

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017



IWEN



Intercultural Women's  
Education Network

*Empowerment • Education • Freedom*

## Board of Directors

Kevin Edgecombe	President
Tamara McLellan	Vice President
Sylvie Forget	Treasurer/Secretary
Amanda Schauerte	Director at Large
Francine Walker	Director at Large
Heather Oishi	Director at Large
Kate Phelps	Director at Large
Chloe Edgecombe	Director at Large
Ann Haymond Hill	Director at Large
Karen Hughes	Finance and Admin Officer

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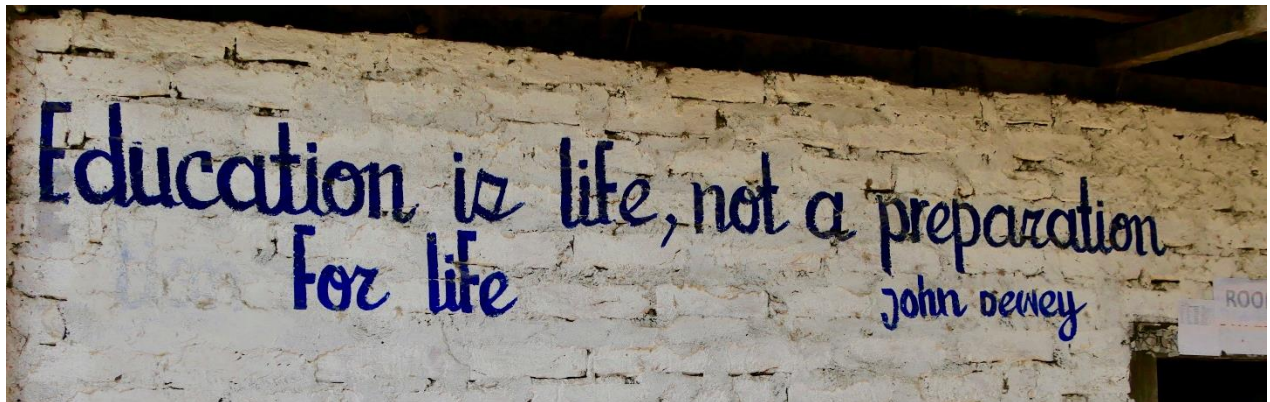
Website: [www.IWENCanada.com](http://www.IWENCanada.com)

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## Presidents Report

On behalf of the 2016 - 2017 IWEN Canada board of directors, I want to first offer a big "THANK-YOU" to all those who continue to support this great little charity called IWEN!! The work of our board and our partners, Creating Possibilities Nepal, is only possible with the significant financial support that comes from everyday people all over Canada. THANK-YOU!!

Thanks to the executive board, VP **Ann Haymond Hill** and Treasurer **Sylvie Forget**, their leadership and dedication has been amazing. Also want to thank returning and new board members, **Heather Oishi**, **Kate Phelps**, **Tamara McLellan**, **Chloe Edgecombe** and **Amanda Schaurte**. We also want to recognize our newest board member **Francine Walker**.



*From left: Ann Haymond Hill, Sylvie Forget, Francine Walker, Chloe Edgecombe, Tamara McLellan, Kevin Edgecombe, Heather Oishi, Amanda Schaurte (missing Kate Phelps)*

In addition to the board itself, there are many others that contribute to our efforts. I would like to personally recognize **Karen Hughes** who is doing a fantastic job as our Administration and Financial Officer. There are a lot of moving parts in an organization like this and she manages us with the utmost of dedication.

IWEN Canada has enjoyed another very successful year thanks to the devotion and efforts of many. 2016 and early 2017 have certainly been transitional for IWEN and we are very excited about the future potential and direction that our charity has taken.

We continue to become a more organized and efficient organization with a focus on policy and procedure, while not losing site of the core reason why we are here in the first place. IWEN has always been a grass roots, boots on the ground, type of charity and we certainly intend to stay that way despite some of the big picture steps we have taken this year.



Although this report is intended to reflect on our fiscal year March 31 2016 thru March 31 2017, I feel it's important to tell you about a big move we made early in the 2017 time frame.



The decision to hire an Executive Director had been contemplated for several years and this year, I am happy to report we hired two! Former board members Tamara McLellan and Kate Phelps applied for the position as a team. I cannot tell you how happy I am with the decision we have made, as these two dynamic and committed individuals are going to take the organization to a whole new level. Of course with a significant move like this, there are costs that need to be considered as well as return on investment. We expect that the returns may take a year to see, but I also feel that the ground work is being set for great things to come from an organizational perspective as well as a financial perspective. Tamara and Katie work for the organization on a part time basis, and we are very happy with their progress thus far.



