

GIRL'S EDUCATION PROJECT



A PROJECT BY



NEPAL VILLAGE FOUNDATION, UK

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

HAMRO SAMAJ NEPAL

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WRITTEN BY

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Project summary

Girl's education project is a long term continuous project by Nepal Village Foundation (NVF) in partnership with Hamro Samaj Nepal (HSN). Female literacy is very low in rural villages of Nepal, girls are kept away from formal schooling and they are married by arrangement in their teenage years. This has some serious consequences such as, poor health and loss of equal opportunities, to individuals, families, communities and to the country. The parents are less aware about the benefits of educating girls. Therefore the main aim of the project is to improve female literacy in the rural villages of Nepal by raising awareness about the importance of girl's education and supporting girls from poor and Dalits families into education.

Raising awareness will be done through Shiksha Lila (education drama) activity. Shiksha Lila is a drama performance that can be performed at festival seasons to attract more viewers because all close friends and family members gather together at festive season time. The concept of Shiksha Lila came from 'Ramlila' which is an enactment of Hindu epic-Ramayana. The enactment became so popular that religion is way of life now in Nepal. So we believe that promoting awareness about importance of girl's education in this way will be more effective. It will be managed and performed by a team under the management of HSN in rural villages. This will motivate parents to educate their daughters and hence improve the number of girls in schooling. There still might be some girls from the poorest and/or Dalits families who will not go to school because they can't afford it so the project will support these girls through a scholarship scheme until the final year of schooling (age 16). To support 25 girls and perform a Shiksha Lila in a village cost £3,625 per year.

An educated girl will be a mother in the future and there is ample evidence to suggest that an educated mother ensures that her children will get an education regardless of gender, brings up healthier babies, has better family planning and they also participate in income generating activities and community social activities. Hence, this is a more reliable and sustainable approach to poverty reduction and wellbeing of the poorest and Dalits in rural Nepal.

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1. Background

Project location- VDC Bhagawatpur, Saptari District, Eastern Development Region, Nepal

Nepal is one of the poorest developing countries in the world and on the world map Nepal is in South East Asia between two giant neighbour countries India and China with an estimated population of 30 million. An average life expectancy is around 65 years but this can be as low as 52 years in the rural areas.

Demographically, Nepal has three regions; The Terai, Hills and Himalayas and the Terai is the most populated region because it is flat and has the most fertile lands in Nepal. Nepal is divided into five development regions and these regions are subdivided into Zones, Districts and Village Development Committee (VDC). Bhagawatpur is a VDC in an eastern development region with more than 1100 households and a population of approximately 6000.

There is no running water and majority of households in the village have no electricity. Most of the villagers cook food on open fires and use kerosene lamps. The village is not connected with any tarmac road thus there is no public transport. The nearest town centre is Rajbiraj which is 12km distant and it takes more than two hours to reach the town through muddy roads and paddy fields. There is a health post but only in name and without any facilities so a couple of private pharmacies, with very limited stocks, are maintaining the medical needs of the village. No more than 50 households in the village have toilets and the rest of households still use the surrounding bush for a toilet.

More than 70% of the households in the village who are the poor and Dalits live in thatched mud houses. The Terai is a subtropical area and temperature can reach as high as 48 degree in the summer time with high winds and some hurricanes. As mentioned above cooking is done on fires and sometimes these fires get out of control and destroy the entire village and their livelihoods within half an hour. Last year 21 households lost their houses and entire livelihoods in a house fire in the village. NVF provided a support package to the victims.

There is one secondary and two primary schools in the village and the school management system in Nepal is decentralised. This means each single school is managed by locally elected board committee and the teacher's salary is paid directly by the department of

education. Revenue is generated through various sources such as, school fees; these are used for maintaining the existing infrastructure. But the heavy influence of powerful individuals in the village, corruption, unmotivated teachers and lack of infrastructure, means these schools are barely surviving with few pupils from the more well off families.

