

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Greetings from Volunteers Initiative Nepal!

We are pleased to present to you our annual report for 2009. This is our first published annual report and we are excited to have better means to share our progress and impact in the community with our partners.

VIN is a grassroots, non-profit organization that was founded in 2005 by a diverse group of development workers, educationalists, social activists and other professionals. VIN's aim is to place community development in the hands of the program's participants by empowering them with the skills and confidence to address their needs.

This year at VIN we have been working hard to improve the education and livelihoods of the women and children in Jitpur, our target community. Jitpur is an underprivileged, rural community located approximately eleven kilometers outside of Kathmandu.

With 2009 behind us, we have made significant progress toward our program goals, through our ever-strengthening partnerships in the community. This year, we have

expanded our Women's Empowerment program to include seven more women's groups, which involves an additional 63 women in VIN's programs. Our micro-finance project is taking off, as we are currently in the final stages of registering our agro-based microfinance cooperative, which is a new model for micro-lending and agricultural support that will provide more financial opportunities for our women's groups.

This year, our Health and Sanitation program has taken off. VIN has been running two toilet construction projects, one independently and one in partnership with the District Drinking Water and Sanitation Office. In the past few months, VIN's pilot project succeeded in helping sixteen families install permanent toilets. We plan on expanding the project to reach even more members of the community in 2010.

In addition, we are excited about our expanding child-sponsorship program, which has allowed more than fifty children in the Jitpur community to attend school, and the progress of our Early Childhood Development project that has made four ECD classrooms more child and learning-friendly.

We would like to acknowledge the support from all of our local and international volunteers who gave their time and efforts over the past year. We would also like to thank our government and non-government partners who have been involved in our projects, and our board of directors and board of advisors, whose valuable support make our programs possible. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the people of the Jitpur community, who have showed us immense support and patience and allow our projects to grow.

ABBREVIATION

We hope you will find this report helpful in understanding our mission.

| | |
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| A/C | Account |
| CC: | Children's Club |
| CCT: | Children's Club coordinator Teacher |
| CD: | Children Development |
| CLC: | Community learning center |
| DDWSO: | District Drinking Water and Sanitation Office |
| DEO: | District Education Office |
| ECD: | Early Childhood Development |
| ED: | Executive Director |
| FPA: | Field program Assistant |
| FSP: | Flexible Schooling Program |
| GO: | Government Organization |
| GTM: | Ganghi Tulsi Mehar Guthi |
| HH: | Household |
| HRD: | Human Resource Development |
| HSS: | Higher Secondary School |
| HT: | Head Teacher |
| IGP: | Income generating Program |
| Int.: | International |
| KVCCN: | Kathmandu Valley Children's Club Network |
| KVM: | Kathmandu Bidhya Mandir |
| LSS: | Lower secondary School |
| Mgt: | Management |
| NGO: | Non-government organization |
| PM: | Program manager |
| PO: | Program Officer |
| SCIDB: | Small and cottage industries development Board |
| SLTS: | School Lead Total sanitation program |
| SS: | Secondary school |
| SWC: | Social Welfare Council |
| UCC: | United Children Club |
| VDC: | Village development Committee |
| VIN: | Volunteers Initiative Nepal |
| WE: | Women Empowerment |
| WEd: | Women Education |
| WG: | Women group |
| YC: | Youth ClubVIN Newsletter publication |

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1. Introduction

Volunteers Initiative Nepal (VIN) is a non-governmental and non-profit organization (NGO) which was founded in 2005 by a group of dedicated development workers, educationalists, lawyers and ex-volunteers. The organization has officially been registered under society act, District Administration Office – 147/062/63, Kathmandu and is affiliated to the Social Welfare Council (SWC) - 20910.

VIN's mission is to empower marginalized communities, with a focus on women and children, through enhanced educational programs and community training to promote equality, economic wellbeing and basic human rights. These programs provide training and counseling that significantly contribute to the development of the Jitpur Phedi area.

VIN adopts an integrated, participatory development approach for the well-being of the community. It works with both local and international volunteers, implementing different kinds of program and activities under its five major projects:

1. Women's Empowerment: Women's education, Microcredit, Income generation;
2. Community Health and Environment;
3. Children Development: Children's Clubs, Sponsorship / scholarship education, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Flexible Schooling Program (FSP), Orphanages Support;
4. Youth Empowerment: Youth Club, Career Development and Entrepreneurship, Volunteer Program, English Language Development Program;
5. School Education Improvement: ECD Teacher Development, Primary Teacher Development; Basic Infrastructure Development

VIN's staff members come from a variety of backgrounds, including Masters Degrees in

Economics, Public Health, Education and School Management. All of VIN's staff members are passionate about working for community empowerment and have extended experience in community development, specifically working with women and children in underprivileged areas.

This annual report seeks to highlight VIN's major programs and activities, as well as its achievements and challenges, which have been implemented in the Jitpur Phedi VDC throughout 2009.

2. Basic objectives of 2012

I. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

- An agro-based microcredit cooperative is fully operational, sustainable and autonomous.
- The Income Generation Program will have assisted 80% of Jitpur Phedi households in having a regular source of income year-round through agricultural and non-agricultural income sources.
- There is a specialty non-agricultural branded product in the market that generates a sufficient income during off-season (e.g. handicrafts).
- Organic farming pilot project completed, to evaluate if organic farming can be recommended as a profitable venture.
- Over 95% of the women aged 14-45 have received an education comparable to grade five school-level in order to increase participation in community activities (IGP, cooperative).
- All women have received life skills training.
- Women's social groups are up and running to increase their sense of support and participation in the community.

II. COMMUNITY HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- All families have toilets i.e. 450 new toilets installed and are educated on basic health and hygiene.
- Waste removal / collection system is in place for plastic, human waste, etc.
- All families are made aware to use safe cooking and drinking water.

