



1016 Lincoln Blvd, Suite 222
San Francisco, CA 94129
NepalYouthFoundation.org

Transforming Lives
for Over 30 Years



Photo credit: Sunita Rimal

In January 2023, Binita* (18) and her son Dipesh* (2) attended a Nutrition Outreach Camp in Nepal's Saptari District. Dipesh was just one of an overwhelming 1,499 children served at this two-day event. NYF is proud to be launching the next phase of the Caste Equality Project in this region!

* Names have been changed



Transforming
Lives for
Over 30 Years

1016 Lincoln Blvd, Suite 222
San Francisco, CA 94129
415.331.8585
info@nepalyouthfoundation.org
facebook.com/NepalYouthFoundation
@nepalyouthfound
@nepalyouthfoundation
NepalYouthFoundation.org

Spring 2023

Dear, dear friends:

Well, I am back where I belong—in sunny Kathmandu. The 15 new kids who have joined our Olgapuri family are such an adorable, funny, lively bunch. One of my biggest joys is witnessing how loving the Olgapuri children are to these newcomers. One night, a new toddler picked apart a corner of a difficult puzzle the older kids had assembled, so she could show the pieces to me. Not one voice was raised in indignation; they only smiled at the little one and continued with the puzzle.

has suffered for countless generations. How thrilling to witness the beginning of what we hope will be long careers of successful advocacy!



Photo credit: Riswo Gorkhali

The first 15 Educating Dalit Lawyers students (pictured here in my home) began law school in late February. It will be fascinating to follow their journey over the years.



Photo credit: Riswo Gorkhali

Som and his wife, Sajani, and the local staff welcomed me home with a celebration at Olgapuri with flowers, music, colorful banners, and the Olgapuri kids. This photo says it all!

This summer, NYF will expand the Caste Equality Project into Saptari District, an eastern region where Dalit communities are facing extreme hardships. Alongside NYF's Nepal team, I visited a few villages, speaking with local leaders, mothers, teachers, and more, to hear and understand their needs and wishes. I'm buoyed in knowing that with our incomparable staff members behind them, these Dalit families can begin making positive strides within their communities in short order.

I've been inspired by another 15 young people: the Dalit students receiving the first set of Educating Dalit Lawyers scholarships. At a recent gathering at my home, I asked them to tell me their stories. Each has overcome heartbreaking casteist discrimination and oppression—and each is determined to improve their lives and those of Dalit communities across Nepal.

Finally, on June 1, I will be back in the States for NYF's first in-person Founder's Day in years. The main program will also be livestreamed over Zoom. I am looking forward to sharing more with you about NYF's exciting new ventures during the event. As I approach age 98, I can't help but marvel at the achievements of this chapter of my life—and the transformations still on the horizon!

I'm especially excited for these students. I, too, faced discrimination when I graduated from law school almost 70 years ago (gulp!) as a woman attorney. Just as I and many others were able to overcome the obstacles to a legal career, I'm confident that these young people will succeed not only as lawyers, but as leaders in dismantling the injustice the Dalit community

Thank you, dear friends, for making this possible through your support, encouragement, and love for the children of Nepal.

Gratefully,

Olga Murray
Founder & Honorary President

Founder's Day
June 1, 2023 • Livestream beginning at 6:30pm PDT



Founder's Day 2023 will be NYF's first-ever hybrid event, with the main program streaming **live over Zoom** from our in-person festivities in Sausalito, CA.

To register to attend, please scan the QR and follow the directions on the event page. Or, visit the event page at <https://nyfnews.foundersday2023>

Please join us as we celebrate Olga's 98th birthday, the return to in-person festivities...

and our most ambitious project yet!

A Year Full of Promise

Namasté, my friends! After the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is such a joy to report on excitement and progress this spring.

The children in our programs have greatly enjoyed having Olga back in Nepal. Her love for Nepali young people is clear to all who meet her, and many Nepali adults are inspired by her determination to bring international support to our locally-led projects.



Photo credit: Sanjoj Maharjan

On February 27th, 2023, our Kathmandu Valley Nutritional Rehabilitation Home celebrated 25 years of operations with a special ceremony. Olga enjoyed giving gifts to each of the kids currently receiving treatment here, and local politicians attended to offer their thanks for the care we have provided to so many.

I am looking forward to visiting San Francisco for Founder's Day in June, after which I will be joining our U.S. Executive Director, Ryan Walls, in Denver, Seattle, and the Baltimore / D.C. area. During these events, I will share more up-to-date information on the work our team is beginning to do in Saptari District, where we are rolling out the next phase of the Caste Equality Project.

