season. Lack of livelihood sources in the village's forces parents to migrate along with their children to work at the brick kilns. Children who come along with their parents are also compelled to work with them at the brick kilns. These families and children face many challenges and risks while working and living at the brick factory.

Protection, education, health and sanitation are some of the major

issues that children of all ages face at the brick kilns. Children are not only exploited and abused but they also have no access to education due to the seasonal migration. The precarious living conditions at the brick kilns also poses negative affect to their health.

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**Lack of livelihood sources in the village's forces parents to migrate along with their children to work at the brick kilns.**

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There are many instances of unaccompanied children who travel from their villages to work in these brick kilns. Brick making in Nepal poses significant threat to the rights and wellbeing of children, which remain unaddressed by current system and regulations, and largely ignored by the public. This makes children, living and working in brick kilns one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the country.



## PROJECT GOAL

The project aims to ensure rights to protection, education and health of children who live and work in the brick kilns

Provide alternative livelihood opportunities to poor households in the source districts so that families can stay in the village and children can continue their education

Advocate for policies and legislation to improve the working and living conditions at the brick kilns for the workers



## PROJECT'S IMPACT

**6527** Total  
Children  
Reached



INCLUDING  
3424 GIRLS

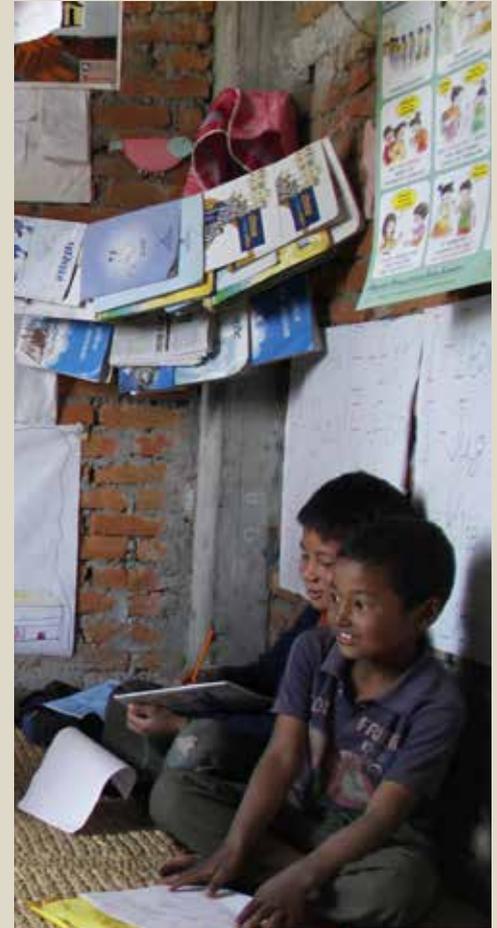


The project has coordinated to Child Protection Committee, District Child Welfare Board and Nepal Police to rescue 32 children compelled to work in hazardous conditions in brick kilns and they have been reintegrated their families in source district (Rolpa, Kavre, Ramechhap, Sindhuplachowk) in support of local NGO, DCWB, Nepal police and Child Protection committee and supported them to continue their education as well as Income Generating Support to their families.

