

# Annual Report

2015

## Setu Nepal

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## Forward

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### 2015

In 2015 the Nepali citizens were devastated by two earthquakes and SETU Nepal struggled through the aftermath to provide localized, long term support to the neediest communities. Showing strength in the face of adversity, SETU Nepal continued to run Aarati House successfully, saw five income generating programs for women living with HIV and increased our support for school children with HIV. The earthquake relief program brought relief too much neglected areas of Lalitpur and assessed the needs of the local community in order to roll out continued support.

### Looking Ahead

For 2016, we look to extend our reach through mobilized training and health care awareness. SETU Nepal strives to address the aftermath of the Gorkha earthquakes by continuing nutrition programs in local schools in lalitpur and the sponsorship of more needy children. We strive to continue to liaise with other charities to maximize the potential of women and children in our care, and deliver a high standard of income generating training to as many as women living with HIV as possible to improve their prospects and quality of life.

Ranju Pandey  
Director  
[January 2016]

## **Executive Summary**

SETU Nepal provides women and children living with HIV with educational, financial, health and motivational support and women in prison with physical and emotional care for the inmates and their families. 2015 saw overwhelming tragedy in the face of not one but two consecutive natural disasters. This set SETU Nepal on a new path to formulate and implement an earthquake relief program, targeting schools and families affected in less well known areas to sustainable relief. SETU Nepal saw its income generating program for mothers living with HIV flourish by actively seeking participants who demonstrated a willingness to learn and engage in the program in the long run. Goat farming and trades, such as beauty technician or crafting, were the most popular and well attended, with many recipients making active efforts to repay their loans within only 6 months. SETU assisted over 70 children through their education support program this year, allowing children living with HIV to continue their studies through the provision of sponsorship, clothing and materials. Aarati House went from strength to strength, housing 24 children and 40 mothers this year alone and encouraging the residents to participate in cultural celebrations, community outreach and health and education support programs. After two great earthquakes while support flooded in from national government organizations, much of it was focused on immediate relief in the capital and SETU Nepal felt well positioned to provide targeted, long term support to those. Looking forward to the year ahead, recommendations are made for SETU Nepal's 2016 program of activity before the report concludes by thanking well-wishers for their continued support.

## **Introduction**

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SETU Nepal is a non-profit organization, established in 2001 by a group of young professionals from Nepal and philanthropic donors from a variety of countries. SETU Nepal originally served as a bridge for women re-entering society after imprisonment. Today, we also work for HIV/AIDS infected mothers and children to help them overcome the trauma of their illness and the stigmatization that often goes with the disease and ultimately to empower them. Its aim is to provide a residential centre in order to rehabilitate and supply emotional support as well as livelihood training so that they can re-enter into society, enabling them to provide a stable future for themselves and their children specially focus on their nurturing and education.

## Overview of 2015 Activity Program

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Currently SETU Nepal is conducting 2 separate projects: First one is “Support Program for mother and children suffering from HIV/AIDS”. Second one is “Earthquake response program”

Under “Support Program for mother and children suffering from HIV/AIDS”, there is a range of programs to improve the lives of those women and children living with HIV through education and self-employment. The programs are:

1. Training for mothers living with HIV;
2. Education for children;
3. Aarati House and outreach work;

Following the earthquakes that struck Nepal, we have added earthquake response program as additional scheme for school children and school management in those areas worst affected:

4. Distribution of basic educational requirements of school/children.
5. Nutrition programs for school children
6. Side by side SETU Nepal also conducted program for women in prison in the year 2015.

## Training for mothers living with HIV

In 2015 we offered two streams of training programs to 70 mothers and women living with HIV.

### Activity 1: Entrepreneurial training for women

SETU Nepal set out to provide training with financial support to 70 women throughout the course of 2015 by offering a training program with financial backing for start up businesses.

Women were chosen who had demonstrated their motivation and dedication to starting a maintaining a business, whether it had been those who had previously benefitted from Setu Nepal's assistance in the past or those who showed accountability. It is intended that those who benefit from the program donate 50% of their own start up costs back to Setu Nepal to assist the next year's program once they have seen success and growth. This is for a number of reasons: to support the organization that supported them, but also to instill



accountability and money management skills into those on the program.