- Hygiene- related illnesses are significantly reduced.
- Health clinic infrastructure is complete and majority of community-members are using the clinic available at Jitpur.
- The clinic permanently staffed by doctor or nurses to provide medical care when necessary.
- Free provision of core medicines through partnerships with government/ head council/ pharmaceutical companies.
- Community Health Awareness Program developed and implemented, meaning:
 - ➔ Targeted education and awareness on women's health issues, i.e. menstrual/uterine/sexual healthcare.
 - ➔ Regular check-ups provided.
 - ➔ Pre- and postnatal care provided.
 - ➔ Training on epidemics and vaccinations.
 - ➔ Family planning awareness.
 - ➔ Awareness of mental health issues.
 - ➔ Basic health and hygiene for personal and home environment.

III. CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

- Children's Clubs are self sufficient, running independently of VIN through the schools.
- Leadership development program implemented into Children's Clubs to facilitate future advocates.
- Majority of children in Jitpur are educated on their rights.
- Creativity and Life Skills are part of the school curriculum.
- Every child age 3-5 receives access to early childhood development (ECD) programs
- Every child in the community will graduate from Primary School.
- Every child in the orphanage program has access to education and educational tools, such as games, puzzles, posters and books.
- Every orphanage should be fully equipped with child friendly learning materials and furniture.

IV. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

- Youth club membership increases to at least

150 youth members.

- 50 local youth volunteer regularly with VIN in the community.
- Youth club members have all received life skills training.
- Operational procedures for youth club are in place so it is self-sustaining.
- International / national networks are in place to give Youth Club members more exposure to new people, ideas and cross-cultural learning.

V. SCHOOL EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT

- All communities within Jitpur Phedi have at least one ECD center
- All ECD programs in Jitpur Phedi are self-sustaining and funded solely by the government and community.
- All ECD teachers are trained on the ECD concept and curriculum.
- All ECD centers are fully equipped with necessary child-friendly learning and teaching materials.
- All primary school teachers are trained for child friendly teaching / learning approaches.

3. Project Activities, Achievements & Challenges

3.1 WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS

Project aim: Because many areas of Nepali society value men's roles more than women's, women often receive less education, make less money, and have less power outside of the home than men. One of VIN's primary aims is to reverse this trend by **empowering women to become self-reliant, creating better and more equitable opportunities in basic education, health and income generating activities.**

3.1.1 WOMEN EDUCATION PROGRAM

The most important aspect of women's empowerment is education. The Nepali government has set 2010 as a target date to



eradicate illiteracy throughout the nation and has implemented a special literacy campaign in every VDC. VIN is working alongside the VDC office to make this campaign successful in Jitpur Phedi. VIN provided technical support to literacy facilitators during a three month literacy class, held from February to April 2009.

As VIN's annual plan for 2009, VIN's objective has been to provide literacy, numeracy and life skills such as problem solving, communication, and health sanitation for at least 135 women. VIN has provided the following training and orientation for the literacy program:

Facilitators Training and orientation: VIN organized orientation programs for women's education facilitators and volunteers in Tinpile, coordinating with the VDC Office of Jitpur Phedi. The orientation familiarized the new facilitators with VIN and the VDC and their roles in the program, and trained them in collecting data on literacy levels in the Jitpur Phedi area.

During the class implementation, VIN performed regular monitoring and follow-up support for the facilitators. It conducted regular facilitators' meetings at least once a month to address the challenges that the facilitators faced during the trainings.

A total of 230 women from Jitpur Phedi's

nine wards participated in 10 women's education classes. The majority of women have increased their level of basic reading and writing in Nepali. They are now using their acquired literacy and numeracy skills for dialing phone numbers, recording their income, reading public notices, and getting to the hospital and around Kathmandu via bus more easily. They now have the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of issues such as health, sanitation, the environment, children's education and child and women's rights.

3.1.2 SAVINGS & CREDIT AND INCOME GENERATION PROGRAM



Since VIN has started working in Jitpur Phedi community, it has been working for empowering the women through small savings and credit mobilization. The main aim of this program is to encourage women to make small, regular savings within their groups. Women can then take out loans with a low interest rate from the collected savings in the groups. These small loans help facilitate new IGP projects for the women.

Currently, VIN is working with 19 savings and credit groups, totaling 171 women, who have been saving regularly and taking loans for income generation activities. The savings groups have collected at least Rs. 4,000.00 to 42,000.00 since their formation. Currently, VIN with working with the women's groups to form and register **women's agro-based cooperative**

(Jitpur Phedi- Mahila Krishi Sahakari Sanstha Ltd.) with representatives from all the VIN women's groups in Jitpur Phedi VDC representing all the groups in end of Dec. 2009. The preparation process for the cooperative, which involves registering the cooperative with the local VDC office, drafting a constitution for operation, and training the members of the women's groups on the cooperative's procedure, is completed. VIN wants to see an autonomous and sustainable microcredit system implemented and functioning as soon as possible, as this will increase the sustainability of the project.

3.1.3 INCOME GENERATION PROGRAM

Many families in the Jitpur Phedi area rely solely on agriculture for their income. Often, this income is insufficient to support all the family needs. To address this issue, VIN has supported women's groups to get involved in income generative activities, such as organic vegetable farming, off-season vegetable farming, live stock rearing and other non agricultural income generative activities. VIN currently works with 19 women's groups, totaling 171 women. Of the women's groups, fourteen groups are doing vegetable farming, three groups are raising goats, and two are involved in candle-making.

VIN provides orientation to new IGP activities, specific training and on-going technical support to each of these groups. Shiva Kumari Aryal, a member of the Jagran Women's Group, describes the program, "VIN helps women of Jitpur VDC in different ways. It has formed different woman groups in our community and... provides technical support for farming, like training on vegetable production, regular follow up, and supervision..." The following sections describe the specific activities and achievements of each of these IGP projects in more detail.

Seasonal Vegetable farming Training: VIN conducted a two-day seasonal vegetable farming training for eleven women's groups. The training

covered farming techniques and practical concepts that could improve seasonal yields. The training acted as a refresher course for some of the participants, whose primary income generation activity is farming, and as an introductory course for women's groups who were about to begin farming as their main IGP activity.