**4391** Total  
Adult  
Reached

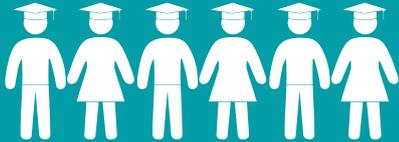


INCLUDING  
2,988  
WOMEN

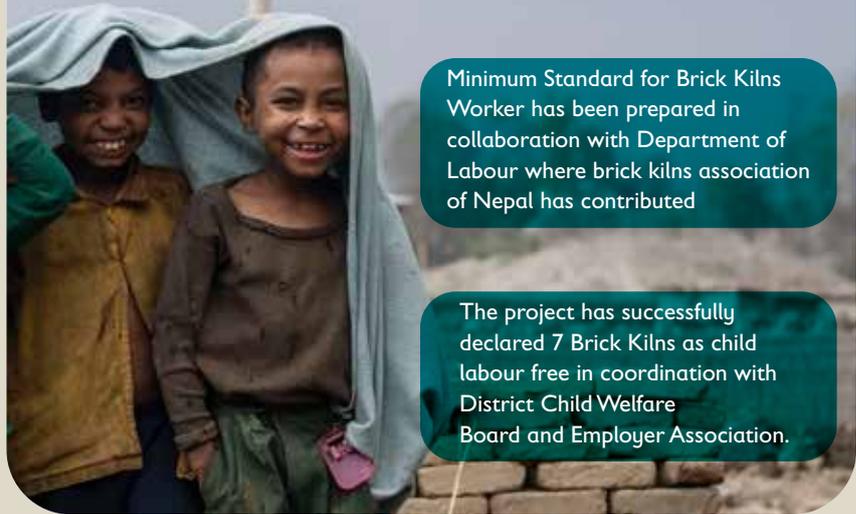


# 1572

Education support to children



Day care centers have provided nutritious food, learning and safe, protected environment to 647 (girls 319) children in Brick kilns premises, it has benefited 15 brick kilns of Bhaktapur



Minimum Standard for Brick Kilns Worker has been prepared in collaboration with Department of Labour where brick kilns association of Nepal has contributed

The project has successfully declared 7 Brick Kilns as child labour free in coordination with District Child Welfare Board and Employer Association.

# 410

Total women who received SEEP training among which 291 mothers decided to stay in their own village



# 40

CHILD CLUB FORMED AMONG WHICH 21 ARE COMMUNITY BASED CHILD CLUBS IN WHICH 1122 MEMBERS



INCLUDING 659 GIRLS



# 800

Children of SEEP women who did not migrate and continued their education at source districts



Total number of children who received awareness on child rights, risk of unsafe migration and child labor exploitation through street drama, wall comics and art competition

## FROM BRICKS TO BUSINESS

Phulmaya -31 was brought up in Kathmandu, where she lived with her parents. Her parents had a difficult time making ends meet but made sure that their daughter was protected from hardships of life. This changed when she married her husband and migrated to his village in Ramechhap.



Her husband worked at the brick kilns of Bhaktapur and left his village for almost six months during the brick making season. With escalating household expenses, her husband's sole income was not sufficient for the family. Phulmaya was compelled to work at the brick kiln with her husband. She recalls, "I had no clue how difficult it would be."

Working at the brick kiln was Phulmaya's worst nightmare. She shares, "It was a very difficult job that required us to wake up at 1:00 am in the morning to make bricks. Winter season was particularly difficult because it would be freezing outside yet we had to work." There were several situations where Phulmaya would cry her heart out but quitting her job was not an option due to her family's frugal economic situation.

Things got worse when Phulmaya became a mother, as it required her to carry her young children to the brick kiln. She recalls, "I had to take my children along to the brick kiln as they were breastfeeding. It was frustrating because I could not attend to my children all day as I had to work and I was always scared of something happening to them." She stopped bringing her children to the brick kiln when they stopped breastfeeding. Her daughter is now 13 while her sons are 10 and 8 year old.

Phulmaya's life took a positive turn when Self Employment Education Program (SEEP) was implemented in her village. "I heard about a class that was about to start in our village where women could study and would also be provided livelihood opportunities and I knew I had to join this class," says Phulmaya.

Joining SEEP class was a turning point in Phulmaya's life. She shares, "Before the classes I did not know

how to write my name. I would avoid attending community meetings because I was very shy and could not speak in public. But now I can not only write but also read. I am more confident now.” For Phulmaya, learning how to write was the biggest achievement in life. She is also able to keep track of her expenses while doing simple calculation has become easier.

Phulmaya also received income generation support through the program, which helped her start carpet weaving business. She says, “I received Rs 20,000 as income

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### Phulmaya’s life took a positive turn when Self Employment Education Program (SEEP) was implemented in her village.

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generation support from which I bought weaving threads and also bought a weaving machine adding to my own saving.” In a month Phulmaya has been able to weave two carpets, which she will sell at the same outlet from where she bought the threads. She expects to earn at least Rs 9,000 for each carpet.

For Phulmaya, working at the brick kiln for



six months was akin to being locked up in jail. She is now satisfied with her life as she gets to stay in her own village with her family. “My husband and I have stopped going to brick kiln. I enjoy weaving carpets at home while my husband is busy with his social work in the village,” says Phulmaya.