Several issues were encountered over the course of the year: as Nepal is a vast country with many rural villages and a weakened infrastructure following the 2015 earthquakes, we focused our efforts on the

Makawanpur district where we felt we could most effectively run the program.

After some deliberation over intake, it was decided that 14 women would take part in the program at one time to maximize the resources available and the number benefitting from the program.

The training was initially directed at the developmental aspects of micro level entrepreneurship for women infected with AIDS/HIV. Often, those women suffering from the disease are outcast from society, meaning they have a limited number of options available and often suffer mental trauma due to their status. Setu Nepal believes that empowering these women by providing them with the practical tools and mental support to start a business can completely change their outlook. Moral and financial support leads to self-motivation; by providing mentorships, a financial trigger and the educational tools for the participants Setu Nepal helps to motivate and ultimately empower them.

### Training Objectives

- To educate semi-literate women suffering from AIDS/HIV as to how businesses operate and provide them with the educational tools to formulate a business plan;
- To inform these women of local market conditions, the financial requirements and operational structures in local Nepali businesses; and
- To assist these women in implementing their business plans to set up their own businesses with the ultimate goal of financial independence.

### Training streams

Once the objectives had been identified the training streams were categorized into four specific programs:

- Beauty technician (4);

- Tailoring (4);
- Mobile snacks stall (2);
- Goat farming (4).

Each program began with workshops to provide the applicants with practical skills, whether it was agricultural practice, beauty parlor work or sewing classes. As the women had varying degrees of literacy the workshops allowed for an effective means of educating the women. Once they had fulfilled the allocated workshop days, the women were introduced into practical roles under mentorship.

#### Motivation training and funding allocation

Once the practical workshops had been completed, the women took part in motivational training to see how they could best implement the skills learnt to establish their businesses.

Once motivational training had been completed, the 14 participants formed a peer group to discuss deployment of funding in small businesses. The women discussed how best to monitor their expenditure, manage profits and loss and use money successfully. The session culminated in the formulation of a peer contract, which outlined the following:



- 1 The group to meet once a month and discuss their progress and challenges;
- 2 Each participant has to repay the amount in monthly installments. (Rs. 500-1000 per month.)
- 3 Those participants who are not able to attend the meeting without valid reason will have to pay a fine of Rs 50;
- 4 The loan will be repaid at 1% interest;
- 5 The repayments will be deployed to other women with HIV/AIDS in the same district to assist them in the program.

### Results

As at the year-end evaluation in December 2015, the program had seen NRs 72000 repaid in loans with NRs 11000 in interest. Despite the natural disasters causing a setback, the participants were eager to repay their loan to help other women and expand the business.

### Case Studies

**Manju Lama** started her goat farming business with the start up money from the income generating training. Since then, she has been running a successful goat farm and now has 16 goats. She lives with her mother, who has been very supportive about her work. She has demonstrated to



other participants how something simple, like goat farming, can be expanded and generate income with the support of Setu Nepal's program.

**Sarita Karki** used the start up money from the training to add equipment to her existing beauty parlor. One year after opening, her husband died in a tragic road accident and she lost her support network. Three years on, her parlor is thriving and Sarita lives with her mother. She told Setu that she does not feel prepared to acknowledge her disease in her community as she feels it will have an adverse effect on her business. Having completed the entrepreneurship program, Sarita has expanded her parlour and already repaid 35% of her loan. She has shown a keen interest in helping others start the journey she is on.

**Sindhu Nepali** has successfully managed to maintain her tailoring business in spite of many financial issues. As a child, she wanted to be a teacher, but upon completing tailoring training in Kathmandu she returned to her district to open a small shop with one machine, where she trained others. At one point she had 7 machines, however she had to sell 5 when her family fell into hardship. Left with the shop and no capacity to employ trainees, she single

handedly ran the business. Thanks to Setu's training, she has increased her fabric collection and expanded her business. Sindhu has repaid 60% of her loan and has high hopes for her husband and son to benefit from her knowledge in setting up a poultry business.

**DurgaShrestha** had set up a small mobile snacks stall near the bus station with her start up fund. Due to road violation issues, she had to shut down her business. Thanks to Setu Nepal she has overcome these hurdles and reopened her business after further training. Durga is doing well in her business and her husband has been supportive, by providing her moral support as an entrepreneur and by taking care of their children.

