

Table of Contents

From the President	3
Our Mission	4
How 2015 Started	5
Earthquake Disaster and Our Response	7
Rebuilding Education	13
A Survivor's Story	14
Rukmini Scholars Graduate	16
Shining Light of Hope with SLF	17
Promoting Literacy with LitWorld & Global GLOW	18
Providing Warmth through A Cold Winter	19
Celebrating 4 th Birthday	20
Pittsburgh & USA Efforts	21
Sincerest Thank you	22
Our Wonderful Supporters	23

Dear Friends,

2015 was a devastating year for the people of Nepal, and as an organization supporting education in village communities, it was the most challenging year our team has had to face. The devastating earthquakes that wrought widespread damage across the country along with the hundreds of strong aftershocks that left the people of Nepal in a perpetual state of fear caused an almost paralysis within the country. Despite these hardships, our team in Nepal and the wonderful volunteers from the community showed incredible **courage**, **dedication** and **perseverance**. *These are difficult and trying times*. Rukmini Scholars had just completed one month of the new school year in April 2015 when everything changed for them and the rest of Nepal. We were fortunate that no lives were lost, and despite all of the damage suffered, the community has stayed together as we all look to rebuild and recover.

What we have strived to accomplish in Pharping, Nepal is not easy but it is only possible with the commitment of our Scholars, dedication of our staff and team in Nepal, cooperation of community members and community partners, our team in the USA, and most importantly the support we receive from friends like you and your belief in our cause of empowering girls with the knowledge and tools to lead healthy and happy lives through quality education, formative mentorship, and wellness programs.

We look forward to bringing you more updates in the coming year as we look to continue our successful programs while developing new and exciting programs and partnerships. We hope you will continue to follow the girls in their journey towards empowerment and support the programs that make it possible. Thank you for all that you make possible.



Bibhuti Aryal
President

Our Mission

Rukmini Foundation has focused on providing a holistic education program to underprivileged girls in villages surrounding the Pharping area since 2011. Girls in rural Nepal are often forced into a do household work rather than go to school due to familial financial constraints. Rukmini Foundation ensures girls are given access to quality education and extracurricular opportunities through holistic programming and implementation of novel concepts of mentoring, problem-based learning, academic coaching, and health and wellness activities.

An educated girl lives longer, makes healthier decisions, and fights against child marriage, an illegal yet persistent problem in lower income families. With our Education, Health & Wellness, and Didi programs, we show girls and their families that education is what leads to opportunities to create a better life. Girls in Nepal should not be victims of poverty but rather part of the solution. Educated girls can improve their families, communities, and in turn, their country.

Villages we serve in: Basbari, Bhangang, Chalakhel, Chaimale, Dollu, Kopugaon, Nimtol, Pharping, Satikhel, Simpani, Sokhel, Talku, Yuntiki

A YEAR THAT STARTED OFF WITH GREAT PROMISE

The year 2015 started off with great programs and more collaborative efforts with our partners:

LitClub Story Summit with LitWorld and Women Lead Nepal

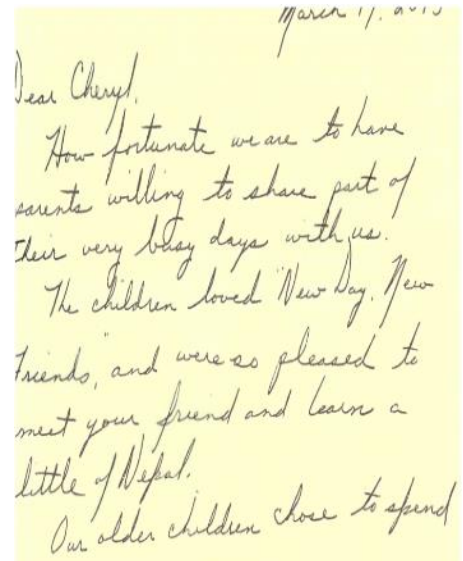


Rukmini hosted a story summit in collaboration with Women Lead Nepal and LitWorld, which included all of our LitClub Nepal clubs. The event included 25 girls from LitClub Niharika, LitClub Seti Devi, and LitClub Sriharipur. In the event, we asked the girls to write a story using the theme of LitClub's 7 strengths: **Belonging, Curiosity, Kindness, Friendship, Confidence, Courage, and Hope**. After the stories were written, they were presented using different multimedia.

