

Small WORLD

Issue 72 January 2021

A photograph of a woman in a maroon cardigan and a colorful patterned headscarf, smiling and holding a bunch of green beans. She is standing in a field of green plants, possibly a bean field. The background is slightly blurred, showing more greenery and a dirt path.

Launching our exciting new
campaign, Turning the Tables
on Climate Change in Nepal
with UK Aid Match

**Practical
ACTION**

Big change starts small

A BIG OPPORTUNITY FOR A



I'm pleased to welcome you to the latest issue of *Small World*. This issue includes a special feature on our new Turning the Tables on Climate Change UK Aid Match appeal, focusing on my home country – Nepal.

Nepal is small – about two thirds the size of the UK, with a population of 30 million. But it is diverse in ethnic groups: more than 100 languages are spoken here. We have a diverse landscape too, ranging from 70 metres above sea level to the highest peak in the world, Mount Everest.

Communities living in the Himalayan mountains face many challenges.

Landslides and flooding are common during the June–October monsoon, when 80% of Nepal's annual rainfall occurs. In this extreme terrain it has been historically difficult to establish any kind of infrastructure, so many people live without a robust drinking water system or irrigation channels for farmers in the hills.

On top of these challenges, climate change is creating disastrous consequences for the poorest communities. Families rely mostly on subsistence farming to survive, but changing temperatures and inconsistent rainfall patterns are causing crops to fail.

Nepal's carbon output is responsible for just 0.27% of global warming. So while the poorest mountain communities are not responsible for causing climate change, they are suffering some of the worst effects.

Life at the top of the world is challenging.




BIG IMPACT

Our Turning the Tables on Climate Change appeal offers a big opportunity to make a big impact on the lives of vulnerable communities in Nepal and around the world.

I'm excited for you to learn more about the amazing transformation we'll be helping to create in three districts of Nepal. My colleague Prabin will tell you about it in more detail in the special feature on pages 7–11.

Thank you for your vital support.



Achyut Luitel
Regional Director, Nepal and South Asia

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Cover image
Climate-resilient
farming in Nepal.

FSC Logo
to go here

The challenge of farming in a **CRUEL CLIMATE**



Many farmers in drought-prone Zimbabwe must walk kilometres to get water from a borehole.

We talk to Chris Henderson, our head of agriculture, about the challenge of climate change for the world's poorest farmers.



How is climate change impacting farmers?

It's wreaking havoc with the weather systems that they rely on. As temperatures rise, pests and diseases that blight crops increase. Rainfall is unpredictable. The start and end of seasons is in flux,

making it difficult to know what to plant and when to harvest. When rain does come, it's often violent. In drought-prone areas like Sudan and Kenya, when heavy rain hits soil that's dried to a crust, it cannot penetrate the ground. It runs off and creates flash floods in the desert. Flooding is a problem for communities in Bangladesh and Nepal too. Here, communities are seeing floods erode their land and wash away their crops and homes.

Altogether, the effects of climate change are making agriculture less viable or even impossible in developing countries. People can't even grow enough to feed themselves. Climate change means families going hungry.

Where do you begin to solve huge challenges like that?

Almost everywhere we're working, from Peru to Kenya to Nepal

and Sudan, we always come back to the landscape, and the trees, animals and plants in that landscape. So many of the problems that communities face are caused by biodiversity loss and deforestation. The environment is degraded.

Almost every solution begins with improving the diversity of the plants in the landscape. The best way to cope with unpredictable rainfall and drought risk is to increase the ability of the soil to act like a sponge and hold water. To do that you need to get organic matter into the soil. So we work with communities to strengthen their practices like composting, mulching, and crop rotation, and to incorporate trees in their farming systems. This makes soil fertile, and fertile soil produces abundant, nutritious food. We call it regenerative agriculture.

What is Practical Action's vision for the future of farming?

Our vision is a system where agriculture works for struggling smallholder farmers. Where farmers can adapt to climate change and grow plenty to feed themselves and their families, with extra to sell at market to make a decent income. Our vision is for farmers in poor communities to be part of a flourishing rural economy. One based on nature-friendly farming, using new climate adaptive techniques, and harnessing local resources and knowledge.