**Activity 2: Livelihood and Income Generating Training**

*“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime”*

By teaching women life skills, we enable them to be independent and self-sufficient. This year SETU Nepal conducted livelihood and income generating training for mothers with HIV and provided support to total 56 women with HIV over 4 sessions in 2015 (See Appendices 2 - 5). We conducted training, supported by monitoring and evaluation to judge how our contribution impacted the lives of these women. The results have been positive in terms of female empowerment, self-confidence and establishing peer relations with women in similar circumstances. The response from goat farming has been positive, although we recognize that it is not suitable for every candidate (family problems, unsuitable land, geographical location). Offering a program with start up funds and income generating skill workshops enables these women to become self-sufficient and network with others. It is also an opportunity for SETU Nepal to extend their outreach and set up localized support networks so our work can benefit the greatest number. Meeting the participants in their own environment gives a better idea for how we can tailor our support systems and income generating workshops to local districts. At a basic level, it allows us to accurately gauge what each woman needs and what we can offer them, practically speaking.

*“In our village we all have our own priorities and familial responsibility and do not always make time to share our experience and bond with others. SETU Nepal has provided a safe environment and friends who understand the challenges I face; even in the face of sorrow and pain, I have found levels of*

*support, understanding and empathy in these women that I wouldn't find elsewhere." - Woman living with HIV, Nepal.*

The objective of the training was to empower mothers and women with HIV, to boost their self-esteem, to make them aware of their rights and responsibilities, to educate them on the significance of nutrition, hygiene and meditation for a better life and to provide them financial support in start up funds and income generating training.

Each training session saw 14 women take part in a holistic residential program. All participants were from different districts (Chitwan, Nawalparashi, Sanyaja, Palpa, Lamjung, Kaski, Makawanpur). They were moved from their original place for attending training program for changing environment. The training was conducted in Lamjung and Kathmandu (SETU office).

The training focused on gender discrimination, female empowerment, the differentiation between men and women in Nepali society, health and HIV in women, the significance of nutrition and meditation to manage life with HIV. The last day of training, participants shared their experience of managing goat farming businesses, as traditionally many women rear goats at home and in their community. By providing participants with business acumen, SETU Nepal helps these women to develop their pre-existing skills into income generating businesses and motivates them to become self-sufficient.



The undercurrent to the training addressed the inherent gender discrimination in Nepal, the female identity and how women can embrace both gender and society despite the difficulties they face.

To make the learning process more effective different teaching methods were used including: group discussion and presentation, role-plays, question/answer, lecture, brainstorming, game, art, singing, demonstration. It was realized that group work and presentations increased their confidence levels, while brainstorming sessions aided their creativity and mental stimulation.



By recognizing the importance of both genders in female the development, the participants gained a greater understanding of female empowerment and the psyche in terms of suffering from HIV, domestic abuse and imprisonment.

The volunteer Ms Jennifer Thompson from the United States held art therapy sessions during her stay to encourage positive thought and provide a channel for the psychological burdens they bear.



By using games and role-plays, SETU Nepal taught participants about the importance of health, hygiene and nutrition, as well as how to manage their disease and avoid transmission. Meditation and yoga were used to demonstrate a healthy coping mechanism the women could employ and training sessions were held on living with children suffering from HIV, to highlight the importance of balanced diets and hygiene for youth and how to instill positive mental attitudes in children suffering from taxing circumstances.

### Results

The average age of the women and mothers in training was 35 and one in two mothers in attendance were the sole caregivers for their children. These women were predominantly illiterate feedback demonstrated that the training was an accessible and practical way of teaching that they could understand, learn from and most importantly implement.

As the program started in mid 2015, the financial results of goat farming have not yet been realized. Through local visits, SETU Nepal found the participants to have benefitted from the training and engaged in rearing the goats purchased with the start up investment funding.



### Case Study

**Pabishara Pariyar**, 35 years old, participated in our third training session of 2015. She lives in a small hut with her husband and 4 of 6 children who are still under the age of 16, 2 of whom are disabled. While goat farming has provided a practical help for her family, it has meant her 13 year old daughter has left school to work and to help for caring her siblings who are disabled. Through our site visits we realized



Pabishara needs a higher degree of financial support. SETU Nepal has contacted a local child welfare center to provide support to her disabled children so that her daughter may attend school and Pabishara may develop her business.

