

Friends of ADWAN Nepal (FAN) Newsletter 2021



Namaste from Friends of ADWAN Nepal (FAN)

Dear Friends of ADWAN,

Every year at this time it has been my joy to update you about our accomplishments and thank you for your generous donations that made it possible.

This year ADWAN's achievements have been extraordinary! Throughout the pandemic and the enforced lockdown, the staff continued to personally deliver truckloads of essential supplies and food to the most needy, especially in the most remote communities.

Projects have proceeded uninterrupted, including The Karuna Trust UK and FAN jointly funded 4 year Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Project. ADWAN's Sponsorship Program, Ambitious Girls Fund Scholarship Program, gender based violence trainings are on going. ADWAN has completed the formation of 20 new women's self-help groups in Kailali (11), Chitwan (5) and Gulmi (2) along with existing 76 women groups. In partnership with ADWAN, CREA (India) and Global Fund for Women funded young women's mentorship project. ADWAN supported cooperative bank in Gorkha continues to grow and has been able to support rural women's small businesses.

FAN has also thrived and I am delighted to introduce the outstanding women who have joined our expanded Board. Additionally, I am happy to announce that while I will continue to serve on the Board as the Sponsorship Coordinator, Bishnu Maya Pariyar has accepted the role as FAN President. The talents and dedication of the new Board members, partnering with you, our donors, assures a robust and dynamic future for FAN's mission to support ADWAN.

With warmest regards,

Joan Goldmann
Friends of ADWAN Nepal (FAN)

ADWAN'S Projects

18 New Self-Help Women Empowerment Groups



ADWAN helped formation of the groups during lockdown in Kailali District (11), Chitwan (5) and Gulmi District (2). ADWAN conducted skill training, literacy training and gender-based violence training. We will reach UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) when we empower marginalized women and children at the grassroots level. ADWAN's women's groups provide women with innate leadership skills and a platform to develop and initiate change that benefits the entire community.

Since COVID-19 domestic and sexual violence cases continue to increase; but with ADWAN's new training classes to prevent and combat gender-based violence, the participants in the women groups in Chitwan and Kailali have transformed themselves from being victims into proactive leaders. By spearheading development and improvements in their communities they have enhanced their status and increased their decision-making power. The women act with confidence, speak up at public meetings, and now take collective action - women changing the social climate of their

Uniforms and School Materials Distribution



This year, ADWAN has distributed 350 uniforms to Dalit and other marginalized children of women in 18 newly formed women's groups in the provinces of Tanahu, Gulmi, and Kailali.

Sanjila's Inspiring Story



communities.

ADWAN's Cooperative Bank



Ten years ago, 10 ADWAN women's groups got together and collected Rs. 28,000 (Rupees) and started the Cooperative Bank in Taklung, Gorkha. In nine years, with the support of ADWAN, the groups have 5 millions rupees (50 lakhs rupees) in the bank. The bank provides loans at a low interest rate. One hundred and ninety women are now members in the Cooperative, and Women especially the Dalit and marginalized, now have access to credit or loans. The bank gives the women loans to start their own small businesses, to invest in and access more shares to expand their businesses. Through COVID-19 and thereafter, the bank will continue to support these women should there be another economic crisis or lockdown in their districts.

Sponsorship Program

ADWAN / FAN Sponsorship Program allows at-risk children to go to school. The program is simple but makes it possible for a child to become the first member of a family to attend school and escape multi-generational subsistence living. Modest cash stipends support and ensure that a child will remain in school and reach her/his potential.



"ADWAN lit a lamp of knowledge, education, and awareness for me. Through regular monitoring of activities, it builds a sense of guts, encourage

ment and self-assertion to move steps ahead independently. I want to be a feminist to end caste based discrimination and other social evils." -Sanjila

Sanjila BK was a poor and disadvantaged, so-called Dalit (untouchable) born into the intergenerational hierarchical caste system which it still remains the social culture in Nepal. Since primary school in Chitwan, Sanjila has been receiving individual sponsorship through FAN and ADWAN's Program. She is now working towards her master's degree.