Phulmaya is also able to give more time to her children and husband. She explains, “The

happiest part of my life now is that I can care for my children and make sure they are going to school and studying hard. I am a good mother and a good wife and I am also earning money for the family.” Phulmaya never wants to return to the brick kiln and plans to weave carpets as long as her eyes don’t trouble her. She hopes that her children will grow up and have a better life than her.



## ENTERPRISING BRICK KILN OWNERS PAVE A POSITIVE PATH

At first glance, Keshav Chuwal seems to be like any other brick kiln owner in Nepal. But he is actually a pioneer entrepreneur, who has banned child labor at his brick kiln, Kumari Mata Brick Factory in Bhaktapur. His brick kiln was one of the seven kilns declared as child labor free by the District Child Welfare Board (DCWB) in Bhaktapur for the last two years. Chuwal has achieved this distinction by maintaining the minimum standard of child labor free brick kilns on the basis of Child labor provision and Regulation Act and Labor Act developed by Brick Kilns Employers Association Bhaktapur in coordination with DCWB Bhaktapur.

Chuwal joined his father's business around 20 years ago. He recalls, "There were hardly any children to be seen in the kilns during those days. There were only 20-25 families and some Indians who worked in docks. Gradually, demand for bricks soared and so did the number of brick kilns and human resource. People began coming to work at the kilns with their family and children."

In those days, it was difficult for the workers to do all brick making work manually like digging and carrying water for making mud. The workers dug ditches around the kilns to store water, and there were cases of young children drowning in these ditches. Chuwal was concerned about this, and ran a day care center in the brick kiln premises for young children. He also provided support for education and safety of the children. He distributed school uniforms to the children in the kilns so that they go to the nearby school, while also making sure that the workers had masks. However, he did not find his efforts very effective and came to the conclusion that workers did not send their children to school or use masks because of a lack of awareness.

When the project Protection of Children Working in Brick Kilns in Nepal began in 2013, most owners were reluctant to open up their brick kilns to the outside world. They were also hesitant development staff carry out orientation and interactions with workers and their children. Likewise, the contractors did not want to release adolescent children to participate in activities like life skill training – and if they did, it was to be only under supervision of the contractors. But with support from owners like Chuwal, the program gradually started creating an effect and changing the mindset of the owners as well as contractors. These days, the contractors

acknowledge that the project has taught them useful things. "Even though I am the head contractor, I used to spend a lot on unnecessary things. Being involved in the program has opened my eyes," says Ganga Bahadur Lama, the Contractor of Changanarayan Brick Factory.

These two are shining examples of the results of the project. Including Kumari, 15 brick kilns in Bhaktapur now have day care centers for children. The brick kiln owners are also very open to conduction of non-formal centers to spread awareness activities for parents and adolescents, child club formation for children and life skill trainings for adolescents. Among them, day care centers are quite an impressive achievement, for they keep children safe and secure. After the project ran them for three years, they were handed over to the brick kiln owners. They say, "We now have some idea on running them and are committed to run in coming years." Balgovinda Tachamo, the owner of another child labor free brick kiln says, "We recently managed a free health camp with the support of Save the Children and Department of Labor. The doctors, medicines and human resource were contributed by the

organizations, while other resources were managed by the kiln."

Along with other enterprising owners, Chuwal is also happy that parents are now quite aware about the health and safety



of their children. He says, "We need to regularly organize sensitization activities in brick kilns, which will help in gradually raising the level of awareness." To raise the awareness level of the owner with regard to government legislation on child labor, Save the Children coordinated with the police to help owners declare their factory as child labor free. Balgovinda Tachamo says, "I make it a point to request contractors not to bring children as workers, and also advise parents to send their children regularly to day care."

This positive change required a lot of determination and strategic intervention. In coordination with the DCWB, Save the Children conducted frequent joint monitoring visits with government stakeholders and media, which created legal and moral

pressure on the owners to compulsory follow the provision and eliminate the engagement of child labor. News related with child labor that appeared in newspapers, radio, TV and social media added to the social pressure.

