

GOOD  
CHANGES  
2019-2021



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2019-2021

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# Support Paves Way For Success

Parbati is the eldest among six sisters. Her parents are farmers and seasonal day laborers. Although the Rokayas owned 25 goats, being a large family of nine, most of their income was spent on food. The livestock they had and the crops they grew were barely enough to feed them for four months. Educating Parbati and her five younger sisters naturally took the backseat in such a circumstance. Despite being one of the brightest students in her class or school, Parbati forwent school and helped her parents at home.

Parbati went to one of the GNI Nepal-supported schools in the district. Aware of her long absence from school, teachers and neighbors--who knew her well--were concerned about her studies and future. Desiring to see her back in school, they referred her to GNI Nepal's sponsorship program.

During the new sponsorship child enrollment that year, GNI Nepal staff members visited Parbati's home. In 2011, as a second-grader, she was enrolled in GNI Nepal's sponsorship program, which was instrumental in paving her way back to school. All the necessary educational materials including routine health checkups were covered.

In 2019, Parbati completed her Secondary Education Examination (SEE) from Shree Mandhara Secondary School with a 2.85 GPA. At the school's Farewell Program, she was also felicitated as one of the 'Best Volleyball Players'.

Currently, Parbati is working as a sub-overseer at Birendra Nagar Technical College in Surkhet District. She shared, "My struggle towards achieving higher goals has just begun and I shall continue working harder."



**PARBATI ROKAYA**

Shree Mandhara Secondary School

Ward No. 4, Kharpunath Rural Municipality, Humla District



# 'Open-sky' ECED Center Gets A Brand New Building

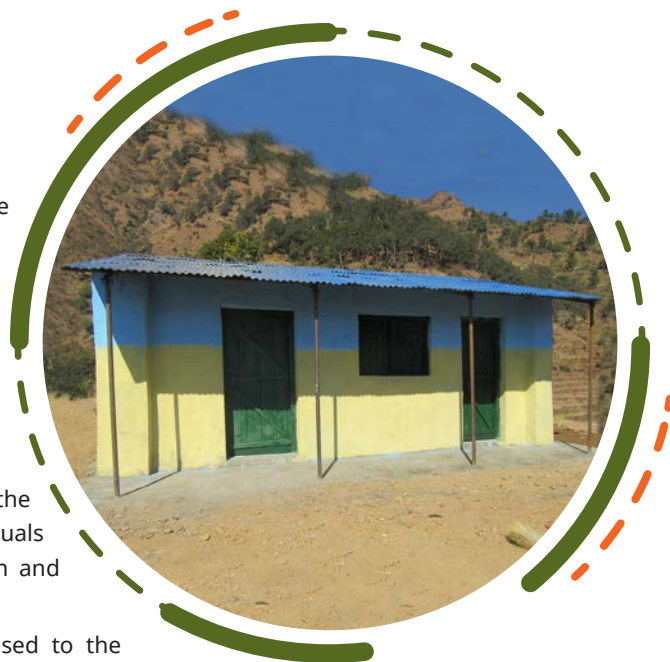
Due to poverty, low level of education, unemployment, and lack of marketable skills, the majority of the head of the families in Sunbasta, especially fathers are compelled to go to India looking for jobs.

Although the residents were well aware of the importance of education, no school in the village could be sighted. Students would have to make an hour-long arduous journey to get to the nearest school. Meanwhile, many school-age children would be herding cattle, helping with domestic chores, or idling away whole days in the woods.

Education-minded locals for putting these kids in a school began the establishment of Laligurans Balbikash Kendra. But these motivated individuals could not manage to build a building for the early childhood education and development (ECED) center. Thus the children learned under the open sky.

Concerns were raised in the community about children learning exposed to the elements. The rural municipality deliberated on the issue and approached GNI Nepal. Along with the funds and technical support for the building construction, GNI Nepal also provided the center with learning materials.

Now, these young learners can reach their place of learning in just fifteen minutes. Proximity and the new building had an immediate effect on the student attendance: it has increased by almost 60 percent. The all-new learning materials have also attracted more children and made learning easy for around 50 young pupils.



# A Poor Boy Finds His Way Back to School

Nepal is one of the countries in South Asia with the lowest per-capita income. With ever-rising inflation, rural Nepali families having sole income earner have high chances of falling under the poverty line – often left without basic human needs and robbed of a dignified life.

Shahil and his family shared a similar fate. His father, the only provider for the family of six, was a day laborer and a seasonal farmer who grew vegetables for daily consumption. Shahil was a bright student. But after he and his brothers realized that their father could not afford to buy them education materials and school uniforms, school turned into a wholly unpleasant experience for them. Shahil's passion for sports was also stifled.

The Tamata brothers thought they would be ridiculed for their poverty. Thanks to their unpleasant reality and perception, they all were on the verge of dropping out of school. The Tamatas' financial woes came to the fore when the school administration found out about Shahil and his brothers' absenteeism. The school appealed for help to GNI Nepal community facilitators.

In 2013, Shahil was selected for GNI Nepal's Sponsorship Program when he was a third-grader. He received all the necessary educational materials to attend school for seven years, until he passed his Secondary Education Examination (SEE) with a 1.8 GPA in the year 2020. By the time he was ready to go to college, Shahil was a confident chap and looked forward to the future optimistically. His school remembers him as a leader and an excellent athlete.

