

Friends of
Volunteers Initiative Nepal
N E T H E R L A N D S

Empowering Marginalized Communities One at a time



2016 Annual Report

14 APR 2017

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Friends of VIN, NL is an SDO

Ever since we entered the world of non-governmental, non-religious, non-profit organizations, we decided to *not* label ourselves with a negative pre-fix, so **F**riends **o**f **V**olunteers **I**nitiative **N**epal (FoVIN), Netherlands, calls themselves an SDO – a **S**ocial **D**evelopment **O**rganization.

FoVIN was founded in March 2011 and our work centers on putting the efforts for change in the hands of local people and we actively encourage local people to volunteer within their communities, aiming to unite all sectors of society in working together to set up and run local projects. We run these programs with our Nepal-based partner, **V**olunteers **I**nitiative **N**epal (VIN) and once the community is self-sustainable we remove our active presence and move on to a new area. Our goal is to facilitate empowerment and improvement of basic living conditions and to make marginalized communities independent and self-sustainable.

We perform various fundraising activities in Europe, form partnership with private institutions and apart from providing financial support and sending volunteers to Nepal, Friends of VIN also acts as a sounding board for our partner organization in Nepal, VIN

From the founder

Firstly, I would like to wish you all a happy new year 2074 - Naya Barsa 2074 Ko Subhakamana!

It's been almost two years since the earthquakes hit Nepal in April and May 2015. The poverty-stricken country and its people have been clawing their way out of the disaster and in many urban places construction and rebuilding are well under way. However, there are numerous rural and remote places where recovery is still slow. Among these are Nepalese partner VIN's and our project areas; Okharpauwa, Kavresthali, Bhadaure, Taluwa and Thulachhap where we are focused now more than ever to alleviate poverty caused by inadequate access to sanitation, healthcare, quality education and income-generating possibilities which only worsened after the earthquake.

2016 was the year where we again enjoyed looking forward to all the opportunities there are for us to help marginalized people in Nepal edge their way out towards a better life for their communities, themselves and their children.



Ann Wilson & Bhupi Ghimire (Founder VIN) in Liege, BE

We are proud to say that that in 2016, we organized:

- A course in organic farming (40 beneficiaries)
- WaSH sessions (90 beneficiaries)
- Sponsorship for 42 children
- 4 teacher trainings (16 teachers)
- Improved 31 ECD classrooms (350 children)
- And much more, so please read on!

Holistic Approach

Poverty is a complex phenomenon; its causes and symptoms are complex and there is no one-fits-all solution. Education alone isn't enough, healthcare alone will not create positive lasting change nor will the sole support of women's and children's programs. FoVIN's mission is to empower marginalized communities by co-creating healthy, self-sustainable communities where people have access to adequate sanitation, health care, education and economic opportunity.

Our five main focus areas are

- Women's Empowerment
- Community Health
- Youth Empowerment and
- Children's Development
- Environment and Conservation



Projects in Nepal



Empowering Women

We believe in the equal opportunities of women in Nepal, therefore we have created a variety of projects which assist women to overcome current adversity to not only survive, but thrive in society. Through this program VIN volunteers have a chance to assist **women's empowerment**, by boosting literacy and health education, providing income generation tips and micro credit loans.



Raise Health Awareness

The **Health and Medical program** aims to improve the health of the community through education, health services and public health improvements. According to their interests, volunteers can be involved with a number of different projects, depending on their interests and the needs of the community at the time.

Projects in Nepal



Youth playing volleyball in a village



Secure children right to Education

Our **Youth Empowerment** volunteer program aims to inspire and encourage the youth of Nepal. Involve the youth in different community development programs by giving them trainings on social and professional skills. Ensure the youth to become pro-active and responsible towards their community promoting change and empowerment.

Our **Children's Development Program** is one of the major activities in our integrated community approach, supported by our full-time staff and volunteers.