To ensure ownership and provide encouragement, the exemplary brick kiln owners were commemorated by high level government authority at a public function. After receiving the honor, Tachamo says, "This respect

will now force us to abide by the code of conduct and it will also be easier to advise contractors on not bringing the children to our brick kiln. We can back up our request with this certificate while talking to contractors." Tachamo also suggests that the government needs to formulate a policy that the bricks for reconstruction should be bought only from Child Labor Free Brick Kiln, which will motivate other factories to eliminate child labor as well.

## JOURNEY FROM BRICK KILNS TO OWN BUSINESS

18-year-old Apsara lives with her parents, brother and two sisters aged 7 and 16 in Ramchhap, a district that falls under Nepal's central development region. As her parents have very few options to sustain their livelihood, they travel to Bhaktapur each year to work at the brick kilns. As a child, Apsara also went along with them to Bhaktapur, which was around 75 kms away from her home. She enjoyed going to the brick kiln with her parents, because she did not like staying away from them.



As she grew older, coming to the brick kiln with her parents was no longer a fun idea, as she also had to work with them. She recalls, "I had to wake up early in the morning along with my parents and start working. I had to carry bricks and flip them from time to time. I also had to cook for everyone in the evening." The physical

pressure she had to endure while working at the brick kiln took a toll on her and she soon started suffering from backache and knee pains.

Working at the brick kiln not only affected her physically but also hampered her education. She was only able to attend school for half a year and would only come back to Ramechhap to take her exams. She shares, "I had to leave my school and friends every year, when it was time to work at the kilns. I would often fail my exams because I could not study at the brick kiln."

Apsara was looking for a way out of the brick kiln and luckily she was informed about vocational trainings being provided by Child Development Society, through the support of Save the Children. "I told my parents that I wanted to attend the vocational training to learn something new," says Apsara.

Apsara set out to attend a month long vocational training where she learned how to cook various Nepali dishes. She shares, "I learned to make noodles, dumplings, samsosa (potato wrapped in bread) and other snacks." Apsara chose to learn cooking as she wanted to open her own eatery in the village rather than working at the brick kiln. After completing her training, Apsara rented a small room at her village and opened her shop. She was also provided financial support to buy utensils. "It

has been a month since I have opened this shop and the business is good so far. On a good day, I earn around Rs 300 while I earn Rs 100-50 per day on average,” explains Apsara.

Over a month since opening her eatery, Apsara has earned around Rs 9000. She says, “I use my earnings to buy more stuff for the eatery, and also save some money.” Apsara is satisfied with her earnings – at the brick kiln, she had to work twice as hard but barely earned half of what she does now.

Apsara now also has more time to devote to her education. She is currently studying in grade 10 at the local school and is also busy preparing for her School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination. She shares, “I now have more time to study and do my homework. I also have the time to attend tuition classes after school which helps me prepare better for my exams.”



**Working at the brick kiln not only affected her physically but also hampered her education. She was only able to attend school for half a year and would only come back to Ramechhap to take her exams.**

Her parents also encourage her to study and do well in school. Apsara is now very happy with her life and is thankful for all the support and advice she received so far. She expresses, “It was a wise decision to attend the vocational training as it helped me open my own shop and that too in my own village. I am now independent and am also able to help my parents when in need.” In future, she also plans on expanding her shop.

Vocational training is provided for 16-18 years adolescent children on different trades suitable for the local market. The minimum basic vocational training period is for one month to three months while advanced vocational trainings last upto six months. They are provided training on various trades such as mobile repairing, motorbike mechanics, tailoring, driving, making chatpate (local spicy snack made from rice puffs) etc. The adolescent are supported with materials/equipment worth Rs.20,000 to start their business.