GNI Nepal's Sponsorship Program turned Shahil's life around by supporting his education. His parents understand the importance of education and they are doing all they can to support their children. Shahil shared, "I would have been left out if I had not found my way back to school."



**SHAHIL TAMATA, 17**

Shree Saraswoti Secondary School

Ward No. 6, Malikarjun Municipality, Darchula District

# Better Health Care Services for Outskirts Residents

Sangla Primary Health Care Center (PHCC) is situated in a semi-urban area 18 km north of Kathmandu. It serves a population of around 4,500 people. On average, 150-200 people visit the PHCC in a month.

Although serving a large number of people, the PHCC lacked equipment including microscopes for starting specialized services. As there was no alternative, patients were referred to urban hospitals even for minor tests. Referred patients had to take a long journey.

In 2017 GNI Nepal supported the health center with a microscope which enabled the testing and early detection of a wide range of diseases like diabetes, tuberculosis, and intestinal problems. The PHCC's lab has seen other upgrades recently allowing for enhanced testing.

Now 20-25 tests are done every month. After the support, 341 tests in total have been done including 86 total count, 86 differential count, 141 urine, 6 stool, and 22 sputum tests. Sanu Magrati, a 32-year-old local woman displaying tuberculosis symptoms was tested. Tuberculosis, the disease she was suffering from was correctly identified at the health care center.

Health in-charge, Mr. Badri Mainali shared, "The microscope has allowed us to make correct diagnosis and our ability to test and correctly diagnose different medical conditions has also increased greatly." Also, Dr. Ashish Mainali, Head of the Centre shared, "The equipment forms an essential part of our health services and now we make few referrals as we can test most of the cases at our center itself."



# Health-care Services At A Stone's Throw

Before the establishment of the Basic Health Unit, the 305 households of Baklauwa, Khairiphata walked for two to three hours (8 km long earthen road) to reach the health post in Patharaiya, one of the neighboring communities. You can imagine pregnant mothers, children, elderly, and the sick making this arduous journey on foot. Only the privileged could afford vehicular transportation and get the health services when they needed.

Since 2016, GNI Nepal has been strengthening the local health system in 13 districts including Kailali. After conducting a need analysis and multiple meetings with the local government and target community, GNI Nepal, local community, and local government contributed NRs. 250,585, 250,000, and 6,400,000 respectively towards the construction of the health unit. Although the building was inaugurated in 2018, it could not offer services well owing to a lack of health materials and equipment. The newly constructed building stood empty.

In 2019, GNI Nepal provided all the necessary furniture, surgical, and medical equipment worth NRs. 147,700. At present, this Basic Health Unit provides health care services from 10 am to 4 pm six days a week. Currently, three health care members and a support personnel serve at the facility.

According to the in-charge, Mr. Bishnu Thapa, the health facility has served 1,112 people in the last four months. The Ward Chairperson shared, "Number of periodic pregnancy and maternity check-ups has gone up. We are relieved to have a fully operational health facility and are planning to provide delivery services shortly."



# A Roof Over Young Pupils' Heads

Shree Kalratri Secondary School, a learning space for 229 pupils (96 boys and 133 girls) is served by 15 teachers (11 males and 4 females). It is one of the model schools in the district--having child-friendly infrastructure and other facilities.

The school started as a philanthropic educational effort by Mr. Ramjal Gurung, a retired Indian Army and resident of the same rural municipality. He started by giving lessons to some local students at a *chautara*, under a tree. He managed to pay salaries to other teaching staff by collecting donations from the locals.

After two years of teaching students out in the open, a school building was constructed using locally available resources and labor contribution. However, it was poorly built and on a narrow plot near a cliff. Also, a semi-concrete structure was constructed with the Chinese government's support. Unfortunately, the 2015 Earthquake razed it to the ground.

In 2014, GNI Nepal had started its interventions in the district. After conducting an earthquake assessment in its catchment areas, the school was identified as one of the many earthquake-affected schools in dire need of reconstruction support. With GNI Nepal's financial support of NRs. 36,400,000, an earthquake-resilient concrete building having 12 child-friendly classrooms and library and science and computer laboratories was constructed.

Now the school boasts of a beautiful and sturdy building. Gender-friendly toilets and drinking water facilities are available within the school premises. This has made it easier for both girls and boys to attend school regularly. The newly built compound wall and fence have added an extra layer of security to the new building and the school's physical assets. The Chairperson of Dharche Rural Municipality, Mr. Santosh Gurung expressed, "We plan to run a residential school and bring internet connectivity to our computer lab."





# Menstrual Myths And Fears Dispelled

Lack of awareness and menstrual hygiene materials in the local communities is rampant. Although Karisma wanted to manage her periods safely, she including her friends did not know anything more than general facts. Attending school, events, gatherings, and extra-curricular activities was inconvenient for them. Many times, during her period, Karisma had to leave the class in the middle. Since women and girls of Karisma's community used plain cloth pieces to stanch blood flow, they ran the risk of those pieces slipping off while they walked or moved around.

