



YEAR IN REVIEW

Hello! Namaste!

We are so grateful to you for reading our annual report. 2018 was an amazing year for the foundation, and for me personally, for getting a chance to see firsthand some of the results of our programs. This year, I was lucky enough to start the year by visiting our girls in Nepal where I got a chance to participate in different programs and observed quite a change in the way the girls interacted with me and with each other. Seeing their confidence made me wish that we had programs like this when I myself was the first girl from my village to go to school. I was also excited to participate in the initiation of our Moms Club program, which brings local female elders together to share stories and ideas to improve their communities. Like moms everywhere, they care about their family and their children's well-being, especially in terms of education. We believe that these mothers can become the strongest advocates for girls education, and I am looking forward to seeing what ideas they bring to us in 2019. Lastly, I was most proud to see how our pilot meal program in one of our partner schools has impacted the entire community. Through the simple idea of "filling bellies to fill minds", this program has increased enrollment of girls in school and attendance as well.

Being able to see these changes in person made 2018 a very special year for me, and I look forward to seeing what we can all do by working together.

Thank you for your continued support of Rukmini Foundation.

LAXMI ARYAL, SPECIAL ADVISOR



Mission

Empower girls through quality education so that we can eradicate child marriage, end gender inequality, and enable a more equitable and prosperous Nepal.








Amita and Ramita with their grandmother:

Their story is an example of what the foundation is about because not only are we supporting the girls, but we also have to support their grandmother if we want them to be able to continue with their studies. We are taking an even more holistic approach to how we support the girls because we have to support their families, their schools and their communities if we want to truly empower them.

7 Goals for our 7th Year

We feel good about being able to do well on **5 of the 7 goals**, but we know that there is more work to do.

1. Fill Bellies So that They Can Fill Their Minds 
2. Identify, Develop & Support Mentors / Promote & Highlight Local Women Leaders 
3. Emphasize Moms Club to Empower Children 
4. Conduct More Frequent Home / School Visits 
5. Bring Renowned Teacher to Nepal from the US to Teach Music & English 
6. Be More Open in Discussing Mental Health Issues & Challenges
7. Foster Culture of Reading / Establish Culture of Community Service

Fill Bellies Before Trying to Fill Their Minds

In 2017, we had a revelation about the importance of nutrition in the educational outcomes of students. In 2018, our Pilot Nutrition Program was conducted every school day at Kalidevi School, and the results were impressive:

- Higher enrollment of students (girls and boys)
- Higher school attendance
- Improved health outcomes
- Improved performance in school because kids could concentrate better
- Interest from other schools in this program



In 2018, we worked with Kalidevi School to provide a meal every school day.



Scholars are now becoming advocates in their communities

Identify, Develop & Support Mentors / Promote & Highlight Local Women Leaders

To ensure that all children, especially girls are enrolled in school, our team visited several remote villages this year to advocate for Education for All. Just through this one program we were able to get 17 girls enrolled in school who were not attending school. What made this program even more special was that some of our scholars led the advocacy efforts and acted as role models for the girls who were not attending school.



Graduate Scholar, Rabin (right) is now tutoring and mentoring new scholars

Identify, Develop & Support Mentors / Promote & Highlight Local Women Leaders

One of our proudest achievements throughout the life of the foundation has been the number of girls who come back to support new scholars. Rabina Shrestha was one of the first 10 ever Rukmini Scholars and now she provides support to the foundation in many ways, including being a tutor.



Jasmine wows the crowd with a passionate speech at HerStory Summit / CSW Presentation

Identify, Develop & Support Mentors / Promote & Highlight Local Women Leaders

Our collaboration with Global GLOW and LitWorld has also provided us opportunities to develop mentors through our LitClub Nepal program. Mentors like Jasmine have gone from being beneficiaries of the program to leaders who are motivating and inspiring younger girls to dream big.

“

It feels awesome to be a part of this amazing club. I joined Litclub when I was in the 9th grade and now I am a mentor. The 4 years of being a part of Litclub has been a wonderful experience. Now I can share with other girls about my experience and guide them to understand its value with fun activities, story telling, reading and writing.

Not only are the younger girls benefiting from my mentorship. I feel that being a mentor has given me a platform to learn so many things each week. I learn from everyone's story and their experiences. We inspire and motivate each other. I am so glad that I have got this chance to be part of the LitClub Nepal family.