## DAY CARE AT BRICK KILNS

“Initially parents were unwilling to send their children to the day care centre. We approached individual parents, visited their temporary shelter and informed them about the importance of sending their children. Now parents are happy to see the changes in their children’s behaviour and are thankful to us for running the centre where children are not only safe but also get an opportunity to learn new things.”  
Shova, Day Care Centre Facilitator



“My son was very mischievous and never listened to me. This changed completely after his enrolment at the day care centre. He grew fond of studying and could recognize letters. He started treating everyone respectfully and also listened to what I had to say.” Rammaya

“I decided to send my son to the day care centre because I loved the idea of keeping him safe and engaged. Initially, my son cried a lot during his visits to the day care centre, but he enjoys it these days. He now brushes his teeth every morning and asks me to cut his nails. He also sings songs to me that he learned at the centre.” Maili

“Anisha was a very difficult child and always refused to eat her food but after attending this centre, her food habits have improved and so has her health.” Laxmi





## BUILDING CONFIDENCE, EARNING MONEY

Laxmi (31) is a mother of four beautiful daughters aged 8 and 7 and twins aged 3. She lives in Pakarbash a Village Development Committee in Ramechhap. As a child, Laxmi's earliest memories are of her at the brick kilns with her parents. Her parents always took her along with them to the kilns. As she grew up, she also had to start working there. This meant that she never had a chance to go to school and learn the alphabets.

After marriage, Laxmi continued working at the brick kilns with her husband. Whether as a child or an adult, working at the brick kiln was always difficult. She explains, "We lived in a Jhuali (temporary shelter made of raw bricks) that was small, cramped and cold. We had to wake up every day at 1:00 am and start working. We had to carry

bricks, flip raw bricks and ferry heavy sand bags." Laxmi and her husband worked hard every day without proper sleep, food or rest.

Working at the brick kiln proved to be even more challenging after Laxmi gave birth to her daughters. She recalls, "I brought my daughters along with me to the kiln as they were very small. But I could barely take proper care of them. I was always scared that my daughters would fall in the ponds around the kiln or something bad would happen to them." As her daughters grew up, they also started missing out on school.

In October 2014, when Laxmi returned to her village after the annual brick-making season was over at the brick kiln, she heard some women talking about Self Employment Education Program (SEEP) and Income Generation (IG) support that was being run by Save the Children through its local partner Child Development Society. Without wasting much time Laxmi quickly enrolled herself for the classes but did not know what to expect. For Laxmi, SEEP was an opportunity to learn how to read and write again. She says, "I was nervous when I first attended the class but there was so much to learn. I was able to learn how to write Nepali alphabets, I learned how to do simple calculations and also learned about the importance of saving." Over a year after the SEEP classes, Laxmi

can write her own name. She also helps her daughters with their homework and occasionally visits her daughters' school to evaluate their performance. In addition, she also teaches her husband how to read and write.

Laxmi has now overcome her shy nature and has also become smarter. Earlier, she had to depend on someone else to count her earnings at the brick kiln. She says, "I would spend all my earning earlier. But now I count my own earning and also save money every month." All the women from her SEEP class have started saving Rs 50 every month so that they can lend it to each other when in need.

After the SEEP classes, Laxmi also received eight goats as IG support along with training on rearing them. She says, "Along with the goats, I also received thorough training on ways to keep the goats healthy."

Laxmi closely followed all the things she had learned about goat rearing and doubled her goats to 15. "Among the 15 goats, I sold a billy goat at Rs 8000 and two other goats at Rs 2500. I now have 12 goats," says Laxmi. The money she earned after selling the goats



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**Now, Laxmi and her husband do not go to work at the brick kilns. They stay in their village rearing goats, farming and looking after their daughters.**

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were mostly used up in household expenses as well as her daughter's education.

Now, Laxmi and her husband do not go to work at the brick kilns. They stay in their village rearing goats, farming and looking after their daughters. Laxmi shares, "My life

is so much easier as I get to stay in my own village. The environment here is cleaner. I neither need to wake up at odd hours to work nor do I have to slog all day." Laxmi wants to continue working at her own village and wants to educate her children so that they have a better life than her.



## CHANGING THE SELF, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Samjhana, 14, is the eldest child among three siblings. She lives with her father, mother, grandparents, brother and sister in Pakarbash village of Ramechhap district. Her parents were seasonal migrants who worked at the brick factories of Bhaktapur. Every year, Samjhana had to leave school midyear to accompany her parents to the brick kiln. She only came back to school to take her final exams. Her responsibility was to look after her siblings but most importantly support her parents by working at the brick kiln.

As a young girl who loved going to school, working at the brick kiln was not an easy task. She recalls, “We had to wake up early in the morning to work. I had to lift sand bags and flip the bricks, which was very tiring.” She always felt that her parents had put too much responsibility on her young shoulders.