Where do you think Practical Action can make the biggest impact?

It's about connecting what we know works in practice with the

governing bodies who make the policies that shape the farming landscape.

I could take you to hillside coffee farms in Peru where we've worked with the community, and you can see the difference that new farming techniques are making to them. But the difference we're working to make goes way beyond the individual community. We need the coffee sector to change. And that's about building partnerships, and building trust with local government, and through strong relationships changing the systems and policies that govern farming.

My job as Practical Action's head of agriculture is to pull together all the richness of our agriculture work around the world and connect it to the wider international challenge – achieving the Sustainable

Development Goals set by the United Nations. Goal one is to eliminate poverty, and goal two is to create food security and eradicate hunger by 2030. These goals will only be achieved if agriculture works for the majority of smallholder farmers.

The important thing to note is that nature-friendly farming helps mitigate against climate change by locking carbon in the soil. Using regenerative agriculture, rural farmers both adapt to climate change and help lessen its effects. That's how together we can Turn the Tables on Climate Change.

Help us work with communities to rise to the challenge of climate change by making a gift at: practicalaction.org/smallworld

The right knowhow can make farming climate-resilient.





Planting for Progress project work has started and the community is excited to begin the transformation.

The tables are already turning in Zimbabwe



An update from Kudzai Marovanidze, South Africa

regional director, on our Planting for Progress project.

As I write this, it is the beginning of the rainy season in Zimbabwe. We're hoping to receive "good" rain, because for the last three years, there has been severe drought. Rural farmers haven't even been able to grow enough food to feed themselves. This is why the Planting for Progress project is so important.

The project is working with poor, rural communities, particularly women farmers, in two of the driest parts of Zimbabwe: Gwanda and Bulilima. With new skills and solar irrigation technologies, communities will be able to grow plenty of nutritious food to eat, plus extra to sell for an income.

The project launched at the end of 2019, with the last 12 months being the planning phase. This has involved meetings with members of the rural district council, the government's departments of agriculture and irrigation, and community leaders. Together with hydrological surveyors, we have identified sites where there is good availability of underground water. And we have begun the process of finding the company that will drill the boreholes that, together with solar powered pumps, will bring year-round crop irrigation to farmers.

The coronavirus pandemic has created many challenges for the project. Our top priority was to ensure the safety of our staff and the communities we are working with. We were grateful to the funder, UK government, who supported us in getting the personal protective equipment we needed. We are also working to strengthen the communities' response to coronavirus by ensuring they have the water points and hygiene practices they need to keep themselves safe.

We have adjusted some of the project stages, so that progress

can still be made while movement of staff is restricted. As a result, we were able to make an early start on community training materials for the climate-resilient farming workshops we will run.

Despite the challenges, we are all excited to see the project taking shape. Ellina Ncube, a farmer from Gwanda said:

"I cannot begin to describe how happy I feel. The expectation of getting a reliable water source is making me restless. Morale in the community is high and everyone is motivated. We want to make this desert area green through our hard work. We want to show our grandchildren what is possible."



Thank you to everyone who supported the 2019 Planting for Progress UK Aid Match

appeal, which made this work possible. We'll keep you updated on this, and other global climate change adaptation projects, in future issues of *Small World*.

Turning the tables on CLIMATE CHANGE IN NEPAL



Prabin Gurung, from our team in Kathmandu, introduces you to the determined mountain communities of rural Nepal for this year's UK Aid Match appeal.

The people of remote, mountainous Nepal live in one of the harshest environments on Earth. From generation to generation they have survived by passing their farming skills and their deep understanding of the land and the weather to their children.

Survival has always been tough here, growing just enough food to eat, heaving heavy loads up

and down treacherous mountain tracks. But today, climate change is making life even harder. In the monsoon season, torrential rain and floods destroy crops and cause landslides. Rising temperatures mean new crop pests and diseases that blight harvests. And the dry season is drier than ever before, so water for drinking and watering crops runs short. The added impact of

the pandemic threatens to tip vulnerable families over the edge.

Since my first visit to these communities in 2013, I've seen for myself how hard life is here. But I've also seen what's possible when a community gets the opportunity and knowhow to change things. Let me show you the transformation we're hoping to help bring to the districts of Rukum, Rolpa and Dang.



