

A Sustainable Home For Abused Women

The space limitations of the Global Giving project page makes it difficult for a donor to appreciate the full scope of what we are doing, the people behind this project and the investment we have already made in this farm. This is an active project that we've made a substantial investment in. We are asking for additional support to enhance and expand what is already underway.



Supplemental Information

Contents

- Board and key staff bios
- Photos of the farm and story behind it
- Photo of the first woman at the farm and background
- Details of the exact use of funds
- Information about the school
- Information about the day-care center
- Fact sheet about Nepal



Board and Staff.

Scott MacLennan/Sunita Subedi Sharma (MacLennan) This husband and wife team have been working for over a decade to create innovative, sustainable programs in Nepal that operate on Mountain Fund's principle of "a hand up, not a handout." They've created 3 health clinics and a hospital in the remote Rasuwa District, created a volunteer program that now hosts over 100 volunteers each year in Nepal and from that program provided support to the 104 students of Koseli School - a school for slum and street kids, 160 children at Orchid Garden Nepal, an affordable drop-off day care for the working poor, ECDC a

program that helps the children of prisoners in Nepal's jails (the founder is a 2012 nominee for CNN Hero) and Himalayan Society a teaching and training center for Tibetan refugees. Scott was the 2010 recipient of the Sir Edmund Hillary Medal, awarded to him by the family of Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man atop Everest.

Scott and Sunita are unpaid volunteers who earn a living as the owners of www.PeakProperties.me a property management firm specializing in low-income housing for elderly and disabled in Albuquerque, New Mexico where they live 50% of the time.

The Board

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Women's Cooperative Farm

Mankhu Village, Dhading District Nepal



First occupants at the farm

Our first occupants at the farm are a “Dalit” or untouchable caste family who was essentially living in the forest nearby the village. Husband, wife and four children, two of whom are pictured here are delightful, hard-working people but shut out of society due to their status as untouchables. They are currently farming the land and caring for both properties until we can build additional housing for more occupants.

90.5% of women in Nepal are engaged in agriculture.

UN Sustainable Development Department, Technical paper

Over 80% of Nepal is rural, subsistence farming. More than 90% of Nepalese women work these familial farms to feed their families. Agriculture is Nepal's largest business enterprise and accounts for more than 40% of the Gross Domestic Product. Studies on the status of Nepalese women have revealed that they not only play a major role in agriculture, but constitute the “backbone” of Nepali agriculture. (Axin,1977)

But, women have virtually no ownership or control of land. (World Bank, 1991) Women, in general, are more active than men in farming activities in rural Nepal.

The popular thinking about women in Nepal is that they lack the skills needed to break out of abusive relationships or dependency on the goodwill of family members, in the case of widows. Yet, the women of Nepal have a valuable skill, they are farmers. From an early age they are taught how to grow crops and tend to livestock. The family often depends on the woman's skill as a farmer for its daily meal.

The opportunity they lack is control of land upon which they can apply these skills for their own benefit and independence. The Women's Cooperative Farm provides a safe place for these women to live, to farm and to survive. They can control their own destiny to the extent they can control access to farm land. It's that simple.

Given a plot of land to farm, these women can, and will, feed their families, after all, they've been doing that all their lives. At the Women's Cooperative Farm, women will work collectively to tend livestock and grow food. Together they can produce a total food package of cereal grains, milk, meat and vegetables in sufficient quantity to feed themselves and their children. Housing will be constructed at the farm using local materials and local workers.

“I’m used to it now. What choice do I have?” asked Neupane who works as a maid in more than three houses, earning less than US \$30 per month, to support her children. “I have to survive for my children. They will be homeless if I leave my husband.”

About the farm



The high school who started it

Stelly's school in Victoria, Canada raised the first \$15,000 to purchase one plot of land and a house. Then Stelly's came to Nepal for 3 weeks in the March 2012 and worked to add a room onto the house, get fields ready for planting and make repairs to the existing house.



Additional room

With the addition of the room, now complete, we were able to move in one more Dalit (untouchable) family with two more children, bring the total to six children now having a home to live in and food on the table. The adults in the house are growing corn, tomatoes, beans, rice, onion and garlic, the staple foods in Nepal. Children attend the nearby community school



Location #2

Just fifteen minutes walk from the Stelly's funded land we have purchased a second, larger plot of land with money donated by the individual members of The Mountain Fund Board of Directors. Prime farmland with plentiful water this site has no housing.

What's most needed now, what will be needed in the future and what is the full scope of this project

The most pressing need is to build housing for women and children

Goal.