#WRAD2015 - World Read Aloud Day celebrated in Nepal



World Read Aloud Day (WRAD), celebrated every year on the first Wednesday of March, calls for global attention to the importance of education and literacy. LitWorld honors WRAD by reading out loud and sharing stories. WRAD encourages children and adults to celebrate the power of words through reading out loud and sharing stories. To highlight the power of words, quotes from different leaders and inspirational individuals around the world, and poems by Maya Angelou and Laxmi Prasad Devkota were recited.



World Read Aloud Day Celebrated Across Pittsburgh Schools

WRAD was also celebrated across Pittsburgh Public schools in March 4. Members of the Office of the Deputy Superintendent participated in a service learning project for World Read Aloud Day, an international holiday to motivate children, teens, and adults worldwide to celebrate the power of words. Approximately 30 "readers" shared their favorite stories with students across the District, and donated the book they read to the school library

World Poetry Day



Rukmini Foundation and the A School for Community (ASC) family gathered to celebrate World Poetry Day on Friday, March 20, 2015. Poetry is the universal human song. The program was managed by students who showed energy and enthusiasm throughout the day. Two students, Rasmita Balami and Deepika Balami, co-hosted the event. The celebration began with students given one hour to express their creativity through poems.

PROMISE TURNS TO TRAGEDY AS NEPAL IS DEVASTATED

On April 28, 2015, a 7.9-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal and took thousands of lives, completely destroyed homes, depleted essential resources, and stole all senses of safety. Then on May 12, another powerful earthquake of magnitude 7.2 struck the nation, further devastating the nation and its people. This was the worst disaster in Nepal's modern history.



Instant Response: Family Safety & Damage Assessment

Rukmini Foundation's first priority was to make sure that our Rukmini Scholars, Foundation staff, and partner schools' teachers were safe and unharmed by the damage that occurred. The Foundation's emergency response began immediately. We contacted community members in the areas we work in, in Pharping, Nepal. It was challenging to reach people by mobile phones because power lines were destroyed. Many people could not charge their cell phones.



Annual Report 2015

Our response in the weeks immediately following the earthquake included damage assessment, relief package distribution, and temporary shelter set up. The day after the earthquake, our Nepal team visited the villages where our scholars, staff, and partner schools are located to talk to families in person and assess the damage incurred. There were varying levels of destruction and debris everywhere. Some homes were completely destroyed. Our evaluations of homes, health, and shelter conditions helped determine which families would require the most immediate support. We gave out relief packages to sustain vulnerable families for up to one month. We had to plan and act quickly to restore the hope that was lost in these communities.



Our team and volunteers worked to clear the debris and damage around collapsed homes and buildings. We recognized that *families living under tents would be especially vulnerable to diseases from poor health and sanitation*. Our team closely observed and supported these families.



Tents would not suffice when monsoon season arrived so we created a Temporary Shed Management plan to assist these families in returning to their permanent residence. We raced to provide families with sturdy CGI tin sheets so they could build sturdier homes before monsoon rains hit. We selected 20 of the poorest families who were living under tents to give tin sheets to.

Using the tin, families built one or two bedroom sheds. Ideally we would support all families. Decisions like these are not easy but they must be made – especially when time is pressing. This is why our staff and partners in Nepal regularly communicate with families in Pharping to check on their homes and well-being.



Reconstruction of homes and buildings was the next phase of our efforts. We worked with community members and formed key partnerships with community organizations, engineers, and stakeholders to secure funding and create safer design plans. Our future focus will be to help rebuild as many homes as we can.