I am so proud of our NYF Community. Together, our network of donors and our devoted staff have weathered the recent pandemic with strength and continuing compassion. During this time, we developed valuable programs that are creating new opportunities for children and youth in Nepal.

NYF is so fortunate to have a passionate network of generous supporters who make our transformative work possible. We are grateful to all of you for the impact you have already had—and for the achievements you will make possible in the coming years.

Dhanyabad!

Som Paneru
President

Do you have a Donor Advised Fund?

If so, you now have a special opportunity to make an even bigger impact through the #HalfMyDAF movement!

Over \$234 Billion currently sits in Donor Advised Funds (DAFs) across the US. But those funds can't go to work for worthy causes until they become grants for organizations like NYF!

When DAF holders commit to spending down at least half of the money in their DAF by the end of September 2023, all of the grants they make become eligible for dollar-for-dollar matches from #HalfMyDAF. On July 3, 2023, and again on October 2, 2023, #HalfMyDAF will randomly match grants up to \$5,000 – with one lucky nonprofit receiving a match of up to \$50,000!

Since starting in 2020, the #HalfMyDAF community has awarded over \$33 million in grants. The more donors who commit to spending down at least half of their DAF and give to NYF, the more likely we are to receive a match!

You can learn more about joining the #HalfMyDAF movement at halfmydaf.com.

If you have any questions about this opportunity, please call our Director of Development, Crystal Anderson, at 415-331-8585 or email crystal@nepalyouthfoundation.org



Photo credits (from top to bottom): Som Paneru, Samana Amantya

In April 2023, the Olgapuri Children enjoyed their first major trips since before COVID-19! The Senior kids (above, with Som) went on a several-day trek to Panchase, near Pokhara. The Junior kids (below) enjoyed a visit to Chitwan National Park. These trips provide cultural enrichment - and good old-fashioned fun!

Staff Spotlight: Lalit Gahatraj, CEP Manager

Meet Lalit Gahatraj, NYF's current Operations Manager and soon-to-be Caste Equality Project Manager on the ground in Saptari District. Both personally and professionally, Lalit is ideally equipped to manage this complex project!

Lalit, 36, grew up in Dhankuta District, a hilly region of eastern Nepal. He is one of the only people from his village's Dalit population to have completed college, and the only one with a master's degree. "The people are facing many problems in Nepal, especially the Dalit," he says. "I've had a chance to get a good education. I want to do something for my society."

Unfortunately, Lalit has experienced a lot of casteist discrimination first-hand. As a child, he was refused entry into homes his higher-caste friends were welcomed into, and he has been denied food and water intended for mixed-caste groups. As an adult, he has been spurned by potential landlords and even religious leaders.

Lalit's experience with NYF has been better. From the beginning, NYF has worked to ensure casteism had no place in its hiring practices, and leadership has cultivated a culture of respect among staff members. "When I joined NYF, I was just 18. I never thought I would work here so long. But the culture in this organization and the programs run by NYF are directly connected to the core of my feelings."

For Lalit's first 11 years at NYF, he worked with the Nutrition team. Then, in 2015, the Gorkha earthquake hit. Lalit was placed in charge of NYF's relief work in Sindhupalchowk District—one of the worst affected areas, high in the Himalayas.

Here, for 18 months, Lalit oversaw several projects: safe housing for displaced children; the establishment of ten Community Nutrition Kitchens in schools; a



Photo credit: Sanjoj Maharjan

"Sometimes I ignore which caste I belong to," Lalit says. "I'm a human being. I have to do some good work for society, for the people."

daycare-style program allowing parents of young children to focus on rebuilding. Lalit managed a campaign that brought running water to villages whose natural springs had been destroyed by the earthquake. "Finally and most importantly," he says, "we reconstructed 51 community schools, building 225 rooms in five districts."

During this time, Lalit and his team lived among those they were serving, with few amenities. The difficult project allowed his leadership skills to blossom. When he returned to Kathmandu in 2017, he was promoted to

Operations Manager. He's been handling daily operations and logistics since then.

Lalit is eager for his newest challenge, and is preparing to relocate his family to a village in Saptari District where he says the conditions are even worse than those he grew up with.

He's especially enthusiastic about the improvements planned for educational resources in the area. "Education is a very, very powerful thing to avoid discrimination," he explains. "If the children get a good chance for better education, and they're able to find a good job, they can earn good money. And if they have good money, they can build their nice house, they can send their children for good school, they can easily fulfill their basic needs."

Lalit's first priority will be to build trusting connections in the community. "My main role is coordinating the people and the government authority, because without their help, we cannot do anything. So I'll live with the community. I'll visit the school day-to-day and monitor the school. What is the education system? Why are the children not going to school? What are the factors? I'll try to find them."