Farming is a way of life in the mountains, but it's no longer enough to make a living.

Your gift will help communities around the world to Turn the Tables on Climate Change. Every pound you donate will be matched by the UK government, up to £2 million, which will go directly to helping communities in Nepal.



Together we can help Radhika overcome a mountain of obstacles

In the district of Dang, I spoke with farmer Radhika Pariya. She is no stranger to hardship. Her parents passed away when she was small, and she grew up with her brothers in poverty.

Like most people in the mountains of rural Nepal, Radhika is a subsistence farmer. She faces enormous challenges just to survive. She told me:

“There are a lot of problems. We don’t get seeds and fertilisers on time. There’s no proper irrigation facility. There’s no fixed marketplace to sell the produce.”

And climate change is making matters much worse: *“It was raining till yesterday so we couldn’t plant mustard, but the time for planting mustard is almost over. Likewise, sometimes when we need rain, it doesn’t rain. Currently our corn plants are attacked by insects too. It’s not the first time. Last year and the year before, our cornfields were attacked and it all went to waste.”*

Radhika has always fought for a better life for people like herself. She has used her singing and dancing skills to raise awareness of social justice issues. And

recently, she ran as a candidate in local elections. She is passionate about creating change for women farmers like herself.

I asked Radhika why the majority of the farmers I’d seen at work in her community were women. She told me, *“Even after giving one hundred percent while farming, the produce we get from our field is enough to last only for a maximum of six months. To make a living for the remaining six months, men from our community go to India or other countries to earn.”*

While the men are away working as daily wage labourers, the women are left with a punishing workload. Their day begins at 4am, with long walks on steep mountain paths to fetch water and firewood for cooking. Then they must attend to the needs of their children and older relatives before going to their fields to farm.

The extreme challenges that Radhika faces every day are common to most people in this region. But big change is possible.

Meet more of the people we’ll be working with at practicalaction.org/smallworld



We can’t wait to begin work with Radhika’s community to Turn the Tables on Climate Change.

Innovative solutions for better lives

In our long experience working with communities in Nepal, we've learned so much. Together, we have developed innovative approaches that have helped many thousands of rural farmers like Radhika to Turn the Tables on Climate Change and build brighter futures for their families. This is our five-point plan.



See the gravity goods ropeway in action at: practicalaction.org/smallworld

1. Water that creates abundance

Today, farmers waste hours every day hiking long trails to fill buckets with just enough water to drink and cook with. And with no water supply to irrigate fields, the fate of their crops is in the hands of the increasingly erratic rainfall.

But even in a remote, mountainous region like this, it's possible for communities to have water on tap for drinking, agriculture, and for their farm animals. Using solar energy and some clever engineering, water from rainfall and mountain springs can be captured, stored, and distributed to homes and fields on demand.

2. Farming skills that overcome climate change

Drought, floods and new pests are causing crops to fail. But with training, farmers can develop new skills in managing soil, water and nutrients, to grow crops more effectively, even in such challenging conditions. With access to modern weather information systems, they can better plan what to plant and when. And with smart seed selection, farmers can plant crops that are more resilient, growing in abundance, even when rain is scarce.

3. Market access that boosts income

Right now, farmers don't make enough money to survive. So, they must travel to cities and other countries

to work in poorly paid jobs as day labourers. But with the right help, the people here can move from farming to survive, to farming to earn a decent living.

IT services can help keep track of local commodity prices and know the right times to take the right produce to market. And getting goods to market will be a cinch with innovative new cable car systems: gravity goods ropeways, which use gravity to safely shuttle heavy goods up and down the mountain.

4. Business skills and new income streams

Facing prejudice and inequality, women have to work harder than anyone else and have a far poorer quality of life. But by equipping themselves with new business skills, they have an equal chance to achieve their ambitions. Farmers can build greater financial stability by developing more than one source of income. And with boosted financial understanding, they'll be able to take advantage of new support services, so they can grow their businesses and thrive.

5. Confidence that empowers women

Many women in rural Nepal face disadvantage and discrimination daily. But through leadership training they can transform gender roles, participate in business, and have equal say in the future of their communities.