## Education programs

From January to December 2015 we have reached 71 deserving children (See appendix 6) who are attending government schools in their district in order to better integrate families living with HIV/AIDS in their communities and show skeptics that these families need not be ostracized.



However, we always encourage parents to be responsible (both financially and as caregivers) and schools not to discriminate in educating the children.

There is no doubt that the education provided by government school of Nepal is of a poorer quality when compared to that of private schools. In rural areas, teachers lack responsibility for their pupils and adequate teaching facilities. We have chosen to provide funding for the education of children at government schools for two reasons: the lower subscription costs mean we can support a



education and attendance.

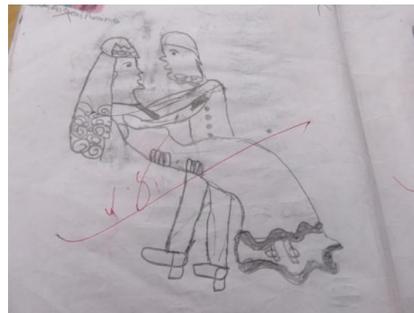
greater number of children and in turn establish a more positive attitude towards learning within communities. Where possible we provide support for private education, especially for those children in grade ten, the final year of school requiring further tuition and support for their

We evaluated report cards of academic progress provided by schools with presentation skills, handwriting, book, bag and stationeries and maintenance. As most of the children suffering with HIV have not disclosed their health status to their schools, we met 14 children in their homes to evaluate their performance. We found that while education programs for children are very effective some children find it difficult to adapt to traditional schooling systems, mentally and behaviorally. The majority showed good progress in their teaching environment, making bonds with their peers and getting involved in extracurricular activities. By removing the stigmatization of HIV, children would have a better chance to relate to others, form relationships and perform academically.

Meeting children at home allowed us to gauge their performance and receive a status update of the socio-economic circumstances of their families.

### Case studies

**Purnima Ghale** is the daughter of Sony Ghale, a woman living with HIV studying in grade 3 in Lamjung, Besisahar. She is one of SETU's beneficiaries of support for education. She studies well, engages with others and showed a passion for art and especially Nepali art. Her and her families take care for her presentation, both in clothing and her school supplies.





Dhristi Naupane 24 years old woman is HIV infected by birth. She got married with Bikash Gurung 7 years ago and has a daughter who is also HIV positive. Because of the family problem she could not continue her school education after grade 7. After participating in IG training in 2014 she started her own beauty parlor by taking some loan. She is doing very well in her business and planning to expand some cosmetic items in her parlor. Recently her husband died and she has responsible entirely to her 6 years old daughter who is studying in Pre-school level supported by our organization. She is living in a rented house along with running parlor. She has not been disclosed about her and her daughter's HIV infection because of fear that she might have close her business. Therefore when we visited her parlor to meet her and to evaluate our education program to her daughter we went there as a customer of her parlor. This is just an example that how women can manage her life in spite of that she is positive by birth. It shows that there is a great hope in all children even they are HIV positive.

**Maya Adhikari** started her doll making business after attending income generating training in 2013. Mala and her husband were the first couple in Chitwon district who disclosed their HIV status to their community to raise awareness about the disease. At the time they were running a small grocery for livelihood; however once they announced they were HIV positive they were ostracized by the community due to discrimination and the fear of transmission. After hitting rock bottom, Maya attended income generating training to learn how to make dolls. SETU Nepal provided Maya with a sewing machine to allow her to produce more toys and expand her business. She now has two children and her families are happy despite the health issues they have had to overcome.



*“Initially we had decided not to have children; we didn’t want to pass on our disease, and we did not know if we could afford it. Thanks to SETU Nepal, I learnt the necessary skills to start my doll making business and received health awareness training. Learning about the prevention of parent to child transition made me realize we could have children and need not be defined by our disease. Both my children are free from HIV, and my family lead a happy life.” - Maya Adhikari, Chitwon*

## Aarati House and outreach work

### Behind the doors of Aarati House



Mother and child treated by doctor and nurse

The SETU Nepal transit home, Aarati house, is geared towards providing support for needy mothers and children living with HIV. It is a safe environment where women and children can have easy access to education, shelter and healthcare to treat their social, physical and psychological problems.