Earthquake Disaster Response Summary

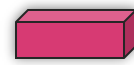
The earthquake on April 25th came as a great shock to us all, especially as we had just welcomed a new group of scholars to our program. However, within days of the disaster, our team formulated a plan to help the scholars, their families, and the larger Pharping community. We set up an Emergency Relief Fund, which received tremendous support from our friends in the US and the rest of the world. Here is how we put that to work to provide immediate relief to get the families and the community back on its feet.



46 homes assessed in 13 different villages



275 individuals seen in mobile health clinics



46 relief packages distributed



75 children reached through mental wellness program



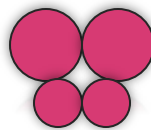
50 community members reached through a safe building workshop



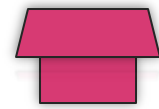
46 families visited to check food, health, and home conditions



150 children engaged in hygiene and hand washing program



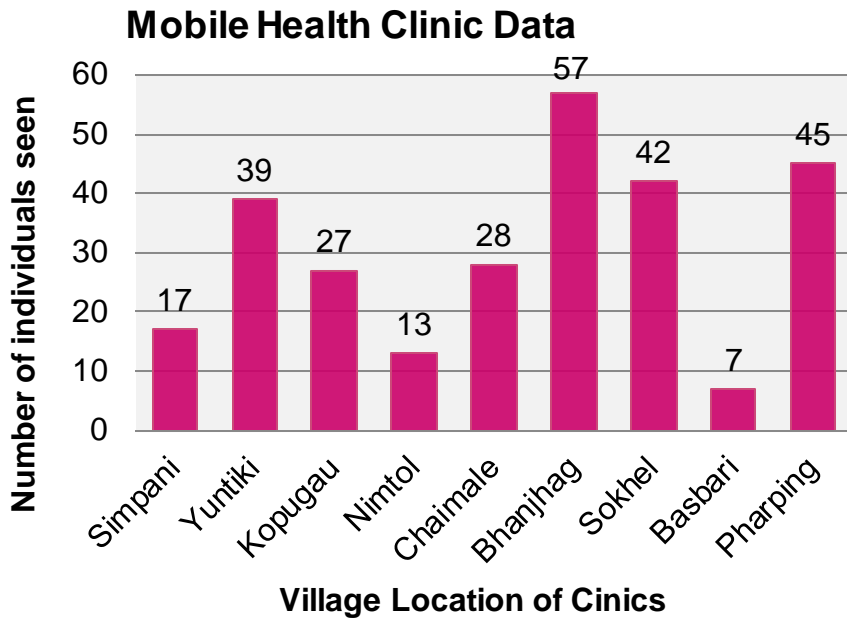
12 families supported with immediate relief materials



5 partner schools reached through earthquake preparedness and aftermath safety session

Health & Wellness: Mobile Clinics in Response to the Earthquakes

Over four days in May, we conducted Mobile Health Clinics that served **275** individuals in **nine different villages**. We worked with medical staff and professionals from Manmohan Hospital to make sure residents of Pharping received checkups and medicines after the earthquakes.



Our team used motorbikes and traveled by foot to set up clinics. Roads had poor infrastructure and damage from the earthquakes.



Clinics were set up in front of Rukmini Scholars' homes to make sure people living in the most rural parts of Pharping had access to medical care and essential medicines.

Together, with Manmohan Hospital, we **integrated physical, mental, and emotional wellness**.
Restoring a sense of community and safety is just as important as providing medicines.

Our Emphasis on Education, Emotional Wellness, & Earthquake Safety

Children, adults, and the elderly in Nepal went through some of the most traumatic experiences of their lives in April and May. On May 30, Rukmini Foundation led a “Happy Times” program in two villages (Kopu Gaon and Untiki). The goal of the program was to finally give youth a chance to express themselves and share their experiences during the earthquakes in a comfortable setting.



