

Saraswati Vidya Mandir School, Renovation Project

Project Background

Sunkhani VDC of Dolakha district is located east of Kathmandu in the Himalaya at an altitude of 1500m. It is home to 57 households: 22 households of the Thami caste, 3 households of Kaami, 2 households of Sarki and another 30 that are considered to be very poor.



Dominant in Nepal is the concept of caste. Caste determines a person's status, their career and how that person interacts with other Nepalis. Kaami and Sarki are considered Dalit communities and the Thami people are considered a socially oppressed caste. Dalits (Untouchables or outcastes) face extraordinary prejudices and restrictions in Nepal including not being allowed to participate in religious life (including not being allowed to enter temples) meaning that this community is in great need of attention and lifting of their quality of life, self esteem and opportunities.

In addition, in 1995, there were heavy floods which swept away the Jhyakur village of this VDC. Since then, the Thami people displaced by the flood have been living on others' land. They are farming others' agricultural land and trying to survive while giving most of their crops as rent to the land owner. Most of them do not have their home on their own land. 50% of the children of this Thami community study at Saraswati Vidya Mandir and 50% do not attend school due to poverty.

Saraswati Vidya Mandir

This primary school runs classes up to Grade Five. The school is considered as the school of the Thami and poor children and holds a low position in the minds of the wider community. There is another private school nearby where the children from middle income families study. The gap between the poor and the rich can be seen in the two schools located within a short distance from each other. There are 95 students at the school and most are from poor or socially discriminated backgrounds and some are orphans.



There is no toilet for the students and they do not have access to drinking water though a recent government grant has been made to allow these things to be provided. The parents of the students are so poor that they cannot afford to buy the notebooks, pens and pencils for the children. A recent donation through TNW Nepal purchased each student basic stationary to enable them to continue their study for the moment. A further problem is that the parents still do not have the sense of responsibility to send their daughters to school and even the boys do not get educated after Grade Five due to poverty. There is no system of scholarship for the Thami children so the number of Thami children attending the school is decreasing.

The Project

The current school building is 10 yrs old and is close to collapse. It is 2 stories but with only floor boards separating the floors which means that the classrooms are not soundproof and it is difficult for the teachers to teach. In addition, dirt and dust falls through the gaps in the floor boards of the upper floors into the eyes and onto the books of the students studying below. Inside the classrooms they only have basic benches and often use the cement walls as blackboards. The roof is not waterproof and the whole building is in need of renovation.



TNW Nepal is halfway to raising the funds needed to renovate this building so that is safe and conducive to learning. In addition, new desks, benches and whiteboards will be installed in the classrooms and hopefully the school's morale and wellbeing of the community will be lifted in the process.



This is just one step into helping lift this community out of poverty and raise its standing in the community. TNW Nepal is committed to helping this community through a number of development activities, the first of which is renovation of Saraswati Vidya Mandir School.

For more information, please visit <http://www.twnepal.org/>
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