Karisma, being the child club president of her school, felt responsible to help her peers break this cycle of myths, taboos, fears, and inaction. Karisma and twenty-five other students from the school got the opportunity to participate in the menstrual hygiene management training organized by GNI Nepal. At the training, she and her friends learned about different aspects of menstrual hygiene and sanitary pad-making.

After the training, there's a positive change in the girls' behavior regarding menstruation. It has made easier for the girls to participate in extra-curricular activities. In the past, two-three girls used to leave classes due to menstrual difficulties everyday. The headteacher of the school Mr. Shankar Bahadur Shah said, "These days Karisma leads extracurricular activities at the school. Participation of female students has also increased under her leadership."

Karisma wants to teach sanitary pad-making skills to all adolescent girls of her schools. So far, she has taught five of her classmates to make sanitary pads. She also wants to spread her knowledge of menstruation among community members. No longer does Karisma fears or worry about menstrual difficulties but rather focuses on her studies.



KARISMA BK, 16

Ward No. 1, Khaptad Chhededaha Rural Municipality  
Bajura District

# Farmers Take A Second Chance At Coffee Farming

Kurga is a farming community of 450 households 30 km away from the district headquarter, Kushma. Subsistence agriculture is not a good livelihood option. Thus, the majority of the men leave for towns and cities in the country and abroad for employment.

Endowed with fertile soil, the Phalewas community has been cultivating coffee for the past decade. Around a hundred farmers cultivated coffee. It sold easily and fetched good prices initially. In the following years, demand for coffee plummeted, prices fell. These small-scale coffee farmers having no other option returned to engaging in what they knew how to and could do, which is traditional farming.

In 2018, GNI Nepal organized a meeting with the Parbat District Coffee Cooperatives' Union. After the meeting, 150 former coffee farmers were persuaded to take a chance on coffee farming one more time. 3,700 saplings, five kg seedlings, one coffee processing machine, materials, trainings, seminars, and exposure visits were provided to them.

Currently, 5,000 coffee plants are in the farmers' orchards and about 4,000 saplings in the two nurseries supported by GNI Nepal. Farmers collected 1,300 kg of coffee and produced 415 kg of parchment having a market value of NRs.400-450 per kg. A coffee sapling sells for NRs. 25. The processing machine is also rented out to farmers from neighboring communities.

Processor Tara Prasad Sharma says that this village is now well known in the area as a coffee village. Coffee has taken over traditional agriculture. To better market their coffee, he says they are reaching out to local as well as collectors in Pokhara and Kathmandu.



# Radio Classes, A Novel Form Of Teaching-Learning

Asish is a GNI Nepal sponsored child. During the nationwide Covid-19 lockdown, he had no one to play with but his brother. He missed going to school and meeting his friends. Most of the time, his family stayed indoors. Only his father went out to get groceries. Every day was as mundane as the other, with no signs of returning to school anytime soon. He had no idea that he would be away from school for months.

When the first lockdown was lifted, he would take the cattle to graze and meet his friends from around. They wondered how long the school would remain closed. They had heard about online classes but their school was not equipped with such a 'luxury'.

Many children like Asish awaited their future with uncertainty. To support unprivileged children without access to online classes, GNI Nepal produced and aired a Radio Schooling Program. Asish and his friends who whiled away their time remained seated in front of their radio and attended radio classes regularly. The instruction given by the teachers was easy and made Asish and all of his friends feel like being at school.

It is said that necessity is the mother of inventions. The pandemic taught students to explore novel ways of learning.



# Doubling Income In A Single Year

Saraswati Chaudhary and her family live in Tikapur Municipality in the Terai plains of Sudurpaschim Province. She and her husband till others' lands and occasionally work as day laborers that barely earns them NRs. 1,500 per day. However, there is no guarantee of finding work every day.

The Chaudharys were among those whose grueling efforts were only enough to feed themselves. Although one of their daughters was a GNI Nepal-sponsored child, ensuring education for the other two children (a son and daughter) was next to impossible.

GNI Nepal works with marginalized communities and poor households across Bardiya through agricultural and other income-generating activities. Saraswati was a member of Sunaulo Bhawisya Krishi Agricultural Cooperative supported by GNI Nepal.

At one of the cooperative's meetings, Chaudhary came to know about revolving fund and grant for its members. In 2015, she participated in an entrepreneurship development training where she learned about potential businesses, business plans, financial literacy. The same year, she received NRs. 42,000 as loan and NRs. 18,000 as a grant. Additionally, she invested NRs. 50,000 and started a banana farm. Initially, she planted 1,200 banana saplings in an area of 0.83 acres. Chaudhary earned a profit of NRs. 250,000 in the first year itself, more than two times her investment. She has paid about half of the loan and also managed to save some money after covering household expenses.

Kudos to her husband who has been helping her on the farm. Now, the couple plans to expand their farm double the current size and further upgrade it by adding drip irrigation, plastic tunnels, and planting hybrid varieties. Saraswati shared, "I am very motivated to turn this farm into our main source of income."





# Bumper Crop Brings In A Million

Shree Krishna's main source of income was traditional livestock rearing and agriculture. His income was barely enough for his family to get by. Being a hardworking person, he wanted to expand his agricultural pursuits but to no avail.

In a constant search of new opportunities, Krishna happened to attend a community meeting organized by GNI Nepal-supported Bhawani Agricultural Cooperative. In the meeting, a discussion on cardamom farming as a potentially viable business was held. Krishna did know a little about cardamoms, and he was stoked after hearing about it from the experts.