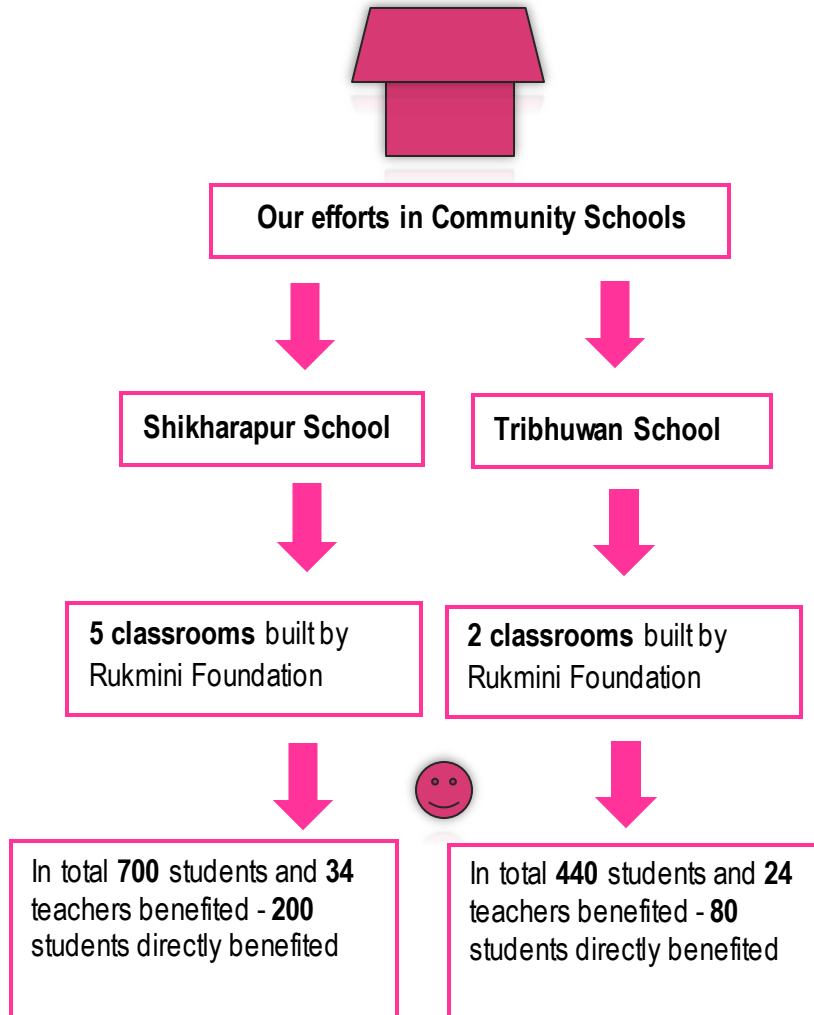
A Community Effort to Rebuild Schools

Our partner school, Shikharapur Community School (SCS) faced a major dilemma after the earthquakes: there were not enough safe classrooms to teach students. Our funding supported SCS to provide a temporary safe and secure learning environment for students and teachers under a very demanding time constraint.



Our Efforts to Rebuild Community Schools in Pharping

Rukmini has provided support for the construction of a new school building for Shikharapurk School, while also helping with opening up a Library in collaboration with LitClub and G.L.O.W.



People of Pharping: A Story of Resilience & Recovery



"I was so relieved to see the Rukmini Foundation team. Before the relief items arrived, it was very hard for us to survive. All of our good and grains got buried. The house was in no condition for us to recover them."

~Anjana, Rukmini Scholar

A Scholar & Survivor: Anjana Poudel

On April 28, Anjana Poudel was inside her home when violent tremors shook the ground beneath. Anjana made a split-second decision and **jumped** out of her window. Had she not done so, she may have been buried underneath rubble and suffered more severe injuries. Her home was **completely destroyed**. Anjana's **courage** in the middle of chaos helped her survive.

Thankfully the rest of her family members were not physically harmed. However, they were heartbroken and traumatized to see their memories and belongings buried in rubble. We are happy to have served families like Anjana's.

Anjana's home before



Anjana's home after



Temporary Shed built with Foundation help



Rukmini holds disaster preparedness class

In order to ensure the schools are prepared if another disaster was to strike, Rukmini Foundation decided to educate people to avoid chaos and help one another. A workshop was held by two representatives from Red Cross with the students of Shikharapur Community School on Disaster Preparedness techniques.