Off- seasonal vegetable farming training: In



January 2009, VIN organized a two-day training session for the five off-season vegetable farming groups. Because there are two main growing seasons in Nepal, women in the IGP agriculture groups are encouraged to grow off-season vegetables because the selling price is higher and the women can save more money. A total of 45 women attended the training, which was conducted in two different locations in the Jitpur Phedi VDC. The training focused on technical and practical knowledge about off-season vegetable farming, such as which vegetables can be grown during the off-season and how to plant and care for them, nursery establishment, and how to properly store and sell their products.

Piloting on Organic Farming: In 2008, VIN encouraged women's groups to start organic farming. However, due to poor weather conditions and disease, many of the vegetables were damaged and the groups lost their investment. As a result, VIN has been conducting a pilot project this past year with the Mirmire women's group to improve the success of the



yield and the women’s confidence in organic growing practices. VIN provides the rent for one ropani of land, approximately 509 square meters, or one third of an acre, and has been supporting the group with regular trainings on improved growing methods and on-going technical coaching. If the pilot project is successful, VIN hopes get other groups involved in organic farming, which emphasizes more sustainable and environmentally friendly growing practices.

Training on organic farming: VIN organized a



two-day training on organic vegetable farming for the all of the women’s farming groups in March and April, 2009. While the Mirmire group is currently focusing only on organic farming, the other groups were interested in learning about organic growing methods as well, to incorporate in to their existing practices. The workshop was divided in to two parts, one

theoretical and the other practical. Some of the topics covered in the training were the benefits and challenges of organic farming, soil preparation, and how to use organic pesticides. In total, 41 women participated in the trainings.

In April and May, VIN staff followed up with the groups by organizing another two-day training on ‘**Organic Pesticide Management**,’ which was attended by both the organic farming group and the other vegetable farming groups. These trainings helped reinforce and advance the techniques covered in the previous workshops and introduced organic pesticide production to the non-organic farming groups.

The participants found the training to be effective in giving them the necessary skills to carry out organic farming on their own farms. Shiva Kumari Aryal said, “By providing knowledge on preparation of pesticides [at the] local level, it reduces our expenditure and improves our soil conditions”. All the participants gave positive feedback to VIN and the training facilitators and expressed their desires for continued organic farming support.

Goat keeping refresher training for women’s groups: Of VIN’s 19 groups, three are involved in the goat-keeping project. VIN first trained these groups on goat-rearing two years ago, when the project began. This year, VIN followed up with the groups with a two-day refresher



workshop to help improve practices and profitability for the participants. The training covered topics such as the importance of goats' genetic qualities, proper diet, disease prevention and goat-house construction. The training also covered methods on planting forage for the goats to eat, rather than using plants collected from the forest. These techniques can help save women time, are better for the environment, and make the ground more fertile for farming. The participants felt that the training was very useful for them to both refresh and update their knowledge about goat farming.



Candle-making project: At the beginning of the year, two of the women's IGP farming groups



were trained to make candles to generate income during slower months, when they weren't planting or harvesting. The groups found that they could not produce enough candles to make them cost-effective and to compete in the larger markets. Therefore, one group stopped the candle-making activities and began another IGP activity. The remaining candle-making group has continued with the project because they are able to generate income by selling their products in Tiniple and in their communities, rather than in larger markets in Kathmandu.

Individual and group account keeping training: In order to enhance the economic status of the local communities, various income generation

activities have been implemented both to groups and individual farmers. The sustainability of such programs is very much dependent upon the effective and transparent record keeping and accounting of economic activities. Therefore, Account Keeping training was organized to give basic practical skills on record-keeping and accounting, including how to calculate personal profit or loss, to the members of local farming groups.

Economic status survey and discussion: VIN staff and international volunteers conducted an economic status survey, targeting members of VIN women's groups. The objective of the survey was to get baseline data for the income and expenditure patterns for each of the IGP participants. The results were used to help coach the women on how to decrease unnecessary spending and how to increase savings in the women's groups. The data will also help monitor the IGP projects' progress and identify areas that need improvements.

New Income Generating women's group Formation and Training: VIN has formed and started working with five new women's groups this year, which added 45 more women to VIN's IGP program. VIN's funding for three of the new groups was equally matched by the District Education Office (DEO). In July, VIN and the DEO organized and funded a five-day group-



management training for the presidents and secretaries of the five new groups. Eight women from the new groups attended the training. They learned basic account-keeping, how to conduct and facilitate meetings, minute writing, about group dynamics and about management roles and responsibilities. VIN and the DEO also conducted a five-day IGP training for the new members on vegetable farming and goat-keeping. Twenty seven women attended the IGP training, which was facilitated by one of VIN's technical staff members, who specializes in agriculture.

3.1.4 COMMUNITY HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT



Community Health and Sanitation orientation: International health volunteers from VIN helped organize and facilitate several Oral Health Care training sessions for the Jitpur Phedi community. These sessions involved three women's groups,

totaling 27 women, as well as 13 VDC-level community health workers in Tinpihle. In these trainings, women learned about the importance of oral health care and some techniques for sharing this information with their respective communities.

VIN also provided a health and sanitation orientation for women's group members and their children in the Jitpur Phedi community. A VIN international volunteer observed and discussed with community members the community health and sanitation situation and needs. She then prepared the session and taught women and children about personal and community hygiene. More than 27 women and their children from Mirmire and Chogaun participated.

Health post support: VIN placed international



volunteer doctors and nurses to support the Jitpur Phedi community health center. They aided the health post assistant in exams and treatments for regular patients. VIN has increased the health post's capacity to handle more patients by installing running drinking water, water for a toilet, windows and window screens. The VDC office later contributed by separating rooms for doctors and health workers to improve the use of the small space. VIN has also helped with organizing patient records.