We have enough land to support up to 30 women and children but we don't have housing for them. Specifically what is needed is (1) on the smaller farm, the Stelly's School supported land, we have leveled an area behind the existing house to build another small house for up to 10 people, women and their children, to live. Such a house, built in local village style will cost \$7000.00. (2) There is a small plot of land directly in front of the larger farm, the farm with no house. We have made a deposit for an option to purchase that land and the house located on it for \$5000.00. That house can provide a home for up to 10 women and their children. (3) We have cleared and leveled land just above the house in #2 on which we plan to build housing for volunteers to come and help in the village. A house for volunteers, capacity of six, will cost \$10,000.00 (4) We wish to establish a micro-credit fund so that women who want to purchase a cow, goats or chickens as cash crops will be able to borrow money at low interest rates and repay loans as they bring livestock to market. Funding needed of \$6000.00. (5) Construct and operate a day-care center near the school, see following pages for details. We are requesting also \$5,500 in wages for a Nepali staff member to manage this project for one year.

Outcomes

- House and feed 30 people, women and children on the farm. They will grow the food and achieve sustainability by the end of year one, by which we mean that no further investment is required for agriculture and the women and children are growing all their own food and seeds as well as livestock for a complete food package.
- By hosting volunteers at the farm and in the community generate income that can be used for medical needs of the women and children as well as staffing of the drop off day care center. We make approximately \$200USD per volunteer (profit). Host 10 volunteers each year at the farm (\$2000 per annum income for the farm)
- This is not just a project about farming; it's a project of integration into a community and strengthening the entire community. As the project will bring up to 30 children into the community we propose to help make the local school a better place by providing volunteer teachers. The women who occupy the farm, as well as the existing women in the community have no place to leave their children during the day while they work in the fields. Often only slightly older siblings who most often are girls care for the youngest children. The girls attending to their siblings are kept out of school to do this and denied an education. The addition of a day-care center at the farm will allow these girls to attend school. This effort connects with and impacts this small farming community on many levels. These additional activities of working with the school and founding a day care center at the farm are an integral part of us being a good neighbor and integrating into the local community.



A Personal story

This is Sunita, Scott MacLennan's wife. She was born and raised on a farm in rural Nepal. Later, her father forced her into an arranged marriage with a very abusive man. She worked the fields to support and feed her family until she was able to escape the abuse, which is nearly impossible to do in Nepal for a woman. Her life-long dream of a safe place for women like herself is the driving force behind this project.

Cost Breakdown for the project.

1) Build one house for 10 women and children on existing land	\$7,000
2) Purchase one additional plot of land with existing house for 10	\$5,000
3) Build housing for village volunteers	\$10,000
4) Establish micro-credit fund	\$6,000
5) Nepali staff to manage project, wages for one year	\$5,500
6) Supplemental food for women year one, until crops come in	\$3,500
7) Construct building for use as drop-off day care center	\$7,500
8) One year staff and food (operating cost) at day care center	\$5,000

Already invested from other sources - \$35,000 in the purchase of two farms, total 30 ropani of farmland and one house, plus room addition on one house.

Sources

- 1) Stelly's School \$15,000**
- 2) Mountain Fund board members, individually \$20,000**



Beyond the farm, volunteers to help community school

This is a classroom in the tiny community school located between our two plots of land. The farm purchased with Stelly's school assistance is five minutes walking time down one side of the hill and the large plot of land purchased by the individual members comprising the board of The Mountain Fund is ten minutes walk the opposite direction. The school has 90 students in grades K-5 attending. Most of the students are from

the poorest families in the village as any family with means sends their child to a boarding school in Kathmandu where classes are taught in English. By building volunteer housing on one of the farms we will be able to bring English to the village classroom and thereby encourage families to stop taking loans against their farms for their children's boarding school education, a practice that has cost families their farms.



The establishment of the day care center cause a minimum of 6 girls to go back to school instead of staying home and attending to their younger siblings

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Goal - an affordable drop-off day care center

Our goal is to construct a drop-off day care center on our land, which is near to the school so that working mothers who are in the fields all day have a safe place to leave their children who are too small for school. This too frees up older daughters to attend school, many of whom currently stay home to attend to younger siblings as they don't have any place that can provide day care.

The cost to create such a center is \$7500.00 (construction) and we are seeking a subsidy to help during the first year of operation of \$5000.00 for staffing and lunch for the children.

Facts About Nepal

- **Nepal is the 12th poorest country on earth and the poorest country in South Asia. It is on the UN list of least developed countries in the world.**
- **Per capita income is \$400 per year, about the same as in Haiti**
- **Under 5 chronic malnutrition rate is double that of Haiti. According to the World Food Bank the rate in Haiti is 24%, the rate in Nepal is 47%. Rural areas see rates as high as 65%.**
- **Maternal mortality rate of 281 per 100,000 births, the worst rate in South Asia.**
- **Infant mortality rate is 71.6 per 1000 births. Nepal is 141st out of 195 countries.**
- **The leading cause of death among women of childbearing age is suicide - 17% of the deaths in this age group are by suicide. This is up significantly in the past ten years.**
- **Literacy rate overall is 43.5%, for girls over age 15 in rural villages, only 5.3%**
- **Unemployment is over 50%**
- **Foreign Policy dot com ranked Nepal as one of the 5 worst places in the world to be a woman.**
- **Nepal is one of the few countries on earth where a mans life expectancy is greater than a woman's.**