Help Turn the Tables on Climate Change with a gift today: practicalaction.org/smallworld

Welcome to a brighter future

In areas of rural Nepal where Practical Action has already worked, you can see the difference in the people's faces. It's in their smiles. You can feel the positive energy and sense of opportunity.

Tek's farm is flourishing

When Practical Action came to Bajura district in 2017, Tek Bahadur Thapa was one of thousands of farmers keen to learn about climate-smart agriculture and business skills. The new multi-use water system that we built with the community meant Tek could always irrigate his crops. Equipped with better business and farming skills, he began selling his produce at the nearby Bamka Bazaar. In recognition of his efforts, Tek received a special farming award from the President of Nepal.

We recently followed up with Tek to see how he was doing. Thanks to his dedication, Tek has been able to realise his big ambitions. He's been so successful that he has bought a bigger farm, where he now runs a banana business. The farmer who took over Tek's previous farm is continuing to grow more vegetables, so the benefit of this work continues to spread.



Tek uses his new skills to grow fruit and vegetables, despite climate change.

“We have so many natural resources in our country. If we give our best and work hard, then we can live a good life.”

Suchana's load has been lightened

I've seen for myself how steep and perilous the mountain paths of rural Nepal are. Accidents are common, sometimes even ending in tragedy. In the village of Mana, I met Suchana Mijar. Several

years ago, she'd had a dreadful accident on the paths while pregnant. She'd been carrying a heavy basket of grass, when she slipped and fell about 25 metres. She broke her shoulder and cut her face. *“I felt lucky to survive,”* she told me. *“But my baby is even luckier.”*

But now, cable cars powered by gravity have changed everything in Mana. This cable system uses gravity to move heavy goods downhill, while propelling another load uphill. It's a simple but ingenious engineering solution that needs no additional source of power. For Suchana, the ropeway is a life-saver.



The gravity goods ropeway has changed Suchana's life.

“I was very happy when I saw the ropeway working. My daughter will not have to carry heavy loads like her mother and grandmother. I believe she will have a healthier future.”

I could tell you about many other people whose lives I've seen transformed with training and ingenuity. Ganesh Bahadur Thapa has become the hub of his community, selling seeds and farming equipment. Kaldhari Devi Saud has become so skilled at farming commercially that her neighbours come to her for advice. And Ram Maya Rokaya found the strength to leave an abusive relationship and build a successful farming business by herself, with enough money to send her children to school.

There are still many more communities who need the chance to make this transformation for themselves. And today you have an opportunity to be part of that transformation.

Help more communities

TURN THE TABLES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

By making a gift today, you'll help us work with more vulnerable communities around the world. Every pound you give before 9 March 2021 will be matched by the UK government, and that money will enable us to work in three more districts of rural Nepal: Rukum, Rolpa and Dang, where farmers can create bright, secure and successful futures.

35,000 people will benefit from this work. 5,500 farmers (80% of them women) will transform farming into a business. One of them is Radhika Pariya, who you met earlier in this feature. So, if you can, please make a generous gift today. Thank you.

**Please support today at:
practicalaction.org/smallworld**



Given the opportunity and the knowhow, farmers like Radhika can grow successful futures.

**DOUBLE
YOUR IMPACT**

Please give today and every pound donated before 9 March 2021 will be matched by the UK government. Or start a new regular gift and up to three monthly gifts until 9th March 2021 will also be matched.

Matching your donations with

UKaid

Meet the **CHANGE-MAKERS**

Sharing Practical Action's stories is just one of the ways we create big change in the world. In this issue, we talk to two people who play an important role in sharing our stories with you. Meet Sanjib and Heather.



Sanjib Chaudhary

Stories Team, based in Nepal

What's your background?

By training I'm a chemical engineer but I switched to communications after completing my Masters. I've worked with the private sector, charities and government.

What does your role involve?

I'm responsible for collecting content from our regional and country offices – stories, photos and videos for our communication materials, campaigns, social channels and website.

I work together with our international communication and programme teams to get Practical Action's stories to a wider audience including our staff around the world.

Were you involved in the Turning the Tables on Climate Change appeal?

I've been coordinating the story collection for the campaign. We've been collecting the stories of people from Dang, Rolpa and Rukum districts.