He applied to join the *elaichi bikash* (cardamom promotion) program and got selected. Each selected candidate was guided on preparing a business plan and analyzing potential local business opportunities. In 2017, Krishna participated in a two-day business literacy training and received 300 cardamom saplings. Initially, it was very difficult to take care of them. After three years of laborious efforts, his cardamom farm started to flourish. As his farm was doing well, he was given an additional 500 saplings each in 2018 and 2019.

In 2019, Gurung sought out his neighbors and local organizations for helping to building a cardamom drying kiln. Unfortunately, this idea of his remained a dream until GNI Nepal came to his rescue and provided him funds via Bhawani Agricultural Cooperative.

This year, Krishna's hard work has earned him NRs. 1,010,000 as he was able to produce and sell a ton of cardamom. At present, he is growing 10,000 cardamom saplings. Apart from cardamom, he also farms tomatoes, cauliflowers, onions, etc. as cash crops and has also increased his livestock. He shared, "Whatever happens, cardamom farming will always be my main source of income."



# Small Start, Big Dreams

Bardiya, a district in Lumbini Province is home to Kusum Chaudhary, her brother, and her parents. As the prospects of gainful employment seemed slim, her father, the sole provider of the family decided to go to India for work.

At home, the impoverished Chaudhary family suffered as usual: making ends meet was as hard as ever. Out of desperation and hope, Kusum took a three-month basic tailoring training. It did not go in vain; however, she did not learn the skills she was hoping to learn. With whatever little skills she had acquired, she started tailoring – offering her services to her neighbors – but hardly made any money.

Chaudhary realized that she needed to master tailoring if she was to make a living out of it. So, she joined a four-month advanced tailoring course with support from GNI Nepal. Kusum completed it and received a certificate. Kurthasurwal, maxi dress, blouse, cholo, shirt, hat, and other clothes she started making with the finesse befitting her certificate. All her friends and teacher encouraged her to start a tailoring shop. Later she opened one in her own house under the name, Kusum Ladies and Gents Tailor.

Now she makes NRs. 6,000 in a month, not a big sum but the prospects are not grim. Kusum saves NRs. 1,300 every month at Shree Asal Agricultural Cooperative. The rest of the monthly income is spent on household expenses, which is a big relief to her parents. Although her shop operates on a small scale and caters to her neighbors, her dreams are big—as they reach far beyond her small hamlet.



# Making Menstruation Safer And Dignified

Shree Saraswati Secondary School provides education for 259 students. 135 of them are GNI Nepal-sponsored children. A large number of these students belong to poor *Dalit* (highly marginalized occupational caste group) families.

Menstruation is commonly known as '*Chhau*' in the far-western region of Nepal which requires women to leave their house and live in small menstrual huts (*chhau goth*) — which are mostly suffocating and shabby— during their periods. Menstruating women and girls have to observe discriminatory practices and are prohibited from participating in regular activities.

GNI Nepal has been supporting the school with Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) interventions including equipment, medicines, and capacity building for teachers and students. Furniture to establish an MHM Corner was also provided. Now girls can take rest and cope with menstrual pangs and bleeding more easily.

These adolescent girls are overjoyed to have an MHM corner, materials, and knowledge.

The orientation has helped them to change their perspective about menstrual hygiene and menstrual taboos. The school's headteacher Mr. Narayan Giri stated, "After the program, there's a significant positive change and rise in school attendance among our adolescent girl students. I request GNI Nepal for the continuity of this program which has brought a positive change at our school and the community." Likewise, one of the teachers, Mr. Damodar Panta seconded Mr. Giri's views.

Focused interventions carried out by GNI Nepal have helped to raise awareness of MHM not only among adolescent girls but the community as a whole. Child club member Karishma said, "I'm much obliged to GNI Nepal for their MHM support and orientation. Many of my friends are getting the benefits. I'm planning to work with my child club to spread awareness about MHM."



# Keeping The Virus At Bay

Shree Prabhat Kiran Secondary School is a learning space for 149 students (87 girls and 62 boys). The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted education all over the world. Nepal, a developing country, was no exception. Children in rural areas are deprived of quality education and health care even in normal times. Not unanticipated, it got worse during the pandemic.

Headteacher, Mr. Jeet Bahadur Gurung had qualms over school reopening, as a substantial number of cases continued to be reported in Nepal. Maintaining proper hygiene and providing hygiene materials for all students and teachers was another challenge in itself.

During such a health crisis, schools also must take precautions and ensure the safety of all. As the school lacked funds, it struggled. Lack of awareness of handwashing, use of sanitizer, and physical distancing among students and community members was also rife, giving rise to a monumental challenge.

GNI Nepal has been working with schools in Gorkha District since 2014 and supporting schools to deal with an unprecedented health crisis was a given. GNI Nepal conducted a demonstration of proper handwashing methods and awareness programs on Covid-19. A handwashing facility was also constructed on the school premises.

Since the construction of the handwashing station, the risk of exposure to Covid-19 has decreased. This timely intervention has helped to bring changes in the hygiene practices of students and through them their family members as well. This has proved to be helpful in combating the deadly virus.