Although some girls from the richer families in the village have an opportunity to go to school for few years, girls from poor and Dalits families are unlikely to have that opportunity. It is because those girls are kept from schooling and are working at farming and on the household jobs. These girls are not getting a formal education because of cultural issues. The caste system still exists in Nepal, this is based on an old inherited tradition, many of these girls are from the low or Dalit castes, also the daughter's wedding is the responsibility of parents, weddings can be very expensive and some parents end up in heavy debt to fulfil this cultural responsibility. Because of this, for many parents, investing in their daughter's education is a waste of money. Traditionally, girls must go to live with in-law family after marriage and any income she might generate in the future will go to the in-law family and not the birth family. So for the birth family this is a double expense (wedding and education cost) thus it has been seen educating girls is as a waste of money in the culture. In some cases the birth of a girl can be seen as bad luck for the family.

Many girls in the community are forced into marriage as teenagers which leads to early age pregnancy and serious long term health issues. More than 70% of the households in the village live under the poverty line (less than dollar a day) and their large family size becomes an extra burden which results in a poor childhood and under-nourishment.

Nepal has a high unemployment rate and finding a job that can fund the most basic daily expenses is extremely difficult, this leads to overseas employment. Hundreds of thousands of men seek overseas employment every year to meet the demands of a large family and to fulfil parent's cultural responsibility. Various employment surveys show that a large percentage of Nepalese population is in overseas employment. This holds the community back from many developments such as, social and economical improvement because productive labour are in overseas employment, a large number of the female population is illiterate or semi literate and their reading and writing skills has been long lost and the income from overseas employment barely maintains the basic family necessities.

2. Aims and objectives

Overall aim of the project is to improve the female literacy levels, particularly of the poor and/ or from Dalits communities in rural Nepal.

Objectives are;

- Raising awareness about importance of girl's education through Shiksha Lila (education drama) project
- Provide support to the girls who are from the poorest and/or Dalits families and struggling to maintain schooling costs
- Support the local people with skills by contracting for uniform making, shoe making and stationary supply which will create further livelihood opportunities
- Develop relationships with local government authority, schools, teachers, parents & locals to improve the schooling environment to motivate more girls in schooling

3. Overall approach

This will begin with second phase multi-stakeholder consultation plan with the villagers of Bhagawatpur and then a two year pilot project by reviewing the current situation of village, particularly situation of girls schooling environment and education system in rural Nepal. A baseline data of the village will be collected on the situation. Cost of schooling and uniform per girl and motivation of parents, teachers and local community will be identified at the beginning. During these years the partner organisation, Hamro Samaj Nepal (HSN) will visit the family and school to collect attendance of girls in the scheme and their progress monthly. This will be fed back to Nepal Village Foundation (NVF) every three months. The information collected will be analysed by both organisations to establish a long term sustainable monitoring policy.

In parallel with the above strategy to manage the project in the future, NVF will provide various organisational and personal capacity development trainings to manage the project effectively and efficiently. NVF will have responsibility of fundraising to support the project,

evaluation and reporting to its stakeholders. Similarly, HSN will have responsibility for managing, monitoring, reporting to its stakeholders and demonstrating that resources are being spent efficiently.

Finally, at the end of pilot year if HSN is managing the project effectively and there is positive impact on the beneficiaries then the project will be continued and expanded to other surrounding villages according to need of the project. NVF will make a project visit at the end of year two to analyse the efficiency, impacts and motivation of the local community.

4. Project outputs

Anticipated outputs of the project are;

- A baseline data on the current situation of the village about livelihoods and educational achievements
- Scholarship scheme for the girls from poor and/or Dalits families
- Development and promotion of Shiksha Lila (education drama) to raise awareness about importance of girl's education
- Development of relationships with various stakeholders in the village to improve schooling environment for girls and increased impacts of the project activities
- Development of partner organisations and member's capacity to manage project
- Creation of livelihood opportunities for the poor but skilful people in the village

5. Project outcomes/impacts

Anticipated outcomes of the projects are;

- More literate girls from poor and Dalits families in rural villages
- A community that is more aware about importance of girls education which will motivate more girls into schooling
- Increased livelihood opportunities for the poor in rural villages
- Improved organisational and personal capacity to manage projects
- Other developments

Improved female literacy, health, livelihoods and wellbeing of rural community- a literate girl means an educated mother for tomorrow. It is likely that an educated mother will educate her children whether they are boys or girls. An educated mother also brings up healthier babies and intends to have fewer children through better family planning. It appears even in rural villages that the families with educated mothers are economically and socially in better positions and they participate in local community development and debate. This means educating girls brings a better return for short term as well as longer term in any community and it is a more reliable and sustainable way to break the poverty circle. Particularly in the Nepalese context where a large male population are in overseas employment, literate female can play a productive role in the community to improve commercial activities which is vital to national economic development.

