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Renewed Hope in Earthquake Devastated Dolakha

By Naresh Koirala



A school classroom in Damarang post earthquake. Photo Dr Mark Turin

The resulting structure is built to national and international seismic standards and can be used as a model for other communities wishing to develop earthquake resistant buildings.



*The finished product—ready for the monsoon
Photo Dhan Kumar Shrestha*

The village of Damarang, a community in the Suspa area of Dolakha district, has a history of strong commitment to education and prior to the devastating earthquake of April 2015, had recently finished updating its school buildings. These were destroyed along with thousands of residences. As a result the community was left with no adequate building to house even a basic school program.

The community contacted the NLF through Dr Sara Shneiderman, an associate professor at the University of British Columbia's Department of Anthropology and School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, who has a long time connection with the community. The NLF was able to coordinate fund raising including contributions from the Nepal Cultural Society of British Columbia, the Nepalese Society of Texas, and Roorkee Indian Institute of Technology Alumni Association of which NLF president, Naresh Koirala, is a member.

The NLF has a strong commitment to supporting a strict adherence to internationally accepted seismic building standards in Nepal. NLF member Dr Bishnu Pandey an internationally recognized expert on seismically sound building technology at the British Columbia Institute of Technology and Mr Dev Maharjan of ESS, a national engineering company, provided input to ensure that the resulting structure was built to national and international standards and which now can be used as a model for other communities.

The construction was jointly managed by the NLF and Fashelung Samajik Sewa a local organisation that supports the local Thangmi community.

E-Pustakalaya Servers to be Installed in 32 Schools in Myagdi



Chakra Bahadur Thapa joins Naresh Koirala and Dhan Kumar Shrestha in signing the MOU to install 32 digital libraries in schools in Myagdi

Non Resident Nepalis (NRN) from the mid-western district of Myagdi have come together to change the face of schools in Myagdi. The Myagdi Overseas Nepalese Association (MONA) has negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NLF to install e-Pustakalaya servers in 32 Myagdi schools. MONA treasurer Chakra Bahadur Thapa joined with NLF General Secretary Dhan Kumar Shrestha in signing the agreement. MONA intends to expand e-Pustakalaya coverage to all schools in Myagdi over time.

MONA was established in 2007 by some of the approximately 16,000 Myagdi NRNs who live overseas. MONA is engaged in providing coordinated medical, educational and agricultural



Teachers and other community members attending a demonstration of the capabilities of the e-Pustakalaya in Beni

productivity enhancement services as well as assisting in the development of tourism and hydro power. Also MONA's aim is to provide internet coverage for the whole district and they are working with Nepal Telecom in this regard. Under the MOU, NLF will install e-Pustakalaya servers in schools nominated by MONA; conduct a day long teacher orientation in its use and provide technical assistance where necessary. Soon after signing the MOU in Kathmandu, Basanta Shrestha, NLF's e-Pustakalaya specialist conducted a demonstration of the digital resource's capability and application to a packed standing room only audience in Beni, the capital of Myagdi district.

Gaighat School IT Resources Upgraded



New resources being put to good use

The NLF recently helped coordinate an e-Pustakalaya digital library and learning resource installation in the Paradise Secondary School, Triyuga Municipality, in Udayapur District in SE Nepal. With funding provided by ex students Manish Shrestha and Nishan Rana and the e-Pustakalaya Helping Group of Japan, the installation provides the school with much needed networked digital content and learning resources. Shrestha and Rana, who are pursuing further studies in Japan, serve as an inspiration to the thousands of Nepalis studying and working overseas who wish to contribute to helping to improve educational opportunities in their alma maters.

