

NEWSLETTER

November – December, 2024

By Volunteers Management Team



Volunteers Initiative Nepal (VIN)

Volunteers Initiative Nepal is a non-religious, non-political, non-governmental and non-profit organization (NGO) with the primary purpose of supporting the development of marginalized people living in rural areas of Nepal.

We aim to promote a peaceful, prosperous and equitable society where everyone has access to quality education and health, safe natural environment, basic infrastructure and financial sustainability.

Our mission is to empower the marginalized through equitable, inclusive and holistic development programs, aiming to enhance the livelihood of poor and disadvantaged people, primarily focusing on vulnerable women and children in rural areas. To achieve this, we deliver community-based programs involving local and international volunteers.

Our Story



Volunteers Initiative Nepal (VIN) was established in 2005 by a diverse group drawn from development workers, educators, social activists, and other professionals. VIN has been officially registered under the Society Act with the District Administration Office, Kathmandu (Reg. No. 147/062/63), and affiliated with the Social Welfare Council Nepal (SWC) (Affiliation No. 20910). VIN focuses on community-based projects involving international volunteers backed up by local volunteers in Nepal.

Our Values

Solidarity – We believe that volunteering and gratitude can make the world a better place.

Impartiality – We serve marginalized and disadvantaged people solely based on need and not on their social, political or cultural identity.

Inclusiveness – Diversity empowers communities and deserves to be promoted and defended at all levels.

Accountability – Accountability and transparency are central to our actions and use of resources.

Message From Our President



As we look back on the past months, I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has been part of Volunteers Initiative Nepal (VIN). From our national and international volunteers to our donors, staff, Board of Directors, and well-

wishers, each one of you has contributed to making a significant impact in the communities we serve. promoted and defended at all levels.

In November and December, we were proud to host 44 volunteers from different parts of the world, including 11 long- and mid-term volunteers, 17 from the European Solidarity Corps, 7 national interns, 3 work camp volunteers, and 6 other national volunteers.

Our Volunteers touched many areas of our projects. In health care, volunteers collaborated with Green City Hospital in Kathmandu and communities in Okhaldhunga to conduct medical screenings, raise awareness about diseases, and promote better health practices. In women empowerment, sessions on life skills, trafficking prevention, and self-esteem building helped women feel more confident and equipped to face challenges. For children and youth, volunteers organized English classes, early childhood education programs, and sports activities, creating new opportunities for growth and learning. Environment conservation was another key focus, with volunteers working on permaculture practices, water resource studies, and waste management. We also celebrated International Volunteer Day on December 5, which reminded us how crucial volunteers are in shaping a brighter and better future. From working in Buddhist monasteries and schools to promoting disaster risk reduction and sustainable farming, the contributions of our volunteers have been incredible. None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors, staff, and Board members, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make our programs successful.

As we step into a new year, let us carry forward this spirit of collaboration and service. Each of you has played an important role in creating meaningful change, and together, we can continue to transform lives and build stronger communities.

Thank you for your kindness, dedication, and belief in our mission. You are the reason VIN continues to thrive and make a difference.

Warm Regards,



Mr. Bhupendra Ghimire
Founder / President
Volunteers Initiative Nepal

Contents in this Newsletter

This newsletter covers the remarkable achievements, ongoing projects, and future aspirations of Volunteers Initiative Nepal (VIN). It highlights our European Solidarity Corps (ESC) and Long- and Medium-Term Volunteer (LMTV) projects, focusing on community development areas such as women's empowerment, youth engagement, child protection, public health, and disaster risk reduction. Additionally, it shares key events, including the inauguration of the Naratika Community Learning Center, International Volunteer Day celebrations, and stakeholder meetings. Looking ahead, we outline upcoming initiatives to continue fostering growth and resilience in the communities we serve.