November 2016 saw a fantastic group of energetic volunteers make their way to Salangiri School in the Ghorkha district of Nepal; one of the areas hardest hit from the earthquake. Team leader Ron Quilter and 14 smiling faces made their way to this mountain top village and assisted on the foundation and bricks of this 7 classroom school project. From all accounts this turned out to be one of those fantastic trips that helped carve lasting bonds amongst likeminded people. The trip was a challenging one as each morning the team had to hike 45 minutes to the work site as roads were pretty dangerous, even by Nepal standards.

Following the build, the team headed to Dang and spent some time visiting Unako house, meeting with mother's groups, visiting schools and hosting soccer camps. On behalf of IWEN, thanks very much, to the team that made this such a successful trip. In my opinion it is trips like these that have made IWEN what it is today. When a person can touch and feel, smell and taste Nepal like you do on a volunteer construction trip, you will remain a friend of Nepal forever. I know it certainly happened to me.



On a personal note, I had intended on being on this trip but sadly my parents failing health had prevented me from going last November. I did however plan to go in late April of 2017 which turned out to be a

fantastic trip with my daughter Josee. This trip was intended to be a fundraiser for the Unako Memorial Scholarship fund as we were planning a memorial for "little Unako" in early June of 2017. This photo was an amazing gift to receive from Nepal while I was at home mourning the loss of both my parents last fall. Thank you for this amazing gesture. I was there in spirit!



The annual bicycle allocation occurred this past January. This ceremony is a very big deal for the young girls in Nepal lucky enough to receive this ever-so-important mode of transportation. Thank you CP Nepal, for the coordination of this outstanding IWEN initiative. Thanks to all our donors through IWEN Canada who generously support this program. A very special thanks to the Fletcher Family who continue to carry on one of the dreams of Ryan Fletcher. In addition we want to thank Julia Harwood who was Ryan's girlfriend. She along with TELUS, have been huge supporters of the bicycle initiative since Ryan's passing.



Creating Possibilities Nepal is the reason we are able to work in Nepal, and we cannot express the appreciation we feel for this amazing team lead by Dinesh Raj Sapkota and Nura Basnett. Kiran Mandahar has taken over as Chair of Creating Possibilities Nepal and we look forward to a continued partnership and collaboration. He along with many board members, past and present provide us a very strong level of trust and integrity in all we do.



*From left Country Director Dinesh Raj Sapkota and his son "Bob", Financial and Administration Executive Nura Basnet, CP president Kiran Manandhar, Dang Staff member Rhea Chaudhary, General Secretary Mandar Banarjee, Dang Staff member Shyam Chaudhary, Junu Chaudhary, Kira Sapkota, Sarita Chaudhary and Laxmi Karki.*

As a board here in Canada, we strive to be extremely conscientious stewards of donor funds. We recognize the importance of transparency and understand the dynamic nature of the culture in which we serve.

We recognize the importance of spreading the word far and wide, and introduce new people to our efforts. Many people have been introduced to this great little charity in the last year and we are proud to say that IWEN is alive and well, thanks to our dedicated teams here in Canada and Nepal and most of all thanks to our amazing donors who make it all possible.

Thank You and Namaste,

Kevin Edgecombe, President IWEN Canada

**ARE YOU READY TO DO SOMETHING GREAT?**



## Financial Report

IWEN has known another successful fiscal year and I would like to extend a big thank you to all our donors and supporters. Thanks to many volunteers, we are able to do our work both in Canada and in Nepal.

Our total donations this year was \$106,670, which is incredibly generous. A highlight is that we received \$7,300 more in our Empowerment Through Education (ETE) funds. This increase is due to a couple of big gifts coming in and a higher percentage of sponsor renewals. In the 2016-2017 school year, we had a total of 175 students, of which 170 were sponsored. For the first time, IWEN approved 5 technical courses. These are trade classes for the students who struggle with traditional schooling, giving them a chance for future employment. Examples of these technical courses are tailoring and aesthetics.

One of our challenges is that the cost of our ETE program goes up every year. The cost increases are due to the economic conditions in Nepal; for example inflation was 8% in 2016. To further help our students succeed in school, we now offer tutoring to all of our students outside of regular class hours. Along with tutoring, annual school fees, exam fees, access to a computer, monthly fees and administration, every student also receives a new set of books and stationery, school bag and shoes, a school uniform, a house dress and personal care items, such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and feminine hygiene products. Furthermore, our local program coordinator, Deepa Chaudhary, monitors each student. She ensures, along with their families' support, the students are maintaining regular attendance at school. She also meets with them to help with any personal or at-home concerns that may affect their schooling.