Beginning in November, 2009, VIN has

appointed a medical doctor to the health post to bring more expertise to the community and increase the community's use of the health post. "The health post is now much more capable of helping patients because of adding a doctor and resources, like clean water," said volunteer Verena Wolf, from Germany. The doctor, along with international volunteers and VIN staff, will be holding mobile community camps conducting health awareness education workshops in the beginning of 2010.

Toilet construction/Health and sanitation program: One of VIN's objectives for 2009 was



to make two villages in Jitpur Phedi "stool-free communities." VIN has provided the essential materials for 16 families from two women's groups of the Dadagaun communities to construct toilets. The families also collected local materials for the construction and bore some of the cost for construction. Sabitri Devkota, a member of the Siddheshwor Women group in Dadagaun, commented,

"After VIN program I know about the importance of the toilet and now I made toilet in my home and using it properly. VIN provided us cement, Rod, Pan, Pipe, iron sheet. After making toilet my home environment became clean and healthy".

Another participant in the toilet construction program, Srijana Shrestha, who is the President of the Shrestha Women's group in Dadagaun,

said about the program,

"From the staff of VIN I know about importance and advantage of toilet and sanitation. After knowing about it, I wanted to make a toilet but because of my poor economic condition I was unable to make. After VIN provided us [with materials for construction]... I made a toilet. The support is really big [for people] like me, whose economics status is very poor".

Currently, twelve families have completed new toilets and four more toilets are in progress.

In addition to its independent toilet-construction project, VIN joined forces with the District Drinking Water and Sanitation Office (DDWSO) on their School Led Total Sanitation (SLTS) program in Jitpur Phedi. For the SLTS program, community members selected two communities to become Model Villages as "stool-free environments." VIN providing partial financial and technical support for the project and facilitated a social mapping session, where community members could outline what facilities existed in their areas and where toilets were the most needed.

They found that 76 of 125 households (HH) did not have toilets in Dadagaun, and 43 of 49 HH had no toilets in Chogaun. The program together with the government was launched in Dadagaun, in the service area of Mahavstan Primary school, and Chogaun, the service area of Saraswati Primary School. VIN staff and women's group members helped motivating the chosen communities to take part in the project. The social mapping activity not only helped VIN determine which communities were in the most need of toilets, but also used participatory methods to empower the community to determine their own resources and specific needs.

Health training for facilitators: (Urinary prolapse training): A one day training program

for women education facilitators and volunteers was organized at Tiniple, Jitpur Phedi on the 31st February 2009. The objective of the training was to impart comprehensive knowledge on uterine prolapse and help facilitators conduct a community awareness program on uterine prolapse.

3.2 CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Project goal: VIN's goal is to develop and empower the children from marginalized and disadvantage communities by creating learning and development opportunities to ensure basic child rights are upheld.

Many children in the Jitpur Phedi area do not have access to a basic education because their families cannot afford to pay for school uniforms, fees, books, uniforms and materials. The public education system in Nepal focuses on lecture-style lessons and involves few activities that require creativity. As a result, it is one of VIN's major program objectives to give children from impoverished families access to basic education, as well as to involve children between the ages of 4 and 14 in activities that promote creativity and exploration of their skills and interests. VIN promotes these activities through Children's Clubs and workshops on life skills. The following sections describe these activities in more detail.

3.2.1 CHILDREN'S CLUB

VIN has been working with children through



Children's Club since it first began working in the Jitpur Phedi VDC. Currently, VIN works with eight Children's Clubs in both public and private schools. All the children in classes four through nine are considered members of the clubs, and there are two representatives from each class who volunteered to be part of the management committee. The management committee helps organize club activities every Friday afternoon. Students from all class-levels help plan and prepare for these activities during their free time before, during and after their regular school day. These activities include traditional dance competitions, singing competitions, art projects, and practice with traditional musical instruments and sports.

The secretary of the Jitpur Phedi Children's Club, Bhawani Koirala, commented about the program, "Through [the] children's club formation, VIN involved children in extra activities which increase our capability... Before [the] children's club's establishment, there [were] no opportunities to show our talent..."

Arjun Phuyal, the Head Teacher of Nagarjun Thulagaun Secondary school, said,

"VIN had introduced Children's Club concept in all the schools of the Jitpur community. Through the Children's clubs, VIN has been supporting children's personality and overall development by providing different kinds of training and orientation".

The Children's Club not only helps the students improve specific skills, but also provides an outlet for students to address problems they may have in a class or with a teacher or other students with the help of Club volunteers and student representatives.

United Children's Club: VIN formed a United Children's Club (UCC) with representatives from all eight clubs. The UCC is responsible for coordinating extra-curricular activities and competitions between the eight children's clubs. This year, the UCC organized five activities



Children Club management refresher training: After new representatives were chosen for the children's clubs, VIN organized a one day CC management- refresher training for their orientation. The training provided basic management skills and empowered the new representatives to run their clubs effectively. The training focused on members' roles and responsibilities, meeting facilitation, minute writing, fund-raising ideas, book-keeping and communication skills.

between the clubs of all eight schools. The activities included interschool competitions for dance, handwriting, art, sports and quiz contests. Many students participated in the Club activities this year. Because the representatives in the Children's Clubs and the UCC are elected, VIN asks for new class volunteers every year, to give more children the opportunity practice their leadership skills.

Children club magazine publication: VIN and



Child Rights and Responsibilities training: In April, 2009, VIN held a two-day training on 'Child Rights and Responsibilities' at the Kalikasaran Primary School, in Jitpur Phedi. Thirteen Children's Club representatives from five schools participated in the training, which covered child rights and responsibilities. The training highlighted every child's right to basic survival, with access to food, water and shelter; the right of self-expression; and the right to education. The workshop also emphasized the importance of exercising one's rights responsibly and not at the expense of other individuals' rights.

the UCC of Jitpur Phedi published a children-generated magazine in celebration of the Nepali New Year, April 14th, 2009. The school teachers and VIN have been working cooperatively in encouraging children to unfold their hidden talents and creativity. The magazine, named "Srijanatmak Saugat," or creative souvenir, was successfully published in June, 2009. More than five hundred students, teachers, community leaders, professionals and women's group members were involved in the program.