Why is this work important to you?

It is a great opportunity to see the power of our work in action.



Heather Hurst

Supporter Development, UK

How has the pandemic affected your work?

I'm part of the team responsible for the fundraising communications that supporters receive. Although we've maintained most mailings, we also held the first ever supporter webinar in July, provided additional email updates and ways of engaging online. We were even able to phone some supporters to check in with them and say thank you. It's been a bit of a roller-coaster! We want supporters to feel good about backing the work we do, to really make it a positive experience. We've found some cracking ways to do that this year, and there are lots more in the pipeline.

What has surprised you most over the last 12 months?

In terms of Practical Action, that would be our supporters. The world is in chaos. We are all surrounded by uncertainty, and still those very special individuals who choose to support our work have really rallied behind us. No thank you letter can ever really impress on them just how grateful we are.

Read more about the Practical Action team at: practicalaction.org/smallworld

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED...



When you're solving the world's toughest problems, no question is too small. Here's what's been on your fellow supporters' minds this month.

Q Will the merger of DFID with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office impact your projects?

A The announcement earlier this year about the merger raised some questions about the future of the UK's efforts to end extreme poverty around the world. The projects that the Department for International Development (DFID) has funded are truly making a difference in improving the lives of the world's most marginalised people.

Working with Practical Action alone, DFID has funded projects which have helped hundreds of thousands of people take back control of their lives, adapt to climate change, and, most recently, become more resilient to coronavirus.

We are grateful to the new department, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), for their support of our upcoming project in Nepal to Turn the Tables on Climate Change (see pages 7-11).

It has never been more important that aid money is focused on the people who need it most; and we look forward to working with the new FCDO to play our part. FCDO representatives in Zimbabwe and Kenya have already met with our teams. We have briefed them on our projects and heard about the future opportunities to work together. We are concerned about the impact of the current cut in UK Aid, but we always ensure we are not reliant on a single donor. We will continue to help ensure that the 0.5% of UK GDP spent this year is used effectively to help the world's most vulnerable people.



Q I have supported Practical Action for a long time but still have to complete my personal details every time I donate online. Why don't you have a log in facility for existing donors?

A Thank you for your support and your patience. We want to provide a better experience for our supporters, but to do this, some of our systems require updating. We're currently reviewing where we need to invest to provide the best possible experience – including the point you raise. We hope it won't be too long before you can enjoy a more personalised experience with us.

What would you like to ask our experts about Practical Action's work?

Send your questions to: supporter.services@practicalaction.org.uk



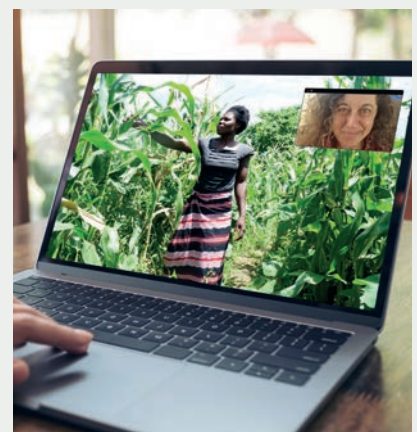
Virtually together

Virtual events prove popular to connect our supporters during the pandemic.

We were thrilled at the success of our first ever supporters' webinar event in July. The event included discussion about the impact of coronavirus, how Practical Action is challenging farming 'norms' around the world, and our work with farming communities in Zimbabwe. We got terrific feedback:

"I was riveted... I learnt LOADS and have loads more questions... always a good sign I feel."

Are you interested in attending an online talk? We've recently created a 30-minute talk to introduce groups to Practical Action online, and our volunteer speakers have already delivered the talk to many groups – from parents and pupils to a rambling group.



If you'd like to arrange an online talk for a group that you belong to, please contact **Adam.Walker@practicalaction.org.uk** or call **01926 634 478**

Saving seeds to **BOOST HARVESTS**



We're building long-term food security in Malawi with the innocent foundation.

Smallholder farmers across the developing world are struggling to grow enough food. Malawi is no exception. But there is hope in the traditional Malawian practice of saving seeds from one harvest to replant next season.

