

Clean Water in Nepal

When people have clean water, they are healthier.

What would life be like if you didn't have clean water to drink? Thirteen-year-old Manita* knows—and she's seen how clean water makes life better.

Manita lives in the village of Ambote in Nepal. A few years ago, before they had clean water, life was very different. Families had to get water from streams high up in the mountains. But climbing there was really hard. Carrying the heavy water was a lot of work. Even worse, the water outside wasn't protected from germs. Almost everyone in the community got sick often, just from drinking the water!

In fact, 700 people had to go to the local health clinic each month in 2010. But not anymore. Today, only about 65 people visit the health clinic each month—a huge difference. How did this happen? Ordinary people around the world raised money to build a new water system!

Here's how the new water system works. Giant pipes capture the natural spring water high up on the mountain. Gravity pushes the water down to faucet stands located throughout the community.

Instead of having to climb and search for water to carry home, now families can turn on a faucet right next to their homes. And



because the water is protected from germs, the health of the community has been transformed for the better.

"Before the water project came in, we had more sick people in the village," Manita shared.

For kids like Manita, better health means being able to go to school. Now she can study math, science, English, and Nepali with other 9th graders. That means Manita can dream bigger!

"I want to be a scientist," Manita declared. "I want to make medicines to cure the ill." With clean water and an education, Manita can work on keeping her community healthy for years to come!

** Name has been changed to protect privacy.*

Hunger in Missouri

Filling backpacks and hungry tummies

One in six American children aren't sure where they will find their next meal. Kitiana, a 10-year-old from Springfield, Missouri, is one of the children who face hunger.

"When I was really young, I walked in the kitchen thinking, 'What's for breakfast?' But there was nothing in the cabinets, and I thought, 'Oh no,'" remembers Kitiana. "My mother caught me digging in the cabinets and said, 'Sorry, we can't have anything for breakfast, lunch, or dinner today.' So we just snacked a little. It made me feel so hungry. It felt pretty bad."

Now Kitiana and her brother, Thomas, a first-grader, live with their grandma. Their grandmother used to work, but had to stop after adopting her grandchildren. Kitiana and her brother take food home every week through the Backpack Program.

The Backpack Program provides hungry children with backpacks full of nutritious and easy-to-prepare food on Friday afternoons so they have food to eat throughout the weekend. During the week, children can get food at school.

The Backpack Program is one way that local food banks are helping to keep children safe from hunger. A food bank



is an organization that gives free food to people who need it.

"My favorite thing in the backpack is the spaghetti and chocolate milk," Kitiana says. "It makes me feel fantastic to bring the backpack home!"

Kitiana explains that because her grandmother sometimes gets sick and can't cook a lot of food, she has the children grab something from their backpacks to help when they're hungry.

"I'm glad the Backpack Program is here, because we have enough now, but one day we could run out of money and run out of food, but at least we'll have things from our bags."

A Path to Education in Bhutan

Education creates possibilities for the future.

Every morning, when Pema* was four, he would walk through fields of rice and corn in the country of Bhutan.

But unlike the rest of his family, Pema would keep going—past the fields that his relatives worked for generations. After 15 minutes climbing the foothills of the Himalayan mountains, he'd reach his destination: an old building that has been turned into a preschool.

Pema's district is one of the poorest in the country. It's also *remote*, which means it's far away from where other people live, so it's difficult to connect children to schools. Many children fall behind in reading, writing, and math before finishing first grade.

To help, organizations trained preschool teachers throughout Bhutan to help children like Pema learn and stretch their imaginations.

"I like all the learning corners," Pema said about his preschool. His favorite corner was pretend play. There, he could pretend to be a farmer like his parents, shop at the market, work at the local health center, or cook a Bhutanese meal.



"Before the training, pretend play here was playing with dolls," the teacher explained. "Now we include community elements, like the farming tools. The children take interest because they have seen their parents using these and doing this."

But there's nothing imaginary about the skills Pema developed. His mother, Jamba, said, "Compared to his siblings, Pema is starting much earlier. He knows his ABCs and is starting to read." This was important preparation for elementary school.

Although Jamba is unable to read or write, she knows that once a path for education is created, the possibilities are endless.

* Name has been changed to protect privacy.