- Research on Women Empowerment
- Women Life skill Facilitation
- Trafficking Prevention education
- English and career development
- Teaching English in Buddhist monastery
- Teaching computer
- Early Childhood Development
- Teaching Sports
- Waste Management
- Water research
- Medical care
- Permaculture
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- International volunteers Day Celebration, 2024
- Stakeholders Meeting





Our Volunteers

- This November, VIN welcomed 38 volunteers, including 11 LMTV, 17 ESC, 1 work camp, 7 National ESC interns, and 2 national volunteers. Most of them were from Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, all from different countries and age groups. Every month, VIN accepts 2 intakes. However, sometimes, depending on the arrival and acceptance of volunteers, it adds up. For instance, this month we had 4 intakes and inductions for volunteers, Nov 2 (LMTV and ESC), Nov 18 (LMTV), Nov 20 (ESC) and Nov 25 (Work camp).
 - In December, VIN welcomed 6 volunteers, which was rather unpleasant news for VIN. 3 LMTV, 2 Work camp and 1 local volunteer. They were also from different age groups and from different countries, most of them coming from Italy, Hongkong, Belgium and France. Overall, we had 3 intakes and inductions, twice for LMTV and once for Work camp.
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- In summary, we took in 44 volunteers over this two month stretch. Some of them committed to short term contracts, ranging from around 2 weeks, 6 weeks, and some even signed up for 5 months!

Where they work

Volunteers were highly motivated to work on different projects. their expertise were explored in various fields. They supported in women empowerment life skills, trafficking prevention education, Public health and medical care, teaching projects, permaculture, water research, waste management and Disdaster Risk reduction projects.

PROJECTS BY LMTV VOLUNTEERS

Water Research Project

Our Water Research Project deals with multiple facets of water. The goal of the project is to conduct research on water-related issues in order to implement appropriate Water Resource Management Programs.

This month, led by Marcel, the program focused on a door-to-door water research survey in the Jitpur Phedi community. Covering three locations and interviewing residents in six communities, the survey assessed water sources, purification practices and community-driven solutions, engaging 13 participants. Marcel conducted water quality testing using a specialized kit that assesses the water purity and presence of other elements. Follow-up activities were also carried out, engaging the participants.



Waste Management Project

The primary goal of the Environment Conservation: Waste Management Project is to ensure positive contributions towards environmental sustainability and public health in the local community.

Elizabeth, our December 16 volunteer, recently joined the Waste Management project for a six-week duration in Okhaldhunga. On her first few days, she accompanied the Child Protection (ESC) team to observe their activities and gain insight into their work. She plans to join them again on next days to assist with surveys. During these initial days, Elizabeth has been focused on creating surveys and developing training materials for her project. Additionally, she has been collaborating with the Environment Club in schools to support waste management initiatives.



PROJECTS BY LMTV VOLUNTEERS

Research on Women's Empowerment

Bente, a dedicated volunteer, completed 17 weeks of research on women's empowerment in Okhaldhunga, focusing on Bhadaure, Thulachhap, and Taluwa. Through verbally administered needs assessment surveys, she highlighted key challenges faced by women in these communities, including low educational levels, limited healthcare access, early marriages, and economic hardships. Her findings provided foundational data and actionable recommendations for improving VIN's Women's Empowerment Project, emphasizing the use of social media, employing local personnel, ensuring equitable outreach, adopting long-term plans, and fostering collaboration. Her work also identified community-specific focus areas to enhance project effectiveness.



Trafficking prevention education

- Jennifer, a November 18 volunteer, dedicated 10 weeks to the Women Trafficking Prevention project in Okhaldhunga, reaching 6 communities and 7 schools. Through interactive sessions, scenario-based learning, and creative activities like the "WE ARE NOT FOR SALE" hand-tracing sign, she raised awareness about human trafficking and empowered participants with knowledge and practical strategies. Her engaging methods, including movement-based learning and the song "My Body is Mine," left a lasting impact on 102 community members and 153 students, fostering dialogue and proactive understanding of trafficking risks.
- Seri leads a three-month Domestic Violence Awareness Program in Jitpurphedi, impacting 26 women across six communities and engaging 131 students in four schools. Follow-up surveys are gathering feedback on abuse, trafficking, and family perceptions. The program continues until January 11, focusing on actionable solutions and community empowerment.