Volunteer trips are a very important part of our work since it allows many people to see our programs for themselves and fall in love with the people and the culture. Another volunteer trip went to Nepal in November, which helped raise money for the build of Salangiri School that was heavily damaged in the 2015 earthquake. This \$47,500 building is now complete and paid off!



Once again, we are fortunate to be the recipient of the proceeds of the Edgcombe's annual golf tournament who donated close to \$20,000.

Bricks have also proven again to be an effective fundraiser raising over \$14,000.

Scarf sales have always been our primary fundraiser, but unfortunately, we are showing a decrease in this revenue for the 2016-2017 year. In prior years we received press, giving us a boost in our online sales. Last year, we sold \$81,000 worth of scarves compared to \$71,000 this year. At the end of our fiscal year (end of March) we moved the scarf inventory from Quebec to Kelowna. Going forward, we are looking at expanding our host programs to new markets outside of Kelowna as well as increasing our visibility at local events.



In 2017, Unako began being featured at "Pop-Up Shops" in law offices and retail outlets all over Canada. We sent our first wholesale orders to Sicamous, BC (Happy Corker Gifts) and Winnipeg, MB (Fair Trade Alliance). We will appear at many craft sales and events over the Fall/Winter season of 2017 and have been actively taking a presence on social media under the names @iwencanada and @iwenunako.

The success of scarf sales prompted Unako to launch another product line: Unako Bottles to Beads. In 2017, four women were trained to make beads from recycled glass. These beads will be used to fashion the new line of Unako jewellery. Stay tuned for more information as Unako Bottles to Beads comes to fruition.

IWEN's president, Kevin Edgcombe, started fundraising in March for the Unako Memorial Scholarship and raised \$4,960 for the 2016-2017 year, but overall, he successfully raised just under \$20,000. These funds are greatly needed to improve the health services in Dang, Nepal.

We continue to partner with the UBC Sickle Cell team that does wonderful work among the Tharu population in Nepal. This year a group of UBC students travelled to Nepal in May 2016 where they followed up on the first year's team's testing results and spent time working with those who tested positive and did not have an understanding of what that meant. They raised over \$10,000 to support their work in Nepal.

Our local expenses have stayed relatively the same over the last few years, but we have added a new member to our team this year. We now have a Donor Relations Coordinator to help with our database and communication with donors.

IWEN is also proud to contribute locally to help women. This year, we allocated \$3,660 to this program. We hosted two food safe courses and initiated a Women's Wellness Group in Kelowna. This group focused on health topics, ways to reduce stress and the overall well-being of local immigrant women. This coming year has a lot of new exciting changes and we have slightly increased our budget to expand our programming here in Canada.

*Submitted by Sylvie Forget, Treasurer/Secretary*

**IWEN Canada**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**as at March 31, 2017**

	<b>2017</b>	2016
Assets		
Current		
Cash	<b>101,110</b>	136,671
Inventory	<b>37,751</b>	37,504
Prepaid expenses	<b>35,000</b>	-
	<b>173,861</b>	174,175
Equipment	-	-
	<b>173,861</b>	174,175
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable	<b>2,499</b>	2,500
Deferred income	-	-
	<b>2,499</b>	2,500
Members' Surplus		
Reserves	<b>171,362</b>	171,675
Unrestricted	-	-
	<b>173,861</b>	174,175

**IWEN Canada**  
**Statement of Reserves**  
**For the year ended March 31, 2017**

	<b>2017</b>	2016
Reserves		
General	<b>125,904</b>	136,622
Empowerment through Education	<b>15,669</b>	9,683
Mothers Literacy	<b>2,000</b>	-
Classrooms	<b>1,281</b>	4,437
UBC Sickle Cell	<b>14,353</b>	9,641
Teacher Training	<b>180</b>	180
Scholarship Reserve	<b>4,960</b>	200
Earthquake Reserve	-	7,622
Bikes Reserve	<b>7,015</b>	3,290
	<b>171,362</b>	171,675

**IWEN Canada**  
**Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances**  
**For the year ended March 31, 2017**

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Receipts		
Donations	<b>107,951</b>	185,493
Fundraising	<b>34,117</b>	38,156
Sale of goods	<b>71,324</b>	81,722
Other revenue	<b>1,126</b>	1,850
	<b>214,518</b>	307,221
Disbursements		
Bank charges and interest	<b>4,641</b>	5,201
Charitable programs	<b>157,138</b>	251,967
Fundraising	<b>5,403</b>	11,631
Insurance	<b>655</b>	650
Office	<b>3,879</b>	6,158
Professional fees	<b>23,594</b>	24,916
Purchase of goods for resale	<b>17,922</b>	30,978
Travel	<b>1,600</b>	1,650
	<b>214,832</b>	333,151
(Deficiency ) Excess of Receipts over Disbursements before Amortization	- <b>314</b>	- 25,930
Amortization	-	685
(Deficiency) Excess of receipts over disbursements	- <b>314</b>	- 26,615
Transfer to reserves	<b>314</b>	26,615
Unrestricted, beginning of year	-	-
Unrestricted, end of year	-	-



## Programs Report

The 2016-2017 year was another exciting year for IWEN's programs all made possible by our fierce and extraordinary donors who support the difference we are making together around the world!