VIN facilitated a similar one-day training on child rights in several Jitpur Phedi schools in November. Over 125 students attended the training in total, increasing awareness of their rights and responsibilities, the Child Rights Convention, and of legal provisions for children's rights in the Nepali legal system and of other similar topics.

Representation on Kathmandu Valley Children's Clubs Network: In February, the organization Child Worker in Nepal Concerned Center (CWIN) organized a general meeting for the Kathmandu Valley Children's Club Network (KVCCN). Several VIN Children's Club members and staff participated in the meeting. The main objective of KVCCN was to network with all children's



clubs in the Kathmandu valley. Several students gave election speeches to the group to be selected for KVCCN's management positions. VIN's UCC president, student in class eight, was selected as the treasurer of the network.

Computer training for Children's Club members:

In July, VIN organized a two day computer technology training for students of the UCC, held in the VIN Office. The training was facilitated by Susan Greenwald, a VIN volunteer from the U.S. Thirteen students from different schools in Jitpur Phe di participated in the training. Greenwald taught them how to open email accounts and use email addresses, how to use Skype, how to chat online, and how to use useful sites such as google search, gmail, youtube, facebook and several blog sites. While the workshop was an excellent introduction for the students involved, they found it difficult to practice their new skills because there is no



internet service in the Jitpur Phe di area.

Musical Instrument Provision: The children's clubs provide an excellent platform for children to take part in creative activities and develop their life skills. To this end, VIN has provided some basic tools, such as musical instruments. The donated materials included: Two Mp3 Speakers, a wireless microphone, a DVD player, an extension cord, a Madal (two-sided drum), and a Khaizedi (tambourine). The donations were presented to the General Secretary of the UCC, Hari Aryal, during a Dashain celebration in September.

3.2.2 SPONSORSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP IN EDUCATION



VIN has been supporting children from disadvantaged and marginalized communities since its founding, in 2007. This year, VIN supported 44 needy children from public schools with sponsorships. VIN provides full and partial sponsorships on an annual basis, which cover the provision of uniforms and stationary and school and medical fees, depending on the individual student's requirements. VIN also works as a mediator between children in need and donors by collecting and providing the necessary information to both parties. VIN uses its connections in Kathmandu and in the international community to bridge the gap between the village communities and outside resources.

VIN organized a meeting with the sponsored children's parents in June, 2009. The main objective of the meeting was to ensure maximum utilization of sponsorship materials, motivate parents to provide study time for their children and to encourage them to visit schools and be aware of their children's progress.

3.2.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

Model ECD: VIN believes strongly in creating



healthy learning environments for children, which target cognitive, emotional, physical and social development. This year, VIN provided training to teachers in the Jitpur Phedi VDC on the concept of Early Childhood Development (ECD). This training empowered them to use new learning materials with their students that focus on building skills in all of those areas. Arjun Phuyal, the Head Teacher at Nagarjun Thulagaun Secondary School spoke of VIN's ECD program,

"VIN has provided so many supports to school such as... ECD teachers training and matching fund to equipped ECD class. After the ECD training, teachers are able to teach small children effectively and increase the students' attendance rate".

VIN also equipped the ECD classes with the minimum requirements needed to make the classrooms child-friendly environments.

VIN made four model ECD classes in public schools and one in the Pachmane community. Four public schools showed interest, so VIN matched the schools' funds at a two to one ratio to improve all four public ECD classrooms. This money funded round, low tables, cupboards, carpet flooring, shoe racks, wall clocks, scales, mirrors, throwing rings for games, Madals, cassette players and other educational materials. These ECD classrooms are now significantly more child and learning friendly for the students.

ECD curriculum preparation: VIN mobilized international volunteers to support the ECD centers of Jitpur Phedi. VIN's program manager and ECD facilitators conducted a series of meetings to work out a curriculum for ECD classes, which focused on Nepali, English and math, but also involved social/cultural studies and science. They drafted a curriculum for ECD English language classes and are still in the process of completing the curriculum for the other subjects. The new curriculum will be finished and implemented in 2010.

3.2.4 FLEXIBLE SCHOOLING PROGRAM: In 2007, VIN launched the flexible schooling program (FSP) in Gongabu-KTM, in coordination with Community-based Alternative Schooling Program/Japan International Cooperation Agency (CASP/JICA) and the DEO of Kathmandu. This was a class that allowed children with troubled backgrounds and whose education



had been interrupted, such as victims of the political conflict, to continue their studies and prepare to re-enter the public schooling system. In this class, 14 children had the opportunity to continue their studies. The program lasted for three years and was completed in April, 2009. The students are now studying in the Manohar Secondary School, in Gongabu, and continue to receive support from VIN.

3.2.5 ORPHANAGE SUPPORT

VIN works with four orphanages: the Lotus Children Home, in Balaju; the Himalayan foundation, in Dhaphashi, Matri Nepal orphanage, in Jitpur Phedi and Disabled Helpless Association. In Jitpur Phedi, VIN supported Matri orphanage by providing funding, education, food and a new carpet for the children’s study room. VIN placed several international volunteers at three orphanages this year, who helped the children practice their English language skills participate in educational and creative activities. The fourth orphanage receives funding for education, food and clothing for the children. One of the volunteers, who specialized in health, presented a health, sanitation and hygiene orientation for the children at the orphanages.



3.3 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Project Goal: VIN’s goal is to empower the youth from the most marginalized and disadvantaged communities by providing trainings for essential life and career skills. The program emphasizes leadership, social responsibility and self-

awareness. VIN believes that empowering youth to live to their potential is a vital aspect of community development.