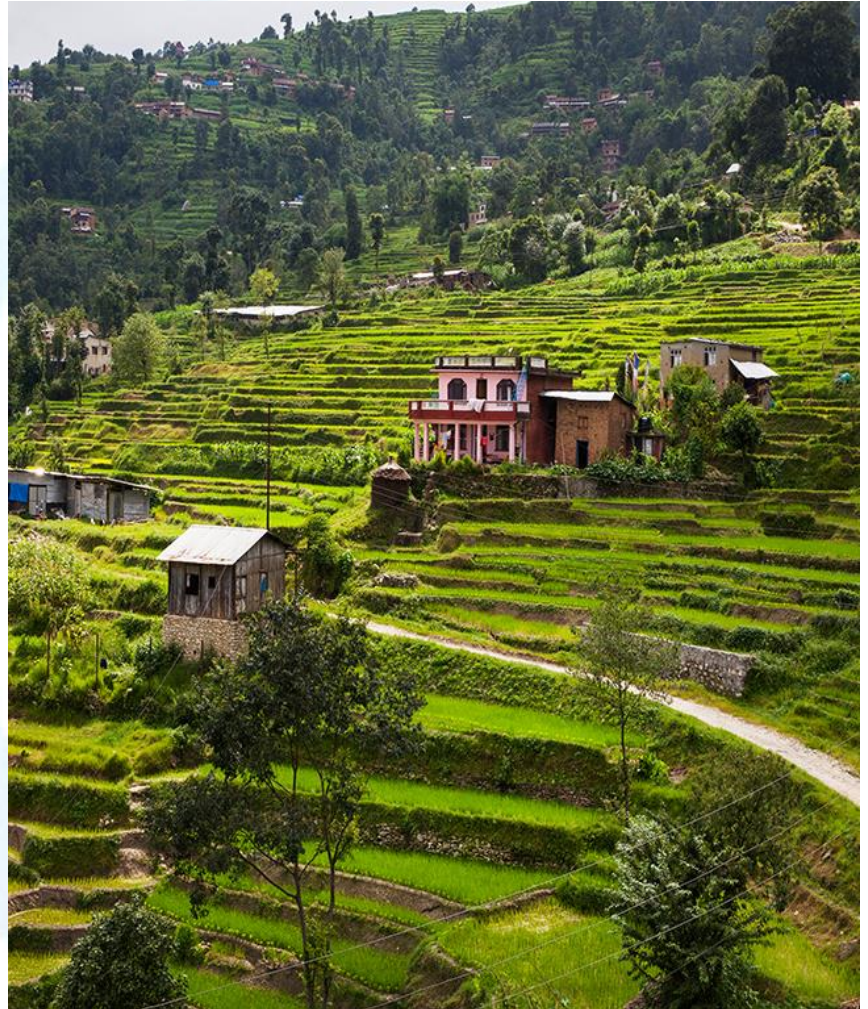
The aim of the program to ensure the basic children rights are met; provide them with basic and quality education in a child-friendly environment. We also aim to develop their life skills and health services.

Projects in Nepal

A recent addition to the pillars from which all our projects stem: **Environment awareness**

Nepal is rich in natural resources, but they are under threat from pollution, industrialization and lack of waste management. We aim to raise awareness and inspire the local communities to take better care of their surroundings.

We conduct Water Research, Environment Initiative, Climate Change Research, Agrofarm and AgroForestry projects under **Environment and Conservation programs** to provide in depth concept of environmental issue of Nepal and to develop analytical skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills of its volunteers and interns



Terrace field in a village in Nepal

Okhaldhunga

The district of Okhaldhunga is located approx. 240 km east of Kathmandu. But improved infrastructure now allows for “only” 8-10 hrs travel to reach Okhaldhunga which is quite a big improvement compared to 3 years ago when the journey typically took 15-17 hrs. This is hardly exceptional as an estimated 36% of Nepal’s 29 million people live at least a two-hour walk from the nearest all-season road, and 15 out of Nepal’s 75 districts are not connected by road. 60 percent of the main road network and almost all rural roads are dry-season tracks that cannot be operated during the rainy season.

We are active in 3 VDCs:

1. Thulachhap 2. Taluwa 3. Bhadaure

Each VDC is divided into 9 wards, home to approx. 1900 households, with a total population of around 10,000 people. There are now 24 schools and 20 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers.



Ploughing in field in Okhaldhunga



With ward representatives from the Women's Agricultural Cooperative

Projects in Okhaldhunga

ECD Teacher Support – Apart from teacher training sessions, VIN continued to provide salaries to 7 ECD teachers and provided a bonus to all the other teachers and volunteer teachers.