### NEPAL

This year as IWEN's Director of Programs, I traveled to Nepal to:

1. visit and assess IWEN's projects,
2. meet with participants to better understand how IWEN's programs had helped them and what else they needed to succeed; gather stories, photos, and videos from participants to share with IWEN donors,
3. meet with local staff to review and revise monitoring and reporting procedures
4. meet with Nepali and international government representatives, civil society, and international development organizations to find future opportunities for collaboration or support

Each of my goals were very successful. The projects, as you will see from the report from our Country Director, Dinesh Sapkota, are doing very well. The students in the ETE and Sungava programs are thriving from their access to education, the Mothers' Microcredit Groups are growing (we are up to 29 groups now!). Our build initiatives are bringing schools and classrooms to areas ripped apart by the earthquake. IWEN's additional support and activities bring knowledge, life skills, and resources, affecting change as grassroots levels.



The program participants I met wowed me with their *grit* and *joy*. They demonstrated resilience in the face of what was often devastating and tragic circumstances but persevered with such happiness and grace that you may never know their history unless you asked. They expressed nothing but gratitude, but when pressed I received requests for more mentoring, post-secondary opportunities and employment training, as well as a computer lab and training. There are many opportunities to build on IWEN's work in Nepal — resources permitting! The interviews, videos, and photos I recorded have been partially released on the Facebook page, on the website, and will continue to be shared incrementally through the new quarterly newsletters.

My meetings with local stakeholders, like-minded individuals, and organizations forged new relationships and networks. We formed new partnerships and the potential for collaboration down the road. Look forward next year to the first fruits of those connections through our social enterprise, “Unako”. It will be launching a new jewelry line made from recycled glass. The jewelry, featuring pieces designed exclusively for Unako by Canadian artist and board member, Francine Walker, are stunning, environmentally friendly, and safely and fairly employ women in Dang, Nepal.



Lastly, my meetings with our local, Nepali staff - working through Creating Possibilities, left me feeling encouraged and excited. Dinesh, Nura, Deepa, Sarita, Junu, and Laxmi are each skilled, passionate, and devoted to IWEN. They love their work and the participants. They put their heart and soul into everything they do and are unfailingly patient with us here in Canada when we don't understand “how things work in Nepal”. Together we have accomplished amazing feats in Nepal and I know that together as a team we will continue to reach those in need, in new, innovative and culturally relevant ways.

## **CANADA**

### *Wellness groups*

Through 2016-2017, IWEN partnered with Kelowna Community Resources (KCR) and the Elizabeth Fry (E. Fry) Society to bring wellness groups to the immigrant women of the Okanagan. The first group was facilitated by E. Fry and took the format of a walking group that allowed women to meet, to chat on their walks, to get outside and enjoy exercise and the fresh air. As the weather turned colder, we started meeting over coffee and discussed topics like depression, isolation and immigration.

For the second group we partnered solely with KCR and moved the group to their new office. We hosted weekly topics around self-care. Over the eight weeks, the women enjoyed self-care discussions, a cooking class, walks around downtown Kelowna to discover new local community centres and a yoga class. They were given the opportunity to bond over stories of settling here in Kelowna and given tools to integrate.