3.3.1 YOUTH CLUB:

VIN believes that young people should be encouraged to play a key role in helping their communities develop. Part of VIN’s strategic objectives for 2009 was to create three major programs for youth: a youth club, a volunteer program and a language development program. These three programs give young people in the



Jitpur Phedi community the tools to promote social responsibility among their peers and community members, as well as progress their education and careers in a supportive environment. The Jitpur Phedi- Janajagaran Youth Club was formed on the 25th February 2009, representative of all 9 wards of the Jitpur Phedi VDC. The following sections explain the trainings that VIN organized to empower members of the youth club:

Youth club management training: A one-day Youth Club Empowerment and Management training was organized for the members of the youth club to give practical skills for club management. The training covered how to conduct youth club meetings, write minutes, how to do basic account-keeping, communication skills within groups and fund raising ideas.

Life-skills training for youth: In September, 2009, VIN organized a two-day training in leadership and goal-setting. A total of 20 youth from Jitpur Phedi- Janajagan Youth Club took part in the training, which covered value clarification, prejudices and biases, leadership and communication skills, team-building and decision-making and goal-setting, among other topics.



Youth technology training: A three-day computer technology course was organized for Youth Club members in July, 2009, at the VIN Office. This course involved training on social networking tools, such as Facebook, email account opening and access and various search engines.

English Language class for Youth: VIN has been mobilizing international volunteers to provide English language classes to the youth of the



Jitpur Phedi VDC. This year, VIN conducted two language classes in Tinpile and Dadagaun. The Jitpur Phedi- Janajagan Youth Club has managed the logistics for the language classes.

Support of game set: In Nepal, youth aged 18-30, often don't have proper platforms for linking their academic learning from high school to practical life. For this age group, VIN believes in the importance of staying active physically and mentally to stay motivated in life. To those ends, VIN provided sports and musical equipment for the Youth Club, which included materials for badminton, volleyball, football and a Madal (traditional drum).

3.3.2 LOCAL VOLUNTEERING:

Youth Club Community Activities: In the spirit of social responsibility, the Youth Club organized several projects to give back to their communities. They first organized a community cleaning program in the Tinpile area, which involved all 15 members of the Club. They cleaned garbage around the Kalikasaran school and along the road in Tinpile. In August, the Youth Club organized a Blood Donation Program in Tinpile, coordinating with VIN and Nepal Red Cross Society. In September, they organized a Cultural program in Tinpile, which involved performing traditional dancing and an original drama for community members. These are just some of the ways the Youth Club members have gotten involved and given back to their community. Participants have felt more confident in their abilities to take initiative in their communities and problem-solve through their activities in the Youth Club.

The Youth Club members have also been involved in several community projects along with VIN staff and international volunteers. VIN provided NPR 1500 to 3000 per month to encourage volunteers and promote community participation. One of the projects involved gathering data throughout the VDC for a Community Health and Sanitation survey. In

this case, the youth volunteers traveled to the community after school and traveled house-to-house with international volunteers, asked residents questions about their health and living conditions and then translated the answers for their non-Nepali-speaking partners.

Dipu Raj Gajurel, 18, a local VIN volunteer and Youth Club member, said about the program, "When I joined VIN as local volunteer I was able to show my capacity without any hesitation. [By] working with international volunteers, I get confidence and can improve my English.. VIN also provides platform to work against social taboos in my society".

This project, along with other similar projects, gave them experience doing community research, allowed a cultural exchange between the local and international partners, and raised their confidence in their abilities to make differences in their communities.

3.4 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Project Goal: One of VIN's overall objectives is to develop the skills of the teachers in Jitpur Phedi in order to create child-friendly teaching and learning activities. The teaching style in the Nepali school-system often emphasizes lecturing and copying from the board. Most classrooms lack child-friendly furniture and educational materials, such as posters. VIN's Teacher Development Program aims to give teachers access to new ways of teaching that emphasize creativity and critical thinking.

Primary English teacher training: VIN conducted a three day Primary English Teacher's Training in March, 2009, for teachers from nine schools in the district. A total of 14 primary English teachers participated in the training. The training introduced a range of English language activities that the teachers could implement in their classes and addressed questions they had about lesson planning and how to improve students' motivation. The participants of the training felt

that the training was very effective and useful for their classroom teaching.

Technology Training: VIN also organized a three



day computer technology training for teachers in July, 2009, at the VIN Office. The teacher training focused on the most useful websites for collecting teaching material. The content included useful sites, such as youtube, Google, various search engines, Skype and blogger

ECD English teachers' training: In August, 2009,



VIN organized a four-day ECD teacher's training, in which 13 ECD teachers participated. The facilitator addressed the concept and importance of early childhood development, child rights, class preparation and the importance of games, songs and other activities that target childrens' physical, mental, social and emotional development.

ECD Teacher Excursion: VIN organized a one-day excursion for ECD teachers to a few model ECD centers and a Montessori class, which has three classes for different age groups. They visited ECD centers in Gothatar, Bhaktapur and Montessori Block of Richmond Academy, Kathmandu. The main objective of the visit was to observe and learn about the ECD environment and necessary educational material for early childhood overall development. A total of eight teachers and VIN staff were involved. The visit was highly successful in providing a good example of effectively-run ECD centers, techniques used and necessary attributes of successful teachers, such as creativity.

3.5 OTHER:

Support for Buddhist Monasteries and Nunneries: VIN supports five Buddhist



monasteries and two Buddhist nunneries in the Kathmandu area through international volunteer placements. International volunteers teach English to monks and nuns of various ages, and cover additional topics such as math, science, history and geography. Volunteers have also raised awareness of health, sanitation and environmental issues, and helped improve sanitation and technology in several of the monasteries.

Support for Deaf Education: VIN has placed several volunteers in the Kavre Deaf School, a secondary school for the deaf just outside of Kathmandu, in Kavre. In general, Nepal does not have many resources for people with



disabilities. As a result, VIN believes in supporting what services do exist however possible. VIN has partnerships with three deaf schools in Nepal; one in Pokhara, one in Kavre and one in Sundhuli. VIN international volunteers have taught English and a variety of other subjects to deaf students between the ages of six and twenty one. This has not only increased the resources for the schools, but also provides different perspectives and teaching styles to the students.