Women Life skill Facilitation

Lara, our November 18 volunteer, participated in the Women Empowerment: Life Skills Facilitation project in Okhaldhunga for three weeks. She conducted interactive sessions on managing emotions with women, using creative ballon games related to managing emotions and expressions. One of her sessions focused on effective communication and expressing emotions, delivered at the CLC as well with other volunteers as well. The volunteers and participants were enthusiastic and grateful for the opportunity to learn and share their experiences.

PROJECTS BY LMTV VOLUNTEERS

Teaching sports

The Sports Volunteer Project aims to empower marginalized communities through sports, enhancing physical well-being, mental health, and personal skills. From September 16 to December 15, volunteers Soana and Cynthia led sessions in Jitpur Secondary school, engaging 25 students in football, volleyball, and badminton, supported by three national volunteers. At Kalika School, 50 students from grades 4 and 5 participated, with chart presentations on sports rules and principles. The program concluded with a generous donation of sports equipment to Kalika School, leaving a lasting impact.

Teaching Computer

Thierry volunteered for six months in VIN's Teaching Computer Science Project, spending three weeks in Okhaldhunga and two weeks in Jitpurphedi. He taught basic computer skills, including MS Word,

PowerPoint, and shortcut keys, adjusting lessons to the students' levels.

At Maheshwor Secondary School, he taught classes of 10–20 students, while at the Community Learning Center (CLC), he focused on practical exercises with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, supported by a local computer teacher. The project aimed to develop IT and computer science skills for Nepali children

Teaching English in Buddhist Monastery

The objective of the Teaching English at a Buddhist Monastery and Nunnery Project is to create positive exchanges of culture, skills, and knowledge between volunteers and Tibetan monks. Volunteers gain a deep understanding of Buddhist culture while teaching English. In November, volunteer Nicolas spent 6 weeks at the World Peace Buddhist Monastery, teaching English to monks in Grades 6–10. His lessons included basic grammar, oral and written speaking, and movies. Nicolas also followed up on the work of past volunteer Marco, whose book Hello English was a great contribution, with monks expressing happiness in using it to practice.



PROJECTS BY LMTV VOLUNTEERS



Early Childhood Development Project

- Yael, a November 18 volunteer, participated in the ECD project for two weeks as part of the Adventure and Volunteering program. After completing her project, she traveled to Chitwan and Pokhara. For the ECD project, she was placed with a host family near Tarakeshwar Municipality and worked at Mahadevsthan Primary School, which had 15 ECD students. Unfortunately, she was mildly unwell from her first day at VIN and couldn't complete the full two weeks. Despite her short duration, her efforts left a lasting impact on the children and teachers. Her lessons included rhymes, teaching the alphabet and numbers verbally and in writing to improve children's speech and penmanship. She also conducted coloring sessions, educational games, and managed classes in the absence of teachers.
- Guilia, a December 16 volunteer, has been conducting similar activities during her two-week stay. Placed with a host family, she works at Nagarjun Secondary School, assisting teachers and engaging with children through lessons on foundational ECD practices, ensuring a positive learning experience.

November Highlight

On November 15, 2024, a stakeholders' meeting was held at NaraTika CLC Hall, with 35 participants, including head teachers, youth representatives, women's groups, social workers, and ViN staff. The program commenced with a welcome and project introduction by Tula, the Program Manager and ESC Supervisor. Teams presented their 5-month plans: the Child Protection team outlined activities for child club formations, workshops, and creative publications in schools; the Youth Empowerment team shared plans for community surveys, youth club reforms, and workshops; Alberto presented a permaculture initiative focusing on 15 families; and the DRR team discussed surveys, disaster committee formations, and training sessions. An interactive session followed, allowing participants to share inquiries and suggestions. Ward chairpersons expressed their commitment to supporting ESC projects, and the Program Manager addressed all raised concerns. The meeting concluded with refreshments, leaving a positive impression on all attendees.