Leaving school every year meant not being able to study and falling behind in everything in life. Samjhana wanted to break this chain and concentrate only in her studies. She shares, “I did not want to work at the brick kilns so I decided to stay back in my own village and continue my studies while my parents left for work.” She successfully convinced her parents and stopped going to the brick kilns. She instead stayed with her mother’s family while they were away.

Samjhana finally had the opportunity to go to school regularly. She now studies in grade five at Shree Prageshwor Higher Secondary School. She is also the Secretary of the Community Child Club (CCC) and actively participates in events. “We have 22 members in our club and we conduct various activities such as creating wall magazines, cleaning temples, staging dramas and organizing small picnics for young children,” explains Samjhana.

Child Development Society (CDS) with support from Save the Children formed CCC’s at the brick kilns as well as the villages. CCC’s were formed to engage children who work at the brick kilns and do not go to school. It also engages former brick kiln child workers who have started to attend school but are not a part of the school child clubs. Through the project these CCC’s are provided training on child club management, child rights and child protection issues, making wall comics related

to issues of brick kilns and performing street dramas.

For Samjhana, the CCC was a platform to learn new things and spread the knowledge among children and adults in her community. Samjhana explains, Through the CCC, “I was able to gain information about child labor and child rights.”

As members of the CCC, their most important activity is informing children and adults about the risks involved in child labor. Samjhana shares, “At the community level, we inform children and adults about the risks involved in child labor. We tell them how hazardous it is for children to work in brick kilns but at the same time we also inform them about various ways of keeping themselves safe.” As a result, parents have now stopped taking children to the brick kilns. They leave their children in the village under a relative’s supervision.

After joining the CCC, Samjhana has witnessed many changes in her. She recalls, “I was a very shy student before, I was never able to speak in public. But now I am confident.” A change she never thought was possible in her life.

The changes she witnessed went beyond herself – her family too changed. Being involved in CCC, she and other members informed each family in the community about child rights, importance of education and how young children should be treated with love and care. “Every day I would come home and share with my parents everything I learned at the club and gradually my

parents too understood the importance of education. They love us and always try to fulfill our educational needs,” explains Samjhana. Her parents now encourage them to attend school regularly.

Samjhana wishes to bring more changes in her community through the CCC’s. She aspires to become an actress in the future.

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“Every day I would come home and share with my parents everything I learned at the club and gradually my parents too understood the importance of education. They love us and always try to fulfill our educational needs;”

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## CHILD CLUB CREATES CONFIDENCE

Sixteen-year-old Sagar currently lives in a Jhyauli (a temporary shelter made from raw bricks) in Nankhel, Bhaktapur with his parents. His parents have been working at the brick kiln since 15 years to make ends meet for the family. When Sagar grew up, he was compelled to work along with his parents to help them earn additional money.

For a young boy like Sagar, working at the brick kiln was disturbing because it meant missing out on school and education. He shares, “I had to wake up early in the morning to make bricks and I would often miss my school as I had to work. Most of my time after school was spent in making bricks” As a result, he often fell behind in class and was not able to perform well.

At school, Sagar was widely known among teachers and friends as a mischievous boy. Narayan, Principal of Ganesh Higher Secondary School says, “Sagar was very ill behaved when he first joined school. He would pick fights with his friends and teachers over petty issues. He would never listen to his teachers and his performance was less than average.”

Sagar’s behavior started to change when he joined the child club initiated by CDS through the support of Save the Children. He shares, “I threw a lot of tantrums at school before but when I joined the child club and met other friends I realized that I had to change.” He learned a lot of skills at the child club. Sagar says, “We were taught how to deal with life problems, we were given trainings, orientations and informed about child rights.”

At the child club, he also received psycho social counselling. “The counselling was very helpful as I was able to talk about my problems and worries. Counselling helped me realize my mistakes while giving me the ability to solve my own problems with logic,” says Sagar. He is now well behaved and still thinks he has a lot to improve. He has stopped fighting with his teachers and also helps his juniors as well as friends with their school work.