Community School Support:



Community School Ground Development and Toilet Construction Project: VIN worked in partnership with the Reach Out TO Asia to improve the grounds and toilet facilities for the Nagarjun Thulagaun Secondary School, in Jitpur Phedi VDC. Reach Out To Asia is a Qatar based NGO, which provided NPR 1.6 million for the project. The project involved constructing a

fence around the school's play area, which borders a steep cliff. This has provided the students with a safe place to play sports and other games, and keeps the school more sheltered from wandering livestock and other distractions. The other focus of the project was the construction of a new toilet facility for teachers and girls, and a renovation of the existing facility for the boys. Providing clean bathroom facilities for girls tends to improve attendance among female students, who sometimes drop out if there are no proper facilities. Overall, the project benefited over 450 students and teachers. VIN plans to seek funding for similar projects for the four other schools in the Jitpur Phedi VDC in 2010.

VIN also places international volunteers in community schools to teach English. This not only increases the students' language skills because of learning from native speakers, but also gives students access to different ways of thinking and learning. Gopal Sir, the Head Teacher of Kalikashran Lower Secondary School, remarked about the program,



"VIN provides different sorts of activities for the development of students and teachers. VIN manages international volunteers in our school for teaching English. The year teaching very interestingly. It improves English of our students".

International volunteers often use creative ways of teaching English to their students, such as using games, songs and creative writing.

VIN Newsletter publication: VIN published an eight-page magazine, named "VIN Chautari," and distributed 300 copies for the occasion of Bijaya Dashami 2066. The publication shared the major activities and programs that VIN accomplished in Jitpur Phedi from January to August, 2009.

Human Resource Development (HRD) and management training for VIN staff and members: VIN organized a three-day Human



Resource Development and Management training for its staff and executive members in September. International volunteer, Pacifica Wekesa (Kenya), facilitated the training. The training covered communication skills, leadership, time-management, team-work and conflict-management. The training was useful for staff because it dealt with skills relevant to their every day work.

This training was followed by workshop on long-term strategy planning. VIN international volunteers, Pacifica Wekesa (Kenya), Hilary Rowe (UK/Qatar), Julie Adamson (Australia/Qatar) and Debra Neill (Qatar), facilitated the workshop and helped the VIN staff with tools to set long-term goals and strategies to reach them.

Jitpur Phedi Community Day: VIN organized a Community Day celebration program on December 4, 2009. More than five hundred women's group members, children/students, teachers, community leaders and key persons and professionals attended the program. Main objective of the day was to share all programs launched in the Jitpur Phedi community to each other and create an environment to explore and develop women, children and youth innate talents and creativity. The program featured



booths run by members of the women's groups, who displayed and sold vegetables and candles, and by members of the Youth Club and Children's Clubs, who displayed some of their art projects and wall-magazines.

Annual Program Community Review Session:

In December, VIN held a community feedback session in the Kalikasaran Primary School in Tinpile, Jitpur Phe di VDC. There, representatives from all of VIN's programs (i.e. members of women's savings and agriculture groups, youth club members, children's club members and teachers) presented the positive results from the projects completed in 2009 and the areas that need to be improved in future projects. The session included a question and answer segment between VIN staff and the program participants to help address and clarify any concerns or questions raised about the



projects. The session was extremely helpful for VIN to determine how to modify and improve its programs and to establish which aspects of the programs the community found to be the most helpful. It also helped reinforce VIN's connection with the Jitpur Phe di community and increase the organization's transparency.

4. RECOGNITION OF INTERNATIONAL FUND RAISING EFFORTS

VIN would like to recognize the special contributions and efforts of several of our volunteers from 2009. Maartje Wessels (Holland) raised funds which improved four ECD centers by making child-friendly classrooms, provided games and sports equipment for the Youth Club, provided musical instruments and equipment for the United Children's Club and added resources to the toilet construction projects. Bas Linders and Lynelle Barrett (US and the Netherlands) raised funds for the toilet construction projects. Janelle Jones (US) donated funds for VIN's priority community projects. We would also like to recognize all of our local and international volunteers, who have donated computers, cameras, office materials, books, games, educational materials and funding to our projects and offices. The contributions mentioned above have significantly aided our community projects and organizational capacity.

5. SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS 2009

- Total 230 women from Jitpur VDC participated in 10 women's education classes, where they improved their literacy and life skills.
- 10 local youth received training to become women's education facilitators.
- Increased the number of active IGP groups from five to 19, which involved reactivating nine groups and forming five new groups. This involved a total of 171 women in IGP projects.
- The same 19 groups have saved money regularly in their groups and have mobilized

group funds for micro-credit projects. The groups collected between Rs. 4000.00 to 42000.00 since their formation.

- VIN registered a women's agro-based cooperative (Jitpur-Phedi Mahila Krishi Sahakari Sanstha Ltd.), with two representatives from each of the 19 women's groups.
- 42 members from 7 women's groups have successfully learned group and personal account keeping skills.
- 121 women from 15 women's groups were trained on seasonal and off-seasonal vegetable farming. All of them are growing seasonal vegetables and at least 45 women are growing off-seasonal vegetables.
- Total 41 women from five groups trained on organic vegetable farming. One group (Miremire WG) has been involved in the organic farming pilot project. Another one group (Jagaran WG) has been doing organic farming independently.
- More than 55 women from 19 groups have taken credit from their savings and credit groups and have started income generation activities.
- Total 20 women have been prepared as model entrepreneurs; 13 from vegetable farming, two from livestock raising, two from sewing, two from retail group and one from candle-making group.
- 66 women have been educated on personal hygiene and sanitation (washing, cleaning, bathing, Dental care, Family planning, menstruation hygiene etc).
- Total of 16 toilets have been constructed with VIN's support in Dagaun and 18 toilets have been made with partnership between VIN and the District Drinking Water and Sanitation Office in Dagaun and Ghogaun.
- Nine children's clubs have been reformed and strengthened for operating non-formal creative activities. Executive members of the nine clubs have received training on club management and on their basic rights

and responsibilities.