School Infrastructure Development – VIN provided painting materials to 18 ECD centers of Taluwa and Thulachhap where plastering of the walls and floor has been completed. 2 ECD classrooms in Taluwa still need painting. Also, tables and cupboards were installed in ECD classrooms to make them more child friendly.

Sponsorship – VIN has been sponsoring children who are from families who cannot afford to send their children to school. We sponsor 37 children in Okhaldhunga.

Teacher exchange visit – 7 teachers from Jitpur paid a visit to Okhaldhunga. The interaction went well; all the Children Development activities and knowledge on strategies and challenges of the children development program were discussed.

Reconstruction and support

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake in 2015, we supported about 100 families with corrugated iron, tents and tarpaulins and held WaSH sessions for 300 people.

In 2016, we supported the renovation of 5 damaged schools and the construction of school toilets in 5 schools.



Taluwa-9: Saptakanya school, after renovation



Bhadaure-7: Shree Kalika primary school during its renovation

Okhaldhunga Achievements

Program Title	Projects	Activity Details	Frequency	No. of Beneficiaries
Women Empowerment	Micro – Credit	2nd general assembly	1	342
	Income generation	Organic farming	1	40
	Life skills	Water sanitation and hygiene education	3	90
Children's Development	Children Clubs	CCs	4	430
		CC Facilitator Teachers training	4	16
	Sponsorship Program	Sponsored child	1	42
	Teachers training	Teaching English	1	25
	ECD Program	ECD building construction	5	110
		ECD classes	1	31
		Full support to ECD teachers	1	12
		ECD class room improvement	31	350
		ECD Teacher's training	1	62
		ECD parents meeting	31	350
Youth Empowerment	-	Local youths as Volunteers	-	32
Public Health and medical care Program	School Health	Hygiene and Sanitation Ed.	3	350
	Hygiene and Sanitation Ed.	ECD parents	31	350
	WASH campaigns	Community awareness campaign on hygiene and sanitation	18	750
		Materials and instrument supply (Birthing center)	1	1000
Environment and conservation	WASH	Toilet construction	844	4020
	Agro forestry	Development and management training	1	40
Volunteering	International volunteers		-	16
	National volunteers		-	32

CLC project in Okhaldhunga

An important activity in Okhaldhunga is the construction of the **Community Learning Center (CLC)**. The CLC aims to provide a platform to plan and implement post disaster rebuilding alongside sustainable relief work and non-formal education programs at a community level. This approach was first implemented in Nepal in 2002 with the establishment of 5 CLCs as a pilot program with the financial and technical support of UNESCO, Kathmandu.

We value a pragmatic and realistic approach to societal issues, prioritizing above all self-sustainability. A CLC will be a crucial vehicle in empowering the communities in Okhaldhunga. It will have multiple benefits; it will offer a place to conduct various trainings (literacy, life skills, income generation, computer and internet, sanitation and hygiene training, earthquake resistant home construction, entrepreneurship and many more); a place for women to hold their monthly meetings and their annual assembly; it will house the first-ever library in the region and overall, it will decrease the amount of people migrating to either the bigger urban areas or overseas, and thus ensuring the well-being of continuation of rural communities.



Architectural rendering of the CLC



Brick-making machine

Solar Foil Trial

In 2015 we contacted a start-up company in Denmark who has developed a special solar foil that can be used for cooking.

They provided samples and decided to try it out in Okhaldhunga.

We can say that it definitely worked; we managed to boil some eggs, but in the end, it was too laborious to constantly turn the foil so that the sun rays would hit the foil optimally. Nobody has time to do this – also, it will obviously not work during the monsoon season (approx. 3 months per year), but we would like to thank to [Heliac](#) team for providing the samples and letting us try these out.

[Click here](#) for more pictures.



Preparing for the Solar cooker



Solar cooker being used

Shree Shanti Devi Primary School

May 2016: Together with Acts of Kindness Collective and the AlphaBetClub Amsterdam, we visited a temporary learning center (TLC) about 25 km outside Kathmandu, however, it could have been 250 km as it felt just as remote and inaccessible once we left the paved road. The car wasn't fit for driving all the way due to the bad and uneven road so we walked for about 90 min to reach the TLC. This made it all the more clear how the lack of good infrastructure can isolate communities which are otherwise quite close to cities.

