



WORLD NEIGHBORS

Inspiring People • Strengthening Communities

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Water: A source of change for one village

Samalbong, a small village in West Bengal, India, once faced a water shortage. Villagers spent hours everyday carrying water from the nearest water source – almost six miles away. The small amount of water they could gather was used to water their gardens and livestock, and for cooking and cleaning for the family, but it was never enough.

A precious resource that many of us take for granted everyday was a vast source of tension for the people of Samalbong.



Man Kurmari Rai, mother of three children, feels terrible when she thinks about the days of walking hours to gather water.

“I started working as a porter when my son was just six months old. I could not leave the baby behind so I had to carry him all the time and do the works like cooking, tilling and carrying water, fodder or fuel wood. While working as a porter I carried the baby over the top of my load, like every other nursing mother. I had to spend more than four hours a day carrying water from the nearest water spring. But, my worry was how long am I going to live that kind of life? I wanted to do something else and be able to generate some income for the family so that I could get out of the misery.”

In 2004, World Neighbors began work in Samalbong and saw the villagers’ desperate need to have clean water closer to their homes. World Neighbors told the villagers they would offer support to bring down the spring water to their village, provided the local community was ready to supply local labor and materials necessary for the water project. After a community meeting was held, the people agreed they must complete the following tasks in order for the water project to be successful:

1. Select the nearest water source.
2. Provide all the labor to dig the trench, lay pipes, fill up the trench, construct water collection tank, etc.
3. Transport all the materials to the project site.
4. Provide local materials like sand, stone, etc.
5. Establish a repairs and maintenance fund through contributions from the community, and ensure smooth water supply with timely repairs and maintenance of the system.
6. Be responsible for protecting the water supply system.

World Neighbors agreed to help by carrying out a feasibility survey and providing all of the necessary polythene pipes of different sizes, fitting materials, etc.

The community, thrilled about the idea of the water tank, banded together to complete the project. World Neighbors and volunteers from Kalimpong Silent Workers Association (KSWA), a partnering organization, worked with the community during the project, however, one person from each household was assigned to

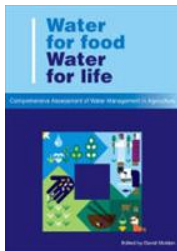


work on the water project. Mr. Dil Bahadur Budhathoki, an elderly man with no family in the village, was assigned the task of team leader and organized the daily activities. After three months of very hard labor, 124 households had tap stands with potable water near their doorsteps. A second water project was initiated and 5 taps were constructed, which provided water to 23 more households. The project also benefited 700 students of the nearby school and other local community people. The entire project took one year to complete.

Man Kurmari Rai tells how her daily life was completely transformed after the water project. ***"This water has changed my whole life. Now, I have enough time to work in my kitchen garden, to look after my children and livestock, and I'm also involved in some income generating activities. I have started a small grocery shop to help support my livelihood and it is generating a good income. The pig-raising business that I started with the loan from the Savings and Credit Group has been beneficial. The most important thing is that I have no worry for water. That has helped me and my husband considerably to reduce our tension in other aspects as well. My children's health has improved noticeably and they also go to school."***

World Neighbors programs in South Asia had never funded such a large project of this length (almost six miles) from the source to the reservoir tank. Thanks to World and the hard work of so many villagers, this community now has water 24 hours a day for drinking, washing, cleaning and irrigating kitchen garden.

On the Shelf



Water for Food, Water for Life: A Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management

The Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture critically evaluates the benefits, costs and impacts of the past 50 years of water development, the water management challenges communities are facing today, and solutions people have developed. The results will enable better investment and management decisions in water and agriculture in the near future and over the next 50 years. The assessment is produced by a broad partnership of practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

CEDICAM founder awarded Goldman Environmental Prize

Jesús León Santos gives his speech at the 2008 Goldman Prize ceremony in San Francisco
Photo: Courtesy of the Goldman Environmental Prize



Jesús León Santos, of the Centro de Desarrollo Integral Campesino de la Mixteca (*CEDICAM*) in Oaxaca, Mexico, was awarded the prestigious [Goldman Environmental Prize](#) – “the world’s largest prize honoring grassroots environmentalists.

In the early 1980s, World Neighbors initiated programs in the Mixteca region of Oaxaca. After experimenting with different approaches to find what worked, Jesús and other local Mixtecan villagers eventually began to address the terrible soil erosion and low production in their communities. The participants formed a local organization called CEDICAM to coordinate and spread the experimental work. Through hard work, determination and ingenuity, CEDICAM and the communities where they work were gradually improving their lives and recovering their ecosystem. World Neighbors gave support over the years to strengthen the work in Oaxaca, but World Neighbors phased out of its support to CEDICAM in 2003 – hoping that local leaders would continue the process.

To learn more about Jesús León Santos' and to view a video, visit the [Goldman Environmental Prize Web site](#).

Turn everyday shopping into meaningful contributions

Almost \$150 billion was spent on online shopping in 2005 and that number is expected to reach \$349 billion by 2010. Now, you can now help raise money for World Neighbors – without writing a donation check!

World Neighbors eMALL let's you shop online as you normally would, but now your everyday purchases can also generate a contribution to help us support our programs – *just with one extra click*. Hundreds of retailers – including Amazon, eBay, Macys and Target will contribute to World Neighbors when you visit your favorite sites through World Neighbors eMALL at www.shopfortheworld.org. You get the same products for the same price, but now your shopping can support World Neighbors work at the same time.



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