Breaking away from the mental health stigma

The aftermath of earthquake has caused a lot of mental trauma. RF held a three-day long counseling session for children to share their problems. Ms. Sabina Rai facilitated the program and served as the main counselor and was assisted by Rukmini staff members and volunteers



Rukmini Scholars Graduate with Flying Colors

Despite the devastation faced, we are happy to see improvements made. On June 18, we received wonderful news that all of our Rukmini Scholars who took the 2015 School Leaving Certificate exam passed with almost all girls scoring in the first (highest) division.



RF held a special program in honor of all the students who graduated.



Proud Teachers & Their Students

The program honored not only the students who graduated, but the teachers as well as mentors who helped them along the way.

Happy Students

These girls were not even sure if they would be able to continue their education, and now they have achieved a significant milestone in their lives.

They are not going to stop here though.



Providing a Light of Hope

Nepal, as an underdeveloped country, does not have a stable source of power and has electricity rationing, called “load shedding”, which can cut power out for anywhere from 10- 20 hours a day, depending on the season. Many of our scholars do not even have running electricity at home, and are forced to use harmful and dangerous kerosene lamps to light their home. In 2015, we piloted a program with our friends at Sumar Lakhani Foundation to distribute solar lamps to a few Rukmini scholars. These little lamps have made a huge difference because the girls can now do their homework even at night. What may sound like a small thing can have such a profound impact. We are excited about expanding this program even further in the future.



First LitCamp held in Nepal with Rukmini Foundation

LitWorld's revolutionary LitCamp was held in Nepal with collaboration with Rukmini Foundation and through the support of new friends at Global G.L.O.W. These camps cultivate social-emotional development in girls by building resilience and literacy skills together.



Rukmini Rallies for Equal Education while Celebrating Int'l Literacy Day

International Literacy Day, created in 1965 by UNESCO, emphasizes the importance of literacy in the advancement of education in marginalized populations. RF participated in this program to bring awareness to the importance of education and equal opportunities for women.



Helping the Community Brave the Cold

Rukmini Foundation distributed winter relief goods to **18 scholars** and their respective family members, neighbors and staff members on the basis of their needs and requirements. Our winter relief program benefited **90 individuals**.



Rukmini Foundation also distributed warm jackets for its scholars as a part of the "**Warm Winter Campaign**". This is to combat the incidence of students falling sick during the winter, or being unable to focus on their schoolwork because of the cold - both of which can impair their abilities to complete their studies.



Celebrating Rukmini's Fourth Birthday

As Rukmini turned 4 years old on October 11, 2015, the Nepal team celebrated the joy of a foundation that has become an inspiration to many in Pharping, Nepal. Rukmini Foundation is a ray of hope for girls who live in the most under-served communities in this region Nepal. To highlight the anniversary of Rukmini Foundation, an event was organized where a total of 150 guests, including the chief and special guests were in attendance.



The anniversary was also celebrated in Pittsburgh with friends and supporters of the foundation coming together for a drink at Hitchiker Brewing.





Our Efforts in Pittsburgh and the USA

Rukmini Foundation is based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in addition to Pharping, Nepal. Our global reach and support has enabled us to accomplish all that we have since our inception in 2011.

Some of our other events included:

- *Nepalese Community Fundraisers in Pittsburgh*
- *Bowling for Nepal*
- *Dinner with Monaca Presbyterian Church*
- *Foundation President speaks at Pittsburgh World Affairs Council Summer Institute*
- *Dinner with Holy Child Parish*
- *Board Member, Allyce Celebrates Birthday for Our Cause*
- *Happy Hour Event at Wigle Whiskey*
- *Dinner with Sewickley Presbyterian Church*
- *Celebrating Diwali & Tihar with City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*

THE HAPPINESS OF OUR GIRLS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT AND DEDICATION.

It is you – your generosity, curiosity, and passion for creating a meaningful and sustainable change – who enables our progress in Nepal. We sincerely thank our donors, supporters, volunteers, well-wishers, committed board members, dedicated staff, partner organizations and schools who really make any and all of our efforts possible. Without you we would not have been able to get through a very challenging 2015, and your support gives us hope for a better 2016.