Sangam Computer Literacy Program Continues



Women participating in the 2016 computer literacy programme in Sangam Community Library

In 2015 the NLF organised a women's computer literacy program in Gaighat in collaboration with Sangam Community Library with the generous financial support of the Trans Himalayan Aid Society of Vancouver. Over 100 women successfully completed the program. The ensuing de-

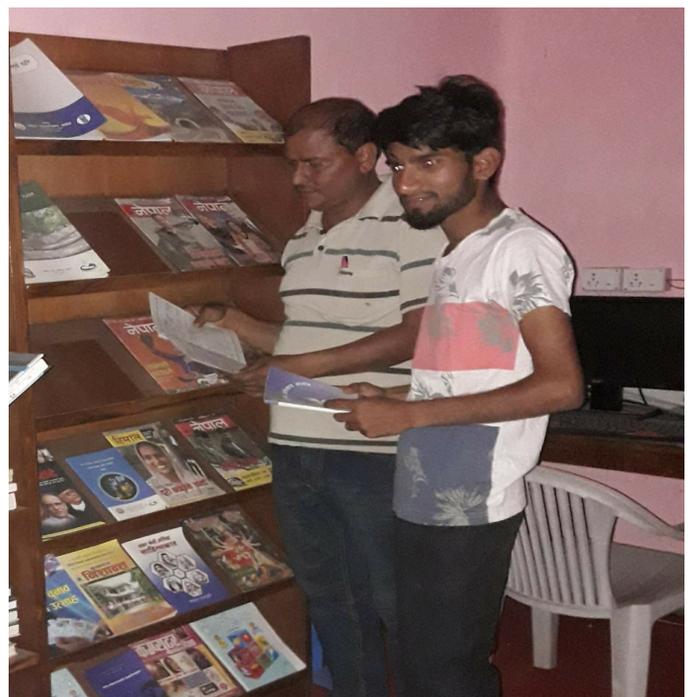
mand for computer literacy training has led the women of Gaighat to start their own programme under the auspices of Sangam Community Library. This initiative serves as a model for other communities who wish to support skill development for women.

A Library Gets a New Life in Brahmapuri, Janakpur

The Shurid Pustakalaya, in the South Central Nepal city of Janakpur, was established by Saroj Koirala in the mid 1950's and thrived until it was shut down in 1960 after the King dissolved Parliament and assumed power. Elected political leaders were imprisoned and civil liberties crushed. Public libraries were banned and forcibly closed. Saroj Koirala went into exile in India but was assassinated in 1972. After the overthrow of the monarchy Ms Leela Koirala, Saroj Koirala's widow, became a member of parliament.

To help restore the library as a functional resource for the community Ms Koirala directed NPR 500 000 from the Parliament Development Fund towards its refurbishment. The NLF has assisted in managing the project, providing library training, installing an e-Pustakalaya server network connected to five computers and setting up a dedicated children's section.