PROJECTS BY LMTV VOLUNTEERS



English and Career Development

Our volunteer Ksenyia spent three weeks in Okhaldhunga, where she assessed students' English levels through various classroom activities. She prepared and delivered lessons on language skills, including grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Ksenyia also taught students how to write CVs and facilitated language practice sessions for real-life applications.

Medical care

- In Okhaldhunga, volunteer Edna led a health initiative, conducting door-to-door checks for hypertension and blood sugar levels while raising health awareness.
- In Kathmandu, volunteers were placed at Green City Hospital, a private multi-specialty facility. They assisted doctors and nurses with tasks like blood sample collection, hypertension measurement, patient follow-ups, and observing surgeries and diagnostics, though direct patient interaction was not permitted.



PROJECTS BY LMTV VOLUNTEERS



Permaculture

The Permaculture project aims to promote sustainable farming and food production by using Eco-friendly methods that conserve resources, are economically efficient, and protect future generations. It also supports groundwater recharge and benefits the entire ecosystem. Located in Okhaldhunga, the project currently had three volunteers assisting farmers with permaculture practices, like digging bed for agriculture, irrigation, and other agricultural practices.

Elderly Care

Marine volunteered for four weeks at J.P. Pratisthan Maitri Sewaashram, focusing on compassionate care and osteopathy for elderly residents. She assisted with personal hygiene, room maintenance, gardening, cooking, and serving. Marine engaged residents in recreational activities like music and art, conducted physical assessments, and organized group exercises to improve mobility. She also hosted motivational workshops and interactive sessions to enhance their well-being and happiness, leaving a meaningful impact.



European Solidarity corps (ESC) Volunteers



Introduction of ESC:

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) is an EU initiative offering young people opportunities to volunteer, work, and network, fostering personal growth while addressing societal challenges. VIN hosts several long-term ESC projects in Nepal:

1. ECHAV, ESC HumAid Volunteering Project: Focuses on humanitarian aid in Okhaldhunga, deploying two groups of 10 volunteers each for 59 days.
2. Vol4HumAid: Supports communities in sustainable food production, child protection, youth empowerment, and disaster risk reduction with 10 volunteers over 155 days.
3. Yes, Youth Can (YWC): A collaboration with Pi Youth (Türkiye) and ICJA (Germany), deploying 24 volunteers in three groups of 8 for 155 days each.

ONGOING PROJECTS:

- Women empowerment in Jitpurphedi
- Children Development in Jitpurphedi and Okhaldhunga
- Public Health and medical care in Jitpurphedi and Okhaldhunga
- Disaster Risk and Reduction in Okhaldhunga
- Youth empowerment in Okhaldhunga and Jitpurphedi
- Permaculture in Okhaldhunga

Activities by ESC volunteers

Women Empowerment

The YWC team conducted soft skills workshops for 71 women across 11 communities of Jitpurphedi, focusing on leadership, resilience, self-esteem, and overcoming societal expectations. Initially using charts, they later adopted interactive methods like games, which were well-received. They also interviewed Parbati Ghimire, a jewelry business owner trained by VIN, to share her inspiring success story for advocacy efforts.



December Highlight

On December 14, 2024, the Naratika Community Learning Center (CLC) in Nishankhe, Okhaldhunga, marked a significant milestone with the inauguration of its newly constructed Multipurpose Hall. Attended by over 150 guests, including donors from Taiwan Aid, Friends of VIN Netherlands, USA, and We Help Nepal, the event celebrated community progress and development.

The ceremony featured a welcome speech by Bhupendra Ghimire, President of ViN, who highlighted the organization's vision, project transparency, and future plans for the CLC. Chief guest Hon. Ram Hari Khatiwada praised the impact of ViN's initiatives, while community representatives expressed gratitude for the facility's transformative role. The hall will serve as a hub for education, training, and empowerment, offering computer classes, library resources, children's programs, and workshops. Cultural performances by local students added vibrancy to the event, reflecting the rich heritage of the region.