Thank you for being part of our journey over the last four years. We appreciate all of your contributions and hope you will continue to support our Rukmini Scholars, their families, and communities in Pharping, Nepal. To serve is to live.

Sincerely,

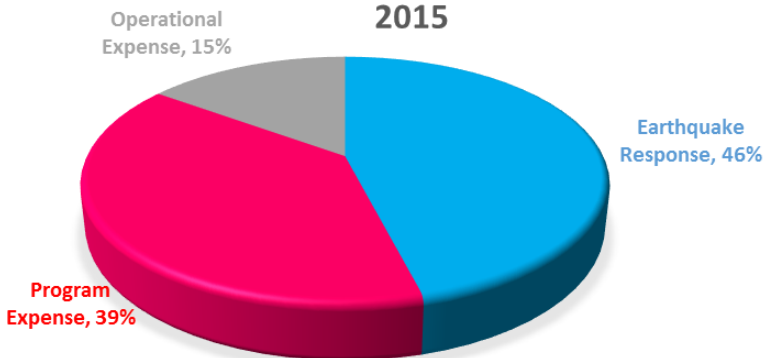
The Rukmini Foundation Board

Bibhuti Aryal, Priti Bhattarai, Kristin Briggs, Linda Githiora, Susan Majcher, Cheryl Paxton-Hughes, Allyce Pinchback, Nikolas Ristev, & Lauren Smathers



HOW YOUR SUPPORT WAS PUT TO USE IN

2015



Total Expenses for 2015: **\$39,387.96**

You have supported girls through quality education, expedited post-earthquake reconstruction, and helped families restore their lives through your contribution.

We are grateful to have such great people in our supportive Rukmini Foundation Family, and as you can see, we put your contributions to work where it is needed the most. We will continue to strive to operate as efficiently as we can so that your support has the biggest impact possible.

2015 Supporter Wall of Fame

Aamir Anwar
 Adam Shuty
 Adam Walkowiak
 Alexander Scheinker
 Alexandra McKim
 Alicia Quebral
 Alisa Bigelow
 Allyce Pinchback
 Alyssa Cypher
 Amber Pinchback
 Amy Greiff
 Amy Pyle
 Anand Perumal
 Andreas Hoelzl
 Andrew Meyers
 Ang Dawa Sherpa
 Angela Garcia
 Anonymous
 Anthony Somerville
 Anup Aryal
 Arati Warty
 Arlane Gordon-Bray
 Arun Misra
 Ashlee Pierre
 Ashley Cvrkel
 Benjamin Daniels
 Bibhuti Aryal
 Bob & Barbara Shuty
 Bonnie Levey
 Branden Ballard
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 Cheryl Paxton-Hughes
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 Chitti K. Lekkala
 Chris Papic
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 Christina Unger
 Christopher Dinnin
 Clyde Pickett
 Corinne Branquet
 Courtney Rodriguez
 Cristan Mooney
 Darcie Cameron
 Dave Fawcett
 David L. Myers
 Dawa Sherpa
 Deborah "Robbi" Robinson
 Debra Hassett
 Debra Sciranka
 Dennis Kremer
 Dennis Funk
 Donna Micheaux
 Edward "Eddy" Jones
 Elizabeth "Lee Anne" Pontis
 Elliot Oshry
 Ellyse Williams
 Eri Taniguchi
 Ernesto Cupo
 Evelyn Castillo
 Francis Hurite

Frank Gyngard
 Frank Batchelor
 Gabriel Pacheco
 Gary Johnson
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 Hiroyuki Ohzakura
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 Kathryn Buckley
 Katie Brown
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 Kelli Wargo
 Kellie Skweres
 Kelly O'Connor
 Kevin Lorence
 Kikuya Nobuhiro
 Kimberly Harris
 Kristin Berman
 Kristin Berman
 Kristina Deneselya
 Kunio Honjo
 LaKesha Silver
 Latasha Mayes
 Lauren Smathers
 Leanne Condron
 Lina Hips
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