Jasmine

Emphasize Moms Club to Empower Children

One of the biggest highlights of the year was being able to get the Moms Club up and running. This was What a great gathering of mothers from different villages discussing the challenges they face and proposing solutions. We love the Moms Club because it is giving women who may not have had a chance to go to school an opportunity to empower and educate each other.


Moms Club Members collaborating and sharing ideas.



Conduct More Frequent Home / School Visits

Even though most of the girls we work with live far away, it is very important for us to know what their home situation is like. This year we were able to make more home visits, so that our team learned if the scholars were facing any difficulties at home, including whether the parents were planning an early marriage. We also used the home visits to share with the parents about the experiences of their daughters in schools.

We also use these visits to ensure that the parents are giving enough time for schoolwork and reading for their daughters.

A photograph showing four young girls from behind as they walk along a dirt path. They are heading towards a steep, rocky, and eroded hillside under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The girl on the far left is wearing a black dress and a blue backpack with 'VANS' written on it. The girl next to her is wearing a blue backpack and a pink skirt. The third girl is wearing a black dress and a colorful patterned shawl. The girl on the far right is wearing a pink hooded sweatshirt and a black skirt. They are all walking away from the camera, leaving shadows on the ground.

Most of our scholars live far away from the schools and our offices, but it is very important for us to visit them at home so that we can speak with them and their parents about their experiences in school

Bring Renowned Teacher to Nepal from the US to Teach Music & English

Ceinwen, a Pittsburgh-based artist, musician, singer and teacher visited Nepal this year to teach in many of our partner schools. Despite not being able to see, Ceinwen was able to show the students and the community that all of us have gifts and abilities to share with others. Here visit was educational and enjoyable to so many. From students to teachers and also the community, she made a very positive impact in a short time.



Ceinwen used music, songs and play to help students improve their English



Students meditating as part of a program

Be More Open in Discussing Mental Health Issues & Challenges

This year, we wanted to do more work around mental health, especially for adolescents who face pressures in school as well as the real danger of early marriage. While we were able to organize some counseling sessions, we feel that there is much more that can be and needs to be done around mental health.

Finding counselors with the right skills has been a challenge, but this is something we want to tackle better in 2019.

Foster Culture of Reading / Establish Culture of Community Service

This was another goal that we did not do as well as we wanted to in 2018. The big challenge that we encountered is the serious lack of free time that girls have to do something as basic as read. Due to the heavy workload in school and then at home, girls have little to no free time. This is one of the reasons why we are trying to work with a school to look at whether we can reduce the school workload.



Moms Club Members collaborating and sharing ideas

20,900 Meals Served

Our Nutrition Program at Kalidevi School served nearly 21,000 meals in 2018 as we ran this program for 220 school days.

11 More Graduates

In 2018, we had 11 scholars who took the national School Exiting Examinations (SEE), which is a requirement for graduating high school. We are proud to report that all 11 passed.

24 Villages

Our work reaches 24 villages in the region where we work. This reach has allowed us to provide critical services to communities that need it the most.

2018 Highlights

*Whether planned or not,
these were some things that
made us jump for joy*

Besides our planned activities, we also had many wonderful highlights like the visit by the Global GLOW team in Nepal. HerStory International Program Coordinator, Binta walks with LitClub Members





Rukmini Foundation / LitClub Nepal members: Prakriti Nepal, Surabhi Sharma and Laxmi Aryal (L-R) prepare for presentation as part of #HerStory Summit and Commission on Status of Women (CSW) program in New York City. Laxmi spoke about her personal journey being the first ever girl from her village to



Congratulations to 11 more graduates

We are so proud of these girls for finishing high school and looking beyond:

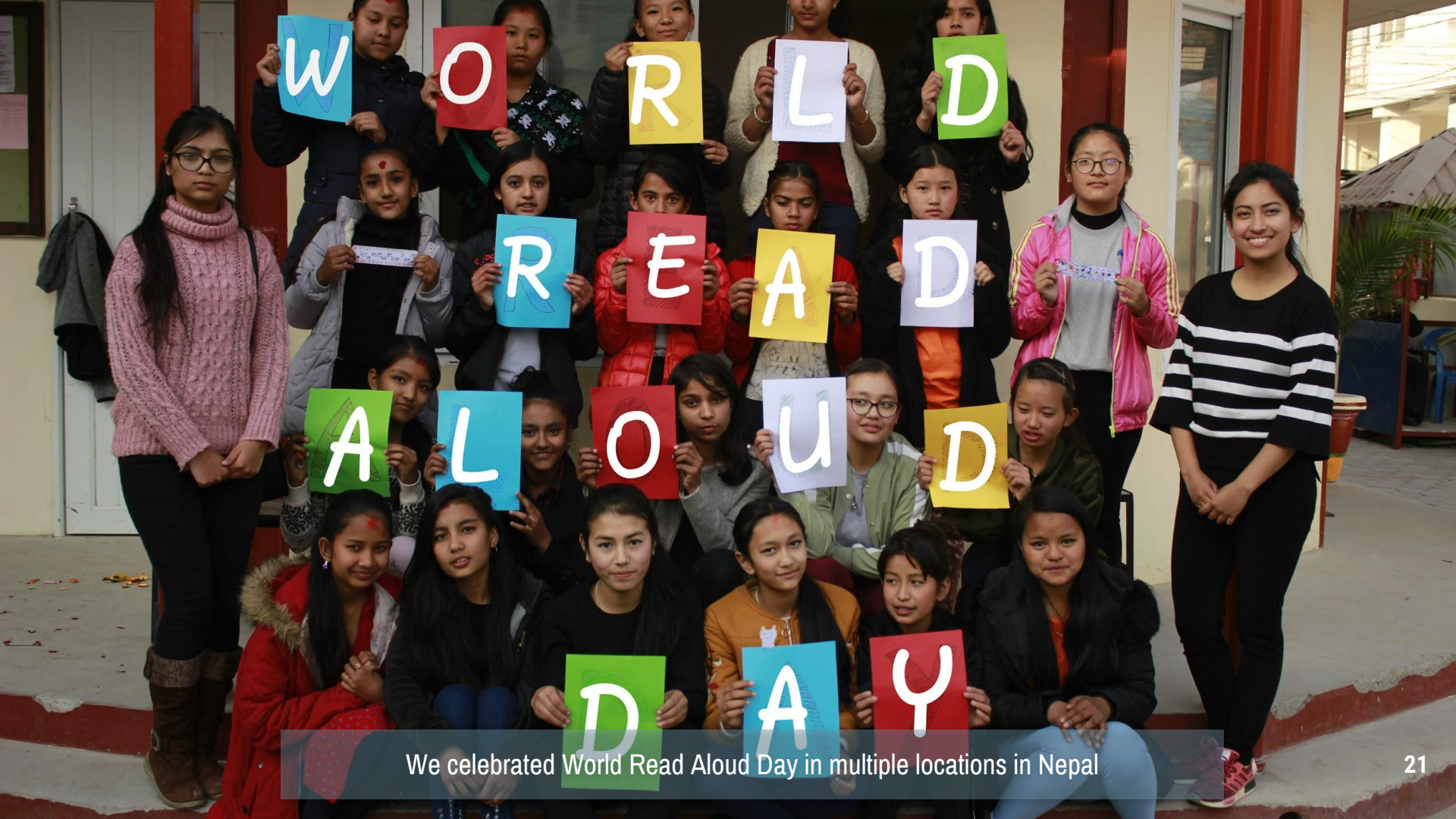
Aakriti Mahat
 Ashmita Tamang
 Sabina Ghimire
 Asmita Mangrati
 Amrita Sunar
 Susmita Tamang (Dadikhel)
 Susmita Tamang
 Tsultrim
 Laxmi Poudel
 Reshma Balami
 Roshni Rumba



The Late Dr. Eliza Bhandari inspired many during her tragically short life, and to honor her spirit as well as to highlight the importance of social causes like blood donation, the team in Nepal organized a great blood drive. Even though Dr. Eliza is sadly not with us anymore, her spirit of community service lives on.



We welcomed the Global GLOW team in Nepal. The team got a chance to see our work up close, visit with our Clubs and also meet the members of our new Moms Club



We celebrated World Read Aloud Day in multiple locations in Nepal



We cooked a Nepali dinner for close to 200 people with the help of our friends from The Helping Hands at St. Barbara's Church in Bridgeville, PA



We had great support from the Pittsburgh community, especially the Nepali community to raise awareness and funds as part of the Pittsburgh Marathon

The Pittsburgh Nepali community Ran for Rukmini during the Marathon

Celebrating our Anniversary / "Birthday" in Nepal



The team had a wonderful birthday party for the foundation where we celebrated with scholars, staff, mentors and community members



Celebrating 7th Anniversary at University of Pittsburgh with the Rukmini Club

Having our Pitt Rukmini Club organize this beautiful event was a major highlight for everyone in attendance.