Over 2015 Aarati House housed a total of 24 children, 10 boys and 14 girls. Along with these children 40 mothers underwent health treatment during a week long stay, depending on their illness and the treatment needed. Of the 24 children, 13 were treated for fever and 1 for sores and abrasions, 1 was treated for a genetic heart problem and remainder underwent health checks and care for HIV, namely their viral load and CD4 count. Similarly of 40 mothers, 2 were treated for whole body check-up and 38 were treated for CD4 count, health tests and HIV treatments.

Evidently, risks still remain: as HIV infected mothers and children require continuous care and support, we want to address their health status and teach them that although HIV is incurable, it is manageable with the right approach.

### **Education for Aarati's children**

There are 5 children living in the Aarati House who are currently receiving educational, health and psycho-social support. Staff and volunteers at Aarati House organize activities such as sports and art events, visits to local villages and temples and celebration of different traditional Nepali festivals at the transit home.

The five children currently staying in Aarati House have performed well academically, studying in a private school in Lalitpur where they do not face discrimination on grounds of their health. Aarati House provides a safe environment to allow the children to develop life skills, their education and to reinsert themselves in society.

### **Festivals and days of celebration**

#### **MagheSankranti :-**

The children and the staff of Setu had a wonderful day on 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2015 to celebrate the Nepali festival Maghe. Everyone helped to prepare laddus (special sweet prepared for that day) and spent time together to celebrate the occasion.

#### **Celebration of Holi :-**

Holi festival has a wide cultural significance. It is the festive day to leave the past behind you and make peace with yourself and others. Holi also marks the

start of spring and for many the start of a new year. The children of Aarati House celebrated Holi with their mothers, the staff and volunteers, enjoying games and color celebrations. We, Setu Nepal would like to express our gratitude to Ms. Genevieve, volunteer from Switzerland who spent her time with us and the children to celebrate Holi.



### Christmas Day:-



*Those are just Eye Sights; either respect JESUS with red cloth or SHIVA with Rudrakchya, the true religion is the respect towards Senior Citizens and their ultimate smile...*



The children of Aarati House celebrated Christmas 2015 with a total of 17 mothers and 45 elderly persons living in a local care (senior citizen) home in Kathmandu. Gifts of woolen caps and socks were distributed as a token of their thanks and appreciation.

### Outreach Work

#### Family Connection:-

SETU Nepal believes that learning begins at home. The maternal bond is the only one we know before we enter this life; this year SETU Nepal reunited as many of our beneficiaries as possible with their mothers to stress the importance of family.



At SETU's Aarati House, the children learn traditional cultural values such as taking their breakfast after prayers and taking part in various rituals. They also visited Pashupati temple and went to the elderly care home to visit those living there with gifts. SETU Nepal wanted to stress the importance of caring for the older generations in our community. They were very excited to listen to their elders and to share stories with the older generation.

### Volunteer placements

Aarati house is an opportunity for volunteer placements with SETU Nepal to give our visitors a valuable insight into SETU Nepal and to allow them to gain firsthand experience of the charity's programs. Volunteers help with the children and their mothers in the transit home and assist in fundraising for needy women and children infected with HIV in the future.

Ms. Genevieve Antille from Switzerland volunteered with SETU from 24th February to 22nd March .She helped SETU in various ways including education support to one of the children of Aarati house for one year and expressed as follow at the end of her volunteering:

*“Volunteering with SETU Nepal was one of the most eye opening and rewarding experiences I have ever had. I really had a chance to get involved. I could follow Ranju the director for a training program in meditation in a jail in Birgunj. I learned a lot about prison, the life in prison, what SETU Nepal does for women to connect them with their family and I could visit the different women parts inside the prison (rooms, toilet, washing place, shop). I received a wonderful gift from them which touched me deeply, a handmade fan to be sold at the market. I was surprised to see them smiling, enjoying the meditative reflection time, being quiet and having fun during the exercises. When I visited the different parts, I saw the children of those women, the conditions are bad and it’s not a place for children. Despite that, they were smiling and said “Namaste” with their heart.”*

- Genevieve Antille , volunteer



Ms. Jennifer Thompson, an Art Therapist and Psychologist from the USA, volunteered with Setu from 22nd November to 30th November 2015. As part of her Volunteering she was led mothers and children in different sessions relating Art. Her insight and experience was invaluable and Setu learnt a lot from her as to how to use art as a medium of expression and more importantly communication. **(See appendices 7 and 8)**

**Donations and Sponsorship**

**Grinder/Mixer**



Aarati house of SETU Nepal has received a generous donation from the volunteer Ms. Linda . She was involved at Aarati house for two days in January 2015. In spite of her very short time volunteering Ms. Linda donated NRs 5,000 to the children of Aarati House of SETU Nepal to buy a

Grinder/Mixture for the kitchen of Aarati house The children and staff are very grateful for her help.

