

## Age Does Not Matter to Open Your Eyes

Bharat Jung Shah  
NEWAH, Central and Western Regional Office  
Bharatpur Chitwan  
Project funded by: Simavi, The Netherlands



Forty nine year old Shamsheer Nepali did not really regret for not having studied in his young age. He was born at a time when the poor did not send their children to school. Shamsheer took his illiteracy for granted, because he was part of a community where lot like him were illiterate. But, for the first time he actually regretted about this missed opportunity when trainings were organised on different themes through the water, health and sanitation project implemented in his community Olang.

Olang, is a community that falls in Muchowk VDC, Ward No. 3, Gorkha district, located at a distance of more than 12 Kms. North West from the district headquarter and along the banks of the Daraudi River. When a maintenance caretaker training was being organised in the community during the construction phase of the water supply scheme, Shamsheer felt confident that he would qualify for the job, provided that he received the training. He requested the members of the users committee to enrol him for this training. Since the maintenance caretaker needed to understand about simple measurements, a literate person was preferred. Seeing Shamsheer so enthused, at the end he was included. He was determined to take support from his literate friends to learn all that was taught during the training.

In this three days basic training for the maintenance caretakers it was very hard for him to understand and follow everything. Nonetheless, he completed the training course with the help of the other literate participants. Shamsheer decided to make an attempt to use the traditional / non standard forms of measurement to do this work, such as finger length for centimetres and inches, palms length for feet and hand for meters.

The learning from the training opened doors for Shamsheer to earn some income. During the project period he managed to earn 3,500 rupees. He realised that if a three days training could generate such an opportunity for him, had he gone to school for some years it would have made his life much easier. The lesson from this experience makes him strongly feel that everyone needs to send their children to school no matter how hard they may have to struggle.

*April 2009*