



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

LAXMI'S STORY (NEPAL)

PRIMARY (3–6)
CASE STUDY AND
ACTIVITIES



Photo credit: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

LAXMI'S STORY

NEPAL



Laxmi is 16 years old and lives with her mother and siblings in Jajarkot, a remote district in Nepal where almost half of the population live below the poverty line. Her family's house is situated next to a giant suspension bridge – the second biggest in Nepal – which stretches over the mighty Bheri River.

Despite her family not having very much money, Laxmi's parents were determined that their daughter receive an education.

“Even though I didn't go to school, I wish my children to live a happy life and earn well,” Mankala, Laxmi's mother, said.

Laxmi loved going to school. She joined a child's club at her school that was run with the support of Caritas Australia's partner, Caritas Nepal. The club supports students to participate in extracurricular activities to develop their speaking, writing and leadership skills through activities such as debating competitions and essay writings. The children also organise awareness-raising activities such as public rallies, street dramas and putting up posters to highlight different issues such as child rights.

Sadly, tragedy struck when Laxmi's father, who worked hard to pay for his children's education, passed away. Laxmi stopped attending her classes for a while but, with the encouragement of her mother and fellow students in the child's club, Laxmi returned to school.

“If I don't get to study, then I'll experience hardship. I'll have to struggle like mother. I know we can only get good employment after we study,” Laxmi said.

Laxmi (16) organising group games with child's club members at her old school in western Nepal.

Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

LAXMI'S STORY

NEPAL



After Laxmi returned to school, she became more actively involved in her child's club and developed greater confidence. Keen to take on a leadership role, Laxmi was elected as the chairperson of her club!

"Before I was involved in child club, I was very shy and didn't talk much," Laxmi said. "Now, I talk to everyone, laugh with them. Teachers tell me, "You used to be so quiet. Why are you so noisy now?"

Laxmi's grades have excelled since joining the child's club – she is the top of her class in many subjects and has received a number of prizes in recognition of her academic achievements. But her proudest achievement is something that will have a lasting impact for future generations: water taps!

Clean water has long been an issue at Laxmi's school. Laxmi and her child's club members discussed the need to build multiple water taps at the school so all students can access clean drinking water. They lobbied the school administration, the ward office and the municipality office until they eventually agreed to construct a series of water taps on the school grounds. This experience made Laxmi realise that her voice matters, that her actions can make a difference.

Laxmi has graduated from high school and is now studying a Diploma in Civil Engineering at a technical school. Her dream is to work as an engineer and create a better life for her mother who is working from dawn to dusk every day to support her children.

Laxmi continues to be involved in the child's club, serving as an advisor. She attends the meetings regularly, mentoring the next generation of young leaders at her old school.

"Even though I don't study in this school now, I want them to learn from the things I did. Teach them what they can do," Laxmi said.

Every time Laxmi walks past her old school, she sees students using the drinking taps and feels immense pride at her accomplishments.

"This is my village. These things happened in my village, in my school," Laxmi said.

"Even if I go elsewhere for studies or employment, when I come back later in the future and visit the school, I'll see the taps. I'll reminisce about these memories and feel really happy."

Since 2018, Caritas Nepal has supported more than 5,000 children through the child's clubs.



Along with your support, this program is supported by the Australian government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

LAXMI'S STORY

LEARNING TASKS



Read Laxmi's Story (Nepal) and watch '[A Day in the Life](#)' film.

TASK 1: DISCUSSION

- Why was it hard for Laxmi to go to school?
- What kinds of activities happen at the child's club?
- How does Laxmi describe how she has changed?
- What is Laxmi's greatest achievement so far?
- How is Laxmi supporting future generations?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- How will you share Laxmi's story with others?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 2: KAHOOT! QUIZ

Test students' knowledge of Laxmi's story by playing the [KAHOOT!](#)

Curriculum links: English, HASS, Mathematics

TASK 3: POSTERS - GLOBAL ISSUES

Through the child's club, students learn about their rights and then raise awareness in the broader community by holding rallies and putting up posters.

For this task, in groups, students raise awareness about the work of Caritas Australia by creating posters to display around their classroom or school.

Students choose which [global issue](#) they would like to focus on. E.g., Education, Water, Food, Inclusion of people living with disabilities, First Nations Australian participation, climate change, etc.

Provide students with criteria for their poster. For example: Caritas Australia's logo, global issue heading, statistic, how Caritas Australia is responding to the global issue, how we can help by donating to Caritas.

Curriculum Links: English, HASS, Health and Physical Education

TASK 4: WATER CHALLENGE

1 in 9 people worldwide do not have access to safe and clean drinking water - that's 780 million people.

Most of the world's population spends up to 3 hours a day to get the water they need to survive. They don't have taps in their houses, schools or even in their villages.

Challenge students to save 5 litres of water every day in the lead up to World Water Day on 22 March.

Organise a Water Challenge fundraiser for your class/school. Join your classmates on World Water Day and take your bucket of water on a 3 kilometre walk in solidarity with so many other communities around the world who don't have easy access to clean water. And you'll be helping raise money to help improve access to clean water for children around the world.

More water-themed activities and resources are available on our [website](#).

Curriculum Links: English, HASS, Health and Physical Education, Mathematics



TASK 5: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING (CST) LINK – HUMAN DIGNITY

Human Dignity

noun

- a belief that every person is made in the image of God and is intrinsically valuable and worthy of respect, simply because they are human
- a quality of being human, independent of ethnicity, creed, gender, sexuality, age or ability
- a reality challenged by poverty, hunger, oppression and injustice

A. How is Human Dignity demonstrated in Laxmi's story?

B. How is supporting Project Compassion one way you can uphold the dignity of others?

For more teaching resources on Human Dignity- refer to our [CST Toolkit](#)

Curriculum links: Religious Education

TASK 6: RE LINK

[Mark 10:13-16](#)

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

NRSVCE

- Read the above scripture passage.
- How does the above scripture passage relate to Laxmi's story?

(Jesus valued children, he taught his disciples that children had just as much right to see him and be blessed as the adults.)

Curriculum links: Religious Education

THANK YOU

PHOTO CREDITS

Laxmi's Story (Nepal) – Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

PRIMARY STUDENTS

Learning about people not having what they need to live a healthy and safe life can be hard. If you are feeling worried or upset about anything you have learnt about through this resource, make sure you talk to your teacher or a trusted adult. They can share your concerns via our [website](#).

Do you have an idea for how Caritas Australia can improve our school resources? We would love to hear it! Please email education@caritas.org.au

TEACHERS

For more school resources, please visit: caritas.org.au/resources/school-resources/

Stay up to date with events and resources! Subscribe to [Caritas Australia's Education e-newsletter](#)



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