Improved equal opportunity environment in which girls can also progress as to boys- if the rural communities are more aware about the importance of girls education then more and more girls will have opportunities to gain a formal education and increase the involvement of parents in school management will improve schooling environment which is important to the quality of education. This will also create more demands for more teachers hence further employment creation. More importantly girls will participate in more income generation opportunities too.

Improved personal and organisational capacity to manage project- the capacity development trainings will enable partner organisation to perform and manage the projects better which gives vital resources to the rural community.

6. Stakeholder analysis

This education project is a multi-stakeholder long term ongoing project and therefore every stakeholder has an important role to play to achieve the anticipated outcomes. However some stakeholders have more influence in the project activities than others and on that basis these stakeholders are categorised into primary and secondary stakeholders. Secondary stakeholders are equally important but primary stakeholders have higher influence in the project activities.

Primary stakeholder;

- School age girls and their parents –These are main beneficiaries and their interest in the project is vital for project viability. Parents will have a role to motivate their daughter to attend school rather than becoming a barrier
- Hamro Samaj Nepal, its members and Outreach workers- The main stakeholders for implementation and managing the project thus good relationships should be developed for project suitability
- Teachers and schools, to improve schooling environment which will motivate girls to attend school regularly will depend on these stakeholders therefore close cooperation with them is necessary
- Nepal Village Foundation- the funding organisation has overall a significant role for project continuity, sustainability and viability

Secondary stakeholders;

- Local community, politicians and respected members of the community- We have received a great support and motivation from these stakeholders. Despite their influence on the project being high, they are in secondary stakeholders because their role is to occasionally convince the parents who are prohibiting their daughter in schooling. This works well in a community where a caste system exists.
- Local government authorities- They can assist us in gathering a baseline data through their village administration system and if any issue arose cooperating with schools and teachers then they have a significant role to play.

- Local businesses and suppliers- They will supply the goods and services we will need for the project such as, uniforms and stationary. This is more convenient and it helps the local economy too.
- Similar organisations working in the community- We will cooperate and share information to improve the practice and higher impacts.

7. Risks analysis

Identification of anticipated risks, their levels and our approach to prevent the risks- despite the most identified risks are preventable through communication, discussion and family visit, there are some which require some formal approaches such as, a agreement with parents, prior to enrolling their daughter in the scholarship scheme, about their commitment.

Anticipated risks	Levels	Prevention plan
Girl's under attendance in schooling	High	Develop various strategies and improve schooling environment
Parents prohibit their daughter to attend school	High	Family visit, raise awareness and raise pressure through respected village members
Cultural issue becomes barrier to girl's education	High	Raise awareness about benefits of girl's education to the community and families
Teacher & schools may not cooperate or coordinate	Medium	Cooperate with school management strategy & if that failed develop pressure through public accountability
Local community may become obstacle in operation of the project	Low	Cooperate with local community and raise awareness about benefits to the community from the project's activities and its impacts in the future
Politicians and powerful ones may interfere in the activities	Medium	Respect their values and feelings by inviting them to do work that meets their status need

8. Project management

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Actions/actors	Responsibility	frequency
Project Manager	Krit Sharma- reports to NVF board of trustees, manage the relationship between NVF & HSN for a smooth management of the project and higher impacts	Quarterly with NVF & regularly with HSN
NVF	Funding, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation and reporting to its stakeholders in UK	Yearly
HSN	Project identification, data collection, project implementation and management and reporting	As per the requirement
Project monitoring	Outreach workers will collect school attendance, analyse it and make family visit on regular basis under HSN	Monthly
Reporting	HSN will report to NVF about progress on the project activities and to its stakeholders on their works	Quarterly and Yearly
Maintaining relationships	HSN will cooperate, coordinate with schools, locals, teachers, parents and with the whole community	As required or at least yearly
Identify other working villages	HSN and Project manager- for project expansion	Yearly or as required
Shiksha Lila Drama Performance team	Team who will perform in and manage Shiksha Lila. The team will responsible to and work under the management of HSN	On regular basis
Promoting and marketing Shiksha Lila	The performance and management team will identify villages to perform the drama, cooperate with locals, do marketing and feedback the report to HSN	As per requirement on regular basis

9. Budgeting

NVF and NVF will have shared responsibility to use the resources effective and responsively and do budgeting accordingly that will have higher impact on the beneficiaries. In order to make budgeting easy, we use a fixed exchange rate- Nepalese Rupees 125 for per pound.