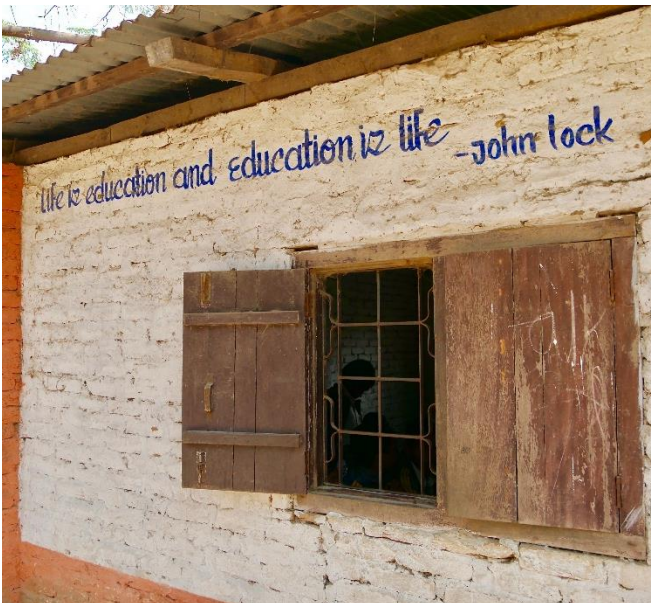
### *IWC*

IWEN sponsored and attended the International Women's Committee Luncheon in December of last year. There were about 25-30 women present representing 20 different nationalities. Tamara did a short talk about IWEN and everyone had a chance to introduce themselves and tell us where they were from. There were women who immigrated as recently as four days prior to the event. The food was amazing and it was really beautiful to see the women bond over their shared love for cooking dishes from their home countries, while the children played. Each woman left with a small bag of donated toiletries and hygiene products, and coupons for various services within Kelowna.



The rest of the year, I focused my time as Director of Programs on standardizing communication and reporting from Nepal. I instituted metrics for both our Canada and Nepal projects to track reach and participation. Lastly, I developed new programming for the 2017-18 reporting year that I am excited to tell you about in our next annual report!

*Submitted by Kate Phelps, Program Director*





## Creating Possibilities Nepal Report

Creating Possibilities has been working for the betterment of the destitute group of people in Nepal. It has adopted a comprehensive approach for its beneficiaries and the programs and its activities' impact have far-reaching outcomes. CP and IWEN have been addressing all necessary issues so that these underprivileged families can move ahead. Last year became very fruitful and remarkable to us.

IWEN with the partnership with Creating Possibilities Nepal has working towards the UN sustainable development goals-especially Quality Education, Gender Equality and No poverty.

### 2016-2017 Major Achievements

#### The completion of Bandevi School , Gorkha construction

Bandevi Primary School was damaged by the earthquake of 2015. Construction was started shortly after the earthquake and was completed by the end of 2016. The children are now enjoying safe and friendly classrooms. The school management committee and guardians were very grateful to receive this support.

#### Commencement of the construction work of Salangiri School of Gorkha district

Salangiri Primary School was also devastated by the earthquake. The children were attending classes in a makeshift bamboo structure. The construction started in late 2016 and received the help of the 2016 IWEN Volunteer Team. The school construction was completed in 2017.

#### IWEN Volunteer Trip, November 2016

November 2016, Creating Possibilities welcomed a team of Canadian volunteers from IWEN. They were put to work right away in Gorkha, working at Salangiri School. The local community welcome them wholeheartedly and enjoyed working alongside them.

After the school build, the volunteer team traveled to Dang to visit IWEN programs. They enjoyed meeting the students and mother groups members and amazed hearing the success stories from the beneficiaries themselves.

## Programs

### Empowerment through Education

There were 173 students last year at the program from nursery to grade 12. Among 173, 11 students exited from the program due to various reasons.

#### Key Achievements:

- Sunita Chaudhary who used to wash the dishes and work at her landlord's house is going to complete her Staff Nurse course this year. Her life will change completely. She told us that she never thought that she would be an independent woman or a nurse.



- The transition of new students into Private English Schools instead of Government Schools is proving to be a success. The students are receiving a higher quality education. As the students are happier in these new schools and achieving success, the dropout rate has dropped significantly.
- Samjhana Chaudhary is a grade 6 student who left school to support her parents. Her mother was sick and the father income was not sufficient to support the family. After rigorous counselling and home visit with CP field staff, Samjhana again went back to the school.
- Sanjita and Sital Chaudhary's mother went to Qatar last year to obtain work due to extreme poverty in the region. This made these girls very sad to miss their mother. They were then responsible for all of the household chores. This made it very difficult for the girls to go to school. After counselling and home visit they understood the value of the education and started to go back to school.
- This year we were able to allocate 5 bicycles to our ETE students. These students are grateful for receiving this gift. They are now able to help out at home and still have time leftover to study. The bicycle allocation continues to be a motivation to younger students to continue working hard so that they can achieve their goals.

#### What happens after they pass their SLC exams?

The students who pass their School Leaving Certificate Exams (SLC) in grade 10 go on to follow their dreams of post-secondary education, employment and starting families.

Year SLC Passed	Number of Students	Students Current Activities
2010	1	Shila is working at the co-operative
2011	2	Junu works for CP and is studying for her bachelors, Nirmala is now married
2012	3	Sunita is in her final year of school to become a nurse, Riya is working, and Amrita is in her 3rd year of her bachelors
2013	1	Pooja is in her 3rd year of her bachelors
2014	4	Sneha, Anjali, Sita and Sunimaya all graduated and are continuing their studies
2015	3	Asha, Bindu and Kusum are currently in grade 12
2016	12	These students are now in grade 11

#### Challenges that CP is facing:

- Some senior students are interested in doing daily labour work as the parents are not able to give the girls pocket money for necessary personal items.
- Most of the students have no parents to take care of them at home.
- With many parents/guardians working outside of the home, the girls are responsible for all household chores. The parents are then also not engaged in the studies or the student's progress.
- Due to extreme poverty the girls are pressured to help earn money for the family rather than focus on education.
- The teachers at government schools are not responsible for the success of their students
- There is a disconnect in the community between livelihood and education. At home, there is no motivation to receive education beyond basic levels. While these students are now literate,

without marketable skills they are not able to provide for their family beyond what an uneducated labourer can earn.