- Total 44 children (orphan, girls, Dalit, Janajati, poor) have been sponsored (24 full and 20 partial)
- VIN provided matching funds of twenty thousand rupees each for four ECD classes in four schools within the Jitpur community to make child-friendly classrooms. More than 100 children, ages 3-5, have the opportunity to get involved in ECD classes to improve their overall development.
- VIN has constructed ground wall and toilets for Nagarjun Thulagaun Secondary School coordinating with international donor, the Reach Out to Asia (ROTA)
- 13 ECD teachers from 7 schools have been trained on ECD concept and can facilitate ECD classes.
- 13 primary school English teachers have been trained on English teaching methods.
- 14 FSP children have been admitted in grade VII.
- VIN has supported 25 orphan children (Matri Nepal Apanga Sangh) of Jitpur community and more than 50 Children from other three orphanage for their education and food.
- One youth club representing all the youth in Jitpur has been formed and 15 youth are involved in the executive committee.
- More than 30 youth have had the opportunity to improve their English language skills through classes, conducted by VIN's international volunteers.
- 20 youths from Jitpur have received training on life skills and career development.
- More than 26 local youth have had opportunity to participate in community development initiatives.
- VIN supported the installation of running drinking water, water for a toilet, windows and window screens for the health post in Tinpile.
- VIN added a doctor to its staff for the Health post.

6. Summary of Challenges and Lessons Learned 2009

- Community people have difficulty attending workshops or trainings that are held at a fixed time because of their heavy workload. There has also been a general disregard for punctuality and fixed schedules in the past in Nepali culture. VIN is working to improve workshop and class attendance by using staff and volunteers as role models and by sharing the importance of planning with youth club members, children's club members and selected model entrepreneurs in the women's groups.
- VIN's goals as an organization range from material improvements to the community, like toilet construction and school classroom improvements, to less obvious improvements, like skill development and capacity building. Because the general education level is lower in the Jitpur Phedi area, VIN has faced challenges in convincing community members about some projects because the results are more abstract and harder to measure. However, VIN's projects have continued to expand and include more people. We hope that the importance of community skill-building and capacity expansion will be self-evident as our projects continue.
- Approximately 25% of the women in Jitpur Phedi depend on their daily wages for survival and cannot afford to take time off to attend VIN's trainings without subsidies. As a result, VIN has shortened many of the trainings to only one to two hours per session to allow more women to attend. In addition, most of the trainings or women's meetings take place in the members' villages instead of the village center, which greatly reduces travel time.
- The village lacks a proper venue to hold larger events and trainings. As a result, VIN has proposed the construction of a community learning center as part of its 2012 goals.
- Jitpur Phedi VDC does not have any veterinary facilities to treat livestock illnesses, or a local supplier of quality seeds and farming supplies. Therefore, many villagers find it difficult to obtain the

supplies they need to plant their crops in time during planting season. VIN is trying to address this issue by helping farmers coordinate with nearby resources for supplies and animal care.

- Farmers lack sufficient irrigation facilities in the community, resulting in poor crop yields. VIN is currently working on proposals for future irrigation projects.
- Often, community members' expectations for VIN are too high. VIN tries to address this issue by raising a awareness that community development is a process and not instantaneous. In addition, VIN is a participatory and capacity building organization and aims to help communities improve their surroundings themselves, to whatever extent possible.
- Many people go to "dhami-jhankris," or community healers, for initial treatment of their illnesses. They only come to the health post when their illnesses have become more complicated and more advanced treatment is necessary. VIN is trying to raise awareness of the importance of the health center and preventative care through the health program.
- Women often experience a lack of sufficient support from their families to participate in VIN's programs. As a result, VIN aims to increase the involvement of male family members and in-laws in VIN's women's empowerment projects, as well as conduct discussions with families on women's rights. Raising awareness about women's issues and recognizing the family's role in improving them can strengthen the programs and increase participation.
- It has been difficult to get teachers' support for the children's program in the local schools. As a result, VIN would like to increase interaction with teachers and parents to orient them to the children's club concept and increase their participation in empowering their students/children.

7. CONCLUSION

In 2009, VIN completed many important activities successfully. VIN has been able to make public a magazine, involving both children and teachers. VIN has not only organized more trainings for community members this year, but has also increased the frequency of follow-up visits to women's groups, in order to check their progress and get feedback. A great deal of positive feedback on the program has come from within the community.

Because of the program and training impact, the women involved in the vegetable farming groups have been able to increase their incomes and savings, children are making improvements in extra-curricular activities and youth are taking initiatives for their community development. There has also been marked improvement in program staff's dedication to the field programs, which have improved as a result. VIN has met with much success in the empowerment of the community and the improvement of individual well being.

This year, VIN successfully completed many important activities that increased participants' awareness of improved farming practices, group management skills, setting individual and group goals, important computer and technology skills, and the importance of children's rights and proper development. VIN's efforts have given children and youth in Jitpur Phedi a platform to explore their talents and capabilities. Hari Krishna Aryal, a teacher at the Jitpur Higher Secondary School, said of VIN's programs, "VIN plays a vital role in the social, economic and educational changes of Jitpur VDC... It helps in the personal development of youth and children through [the] establishment of clubs, and women by conducting income generation programs". Julie Hunter (Australia) said about VIN, "VIN is a wonderful organization that has only recently begun working in the community. Its work will continue to positively influence community members' lives in the coming years,".

The VIN staff has learned many important skills to help improve the organization and effectiveness of the programs. It is vital to continue to focus on long-term strategy planning and annual operational to ensure the continued success of VIN in community empowerment.

Thank you for taking the time to gain a greater understanding of the intentions and efforts of Volunteers Initiative Nepal. We hope that you will consider becoming a part of our organization, focused upon the betterment of the disadvantaged people in Nepali communities.