**Heater and Thermos**



Aarati house of SETU Nepal has received a generous donation from the US volunteer Hannah. She was involved at Aarati house for two weeks from December 2014 -January 2015. Ms. Hannah donated Nrs.10,000 to the children of Aarati House of SETU Nepal to buy a Gas heater and a thermos for the children to protect them from cold in winter season. We are most appreciative of her help and kind gift.

**Medical Support**



Recently Anna Myers from US made a donation of NRs 20,000 to SETU Nepal. We

utilized this support to purchase of surgical instruments for the health facilities in Aarati house. As regular health checks are required for those suffering from HIV, a health expert visits Setu transit home weekly to check up on those staying there. After the purchase of medical set, we have been able to offer a wider and more efficient health check. We extend our full appreciation to Ms. Anna Myers for her kind gesture.

#### A fatherly gesture



SETU Nepal would like to express its gratitude to Mr. SanjyaRimal, a Nepali well-wisher who is going to support the education of Laxmi for a year in a well known private school. Laxmi was rescued from the western part of Nepal whose mother is being treated for her mental problem as well as HIV.

Laxmi is 4 years old now and has been living in SETU home for one year. Mr. SanjyaRimal who is living in USA with his family met Laxmi last year when he came to Nepal. When he first heard about Laxmi, he immediately supported \$200 without delay for the treatment of Laxmi and her mother. Now he is supporting not only her education for a year but providing a fatherly figure to her. Before he left Nepal, he took Laxmi for shopping and bought her new clothes. This gesture and warmth towards the child is really appreciated and Laxmi's entire family would like to thank MrSanjya for his kind support.

Children's Activities



Playing with colors



Ready for interactive



Its play time



Psychological (Sand tray) therapy after earthquake

## Earthquake Relief Program

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The earthquakes on 25 April 2015 and 12 May 2015 killed over 8,000 Nepali citizens, injured over 21,000 and left hundreds of thousands of people without shelter and livelihood. While support flooded in from national government organizations, much of it was focused on immediate relief in the capital and SETU Nepal felt well positioned to provide targeted, long term support to those in need.

SETU Nepal responded to the needs of earthquake victims starting with the districts Dhading, Gorkha, Nuwakot and Sindhupalchowk. Nepal had seen overwhelming support from national and international agencies, and SETU decided that instead of providing immediate relief such as food and clothing, we would focus on the long term needs for rehabilitation of victims. To ascertain how to do this, SETU Nepal visited women and children living with HIV/AIDS and women and children in prison to gauge their needs.

Of the four districts we were unable to visit the Sindhupalchowk jail, as it had been completely devastated and the inmates had been moved to an alternate premise on a temporary basis. The condition of other three jails was better, with mostly minor structural damage. We collected information from all the female prisoners regarding their house conditions after the earthquake and possible ways we could support their families living outside. However, we found out that majority of the inmates were not in contact with their family members; SETU Nepal focused instead on the living conditions of the inmates and education of those contactable minors. Further to a request from the prison women, we provided the Nuwakot and Gorkha jail with a fan and solar and Dhading jail with a sewing machine as per their demand.

In respect of the HIV/AIDS victim, we visited community care centers of all four districts. We collected general statistical data regarding the women and children affected by the earthquake. We also addressed the pressing needs of the women, as most had lost their houses and the majority of their belongings.



Further to this visit, SETU Nepal has been fundraising to provide household items to the community care centers. The kitchen set previously donated to the community care center of Sindhupalchowk had been obliterated. Further to their request, we reinstalled the same kitchen supplies for 20 women in the district living with HIV whose houses had been destroyed.

Having seen the overwhelming international support and its outreach in the country, SETU soon realized that children's education and nutrition needs were not being adequately addressed and resolved to focus support in these areas. School bags containing stationary and schooling equipment, nutritive parcels and mosquito nets were distributed to the children in the Dhading and Nuwakot districts with government consent. SETU is still trying to address the hygiene and psychological needs in the long run, and hope to help reconstruct toilet and bathing facilities funds permitting.