### Lessons Learned:

- CP Field Staff meet with both parents and students to share the importance of education. This helps to lower the number of students who are leaving school to work.
- In order to get the parents more involved in their child's education, the parent is now required to visit their child's school once every three months.

### Mothers' Microcredit Group



Six new mothers groups were formed with 186 new members for a total of 29 groups with 930 members.

### Mothers' Microcredit Group Achievements:

- The mothers' group members were able to get the local government registration, such as, Sita Khadka did her two son's birth registration, Nirmala Chaudhary, Shanti Chaudhary, Maya Chaudhary and other did their marriage registration and children's birth registration. These registrations are very crucial to exercise their rights and to receive government benefits.
- Several mother's groups were able to work together to clean and repair their village road.
- Mothers are working together to build a community garden.
- At this year's Maghi Festival in January the mother's took part in a speech competition. These mothers have not been given the opportunity in life to speak out. Their speech subject was "The importance of education for our daughters". Many of these mothers were bonded themselves and had not been given the opportunity to attend school. The women bravely spoke to hundreds of their peers about their own dreams and fears and their hopes for their daughters' futures. After the speech competition, the women came together for fun! These women spend their lives working and caring for their families with no free time for themselves. They enjoyed playing musical chairs, bursting balloons and various other fun games. Everyone had a good laugh and enjoyed a day for themselves.



**How loans were used:**

Transaction	Number of Borrowers	Loan amount
Agriculture	30	1,83,800.00
Goat Farm	21	1,15,100.00
Pig Farm	15	1,02,300.00
Broiler Farm	3	36,900.00
Fish Farm	2	21,600.00
Vegetable Farm	15	78,600.00
Land Purchase	4	76,600.00
Toilet Construction	2	31,600.00
House Construction	9	92,600.00
Health Treatment	5	29,600.00
School Fee	7	34,200.00
Grocery Shop/Hotel	5	47,600.00
Mushroom Farm	2	17,000.00
Abroad Employment	2	86,700.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>9,54,200.00</b>

**Challenges:**

- Most of the mothers are illiterate and have no skills for work outside of daily labour.
- Many of these women are motivated to start their own businesses in farming and animal husbandry but do not own any land.
- Alcoholism continues to be a challenge for these families. The house work and labour work are left to the mothers.



**Sungava**

This year also there are 13 regular students attending the Vocational Training Centre in Swayambhu, Kathmandu. This year they conducted the following activities for the girls:

- Story reading/writing-Nepali
- Writing in English/Mathematics
- Sewing; kitchen towels etc.
- Knitting; socks, hairbands etc.
- Dance classes were conducted twice a week for flexibility exercises
- Arts and crafts classes conducted
- Invited the mothers also, for various trainings where the mother and daughter did activities together
- Interaction done with college students, where they were very happy to make new friends
- Historical field trip visit to Swayambhunath temple.

**Sickle cell Blood Screening 2015/2016**

Sickle cell is a life-threatening hereditary disease which has been found in Tharu people and there is no cure. Creating Possibilities, IWEN along with University of British Columbia (UBC) medical students are helping with blood screening tests and awareness workshops for the community. The mothers' groups, the school students and Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) of the local health posts were taught about this serious genetic disease. The government has provided free treatment to those who test positive but have not provided screening services. The local people are very happy for this support.

*Submitted by: Dinesh Raj Sapkota, Creating Possibilities Director*

## Stories of Hope

### Meeting Mamata

By: Kate Phelps (IWEN Director of Programs)

It is often hard to connect with someone when operating through an interpreter and at first Mamata didn't even make eye contact with me. I think it was my interest in her bio-gas system and how her family uses animal and human waste to make cooking gas, which helped me make a connection. She showed and taught me this ingenious system (which I plan to share with my sister who has a home off the grid). That was when Mamata warmed up to me; she grabbed hold of my arm and guided me around as we walked. I was in! I had crossed the cultural divide that separates us from those we may think are so different from ourselves and found myself being welcomed into Mamata's world.