Sanjila's inspiring story begins with a young woman determined to fulfill her desire for education yet honor her family's custom to become a daughter-in-law by a certain age. When she graduated with her bachelor's degree in 2019 Sanjila married. Six months later was the start of being severely abused both physically and mentally by her husband and his family members. Finally, Sanjila was able to leave her husband and his family to continue her studies for a master's degree. In Chitwan, she started attending gender based violence training in an ADWAN women's group and then recommended to participate in the Feminist Leadership and Movement Building Project administered by ADWAN's General Secretary Bindu Pariyar Thapa with a \$50,000 grant from Global Fund for Women and CREA. It is a two year mentorship program that prepares young community women leaders in Chitwan district of Bagmati Province.

A Glimpse into an ADWAN Field Visit



This past October ADWAN staff members joined by a Karuna Trust UK representative visited the Chitwan District to observe the progress and the present livelihoods of the Dalit and marginalized women in the Chitwan District project. The Karuna Trust and Friends of ADWAN (FAN) provide these women the money needed for their businesses and training programs. As described in previous newsletters, the four year objective has been laser focused on a training curriculum to build market-oriented livelihood skills and gender equality awareness. Participants are Dalit and women of other caste groups. All these women are economically disadvantaged. This strategy of inviting women from all caste backgrounds to work together in one space has been highly effective in addressing the issue of caste-based discrimination even among the marginalized caste women. Many of the participants came to the program having worked as landless daily wage laborers either working on other people's farms or on small-scale construction sites. Each of the six groups collaborated in their selection of skill training based on the participants' accessibility to land, prior experiences, local market potential, and availability of materials as well as trainers.

Projects included ginger and turmeric farming, tailoring, pineapple farming, mushroom farming, bangle design, and off-season kitchen gardening. They started group credit unions with money generated from the sale of products. Members are already borrowing funds from the credit union on a rotation basis among their members at the rate of 6-12% interest without collateral.

This initiative has protected the members from the local moneylender’s highly exploitative interest rate of 36%. The loans are for the women to pay child education fees, medical care, and growing their small businesses.

Unfortunately, the bangle designing and hand embroidery groups met with hardship due to competition from machine-based production coming from China and India. Members of these groups are now considering other options of livelihood.

COVID-19 has a dampening effect on production, however, slowly women are restarting their businesses. In spite of the challenges the confidence and courage is palpable in the women participating in this project. Some women have expressed an interest in a higher level of training to deepen their skills. From this training they will use their skills to operate sophisticated machinery and materials to compete in their market. The women need your donations so their livelihood will continue to grow!

Donate



Here Is What We Have Been Up To!

Friends of ADWAN Nepal Board Members have been attending events to raise awareness of both the work and the mission of ADWAN. Here are a few of those events that took place this year:

March 21, 2021, Dr. Pariyar and Neha Rayamajhi spoke at The Diaspora Initiatives against Caste-Based Discrimination conference. The event was attended by Nepali activists, scholars, members of US Congress, and a Representative from the Nepali Embassy in the US.

March 26, 2021, Friends of ADWAN hosted “Dignity and Security of Dalit women,” This was a NGO CSWNY Forum annual Parallel Event. NGO CSWNY is part of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Six influential panelists participated and almost one hundred people attended our event.

July 27-28, 2021 Dr. Bishnu Maya Pariyar was a Keynote Speaker for the 6th World Conference on Women’s Studies (WCWS). General public was in attendance. The theme was, “Overcoming Women’s Subordination: Socialization, Law, and Structural Inequalities. Dr. Pariyar talked about ADWAN’s work and mission.



Ambitious Girls Fund (AGF) **A letter from Dipa Nepali**

I am Dipa Kumari Nepali from Janakpur Tol, Ghodaghodi Urban Municipality of Kailali district of Sudur Paschim Province. I am a student of LLB (Bachelor of Legislative Law) in Nepal Law Campus and Master of Education (M.Ed) in Kathmandu, Nepal.

I am from ultra-poor so-called Dalit family background. Though my parents earn little in their traditional and paternal profession of tailoring, they endeavor to provide me better education. My mother sews dresses in neighborhood and sends the earned money for me to stay in Kathmandu. But now the pandemic is severely impacting our daily life. The present wave of the new Corona variant has obstructed regular activities and clamped down even my meager resources that I used to get from parents. My parents had to take loan with high interest rate.

