

We would like to thank everyone who attended our fundraisers in Calgary and Canmore in September for your great support and donations. We could not do it without you.

Donations to CORE make a difference in the lives of the people we try to help! Visit www.core-international.org

PROGRESS: OUR FIRST STUDENTS PAST THE 'IRON GATE'

All six of the first 'CORE' students to take the national School Leaving Certificate exams have passed what is commonly called 'the Iron Gate'. They have been receiving scholarships from CORE to attend school and have now graduated from the basic school system in Nepal. One student, Suraj Shrestha, passed with distinction within the top 5% of all students in the country who wrote the exam.

He is now attending Plus Two, equivalent of Grades 11 and 12 in Canada. CORE is assisting him with a scholarship of \$ 200 to cover 80% of his fees. With your help, we could offer scholarships to more students to continue their studies or start vocational training.



Our easy, secure system for on-line donations through CanadaHelps automatically sends a Canadian tax receipt.



Suraj Shrestha, 18, SLC - Distinction

"My mother is in the saving group and she had me come here. My father is quite sick so my mother was taking loans from moneylenders to send my brother and I to school. I have had the scholarship since class 8. Now, my mother does not have to borrow for my education. When I finish this year, I would like to gain practical experience, perhaps working with computers. With your support, we have had opportunities to study when our families had barely enough food to eat. I will never forget your support. **Thank you.**"

Rosie Shrestha, 15

"I've had a scholarship since class 8. My mother earns Rs. 3,000 (\$40) per month as a cleaner and used to take loans from relatives for our school. Now, it is much easier for us with the scholarship. I would like to work in health as a doctor or a nurse. On behalf of all the students and poor mothers, I would like to say **"Thank You' for all your support."**

THE GIFT OF LEARNING ...DONATIONS as GIFTS for family and friends

CORE offers an opportunity to give the gift of learning. Your donation as a gift for your friends and family can support:

- School for one urban child for a year— \$70
- One month of child centre classes — \$300

Click [here](#) for on-line donations through CanadaHelps, which automatically sends a tax receipt. Or, mail a cheque to CORE International at PO Box 8111, Canmore, AB, Canada, T1W 2T8 and we will email a tax receipt as a secure PDF.

PROJECT UPDATES:

'Hand Up' for the Poor— savings and loans:

CORE's 'Hand Up' microcredit project in two market areas of Kathmandu is entering its fourth year with two groups with 120 members and 45 members. We have improvised to meet the needs of these poor women by having flexible saving that allows for daily or weekly deposits, whatever enables them to build their own assets. The women now use their savings and loans to improve their livelihoods and support their families. We would like to give a huge THANKS to the **Tidlund Foundation** for financial support to start this project. More photos are [here](#).

The other group just south of Kathmandu is now condensed into two villages, where several of the women requested training to grow [organic vegetables](#). The course was a great success. We would like to thank **Wild Rose Foundation** for their support for this project and flexibility to meet the requests of the group. [Photos](#)





Now more than a Child Centre: The rooms rented for the child centre are now also the venue for late afternoon women's literacy classes and for tuition for older scholarship students as they reach the higher grades and exams. Our facilitators for the microcredit and child centre teach the women's literacy classes to about thirty of the microcredit members who requested the classes. Check [here](#) for more photos of the literacy classes.

Uplifting Women through Literacy: What started as a small four-month pilot project of literacy classes to uplift women in four villages in remote Baitadi district was expanded to eight more villages. A year ago, we reported slow changes where several women said that they had stopped forcing their daughters to practice 'Chaupadi', in which women must stay outside the house - 'untouchable' - for five days monthly and for 14 days after childbirth. Our working partner uses literacy to empower women to reform the practice. [Photos](#)



Uterine prolapse awareness project: The hard labour done by women to carry loads up steep hills, often soon after delivery, causes the medical problem of uterine prolapse in about 24% of rural women. CORE assists a Nepali health organization with awareness sessions, training local health volunteers about the issue, and a health camp for our partner to identify the women for operations. We hope to continue the project in an area inhabited by a very disadvantaged indigenous group, once we raise the funds. [Photos](#)

THE POWER OF FIVE RUPEES: SAVING FOR SELF-RELIANCE

"She is too poor to be in the group," said several women in a microcredit group as a woman in tattered clothing carries a huge load of straw past our meeting place. They had just said that they are the poorest women in the village. But now, the group secretary explained that the woman cannot afford the stipulated monthly saving amount of Rs 50 because her few rupees all get spent before the meeting. Plus, she was too busy as a day labourer to attend the monthly meetings.



This incident, several years ago, was a key to how we developed CORE's microfinance saving-&-credit project, "A Hand-Up". First, the stipulated saving amount excluded the poorest people, so we ensured that there were not any stipulated minimum saving amounts to hinder very poor people from participating in the group.

Secondly, the poorest people survive on day wages that are usually just enough for their basic needs of that day. With demands for food and shelter, they have a hard struggle, if at all possible, to keep enough rupees for a saving group. With our Nepali partner organisation, Society for the Urban Poor (SOUP), we have the facilitators visit the group members each day to collect their few rupees of daily saving whether 10, 30, or 100 rupees.

With the power of even just five rupees per day, most members have gradually increased the amount that they can save each day and built up a saving account that they had never dreamed possible.

Most members (mostly women but a few men) report that they feel a much greater sense of satisfaction and empowerment from saving than from taking loans. Several studies and much larger programs have verified this finding.¹ Each of them knows that their families survived on loan after loan in the villages. But, saving a hundred dollars' worth of rupees is a real accomplishment to them.

The saving amount of each member then serves as collateral for small loans to meet emergency needs and for capital to purchase more stock or equipment to improve their small enterprises. The loans come from both the saving fund of the group and a revolving fund provided by CORE. Our stipulation is that the loans are small so that they can be readily repaid and so that the funds are available to more of the members. Some women have taken up to seven rounds of loans, which they repay and then borrow a somewhat larger amount if they need it. Gradually, some of these members join a larger group or cooperative to have access to larger loans.

Most of the 'graduating' members stay members of the 'Hand Up' group for the sense of solidarity with the other members. But, their moving on for bigger loans is our greatest satisfaction. (Click [here](#) for project photos)



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¹ http://www.cgap.org/gm/document-1.9.2435/DonorBrief_04.pdf ; <http://bankingonthepoor.blogspot.com/2010/05/is-saving-more-important-than-credit.html> ; http://www.microcreditsummit.org/papers/Workshops/6_MaesFoosse.pdf