As we walked, we passed the family goats and fended off the chickens running between our feet. Mamata started by sharing her interest in agriculture. As a grade 11 student, she had completed high school (which until 2016 only went up to grade 10) and had begun her desired field of agriculture studies so she could learn improved farming techniques. Students in grades 11 and 12 start classes at 6:00 am and I learned from our staff that Mamata treasures the schooling opportunities her scholarship gives her and is thus a diligent and hardworking student. As she showed me around, Mamata taught me how her family stores their rice and maize in clay pots to keep insects and vermin out. She said that she hopes to continue her studies in agriculture science so she can, in turn, teach others how to farm their lands better.

I then learned how Mamata's father had left her mother, her and younger brother about 10 years ago. If it had not been for her educational scholarship, her mother would have had to take her out of school and sent her out to work as a daily labourer. Instead, both she and her brother were in school.



Her mother, empowered with micro loans and knowledge learning from the Mothers' Microcredit Groups, was able to save money she earned herself to build a brick home. Mamata showed me with pride the new two bedroom concrete home (which was strictly a structure with two bedrooms in it) they had built to replace their mud home (which still serves as their kitchen and storeroom).

We finished our visit chatting and laughing with Mamata, her mother, and family friends who had stopped by. We all ate hard boiled eggs with salt, fresh from those busy chickens who were running through the yard.

I arrived a stranger but Mamata and her small family welcomed me and as I left they begged would come visit them again soon. I look forward to that day!

## Bal Kumari Chaudhary

Namaste! I am Bal Kumari Chaudhary. I'm 49 years old. I live in Gadhawa Rural Municipality ward no.7, Lokharpur, Dang Nepal. I live with my husband and two daughters. I am a member of Paribartan mother group, Lokharpur. My family and I were bonded for 6 years. We had no land and my daughter had to leave school to work.

We were able to get out of the bonded system through the support of a NGO called Friend of Needy Children (FNC). In 2009, Creating Possibilities Nepal's staff came to visit our village. My friend Bimala Chaudhary called a few of us to gather while CP Nepal staff were there. They gave us information about children and women rights, human rights and spoke about the importance of education. They then committed to help our daughters with their education.

My daughters were provided with educational scholarships and I was invited to join the local mothers group. At our monthly meetings we discussed the importance of saving, lending, how to strength our economic status, and was able to take literacy classes.

In the beginning we started to deposit Rs.5 (\$0.06cad) per person every month and got the chance to apply for small loans which saved us from paying expensive interest to the creditors. Not only that, it saved us from providing free labour to our creditors as a term of the loan.

My first loan was a small amount to help with household bills. I then was able to take out a loan for 5000rps (\$62.50can) to help buy equipment for my husband's job so that he could find work. With that equipment he was able to get a contract to build a house and was then busy with lots of work. I was able to pay back my loan on time.



Because my husband was now busy with work we were able to buy land. After purchasing the land, my husband work as a contractor for building houses grew and I was able to do agriculture work in our field. Now, our income is sixty thousand rupees (\$750cad) per year. We have continued to purchase a little bit more of land every year. We now have a small house, cemented toilet, bio-gas, two ox and one buffalo.

Our live have changed. My children had no future. They had to be bonded or do labor work. But now my younger son is in grade twelve and my elder son does construction work and is being trained as an excavator operator. My elder daughter, Manjita Chaudhary is now married and has continued her studies





towards her Bachelor of Art. Sunita Chaudhary my younger daughter is working hard, studying to become a nurse. We are now so happy with this golden chance.



In my leisure time, I take care of the buffalo and ox and clean the home. I also knit mats. Now I didn't do any hard labour work. I am able to sell 12 paddy quintal which we produce our own land. Every year our economic status is going stronger than before. I would like to say thank you to CP Nepal and IWEN Canada. I cannot believe where I am now.

## Annual General Meeting 2016 Minutes



Annual General Meeting Agenda  
September 13, 2016  
The Delta Grand Hotel  
Kelowna, BC

### Welcome

Opening remarks by Kevin Edgecombe, President

### Opening

The Annual General Meeting of the Inter-cultural Women's Educational Network was Called to order at 7:09pm by Kevin Edgecombe.

20 people in attendance, 17 members in attendance; quorum met.

Introduction of the outgoing Board of Directors.

Copies of the 2016 Annual Report and 2015 AGM Minutes were made available to everyone in attendance.

### Approval of 2016 Agenda

Motion to accept the Agenda made by Sylvie Forget; seconded by Francine Walker;  
All in favour, Motion Carried

### Approval of 2015 Minutes

Motion to accept the 2015 IWEN AGM Minutes made by Chloe Edgecombe; seconded by Deana Hills;  
All in favour, Motion Carried

### Directors Reports

See 2015-2016 Annual Report

Kevin Edgecombe presented the membership with a background and the inner workings of IWEN Canada.