Thanks to the teachers and school management committee, the handwashing facility is still in operation. According to Mr. Gurung, the handwashing facility will be continued as long as the dangers of the coronavirus looms. After normalcy is restored, it will be turned into a drinking water facility.





# Alternative Livelihood, Alternative Identity

Mangal and his family are one of the 756 families residing in Chhayanth Rara Municipality, Ward No. 12. Most of these families engage in subsistence agriculture and herbs collection. Although the district has huge potential for tourism and herb farming, residents of the district are still mired in poverty, unemployment, and social vices.

Mangal Singh's story and life were no different. But he always had entrepreneurship on his mind. Wastage of locally produced wool caught his attention. He was well aware of the increasing demand for eco-friendly, non-hazardous, and authentic woolen wears in the market. He saw a viable business opportunity but lacked start-up capital.

GNI Nepal has been supporting Hatemalo Agricultural and Jadibuti Cooperative and provides revolving funds and grants for those aspiring to start a small enterprise/business. Mangal Singh collected NRs. 150,000 (NRs. 63,000 loan, NRs. 27,000 grant and NRs. 60,000 personal investment) and started a hosiery enterprise. With the amount, he bought a loom and wool, started producing and selling woolen coats, sweaters, gloves, socks, shawls, etc. from an outlet in the nearby village of Shoba.

Sawat earns around NRs. 16,000 per month. He also makes enough money to repay the loan. Income from the hosiery business has helped him to send his children to school. He has been a good example for his village that an income generation alternative is possible. He hopes that his fellow villagers will adapt to the changes and learn from him in the future.



# Young Learners Get A Safe Learning Space

Shree Saraswati Secondary School is a co-educational learning space for 240 students (136 girls and 104 boys) with 13 teachers (4 females and 9 males) on the staff. Public schools in Nepal have always been resource constrained. Since its establishment in 1957, the school faced all kinds of minor and major challenges. But undeterred, it has always strived to provide better education by upgrading classrooms, furniture, and improving physical infrastructure over time.

However, in the flood of 2015, the school playground, four classrooms, and all the learning materials were swept away. The school could no longer run classes for all students. Left with no alternative, the school conducted classes under the open sky and besides a riverbank raising concerns about the safety and security of the students.

GNI Nepal supported the construction of an early childhood education development (ECED) center building and gender-friendly toilets at a cost of NRs. 1,823,183 and NRs. 627,904 respectively, obviating the compulsion of running classes under an open sky and attending to nature calls haphazardly. Now classes run smoothly in the newly constructed and safe ECED center building. The toilet block has helped to ensure proper sanitation in the school.



# Community-based Learning Classes During Lockdown

Before the pandemic hit, everything was going normally in Alisha Budha's life. An eighth-grader at a public school, she went to school daily. As the nationwide lockdown progressed, life as we know came to a grinding halt. Alisha along with her family had to stay indoors. They had plenty of time but not much to do. She and her siblings spent many weeks away from school and academics took a back seat in their lives. They had heard about virtual classes but their rural school did not have such a facility.

In the second week of August 2020, GNI Nepal stepped in with 'coaching classes' for children of seven communities of Dhaulagiri Rural Municipality under a community learning center approach. Alisha and her siblings attended classes close to their home in a Covid-19 secure environment. Along with other students, they continued their studies in a classroom-like setting.

Unlike regular classes, these classes were run in open spaces for two hours a day and six days a week maintaining physical distance and all participants wearing masks at all times. At the end of each day, students were encouraged to showcase their hidden talents like singing, dancing, reciting poetry, or drawing. Alisha had never given a dance performance in her life. Nevertheless, she decided to give it a go. And to her surprise, she enthralled everybody present throughout her performance. Her parents were the happiest people in the audience as they saw how much good she was at this newly discovered talent.

Most of the parents of these communities were worried about their wards' education. These supplementary educational sessions helped their young offspring feel and learn like at school. Parents were very supportive of their children and made sure that they did not miss these alternative classes.



# Handwashing Station Helps To Curb Covid-19

After the nationwide lockdown was announced, uncertainty loomed large. As the Covid-19 pandemic peaked, migrant workers became more desperate to return home and similar was the level of desperation among the people of Gorkha District. Gorkha's Aarughat Bus Park located at Haramtari saw a huge number of people just like around Dashain Festival. Every day, at least, 500 people arrived in Gorkha Municipality from various parts of the district and foreign countries.

Before the pandemic, community members seldom washed their hands frequently. Even if they did, it was not done properly. While national media reported about rising Covid-19 cases in the country each passing day, the bus park did not have a handwashing station. This had put the people of Ward No. 6, Gorkha Municipality at serious risk.

To lessen the risk of contagion, GNI Nepal collaborated with the Municipality, Health Unit, and Tole Bikash Samiti (Neighborhood Development Committee) to install a handwashing station at Chalise Tole. From March to June, every day, an estimated 1,200 locals traveling from Gorkha Bazaar to Aarughat, Dharche, Chumnuhari, and Bhimsen Thapa Rural Municipalities used it. The handwashing station is still intact and in use to this day. These days, around 80 people including locals and travelers are using it daily.

Chairperson of Chalise Tole Bikash Samiti shared, "Since the threat of Covid-19 is still lingering, the station will remain as it is. We are also planning to use this handwashing station as a drinking water facility in the future."