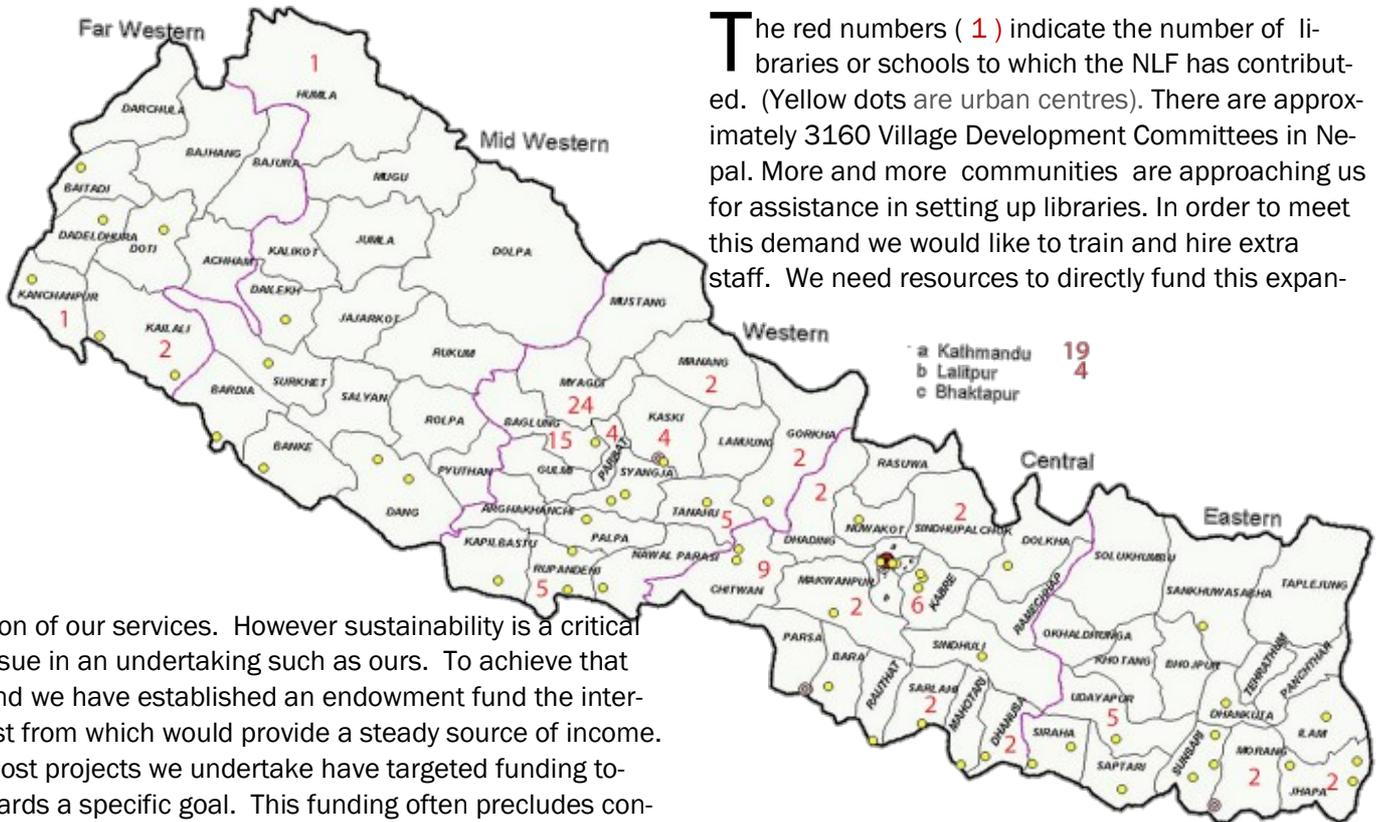
The restoration of this library provides a much needed and appreciated resource to a generation that have never known the concept of a public library.



Volunteers cataloguing books in Surid Library

127 Libraries in 25 Districts

An endowment fund could help provide a sustainable income source to further meet the demands of some of the 3160 Village Development Committees in Nepal for libraries



The red numbers (1) indicate the number of libraries or schools to which the NLF has contributed. (Yellow dots are urban centres). There are approximately 3160 Village Development Committees in Nepal. More and more communities are approaching us for assistance in setting up libraries. In order to meet this demand we would like to train and hire extra staff. We need resources to directly fund this expansion of our services.

However sustainability is a critical issue in an undertaking such as ours. To achieve that end we have established an endowment fund the interest from which would provide a steady source of income. Most projects we undertake have targeted funding towards a specific goal. This funding often precludes contributions to basic costs such as office rent and salaries. If you need more information before you donate, please contact us (see information below). We will ensure any donation is put to good use.

www.nepallibrary.org



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Help support our work

Donate: Online through the Paypal link on our webpage. Cheques should be made out to Nepal Library Foundation and sent to our office 1426 Chamberlain Drive, N Vancouver, BC V7K 1P6. A Canadian tax receipt will be issued on request.

Endowment Fund: Our goal for 2018 is NPR 1 000 000 000 (approximately USD 9 000). The interest from this will build the foundation of a sustainable source of income. Please contact us for more information at any of the above e-mail addresses.