

Village Hope Partnership Newsletter



To: Friends of Village Hope Partnership
From: Don Gielow, President
Date: November 2023
Re: Update 21: Literacy Classes

Hello VHP Friends! We hope this season of gratitude is blessed for you and your loved ones. We at VHP are grateful for all your support of this past year, and for the impactful work that continues in villages throughout Nepal. For this newsletter update, I asked Shanti to share some of the wonderful impacts of the literacy classes that VHP has been offering, as well as an update on the 11/3/23 earthquake that hit Nepal.

Bringing Change Through Literacy

Nepal is a developing country and a large percentage of the Nepalese people are illiterate, mainly because of poverty. Nepal is largely agricultural and due to this, most parents living in Nepal prioritize their children working in the fields with them rather than sending them to school. Some parents lack understanding regarding the value of education, while others know how important it is, but poverty forces the immediate need for their children to help sustain the family unit through working in the fields.

In addition there is an unfortunate gender gap in Nepal where only 46.7% of women can read, compared to 71.1% of men. Without the ability to read, millions of women in Nepal can't work, lack confidence and must rely on others to navigate the world around them. This is a problem that Village Hope Partnership is addressing through its literacy programs. The community of Bardiya is a good example (district in Southwest Nepal). We got in contact with people in Bardiya. These residents are mostly Tharus and Chaudharys. Most are illiterate, and never had a chance to go to school. This situation was made worse by an unfortunate regional tradition of having daughters work in a landlord's house, and the income they earned went to help the family survive. This has changed due to a government shift to eliminate this bias, yet this change has brought even more poverty among the people. Their desire to get education had become unapproachable.



VHP started literacy classes in Bardiya for both women and men. The people have progressed very well, gaining literacy! Before, they could not even spell their own name, but now they can. They have become able to help their children do homework. They have learned to use their mobile phone (which used to be very

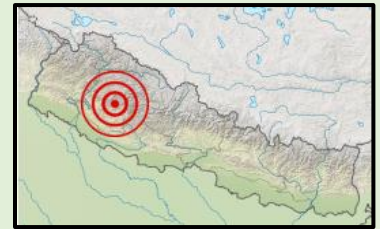
difficult). Many women told me that before these classes, they were not only embarrassed by their inability to read, but they also had been taken advantage of due to their lack of education. For example, while selling milk and vegetables at the market, people cheated them because they could not count money. Others recalled how being illiterate prevented them from communicating with their loved ones: "Upon receiving letters from my husband who works in the Indian army, I had to look for someone from the village to read letters for me. What can be more painful on this earth than not being able to ready your husband's words?" one woman said. After some time, her husband sent her a mobile phone so that they could talk instead, but she still needed help just to make calls. **"It's like being blind, if you can't read and write," she said.**



These students have not only learned to read, they have increased confidence. They have experienced the value of education first-hand, and families have now started sending their children to school. **This small help from VHP to conduct literacy classes in a very rural place has brought huge changes in those people's lives—both now and for generations to come.** They are so grateful, thank you for making this possible.

Earthquake 11/3/23 Update

Many have asked how the recent earthquake in Nepal impacted the country and the villages where VHP has worked. The earthquake mostly impacted western Nepal and northern India. Shanti reports: on November 3rd, around 11:45 at night, an earthquake shook districts in northwestern Nepal, killing at least 154 people and injuring dozens more.



Many people lost their homes, and everything, so this was very hard. Regarding the villages where VHP is working, however, these were not affected much. Please remember the people of Nepal in your prayers. Currently, VHP is not involved in direct relief related to the earthquake, but we continue our work to support villages throughout Nepal as God leads. Thank you!

Thank you to all who encourage, support and pray for the work of Village Hope Partnership in Nepal. What beautiful things can happen when we join together, across miles, borders and cultures. May God bless these people and lead them to hope in all ways.

For more information, visit our website at villagehopepartnership.org
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EIN# 47-2774879. Donations go 100% to programs for the poor, as our administrative costs are covered by a special gift. Donations can be sent to:
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