# Computer Science Classes For Curious Minds

Schools in rural areas of Nepal lag behind their urban counterparts due to several reasons. Poor infrastructure is one of the most prominent. Even today, most of the rural schools do not have basic facilities, let alone, ICT infrastructure. Setting up computer laboratories and running computer science classes is a big challenge in itself. Additionally, majority of teachers are not computer- or IT-literate. Lack of ICT-integrated teaching-learning deprives rural students of the benefits their urban counterparts enjoy.

Shree Saraswati Secondary School located in Ward No. 2, Malikarjun Rural Municipality (RM) was one such school where the local government had established a computer lab. However, teachers had no prior training on or experience in using computers. No wonder, computer science classes could not run smoothly. Only grade six to eight students were offered computer science classes while other students were left out. To make matters worse, a landslide hit the school in 2018 and it struggled to run the classes for some months. Quality of education also began to degrade.

Recognizing the need for computer science classes at rural schools, GNI Nepal trained two teachers each from seven schools on ICT-enabled teaching-learning. Over five days, teachers enhanced their computer skills and learned to use E-path, an ICT-enabled teaching-learning tool. GNI Nepal provided laptops, projectors, sound system, headphones, printer, and flash drives to all the seven schools, and also helped to establish smart classrooms.

These teachers now know how to use ICT tools optimally. Projectors that had been lying around unused, now display lessons on big screens. For students, learning has become easy with the use of E-path. All seven schools are now connected to the outside world with broadband internet and teaching-learning materials are just a few clicks away.



# Dairy Farming Creates Viable Livelihoods

Ashal Agricultural Cooperative established in 2014 in Daulatpur, Bardiya District is a GNI Nepal- supported cooperative. There are around 700 households in the cooperative's catchment area and it has more than 350 share members. Out of them, 223 are from GNI Nepal-sponsored families.

Considering the milk production potential in Daulatpur area, GNI Nepal trained board members and staff of the cooperative on dairy value chain. Ashal Cooperative decided to start a milk collection center as an alternative business. In 2018, GNI Nepal provided NRs. 500,000 for constructing a building and also supported them with a deep freezer, ghee-making machine, digital weight scale, milk cans, milk analyzer, and other equipment worth NRs. 356,000.

The center came into operation in 2019. Within two months of operation, milk was being collected from 30 farmers. At present, 139 farmers sell more than 260 liters of milk to the center each day and it is gradually increasing.

GNI Nepal also trained one of the cooperative members on making dairy products. The collection center has also started producing locally in-demand dairy items. To expand its service to the local farmers, the cooperative also started artificial insemination (AI) center with technical and financial support of NRs. 240,648 from GNI Nepal. Along with its establishment, GNI Nepal also trained a cooperative member on AI who now provides AI services to local farmers at a subsidized rate.

Bal Krishna Tharu, a local milk farmer said, "Before the establishment of this collection center, we lacked market for our milk and had to depend on middle-men to sell it. We did not get a good price either. But now, it is very easy and we are getting a reasonable price. Being a member, I can easily trust the cooperative on the price I am getting. So, we are excited and motivated to produce more milk."

The cooperative has recently established a milk chilling vat to expand its dairy business and start a dairy shop. It plans to collect 500 liters of milk per day from 200 farmers in the near future and is coordinating with district-level collection centers to sell the surplus milk.



ASHAL AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE  
Ward No. 1, Rajapur Municipality, Bardiya District

# One Woman, Three Businesses

Kabita Damai was born in a poverty-stricken family. Seeking a better future, the entire Damai family migrated to Shimla, India where she grew up and got married to a manual laborer. Her family size grew from two to five members but her lot remained the same, even got worse: more mouths to feed, more problems in the household.

After years of struggle in India, Kabita returned to Nepal along with her husband, two sons, and a daughter. However, hardships followed them to Nepal, their home country. They did not have a roof over their head—they were sheltering in a neighbor's cowshed. They did not have enough food on their plates. The Damai family were grasping at straws, just barely surviving.

GNI Nepal's community development project supports individuals like Kabita to earn a stable and dignified livelihood through providing revolving funds, capacity development, and technical support. In 2017, she became a member of a GNI Nepal-supported Parivartan Agricultural Cooperative. A year later, she got NRs. 46,564 revolving fund from the co-operative and NRs. 19,956 grant from GNI Nepal. And with an additional investment of NRs. 44,366, Damai started a small retail grocery store.

Kabita learned the ropes gradually and profits and her clientele also increased similarly. Within a year, she was able to return the revolving fund taken from the co-operative. Seeing more business opportunities, and the enterprising person she is, Kabita started tailoring and snack shops almost at the same time. Currently, she has NRs. 250,000 worth of fixed assets and NRs. 60,000 in savings.

Kabita has successfully managed to start, expand, and flourish her small businesses that started with a revolving fund and grant from GNI Nepal. Kabita shared, "I learned from my experience that it is possible to earn a livelihood in Nepal if one is determined and receives the right support and investment like I did."



# Back From The Gates Of Danger

Kalpesh Luhar is a ten-year-old who lives with his brothers and mother in western Nepal. His father left for India for employment seven years ago, re-married, and abandoned the family back home.