Activity	Unit cost	Total cost	Remarks
Support to 25 girls-scholarship scheme	£30 per girl yearly in one village	£750	School dresses, bag, shoes, school fees and stationary
Monitoring & reporting-scholarship scheme	£10 per girl yearly	£250	Collating school attendance, family visit & 4 reports/year
Extra after school classes	£5/girl for 6monthly	£125	After school classes for 6months
Shiksha Lila performance	£1050/ performance	£1050	Event hire, wages, dresses, catering & tent and transport
Identification of village, marketing & reporting	£450/performance	£450	Relationship development with villagers, wages and marketing
Capacity development trainings	£400/ training	£400	Cost of providing a week training to manage the project
Project visit	£500/yearly	£500	Once every year for inspection
UK based expenses	£100/yearly	£100	Communication and printing etc
Net total	25 girls & 1 drama	£3,625	Yearly running costs/village

10. Reporting and communication

Report from	Report to	Report on	Methods/Frequency
Outreach worker	HSN	School attendance records, about progress in study & any issue experienced	Monthly to HSN Chair
Education Drama team	HSN	Event performance activities	Monthly to HSN chair
HSN	Project Manager	Project activities, any issue to be discussed and progress report	Quarterly and yearly email, phone & post
HSN	Governing Body	Statement of activities, income, expenditure and its impact on beneficiary	Yearly at their office
HSN	Stakeholders	Statement of activities, income, expenditure and its impact on beneficiary	Yearly at AGM
Project Manager	NVF	Update on project activities and any further action may requires	Quarterly in trustees meeting
NVF	Charity commission	Statement of activities, income, expenditure and its impact on beneficiary	Yearly- online
NVF	Stakeholders	Share achievements and future activities and how the money has been spent	Yearly through email, newsletters & website

11. Evaluation plan

Evaluate what?	Evaluate how?	Evaluate when?	By whom?
School attendance, progress in girl's study, motivation of girls, parents and the community & management performance of HSN	By analysing information collected by outreach workers & quality and consistency of reporting from HSN	At the end of pilot year (2013), then yearly and more detailed one every five yearly	Project manager, NVF and an independent evaluator
Impacts of after school classes	Comparing school attendance rate and progress in study	Yearly	HSN
Shiksha Lila- performance activities and its impact	Numbers of viewers at the event, analysis of performance quality & marketing strategy applied	Every year and every five year	HSN and NVF
Impacts of capacity development trainings	By analysing the capacity to manage projects in members & quality of reporting & consistency	Yearly	NVF
Impacts of livelihood creation activities	Researching on increase or decrease of new business opportunities and their income	Every five yearly	Independent researchers, NVF and HSN
Improvement in female literacy and increase in girl's number in schooling	By comparing the baseline data taken before and after of the villages	Every five yearly	Independent researchers, NVF and HSN
Improvement in household's income, family health and women's participation in community management	By comparing the baseline data taken before and after of the villages	Every five yearly	Independent researchers, NVF and HSN

12. Exit and sustainability plan

NVF does not have a quick exit plan from this project. But rather has an interest to expand in more needy villages to improve female literacy in rural Nepal because it is one of the most effective investment to improve living conditions of the poor and Dalits. However an exit plan still will be possible but it will be in a slow and lengthy way. For example, if a girl in schooling year of one is in the scheme then she requires a further nine years of support before she finishes her schooling. Withdrawing the support completely means she will be in a vulnerable position.

Therefore NVF is developing a 'NVF Trading' arm to promote ecotourism in rural Nepal and it is part of NVF's project sustainability plan. It is based on an idea that if further livelihood opportunities are generated in the villages for the poor then they will no longer require any support in their daughter's schooling. In this case raising awareness through Shiksha Lila will increase girl's participation in formal schooling.

Currently HSN is wholly funded by NVF but in the near future this might change and HSN will receive funds from other organisations and sources. This will reduce the burden of NVF for cost to the running organisation.

End of the report