Getting loan was not easy because we didn't have property. I almost stopped going to classes.

I faced fourfold problem – both technical and non-technical related to resources and economic and psychological issues with the stress of scarcity. I had a clear plan to look for job immediately after the final examination so that my mother would get relief from my financial expenses. But because of the COVID lockdown, getting a job was impossible. I went through so much hardship that I was demoralized.

One day, I saw a story about ADWAN's founder Dr. Bishnu Maya Pariyar. Through her story, I found out about ADWAN's work helping marginalized children and women. I contacted Dr. Pariyar through Facebook messenger. She answered my call. I told my struggle. I told her that I wanted to be a judge to advocate for Dalit and marginalized women but because of the financial hardship, I may have to give up my law education. She gave me hope and told me not to worry. I was very happy after I talked to her.

She called me the next day and told me that I would get a scholarship through ADWAN's Ambitious Girls Fund (AGF) through Manakamana Fund. The Fund's co-founder Pam Ross provided \$2,400 scholarship through the AGF so that I could complete my study. I couldn't believe it - I started crying - My heart was bouncing.

I volunteered with ADWAN to start 11 new women's groups in Kailali where Dalit women are very poor and illiterate. They are displaced by war. With guidance from ADWAN's General Secretary Bindu Pariyar Thapa, I was able to conduct gender-based violence training for women.

Besides my study, I write articles for Nepali media on the issue of caste discrimination, untouchability and other relevant social issues for Dalit community. It is my passion to pen my experience, put my thoughts in words. These days, I am writing thesis of Master in Education (M.Ed), a biography of eminent Nepali women of different sectors, and articles on existing social issues. After I finish my study, I will become an advocate for Dalit women who are victims of caste, gender, domestic and gender based violence.

Thank you ADWAN team and Dr. Bishnu Maya Pariyar for your support to fulfil my dream.

FRIENDS OF ADWAN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2021-2023



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Meet FAN's New Board

Friends of ADWAN (FAN) Board of Directors 2021-2023

Bishnu Maya Pariyar, Hon. D.Litt.

President, Founder, ADWAN.ORG

Joan Goldmann, LICSW

Immediate Past President & Board of Director

Neha Rayamajhi, Youth Activist, writer

Secretary

Meghan Connolly, Anthropologist

Treasurer

Hon. Sandy Hecker, Social Activist

Board of Director

Bimjhana Bishwokarma, Scientist

Board of Director

Aska Sherpa, BSN RN, Youth Activist

Board of Director

Ashtha Singh, Youth Activist

Board of Director

Megha Rouniyar, Youth Activist

Board of Director

Featured in 'The Writer's Mindset'

Dr. Pariyar's life-struggle story has been featured at higher education text book, 'The Writer's Mindset' by Dr. Lisa Wright Hoeffner which was published by one of the world's top publications, McGraw Hill in 2021. Dr. Pariyar's story is featured between 591-594 pages. Congratulations !



[Read About FAN](#)

Work With Us!

FAN and ADWAN are looking for interns. Please send a CV and a cover letter to apply.

Qualifications:

- Excellent communication and writing skills
- Ability to work in teams
- Must have a BA or an MA with two years of relevant work experience in the field of education,

program development, administration, or non-profit work

- Some knowledge of caste and race dynamics and sensitivity to power structures
- ESL training and experience living in the global south is considered a plus

Responsibilities:

Teaching and Facilitation

- Teach the English language to a small group of highly motivated women activists
- Set standards for measuring progress
- Facilitate a collaborative approach to the development of a non-formal education curriculum for marginalized women
- Create workbooks and a teacher manual

Administration, Publicity and Fundraising Assistance

- Grant and donor agency research
- Grant writing and editing
- Website design assistance

Field Report Assistance

- Occasional field visits to assist with information gathering and photography
- Stipend provided to cover living expenses for 6-12 months.

Contact Us

Help Friends of ADWAN Nepal Continue to Make A Difference!

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<https://www.friendsofadwan.org/donate>

Or by check

Friends of ADWAN Nepal

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