

BUILDING AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE HOMES AFTER THE 2015 EARTHQUAKE

REALL HAS BEEN WORKING IN NEPAL TO BUILD A COMMERCIALY VIABLE AFFORDABLE HOMES MOVEMENT SINCE 2011, PARTNERING WITH LUMANTI.



AFTER LOSING THEIR HOUSE IN THE EARTHQUAKE, CHAKRA, WHO IS BLIND, AND HER HUSBAND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES BY CONSTRUCTING A NEW AFFORDABLE HOME.

BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE

Chakra and her husband live in Thecho, located south of Kathmandu. They resided in a small traditional home, made from sun dried bricks with no toilet or household water. Chakra is blind, and was completely reliant on her husband. He looked after her; helping her up and down the stairs, cooking their food, and taking her outside to the bush when she needed the toilet.

Although life was difficult, they were able to receive a senior citizens allowance from the government. They had neighbours who would look out for them, and often bring them food. But in 2015, the earthquake which displaced almost 2.8 million people throughout Nepal, hit Kathmandu Valley. Chakra and her husband were home at the time and their house collapsed on top of them.

THE AFTERMATH

Luckily, neither Chakra or her husband were injured in the disaster, and neighbours arrived quickly at their home to help them out of the wreckage. Their house had been completely destroyed so they sought refuge for a week in a temporary shelter, which consisted of a plastic polytunnel under which many people slept. It was very

“WE WERE SO HAPPY WHEN WE FINALLY MOVED BACK TO THECHO. WE FELT THAT NOW WE CAN DIE IN PEACE IN OUR OWN HOME!”

cold at night, and especially difficult for Chakra with her condition. She developed asthma and feared for her safety, struggling to sleep in the unknown environment.

After their sons came to fetch them from the shelter they stayed with them in Pokhara for a year, but Chakra and her husband missed their community. They decided to move back to Thecho and lived in rental accommodation. However, rental prices were high and the most they could afford was a single room in accommodation where the sewers leaked through the floor.

A NEW LIFE

After three years of living in the rental property, Chakra and her husband heard about the housing project Kathmandu - [Bisnu Devi Mahila SACCOS](#), which was

developed by Reall and Lumanti through the Bisnu Devi Women's Cooperative. Lumanti assisted the couple in accessing a reconstruction grant from the government, and offered them the option of taking out an additional microfinance loan with the cooperative. With both sets of funding, they were able to construct a new house of their own within their community.

THE IMPACT

The project meant that the couple were able to properly move back into their community, and live in a home that is both hygienic and safe. Their new house is much bigger than the previous traditional home, and can even accommodate guests for when their sons visit from Pokhara.

Most significantly, the new house has given Chakra far greater independence than even before the earthquake. She is now able to move around the house unaided, and feels secure enough for her husband to leave her alone while he goes shopping. A toilet is also under construction in the house, which will mean that Chakra will no longer need her husband to go with her outside. The project has given the elderly couple a sense of peace and comfort that had been missing since the earthquake hit.