### Schools relief program

#### Dhading and Nuwakot



On 11 August 2015 with the help of Dhading Plus of Dhading district and Trishuli Plus of Nuwakot district, Setu Nepal visited Dhading and Nuwakot to distribute school bags with stationary and nutrition packs for 55 children with HIV. During our assessment of the aftermath of the earthquakes situation, we realized that children were suffering mentally and physically. Most of them have lost their homes and access to education and every single Nepali was affected by bereavement in some form. The majority of international help was geared at food, hygiene and immediate disaster relief; Setu Nepal chose to offer the school bags to give the children a sense of access to education in difficult times and a means to continue their education.

#### Lalitpur



SETU Nepal distributed school uniforms and school bags with stationary to the pupils of three schools in the Lalitpur district which were badly affected by earthquake. Children were very ecstatic to receive new clothes before the Dashain festival, as most poor children in rural communities in Nepal only receive new clothing once a year.

After two earthquakes in Nepal the support from government and non-government organizations has been geared towards the most heavily affected districts, where as affected districts such as Lalitpur and Bhaktpur within a closer proximity to Kathmandu have been neglected. In southern Lalitpur 90% of houses have been damaged, a vast number of domestic animals and livestock have been killed and public buildings have been seriously damaged. Women and children are extremely vulnerable to human trafficking in this difficult time. The majority of the schools are sorely damaged in the Lalitpur district, which affects the future of an entire generation in terms of education. Setu Nepal made donations to seven schools in the area offering practical support in terms of equipment, academia and nutrition. We provided financial support to rebuild the preschool room, distributed computer, sound speaker system and office furniture as required.



*“We are very pleased to receive a speaker system and computer supported by SETU Nepal that will help to improve the quality service for our students, through extra curricular activities and management of the premises.”*

### Nutrition programs in schools

The dropout and irregularity of school attendance has increased, notably in primary level education. SETU Nepal observed that children barely got a proper meal at home and brought no lunch to school due to a lack of supplies. We discussed this situation with the teachers and the principals and we are now running a food



distribution program (Poshilo Aahaar Bitaran Karyakram), having commenced in two primary level schools in Lalitpur district to be rolled out to seven more schools in near future.

For sustainability point of view and for community support and participation, we are asking for contribution of NRs. 5.00 from the parents for each child per day where possible. This fund collected from the parents contributes towards the hiring of support staff to clean and cook in the schools.

We have extended our support to reinforce the healthy eating program by running several programs alongside child development workshops:

#### Nutrition training for mothers



SETU Nepal conducted a one day orientation program on Nutrition for women in Ikudol and Bhattedanda VDCs of Lalitpur district. This program was a part of School Nutrition program that SETU Nepal is running as one of its earthquake response programs. The objective of the program was to raise mothers' awareness about nutrition and child feeding for those with children under the age of ten. Given that we are providing nutritious food packages to schools, if we can educate the mothers we can extend this healthy eating program to the household. This will change both parents' and childrens' attitudes to healthy eating. The response received from the school and parents was overwhelming, with amazing support for the program.

### Assessment of the nutritional needs and status of school children

SETU Nepal has conducted nutritional assessments to assess the longevity and sustainability of the program. By conducting growth monitoring assessments at the beginning of the program and at the three month mark, we have been able to gauge the success of our efforts.

Following our assessment, we found that all children had gained weight and felt better about their own health after three months. We noted that many still suffer from mild to moderate acute malnutrition and will require further support. Those sorely malnourished were put forward as candidates to enter Aarati House. SETU Nepal feels that further studies are required to measure the long term effects of the treatment (**See appendix 9**).