The bamboo 'building' was set up immediately after the earthquake, but it was torn and did not offer a suitable shelter from the elements let alone function as a classroom.

Unfortunately, we didn't manage to raise funds for this school, but VIN's other partner, **PiSL** did and at the end of November 2016, they could hand over the first earthquake proof classroom to the Early Childhood Development class of Shree Shanti Devi Primary School, Sanochitre Okharpauwa in Nuwakot District.



From L to R: Justin Cava-Jones (Acts of Kindness Collective) Ann Wilson (Friends of VIN) Troy Swanson (AlphaBetClub)



Preparing for the Solar cooker

ISD, Partner since 2012



Sunrise at Poon Hill (PC: Keisuke Goto)



After a successful CAS project in Kavresthali (PC: Raymond Chang)

Founded more than 40 years ago, the International School of Düsseldorf (ISD) is a flagship International Baccalaureate World school. It's an institution that fosters an awareness and concern for the well-being and dignity of every individual.

The Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) module of the International Baccalaureate enables students to enhance their personal and interpersonal development by learning through experience.

Friends of VIN offers a CAS trip to Nepal which includes creative elements as well as service elements.



ISD Trip - March 2016

For the 3rd time, FoVIN took students and teachers from ISD on a trip to Nepal. The first part of the trip consisted of trekking through the beautiful Himalayan villages in the Annapurna foothills and the students experienced life on the same trails travelled by local people between villages and schools. Upon the return to Kathmandu, they engaged in a 3-day community service project, decorating and furnishing one ECD classroom and painting 2 others.



Teaching tooth brushing and handwashing (PC: Keisuke Goto)



ISD students and Local students painting

IFMSA, Partner since 2012



Pinar Aktas and Melodi Dekker, IFMSA-NL volunteers with their completion certificates (PC: VIN)



IFMSA student performing health checks in Kavresthali (PC: VIN)

IFMSA is an international platform for medical students. They address global health problems by organizing projects to create awareness about different aspects of global health problems.

For Friends of VIN, NL they are facilitating medical volunteers for our projects in the Kathmandu Valley.

2016 was the first year of projects in the new community of Kavresthali.

11 students went to Nepal in 2016 through IFMSA-NL.

Read Melodi Dekker's blog post here:

<https://hetismelodi.wordpress.com/2016/06/02/why-not/>



Testimonials



Keisuke Goto, Grade 11,
ISD trip 2016

The time in Nepal was a life-changing experience for me. Especially, watching the sunrise from the top of the Poon Hill with my friends and spending time with the local children have become my eternal memory that influenced my career-building immensely. I realized the importance and the need of expanding and improving Economic Development based on what I experienced in Nepal and therefore have chosen to take the major in Economics at university. Ultimately, the project overall is worth much more than how much we paid or how much we study in a classroom. This is an experience, which I want everyone at my age to go and see. I will remember what I felt and did for the rest of my life.

My experience in Nepal was amazing!



Joosje Baltussen, IFMSA
volunteer
1 Sep.– 26 Oct. 2016

The volunteering was such a grateful job. One morning I was walking in the streets of Kathmandu City and one woman approached me and started kissing and squeezing my hands and blessing me. After a while I remembered that I listened to her lungs a few days. You can make the Nepalese this happy by just listening to their lungs! As I said, such a grateful job.

I am very upset that I have to leave Nepal, my host family and all the fantastic volunteers and staff from VIN and I will definitely come back to this beautiful country!

Volunteers: Historical overview 2016



There has been a rise in volunteers over the years; the number of national volunteers increased by as much as 3.5 times the average of the previous year.

We think the rise in international volunteers is mainly due to our many group projects and work camp opportunities for which individual participants can sign up.



Our international volunteers came from 34 different countries and the ratio of women to men was 60-40.

Prologis



Team Prologis heading to Nepal in 2017 for the IMPACT

Chosen as Charity of the Year by Prologis, we have been busy preparing a trip to Nepal for 7 employees who will go to Kavresthali to construct toilets in March 2017.

THANK YOU!

We thank you all for your continued support and for your encouraging words.

To follow our activities throughout the year, please check out our [Facebook page](#) and [website](#)