Looking Ahead to 2019

While we are very proud of what we achieved in 2018, we are already moving ahead with our 2019 planning and programs.

One of the biggest goals for this year is to become a fully women-led organization in Nepal with Ms. Usha Adhikari as the head. She has been a great Program Officer over the years, and now we believe she will be able to take more of a leadership role with the support of other staff members like Ms. Lalita Lamicchane and Sabina Bisunke.



Going forward, we seek to be a completely women-led organization with Usha (center) at the helm of our team in Nepal



Teachers and Students from Niharika School

Adopt a School

In our 7+ years of running the foundation, what we have seen is that for us to make the biggest impact on the scholars, the partner school we work with has to be fully engaged. It is not just about providing scholarships. We have to evaluate the entire school day and also look at what additional supports the students need.

We saw great success with our partner school, Kalidevi School last year because we were able to work closely to implement the Nutrition Program. Similarly, we would like to adopt a school to look at implementing new teaching techniques and unique programming for all students.

Another Nutrition Program

The Nutrition Program at Kalidevi School has been so popular, and resulting in some of our other partner schools starting their own initiatives that we are hoping to implement this program in another school. This year, we have a goal of identifying a new partner and executing on this really important program.



Moms Club Members collaborating and sharing ideas



Documenting our Work in a Video

We believe in our work very much, and sometimes we wish that we could do a better job of showing all that takes place in empowering girls through education.

Thanks to the help of a couple of our friends (Bill Holman and Danny Haritan), we plan to document our programs in a series of videos, which we will be sharing with you in 2019. We look forward to seeing what these talented guys create for us.

Students meditating as part of a program

Implement a Mindfulness Program

Over the years, we have talked about “Quality Education”, and this can mean different things to different people. From our experience in 2018 and previous years, we see a need to both be more mindful as foundation staff and volunteers while also teaching the same practices to our partner organizations, teachers and especially the students. We are looking at ways to implement this program with at least one partner school in 2019.



Students practice meditation in one of our counseling sessions

Call to Action

Will you join these empowered ladies in taking action on girls education?



Foundation and community leaders take part in advocating for girls and women in Nepal

You can ACT
in 2019 to
empower more
girls through
education

A

Advocate

Connect with us on Social Media and help share our stories

Subscribe to our newsletter to stay up to date



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Contribute

With as little as \$25 a month, we are making amazing things happen, but we need your support. There are many ways to give:

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Become a Recurring Donor

Contribute through UnitedWay
Contributor Choice Agency
#12913414

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Take Action

Are you the type of person that has boundless energy and is passionate about equity and justice? If you are, then we are always looking for people like you to help empower girls through education. We have room for:

Board Member
Volunteers
Interns

Reach out to us by email at:
info@rukminifoundation.org

Thank you to all
those who
contributed in 2018

GLOBAL
G.L.O.W.™

LitWorld
Be the Story.

Adam Walkowiak
Allyce and Dre
Amber Pinchback
Anand & Cassandra
Ann & Stuart Demanski
Anne Ceconi
Anne Clough
Anthony Puello
Arlane Gordon-Bray
Arya Baral
Aryal Family
Ashlee Pierre
Ashley Cvrkel
Ashley Pinchback
Barbara James
Bear & Matthew
Bentley Systems
Bhim Dahal
Bill Holman
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Yuan Ren

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The Pitt Rukmini Club took ACTION in 2018

From conducting advocacy efforts and raising awareness about the foundation to organizing a wonderful anniversary event, which raised funds and the visibility of the foundation at the University of Pittsburgh, the Rukmini Club took significant ACTION in 2018. We are so impressed with this club that we are hoping to build more partnerships like this across other schools.

Pitt Rukmini Club sharing about their work to support the foundation during our anniversary event that they completely organized.



Thank you for another memorable year

We are grateful to you for your support, which allowed us to serve nearly 21,000 meals, see 11 more girls graduate from high school and have our team work across 24 villages...and much more.

Please stay tuned for exciting things happening in 2019.

Thank you and Namaste!



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Namaste from LitClub Members