### Stress management Program in Prison

On March 25, 2015 Setu Nepal conducted a Stress Relief Program for both male and female prisoners separately at the Birgunj Jail located in Parsa District. There were around 60/75 women prisoners and 500/1100 male



prisoners who attended the program. Besides them, the staff members of the prison were also involved in the program. SETU Nepal organized the program in coordination with Jeevan Bigyan Kendra (an institute focused on self-knowledge and self-discovery) with the aim of improving the situation of

prisoners, particularly with regards to stress and mental health. The program was led by Mr. Ramesh Prasad Nepal of Jeevan Bigyaan Kendra. Setu Nepal representative Ms. Ranju Pandey introduced the program and its objectives to the participants; following this introduction, Mr. Nepal guided program through different activities such as breathing therapy, singing therapy, and silence

mood therapy to clean our mind and soul and to help participants realize that everybody is accountable for their own happiness and sadness. He explained that we wash our body frequently whenever we feel untidy but never feel that we need to wash our soul and mind. As a consequence of which, the garbage of our mind comes out through emotions such as anger, jealousy, crime etc. Mr. Nepal encouraged the participants/audience to fold hands ( in Namaste position) whenever we feel angry. He added that it is impossible to be angry and hurt anybody while doing NAMASTE. Additionally, Mr. Nepal tried to make participants empty their mind through meditation so that we can plant new and positive vibration towards us. The program was concluded by a summary of the whole program and a song by Ms. Ranju Pandey of SETU Nepal representative. She concluded the session by saying that it is us whether we want to make us happy by following the activities and practice taught from Mr. Nepal or ignore it by giving priority to our own original perception as the sun shine gives us equal rays and heat but we take it as or own situation of mind. While short, the Stress Relief Program was found to be very effective. Participating prisoners were highly involved and engaged throughout the program. Several participants, both male and female, enquired further about the program after it ended. They were excited about the stress relief activities, and expressed the sentiment. The participants were also requested to express their impression towards the program. A participant expressed his feelings in male prison “when I was doing meditation I saw my home with children and my wife working in surrounding that made me so happy for a time being”. One of the female prison express her positive feeling in the saying of Mr. Nepal that we will receive praise from others if we start praising others rather than to point his/her negative aspect. It was evident that it is necessary to conduct such programs more frequently and for longer than just a



single day to maximize effectiveness and to fully engage all participating prisoners. We are very grateful towards Jeevan Bigyan Kendra who supported us by conducting the program. We would like to express our thanks to the team of Birgunj Jail who provided us necessary support to make program success.

### Recommendations

#### Continuation of Nutrition program

After the earth quakes in April and May of this year we visited 7 schools of Lalitpur that had been neglected by governmental and charitable efforts. Further to our nutrition programs, we found there was still a great need of the schemes to be run for both parents and children to maximize our positive results and better educate the communities.

#### Parent club

Having worked with women and children for over a decade, we have realized that each child's development depends upon their family status. Strong family bonds are imperative. In this regard, we have found that educating parents sustains the effects our initiatives have and parent clubs may be used to increase awareness of issues in Nepali culture, better educate parents and provide them with the necessary skills and materials to better care for their children.

#### Adult education for women living with HIV

In Nepal's patriarchal society, women have a more limited access to education than men. Everybody born with some potentiality and they just need the forum to explore their creativity. Tradition dictates the females are the caregivers; in rural communities, women rear children and livestock on the farms. Having supported 70 women through income generating training in 2015 to begin their own business, SETU Nepal wants to provide basic level education in math, English and Nepali to women living with HIV to empower them on a personal and entrepreneurial level.

### Vocational education for adolescents living with HIV

SETU Nepal's education programs for younger children has been highly effective for both child and parent. Often children in their late teens suffering from the disease are neglected, as they have left school and even the family home for various socio-economic reasons. SETU Nepal feels that by offering these teens and young adults vocational training, we can better suit their needs and maximize their potential to give them independence.

### A SETU Nepal vehicle for promotion of programs and health treatments supporting women and child with HIV

By purchasing a vehicle on behalf of the organization, SETU Nepal can save money on public transport and deploy our resources to a wider range of villages. A van would allow for a mobile unit to be established that can be driven throughout Nepal to bring training programs and health checks to a greater number of locations, including rural areas that are not easily accessed in the rainy season.

## Conclusion

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2015 was a tough year for SETU Nepal, but despite the hardships our country faced we saw great success in the face of adversity: through our income generating program for SETU Nepal: Aarati House, Setu Nepal's transit home, saw many children living there with their mothers, while we formed vital links with other charities at a variety of networking events. These links mean we have been able to deliver more care to a wider range of women and children in Nepal, whether through sponsorship or liaising with other charities to fund further education or find placements for the children.

We cannot begin to thank our well-wishers for everything they have helped us to achieve; without you, none of this would be possible. We are thankful for the success we have seen in 2015, and hope it continues into 2016.

## Contact Information

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## Organization Information

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