The *Farmer Saved Seeds* Project is bringing agricultural scientists together with local farmers to identify traditional crops that are most resilient to the effects of climate change. From this bank of hardy saved seeds, we will work with local government to create better ways for farmers to produce and trade seed, and build long-term food security.

Initially, the project will help 750 farming families, but we hope to roll out this innovative approach to farmers across southern Africa.

Ben Summers, innocent foundation director, said: *"We've been really impressed by how quickly this project is making a difference. Practical Action's requests have been adopted into the latest draft of national policy. In the community, over 450 farmers have received training, in a way that kept everyone safe from COVID-19."*

A BIG THANK YOU

Last year, your support helped to create change that's anything but normal.

In 2019-2020, you helped us do all this...

We delivered
105 PROJECTS
on the ground in
12 COUNTRIES
helping
2M PEOPLE
directly, and
3.1M PEOPLE
indirectly



News from our Education Unit

Our Education Unit has achieved so much over the last decade and more. Around 8 million pupils have been able to learn about sustainable development, learning problem solving skills along the way.

But sadly we have had to make the tough decision to close our education programme. With the ongoing impact of climate change and the pandemic, and against a backdrop of increasing uncertainty, we have refocused our resources to continue our core work with communities around the world.

Our education materials will remain available to download, for free, online. And we've created one last, brilliant, activity... Taking inspiration from our Turning the Tables on Climate Change in Nepal appeal, *Farmer's Footsteps* introduces pupils aged 8-14 to life in the mountains of Nepal. There, they meet six farmers, each with their own story to tell. Taking on

the role of the farmers, the pupils play a board game which brings to life the challenges of getting goods to market. However the dice roll, there's much to learn along the path!

Download *Farmer's Footsteps*, and all our other education resources, at www.practicalaction.org/schools



Your gift to help Turn the Tables on Climate Change

Giving online is quick and easy at practicalaction.org/smallworld

Please accept my donation by post of: £ _____

I enclose a cheque / postal order / charity voucher made payable to **Practical Action**

OR please debit my: MasterCard / Visa / Charity Card

Card number:

Expiry date:

 /

Signature: _____ Date: _____

So that more of your money goes directly towards our work we do not automatically post gift acknowledgements. Please tick here if you would like to receive one.

Please tick here to receive information about how to leave a gift to Practical Action in your Will.



Public funds donated to the Turning the Tables on Climate Change appeal will be used to support our work with communities around the world. Matched funding from the UK government will be used to fund our work in Nepal.

My personal contact details:

20/SC-CS002

Title: _____ First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

We will post you information about our work, fundraising activities and ways to get involved. If you are happy for us to provide this information by phone or email please provide your details:

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

We take protecting your personal information seriously. We will never sell or swap your details with another organisation. We aim to provide you with a great experience of Practical Action and to communicate with every supporter in the best way possible.

To do this, we may analyse your data and obtain further information about interests, preferences and level of potential donations using publicly available sources. We sometimes ask carefully selected companies to do this for us.

You can find out more about how we collect and use your personal information by reading our privacy notice at practicalaction.org/privacy. To change how we manage your personal information or opt out of receiving communications from Practical Action, call us on **0800 389 1624** or email myprivacy@practicalaction.org.uk

Maximising the impact of my gift

giftaid it

Yes, I would like Practical Action to treat this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years as Gift Aid donations. I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in the tax year it is my responsibility to pay the difference. Gift Aid will be used to fund all of Practical Action's work. **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____

Please note HMRC requires us to have your full name and address above to Gift Aid your donation.

Thank you

Please return in the envelope provided: Practical Action, The Robbins Building, 25 Albert Street, Rugby CV21 2SD

You can also donate by calling **0800 389 1624** (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

Make a Will

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The uncertainty of the last few months has led many people to re-evaluate what matters most to them.

Making a Will ensures the people and issues you care about are taken care of, and not left to chance. So if you're looking to take control of your affairs, and write or update your Will, our free guide can help get you started.

And if you're shielding there's no need to put it off, as new legislation means Wills can now be witnessed over video links in some instances - your solicitor will be able to advise.

To request our free Wills guide visit practicalaction.org/leave-a-legacy or email: Liz.Webb@practicalaction.org.uk

