



## Program Fact Sheet Nepal Youth Foundation, Nepal January 2012

### Program: Indentured Daughters Program: Freed Kamlaris Development Forum

**Website:** [www.nepalyouthfoundation.org](http://www.nepalyouthfoundation.org)

**Mission:** The Nepal Youth Foundation transforms the lives of impoverished Nepali children by providing them with what should be every child's birthright – education, housing, medical care, and loving support.

Nepal Youth Foundation's Indentured Daughters Program (IDP) is an innovative program that is helping to successfully eradicate the centuries-old custom of "Kamlari," or selling young girls from impoverished families into bonded servitude. More than 11,000 girls have been rescued by NYF from indentured service and empowered through education, vocational training, and leadership development.



**History of the Organization:** The Nepal Youth Foundation began its journey in 2000 after the founder Olga Murray took a trek to Nepal and broke her leg. While being treated in Nepal, she became exposed to the needs of the Nepalese children and saw their lack of educational resources. When she learned that only \$300 could send a child to college in Nepal, Murray pledged to send several children. Others soon followed, launching the Nepal Youth Foundation. To date, NYF has sent more than 3,700 children through school. It also targets child hunger and is currently operating the Indentured Daughters

Program, rescuing girls being sold and helping eradicate the problem of low-caste families selling their young daughters for a yearly profit.

**Where They Work:** NYF largely serves the area of Kathmandu, Nepal, the largest metropolitan city in Nepal in the Himalayas. The vast majority of the people of Nepal are subsistence farmers, living far from roads, electricity, or social services. The average national income is \$200. Most people are illiterate. Cultural and legal traditions make it difficult for women to assert their basic human rights and receive health care and a decent education. According to UNICEF, half of all Nepali children under age five are malnourished, one of the leading causes of death in this age group.



Nepal is a place of spectacular extremes. The land rises from the hot, low-lying Terai plains to the peak of Mt. Everest, the highest point on the planet. Barely the size of Arkansas, Nepal holds eight of the world's ten highest peaks, even as its lowest point is 70 meters above sea level. Parts of Nepal only recently have been opened to Western visitors.

Nepal's cities also are extraordinary. The streets of Kathmandu are clogged with traffic and studded with ancient temples where every morning the local people serenely make offerings, ringing temple bells over the honking of horns and lighting incense amid diesel exhaust. Exquisite woodcarvings dating back centuries adorn buildings that are falling down. Buddhists and Hindus share the same shrines. In alleys tucked between cybercafés, children disabled by polio beg for rupees.

## Life challenges



❖ In parts of rural Nepal, where 72 percent of women are illiterate and women and girls have little value, many families sell their daughters to work far from home as indentured servants, some as young as six. Their families are so impoverished they actually depend on the income from their daughters' labor for survival. These girls typically slave from dawn to late at night without pay, while their fathers receive an average of \$50 per year for their daughters' work. Many of the girls are physically and psychologically abused--some are forced into prostitution, and others disappear entirely. Those that survive require extensive psychological support and remediation.

❖ Although bonding is illegal in Nepal, the government does not proactively enforce this prohibition. NYF files suits against prominent people who have indentured servants, negotiating or ordering them to allow the girls to return home. Most comply, but those who do not are not taken to court.

❖ NYF devised a humane and culturally appropriate alternative to the problem. NYF convinces the families who have sold their daughters to agree to bring their girls home and NYF will provide the families with a piglet or goat. The families are then able to sell the animals for more money they would have earned by selling their daughters.

**The Project:** Dining for Women will donate \$43,043 to NYF to support Indentured Daughters Program: Freed Kamlaris Development Forum. Freed Kamlari Development Forum is an NGO formed by NYF and the indentured girls rescued years ago, some of whom are now in college, whose aim is to combat the Kamlari practice and assist returned Kamlari. The objective of IDP/FKDF is to promote gender equality and empower women in Nepal.

Specifically, DFW funding will support IDP/FKDF staff and provide:

- ❖ On the job training within IDP/FKDF to 18 former Kamlari who are passionate young women and over the course of the next two to three years, NYF will turn over all implementation of the IDP outreach and rescue efforts.
- ❖ Former Kamlari Cooperative which will provide vocational seamstress training to 20 former Kamlari and provide them with financial literacy training so they can successfully establish a garment manufacturing cooperative and become financially self-supporting.

**Program Budget: \$ 43,043**

**Title: Indentured Daughters Program: Freed Kamlari Development Forum**

Item	Amount
<b>Salaries and Benefits</b>	
Coordinators (5 people for 12 months)	\$8,358
Admin/finance (5 people for 12 months)	\$6,500
Business Supervisor (2 people for 12 months)	\$2,600
Office Helper (5 people for 12 months)	\$2,785
Overseer (1 person for 12 months)	\$2,228
Accidental Insurance	\$1,929
<b>Vocational Seamstress Training</b>	
Basic financial literacy training for 18 young women	\$7,143
Vocational training for 20 young women	\$10,000
<b>DVD Production and Mailing</b>	\$ 1,500
<b>Total Program Budget supported by DFW</b>	<b>\$43,043</b>

**Why We Love This Program:** NYF helps families keep their daughters at home and in school. The FKDF program is a natural outgrowth of indentured daughters being successfully rescued and subsequently educated. These girls have evolved from powerless victims to empowered community leaders that are changing the way Nepal thinks about women.

With financial support from DFW, and under the auspices of the NYF, the young women of the IDP/FKDF have the goal of eventually taking over rescue of other Kamlari, managing the implementation of future community outreach awareness activities, and creating opportunities for economic self sufficiency.

**How the Organization Measures Success:** In the upcoming year, the success of the ID/FKDF will be measured by the extent and success of the community outreach events, increased awareness of the benefits of educating girls, and the successful creation of the Kamlari Garment Manufacturing Cooperative. NYF provides progress reports every six months.

## Voices

***“Former Kamlari victims are fighting back with notable success, the result of changing laws, activist pressure and nascent democracy in Nepal,” The LA Times***

### ***MEET FORMER KAMLARI VICTIM VISHNU KUMARI CHAUDHARY: NOW EDUCATED AND RAISING HER VOICE AGAINST THE SYSTEM***

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My name is Vishnu Kumari Chaudhary, one of the Kamlari (indentured daughters). We have six members in our family. We don't have our own land for agriculture, so to survive, we have to work in others' fields, so we can have meals twice a day. So it eventually became really hard for us to gather for meals even twice a day when our income remained the same.

So my father decided me to send as a Kamlari. I decided to go to work as a Kamlari to earn money and make some living for my family. The day I went to work as a Kamlari was the starting point of the miserable days in my life. Then my daily routine was like this: I used to wake up at dawn to mop the floor, wash dishes and clothes, throw cow dung, clean the shed, take the master's children to school, and cut grasses for cattle. That was my daily routine, and I had to do it beyond my capabilities and health. Imagine my life in those cold winter days, but my goal was to earn some amount for my family. I earned Rs. 1500 per year (about \$20 a year).

Nepal Youth Foundation helped free me from being Kamlari.

To read the entire LA Times article to learn more about Vishnu's experience:  
<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/28/world/la-fg-nepal-indentured-20101229>

### **NYF-Poem by Sumitra Chaudhari**

*Narti Primary School in Dang District, Nepal*

Father, I beg you  
Let me go to school  
I plead, joining my ten fingers  
Don't send us to work for the landlords  
No high caste and low caste  
No rich and poor  
We are all equal  
Though we are daughters, we are your children  
Sons and daughters are both equal  
Send us to school  
Make your children's future bright