While counselling and life skill trainings helped Sagar change his behavior, various activities conducted by the child club helped him overcome

his lack of confidence. "We were always involved in various activities such as performing dramas in streets and theaters, creating wall magazines, organizing monthly meetings, exposure visits which helped me become more confident. I was always shy when it came to speaking, but now I can confidently voice my opinions and suggestions in front of people," says Sagar.

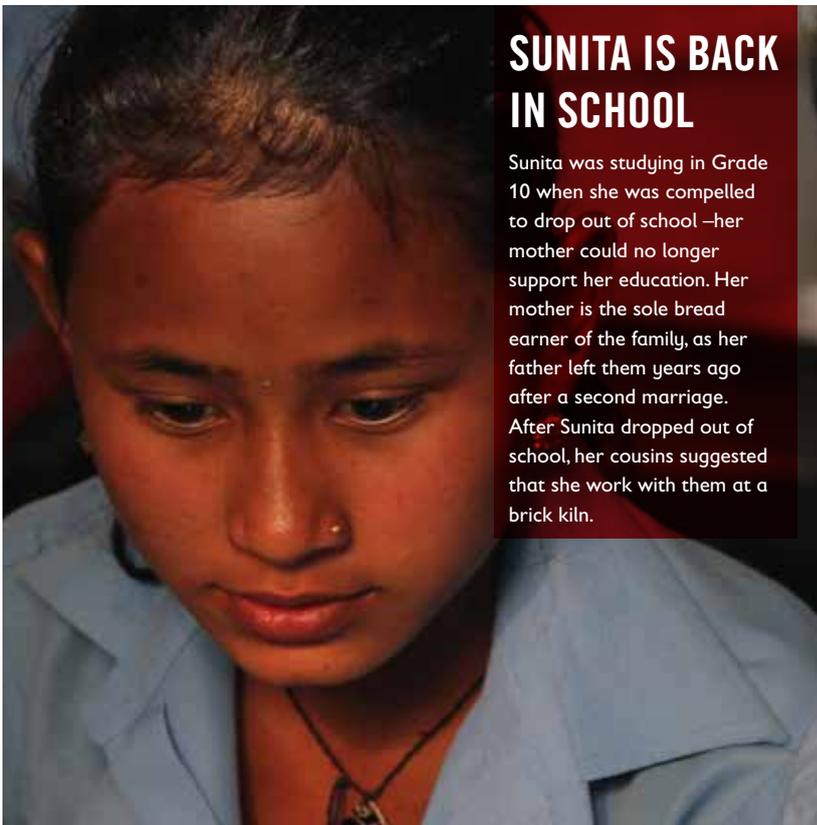
The child club not only helped Sagar evolve as a person but also helped him explain to his parents about the importance of education. He says, "My parents, who initially thought that earning money was important, now say that I should go to school regularly." Though his parents still work at the brick kiln, Sagar no longer does. Most of his time is spent studying and completing his homework. He helps his parents with their work when he has free time.

His performance at school has also improved. Mina, his teachers says, "The change in Sagar's behavior is unbelievable. A boy who fought around with everyone before is now quite calm. He helps his friends and treats his teachers with respect. His performance in class has scaled beyond average and he can perform even better."

Sagar is also proud of the changes he brought upon himself and tries to be a better person every day. He aspires to become a volleyball player in the future but he would also like to try his hand in acting.

Sagar's behavior started to change when he joined the child club initiated by CDS through the support of Save the Children.





## SUNITA IS BACK IN SCHOOL

Sunita was studying in Grade 10 when she was compelled to drop out of school –her mother could no longer support her education. Her mother is the sole bread earner of the family, as her father left them years ago after a second marriage. After Sunita dropped out of school, her cousins suggested that she work with them at a brick kiln.

Sunita believed that working at the brick kilns would ease her troubles. But her expectations were shattered on the second day of work. She shares, “I had to wake up early in the morning along with my brothers to make bricks. It was not an easy job as I had to make bricks, flip them and carry them, which required a lot of physical strength.” Sunita had agreed to work for five months at the brick kiln but the thought of it scared her.

Save the Children through its partner organization Child Development Society (CDS) started providing counselling sessions for young girls and boys who had dropped out of school and were working in brick kilns. Sunita too was approached for counselling. She says, “The counsellor always gave me good advice and talked to me about my problems. She motivated me to go back to school so that I could have a better future.”