This betrayal meant that Kalpesh's mother had to take on the mantle of the breadwinner of the family. She cultivates the small plot of marginal land and works as a laborer if she can find work. The Luhar family's economic status is very critical. To add to their misfortune, on 17 December 2020, Kalpesh Luhar fell off a tree and broke his hand also got injured in the mouth and chest. He was taken to Bajura Health Post for treatment where he couldn't get it and was instead referred to another hospital. Alas, the poor mother was in a more painful situation than her son as she couldn't afford the expensive treatment.

One of Luhar's brothers is a GNI Nepal-sponsored child. His mother petitioned Child Helpline and GNI Nepal for help. In a timely response, she was provided a vehicle to send her son to Bayalpata Hospital. Kalpesh underwent surgery and received medical treatment. GNI Nepal provided NRs. 5,000 for his further treatment.

Kalpesh is slowly recovering in the comfort of his home and under the care of his mother and brother. His mother had almost lost hope to save her son, thanks to the prompt action, he was saved.





# Continuing Education At Home With Radio Kaksha

Prerana had just finished her seventh-grade final exam in March 2020. Soon after, Covid-19 lockdown took effect, she did not have much to do as she remained at home most of the time. Like every other underprivileged student, she had no access to guided learning. Her school neither had facilities to provide virtual classes nor her parents could buy expensive gadgets. Worse still, she did not have learning resources at home and there was no other way to continue her classes.

To help such children, GNI Nepal started airing a radio schooling program which Malika FM, a local radio station also broadcasted. Classes for grade six to eight students on three core subjects: English, Science, and Social Studies were offered six days a week in the mornings and evenings. It was a one-and-half-hour program.

Prerana was fascinated by the newfound source of learning. She could learn just by listening to the teachers speak on the radio. She listened to the classes regularly from the comfort and safety of her home and enjoyed them as well. Even her parents supported and freed her of household chores so that she could take part in the classes. Every day she readied herself with a notebook and pen to take down important notes. She paid attention to the tutors' instructions.

Sundai Sikdai radio classes were born as a response to an unprecedented necessity and were able to help underprivileged students like Prerana. These sessions did not cost Prerana's family anything and also kept her safe from the virus. Prerana shared, "For me, radio was the only option available for learning. Thanks to all the teachers who made us feel as if we were in our classroom."

Keshav Tamata, Principal of Shree Amarawati Basic School claimed, "The radio program was a big hit among local students and they all benefited from it."



**PRERANA CHANDA, GRADE 8**

Ward No. 9, Janaki Rural Municipality, Kailali District

# Menstrual Hygiene Management Program For Adolescent Girls

*Chhaupadi* is an age-old traditional practice that has been followed for centuries in the western region of Nepal. Menstruating girls and women are considered ritually impure and expected to maintain physical distance from their deities, certain foods, and male members of the family.

While youths and progressive locals have started to speak up against this practice and about menstruation in general. By and large, it is still off-limits in the family for discussion. As a result, women and young girls have no knowledge or access to menstrual hygiene services and products. Female students of Shree Mastamandau Secondary School also suffered from such a problem. The school did not have good toilets and hygiene materials for girl students. Consequently, many of them had to miss school every month.

GNI Nepal has been working in Doti District for many years now. Aware of the problem adolescent girls were facing, GNI Nepal designed and implemented a Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) program at Mastamandau and other schools in the district. Orientations and menstrual hygiene products were provided to teachers and girl students along with an MHM- and gender-friendly toilet block.

These interventions have resulted in positive behavior changes and increased school attendance among adolescent girl students. It has become easier for female students to manage their periods as they have sanitary pads at their disposal and gender- and MHM-friendly toilet block.

Headteacher, Mr. Karna Bhandari happily shared, "After the MHM interventions, there's an increase in female students' attendance. The program has had a net positive effect on the students and girl students' menstrual woes have also lessened. I hope GNI Nepal will continue to provide us MHM support."



SHREE MASTAMANDAU SECONDARY SCHOOL  
Ward No.7, Purbichauki Rural Municipality, Doti District

# Busy Bees, Happy Beekeeper

Sita Subedi runs a small grocery store with her husband. In a good month, they make NRs. 5,000. This meager sum is the only source of their sustenance along with their one daughter and three sons. All of her children go to school. The money the Subedis earn is not enough to cover household expenses, let alone the children's education.

Sita is a member of the GNI Nepal-supported Mijuremilan Coffee Cooperative. She came to know about revolving funds and training that she could take part in. She applied for bee-keeping training and got selected. Her husband was skeptical about beekeeping as a profitable business as they had already tried their luck in it before. It failed and they lost NRs. 6,000. However, Sita wanted to give it a try one more time. So she participated in the five-day training.

The training covered both theoretical and practical aspects of beekeeping. Sita bought a modern beehive and a bee colony. Within a year, she was able to triple the beehives, which reached thirteen in number over time. She purchased empty hives and divided and transferred existing bee colonies into them. She has sold five beehives at NRs. 7,000 each. Honey she produces fetches NRs. 800 per mana (0.3 kg). So far, Sita has earned NRs. 60,000 by selling honey and beehives. Sita currently has six beehives which she wants to expand to twenty-five. She also wants to learn to make bee frames, and hives and sell them. Mijuremilan Coffee Cooperative has notified its members to apply for revolving funds and free training. Subedi has submitted hers and is hoping to get selected.