The inauguration signifies a new chapter of growth for Nishankhe, thanks to the collaborative efforts of ViN and its supporters, leaving a positive impression on all attendees.

Activities by ESC volunteers

Disaster Risk Reduction

In Okhaldhunga, the Vol for Human Aid DRR team surveyed 60 people across three communities and prepared a summary report. They created awareness materials for children under 13, with programs planned for March. Currently, they are developing a disaster response manual for the Disaster Management Committee, to be formed by mid-February, and coordinating with NSET and the Red Cross for committee training.



Children Development

- The Vol for HumAid team in Okhaldhunga trained teachers and facilitators from 10 schools on child protection and child club management, distributing manuals for guidance. They completed assessments in 11 schools, introduced child clubs in 4 new schools, and conducted democratic elections for roles.
- In Jitpurphedi, Child clubs were established in all schools, and first-phase workshops were completed in 6 of 7 schools by YWC team. Wall magazines were set up in all schools to encourage student participation



Activities by ESC volunteers

Permaculture

- The Vol for Humaid team supported 8 families in Badhaure by digging 11 beds. Progress was initially slow with just 2-3 people in the first three weeks, but work accelerated over the past two weeks with more volunteers, completing families' tasks in just two days as planned.
- Additionally, a trainer, with the team's involvement, is currently providing permaculture training to 60 farmers in Thulachhap, Okhaldhunga.



December Highlight

On 20 December 2024, a stakeholders' meeting at WBC Tinpile brought together ward chiefs, women's group board members, health representatives, school principals, youth activists, and community members to address youth empowerment, women's empowerment, child development, and public health. Key discussions highlighted the need for skill development and active participation through youth clubs, self-development workshops benefiting over 50 women across nine groups, and child protection workshops in seven schools focusing on child rights, club activities, and wall magazines. Public health initiatives emphasized hygiene, nutrition, and mental health education in schools. Action plans included forming a task force for program implementation, conducting youth and health workshops, enhancing women's literacy and financial management skills, and collaborating with schools on child protection and extracurricular activities. The meeting concluded with a collective commitment to sustainable community development and regular evaluations.



Activities by ESC volunteers

Youth Empowerment

- In Okhaldhunga, the Vol for Human Aid team visited communities like Thulachhap, Taluwa, and Okhaldhunga to conduct surveys, interviews, and pilot questionnaires with women collectives and social workers. They initiated a daily English course with prepared materials, facilitated interviews with stakeholders such as mental health counselors and ward leaders, and finalized personas to target baseline surveys for married women, college students, and farmer men.
- In Kathmandu, YWC team conducted community visits, stakeholder meetings, discussions with ward chairpersons, school visits, and focus group discussions with youth, laying the groundwork for detailed workshops and surveys in each local community.



Public Health

- This month, we developed proposals for public health programs in schools, focusing on sanitation, hygiene, and health education at Jitpur, Saraswati, and Nagarjun. We conducted interactive workshops for students in classes 3, 4, and 5, covering topics like sanitation, handwashing, and oral health awareness. Currently, we're preparing mental health sessions to address stress and anxiety, and promote emotional well-being. Future sessions will focus on nutrition and women's health.
- Additionally, we continued our youth empowerment efforts through surveys, community visits, stakeholder meetings, school visits, and focus group discussions with youth. These initiatives aim to enhance health awareness and community development.



Conclusion

In summary, November and December have been months of growth, collaboration, and meaningful impact at Volunteers Initiative Nepal. From inaugurating a new Community Learning Center to advancing programs in education, health, empowerment, and sustainability, our collective efforts have touched countless lives. These achievements were made possible by the unwavering support of our partners, sending organizations, dedicated volunteers, staff, stakeholders, and resilient communities. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in driving positive change and building a brighter, sustainable future together.





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