The counselling sessions helped Sunita realize that she had to get back to school. However, it had only been four months since she had started working.

She says, “I wanted to return to my village but everyone at the brick kiln said I should complete five months to get my money. So I decided to stay for one more month before returning.” After five long months of hard work, Sunita was finally back in her village. Upon her return, Sunita handed over the money she had earned to her mother. She says, “My mother

Sunita had a strong desire to go back to school, for which she needed money. Trusting her brother’s words that working at the brick kilns would be easy, Sunita decided to go along with them.

enrolled me in grade 10 again in my previous school and she also bought me educational materials for me with the money.” Sunita was thrilled when she went back to school and met her old friends but for her the greatest joy was being able to study again.

Though happy to be back at school, Sunita is still worried about the continuation of her education. She shares, “I worry that my mother will run out of money. I still have to buy additional books and pay for my extra tuition classes every month.” Sunita only had to pay minimum exam fees till grade nine but now she also has to pay monthly tuition fees and buy several books to prepare for her School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exams.

Putting Sunita’s worries to rest, she recently received education support to help her through grade 10. Her education support covers fees for first, second and third term exams, SLC coaching classes, SLC pretest, SLC exam fee and any other additional school costs.

Sunita aims to be a teacher in the future so that she can educate young girls like herself.



**“My mother enrolled me in grade 10 again in my previous school and she also bought me educational materials for me with the money.”**

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## EDUCATION SUPPORT WAS A BOON FOR SUJITA

17-year-old Sujita from Ramechhap district nearly dropped out of school when she was in grade nine due to her family's poor economic condition. Her parents who worked at the brick kiln did not earn enough money to cover her educational expenses as she reached higher grades. Most of their money was spent in household expenses, paying for her two brothers' primary education and catering to the needs of her disabled sister.

Kathmandu during school holidays to earn money so that I could continue my education.”

Luckily, Sujita did not have to drop out of school due to the education support she received from the project. She shares, “I received school uniform, pens, notebooks, school bag and other stationaries that would last for at least a year. This was very helpful for me.” She further adds, “I carried my school books in hand while going to school but now I have a school bag.”

Sujita is now able to concentrate more on her studies as she does not have to worry about her school expenses. “I always worried about not being able to go to school one day due to my family's economic condition. I often had to make small sacrifices such as not going out with my friends, not buying new clothes for myself or forcing my family to spend as less as possible during festivals so that I could save money for my education.” Sujita lived her life in the simplest way possible to avoid any unnecessary expenses only because she wanted to study.

While studying hard to have a better life than her parents was her priority she was equally interested in additional activities. Therefore, Sujita also joined the community child club as a member. She says, “I learned many things at the community child club. I was educated about child rights, child labor and various forms of child abuse.”

Being a student in grade nine meant additional expenses as it required her to attend extra coaching classes. It also meant buying additional books and stationaries. Sujita shares, “I could not buy the materials I needed at school as my parents would not have enough money. There were times when I would go to



**“I performed street drama on child labor with other member that was loved by many people,”**

She was involved in every activity that was carried out by the child club. “I performed street drama on child labor with other member that was loved by many people,” says Sujita. As a member of the child club she not only learned important things about children’s rights but she also evolved as a person. She shares, “I am more confident now and I can speak in front of people. I am also able to educate other children in my village about their rights and also engage them in activities.”

With less than a year left for her to complete her School Leaving Certificate (SLC) Sujita is worried about her further education. She says, “Continuing my education after SLC will be challenging and will depend entirely on the financial situation of my family. However, if I continue to receive this support I might be able to study further.”

Motivated by her own experiences, Sujita aspires to become a social worker in the future so that she can serve her community and fight for children’s right to education.



“ I always missed school during the brick making season and could not catch up on the curriculum later. This affected my education as I could not pass the exams. When I joined the learning center at the brick kiln I was able to attend the coaching classes where children like me were taught English and Math. This was very helpful for me as I was able to catch up on the studies I had missed and I was also able to pass my final examination. I also received education support from the project which helped me continue my education”

Arjun, 15 years old





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