# Clean Water For Everyone

Shree Kharibot Govinda Nath Dev Sharma Secondary School offers education to 246 students of poor socio-economic backgrounds. Even though the school is located near the district headquarters Kushma, the school lacks adequate physical infrastructure.

Lack of a drinking water facility was a major challenge for the school. Teachers used to bring drinking water for themselves from home, while students had to either visit one of the private homes nearby or their own home just for the want of three-four glasses of drinking water. Some students used this water scarcity as an excuse and skipped classes.

GNI Nepal provided the school NRs. 159,426 towards the construction of a drinking water supply system. Despite limited funds, the school invested NRs. 67,426. Students no longer have to run to nearby houses or go home just for drinking water. There is enough drinking water for the whole school.

Life without water cannot be imagined. Its availability ensures health, hygiene, and sanitation which students and teachers of Shree Kharibot Govinda Nath Dev Sharma Secondary School are enjoying, thanks to the adequate supply of potable water.



SHREE KHARIBOT GOVINDA NATH  
DEV S. S. SCHOOL

Ward No. 1, Kushma Municipality, Parbat District

# From The Outskirts To The Center

Mamata Maharjan, lives with her mom and elder sister in the outskirts of Kathmandu, the Capital of Nepal. She is studying for her bachelor's degree in Hotel Management at a college in Kathmandu.

Her father was an alcoholic and died from lung cancer. His passing away put a great burden on her mother and elder sister. For the three people living in one of the most expensive cities in the world, they would have NRs. 20,000 every month earned from renting out a few rooms and Mamata's sister's job. Money constraints meant that Mamata's education suffered, the proof, her poor grades.

The family was in dire straits. Amid all this, Mamata was selected for GNI Nepal's sponsorship program in 2012. For ten years thereafter, as a sponsor child, she received educational materials, school uniform, health checkups, hygiene materials, and gifts.

Mamata's morale got a big boost. Over the years she got better in academics and passed her Secondary Education Examination (SEE) in 2016 with a 'B+' Grade and higher secondary school with a 'B' Grade. She is a black belt in karate and has also won the gold medal in the 55 kg weight category of the 16th WKI International Championship in 2018. Active in sports, Maharjan also engages in community service like sanitation campaigns and cultural programs.

Driven by a deep desire to serve the country, currently, Mamata is having training to be a Nepal Army personnel. GNI Nepal supported her to get an education and pursue her professional goals. She hopes the organization will continue to help children in need.



**MAMATA MAHARJAN, 18**

Ward No. 8, Tarakeshwar Municipality, Kathmandu District



# Fewer Troubles For Expecting Moms

Muna is 14 km away from the district headquarter and has a population of around 3,500. The nearest birthing center was two hours away from the village and it lacked vital birthing equipment. Thus, pregnant mothers were referred to another health post. Additionally, funds were hard to come by. Health workers were tried to provide whatever services they could. Expecting mothers visited the health post in a year but had to return empty-handed. Aware of this situation, the women of Muna preferred giving birth at home.

IN 2018, GNI Nepal provided the health post with vital birthing equipment in the presence of ward chairperson, local representatives, health management committee, and health workers. Midwifery training was also provided to the health personnel.

The same year, female community health volunteers re-started the mothers' group meetings and discussed maternal and child health. It also helped to spread awareness about the availability of maternity services at the health post. In 2018, 28 expecting moms received maternity services compared to 13 in the past year.

Mothers' group meeting has helped to increase the number of skilled health personnel-attended births. Ward chairperson shared, "With the number of expectant mothers visiting the birth center rising, there's a need for a new building. Targeting them, we have demanded a well-equipped maternity building with the state government and plan to serve the community by partnering with GNI Nepal."



# Changing Beliefs, Attitudes, And Practices

Gayatri was forced to stay in a *chhau goth* (menstrual hut) during her periods, courtesy of her superstitious parents. She tried to explain the importance of sanitation, safety, and menstrual hygiene during such times. Gayatri got scared and felt neglected and tried to convince her parents to let her live her life as she would in normal times. But they would have none of it.

Local governments of Bajura have been putting efforts into dismantling the abominable “menstrual hut practice”. GNI Nepal’s Health Rights Improvement Project has been working in the district and providing education on menstrual hygiene management (MHM) at schools. Adolescent circles are formed at each school where adolescent girls discuss MHM and related issues.

But when MHM education was first introduced in the schools, adolescent girls were hesitant to share their menarche and hygiene-related experiences. Facilitators had to make them comfortable by asking them to write MHM-related essays, answers before they started opening up. Only after Gayatri became the Secretariat of an Adolescent Circle, her parents also began to rethink their beliefs and decisions.

Hamal feels fortunate to be a part of the circle which helped her and her parents including her friends to change their behavior and practice regarding menstrual hygiene. Gayatri shared, “I used to feel shy to talk about periods and cramps even with friends, but now such talks have become quite normal in my friend circle. We don’t even hesitate to ask for sanitary pads from our teachers.”



**GAYATRI HAMAL, 16**

Shree Satyabadi Secondary School

Ward No. 2, Badimalika Municipality, Bajura District

# Good Change for the world

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