Introduction of Creating Possibilities Team

Introduction of Michelle Bonneau, Founder

Overview of IWEN Programs

IWEN Highlights from the year

Building a Future, Brick campaign – new campaign has started for fall school build

IWEN Highlights from the year

- Building a Future, Brick campaign – a new campaign has started for the fall school build
- The 2016 bike allocation was dedicated to Ryan Fletcher
- Received a generous donation from Frank J Flaman Foundation, this will be allocated to the Salangiri Primary School reconstruction
- Nepal Trip 2016
  - Have 14 volunteer leaving November 1<sup>st</sup> to build 7 classrooms at Salangiri Primary School

- Triple One Challenge, new scarf sales program that allows anyone in Canada to help out
- Progress on systems and donor communications
  - IWEN is working on the implementation of a new donor management system, this will help to increase prompt communication with donors
- Improved education for sponsored girls
  - Have been working to get all students into private English school vs government school.
- Massive growth with our micro-credit and mothers groups programs
  - Unako Cooperative has grown to over 700 women
  - The hope is that eventually these groups will be able to pay for their daughters own education

### **Directors Reports**

See 2015-2016 Annual Report

### **Financial Report**

Presentation made by Sylvie Forget, Treasurer

Sylvie reviewed the Income Statement and Balance Sheet. Unako House was paid off during the year, there are some funds remaining in the Classroom and Earthquake funds, they will be used in the upcoming year for another school build. Donations were up significantly due to the Earthquake fundraising. Over \$90,000 was raised with \$67,000 matched by the Canadian government. Earthquake funds were used for metal roofs, school rebuilding, family relief, and emergency relief.

Motion by Francine Walker to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Tamara McLellan, all in favour

### **IWEN Programs**

Presentation by Ann Haymond Hill

Ann and Kusum went to Nepal January 2016 and gave an update of the programs they were able to visit and monitor

### **Election of Officers**

President

Tamara McLellan called for nominations for President, Sylvie Forget nominated Kevin Edgecombe, Tamara called two more times for any further nominations, none were received, Kevin Edgecombe is declared president by acclamation.

Vice President

Kevin Edgecombe called for nominations for Vice President, Kusum Wijesekera nominated Tamara McLellan, Kevin called two more times for any further nominations, none were received, Tamara McLellan is declared vice president by acclamation.

Treasurer/Secretary

Kevin Edgecombe called for nominations for Treasurer/Secretary, Tamara McLellan nominated Sylvie Forget, Kevin called two more times for any future nominations, none were received, Sylvie Forget is declared Treasurer Secretary by acclamation.

Director at Large

Kevin Edgecombe called for nominations for Director at Large,  
Kevin Edgecombe nominated Katie Phelps  
Sylvie Forget nominated Amanda Schauerte

Heather Oishi nominated Ann Haymond Hill  
Ann nominated Heather Oishi  
Angie Wilhelm nominated Francine Walker  
Kevin called two more times for any future nominations, none were received, and all were declared directors at large by acclamation.

### Local Programs

Presentation by Tamara McLellan

While Nepal programs are a focus of IWEN, so are programs in Canada. In the past the local programs have been food safe and English conversational classes. This year IWEN will again sponsor a luncheon held in December, it allows immigrant women to connect over shared food, laughter and joy.

A new program that IWEN is introducing this year is Walking for Wellness, in partnership with Kelowna Community Resources & Elizabeth Fry Society. This will help the women with self-care, mental health, domestic issues, and isolation. There will be a trusted counsellor working with the women. The group will run Wednesdays from mid-September to November, a second group can possibly run spring 2017.

### Unako Scarves

Presentation by Amanda Schauerte and Heather Oishi on Unako Scarf operations and growth.

### Closing Remarks

Presentation by Kevin Edgecombe on the Unako Memorial Scholarship

While in Nepal in 2014 Kevin met Jaypal and his 2 year old sister, who had no name. They lived in a house made of tarps, mats on the floor and one post holding up the roof. They were living with their Auntie. A girl named Sushma came home from school and Kevin met sibling number 3. Dad is an alcoholic, mum left due to her own battles with mental illness. The father came to Kevin, and told of Sushmita, another daughter living in Kathmandu at an orphanage. After spending time with the family, Kevin asked if he could name the two year old girl, the father agreed, and she was given the name of Unako. Kevin and IWEN did what we could to help the family out. Unfortunately Unako, at the age of 3 passed away due to a lack of proper medical attention. There are so many stories like this in Nepal, IWEN is trying to make a difference somehow. Our goal is to not see this story again, give them a chance at an education and a future. We have started the Unako memorial scholarship fund. The goal is to have students train to provide medical care in the small rural villages.

**Kevin Edgecombe adjourned the meeting at 8:39**