



**BlinkNow Foundation**

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**Together Women Rise  
Interim Report October 2021 - April 2022  
Support for  
Kopila Valley Women's Center**

BlinkNow is extremely grateful to Together Women Rise for your generous support of the Kopila Valley Women's Center. The Center serves the most vulnerable women in our community by offering literacy, vocational and empowerment training, as well as psycho-social support through counseling services. We are delighted to provide you with the following update on our accomplishments during this reporting period.

**1. Please provide the following information:**

Organization Name: BlinkNow Foundation

- a. Project Title: Kopila Valley's Women's Center
- b. Contact Name: Ruth Dekker
- c. Contact Address: PO Box 453 / Mendham / New Jersey / 07945
- d. Contact Email and Phone Number: Ruth@blinknow.org +1-973-828-2955

**2. Recap briefly what outcomes the project was designed to achieve.**

The goal of the Kopila Valley Women's Center is to empower women in the Surkhet Valley, aiming to increase earning potential, sense of self-worth and overall quality of life for women. Our overarching goal is to enable women to support their families and break the cycles of violence and poverty for their children; when women are empowered, the entire community benefits. Our program began in 2013 and its development has been greatly aided by the Together Women Rise Dining for Women community, whose funding has enabled us to grow and flourish.

**3. Has funding changed for this project? For example, have you received unexpected funding from another source?**



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No, funding has not changed for this project.

**4. Is your organization or project situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, significant project staffing changes or NGO affiliation, loss of large funding, or other significant changes?**

We have not had significant changes in funding or NGO affiliation. In terms of staffing, our director of programs resigned in September and we are still looking to fill that role shortly.

As reported previously, our project situation changed due to the pandemic and related lockdowns and closures. However, since the last lockdown restrictions eased last October we are on track with our programming.

**5. Have the number of beneficiaries changed? To report this please refer to the original numbers in your grant proposal under *Number of women and girls Directly Impacted and population Indirectly Impacted*.**

Our original proposal anticipated training 90 women per year for three years in the areas of empowerment, job skills, and entrepreneurship. In our last report, we noted that the number of impacted women and girls overall is expected to be lower than our original estimate as a direct result of covid-related challenges.

We exceeded our goal in 2019 and were able to train 83 women in job skills and entrepreneurship and 31 in empowerment training (114 total). However, in 2020 and 2021 our program operation was derailed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and consequently, our target number of beneficiaries decreased.

In October 2021, Nepal started opening again and since then our programs and number of beneficiaries have been building back up to our intended levels. At the time this report was written (April 2022), we already had 43 trainees (in beauty parlor and literacy classes), and 19 who graduated from electrical training in February. We hope to train at least 130 more women this year: literacy (37), electrical (3), sewing (30), *kusan* making (20) and beauty parlor (40).

**6. What challenges are you facing as you move forward with this project? How are you approaching these challenges?**

The most significant challenges we have faced are related to the impacts of Covid-19. Aside from closures and lockdowns that stalled our in-person training programs and



services, there are indirect impacts of the pandemic—such as loss of income— which are only further exacerbated by rising costs of living and food prices.

In light of these challenges, we have slightly shifted our goals to emphasize how **we can help women earn more income to feed themselves and their families** as best they can. In light of this, we have implemented the following changes to our programming:

- As reported earlier, we designed **a new literacy program** for guardians of our Kopila Valley Students. Many women in our community are at a distinct disadvantage for jobs and opportunities because they were locked out of formal education during their youth, mainly due to the civil war (1996–2006) and gender discrimination practices. This has left a significant number of women illiterate. We launched the literacy program in December 2021. Over eight weeks, women with low to no reading levels learned basic Nepali reading and writing, numbers, and math. Twelve women participated in the pilot, and in February 2022, another batch of training began with twenty participants.
- We designed training for **short-term income generation activities**, tunnel farming and electrical training, for school guardians, guardians of parlor trainees and the wider community. Interest in tunnel farming was low, so we focused on electrical training. The course started in December 2021 and 19 participants graduated from the training in February 2022.
- Our newly-offered **business development fund** allows women to take a small loan to kick-start new business startups. Altogether, 14 women have made use of the fund to date, including 9 beauty parlor graduates, 3 weaving graduates, and one school guardian.
- We are offering **advanced courses** in weaving and beauty parlor to help women increase their skills and earn higher wages.

7. **Have you revised your original objectives since the project began? If so, why? What are your new objectives?**

Our overall objectives remain the same. We continue to create a community of empowered women by teaching them to earn an income through skill development. We continue to teach women about their rights and provide them with counseling. However, we have made some adjustments to the training, as outlined above. These adjustments include the literacy training, the income-generating activity training (for now the electrical training, although other options in the future are possible) and the business development





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fund. Also, after surveying our graduates, we discovered that many of our past participants were not earning an income from weaving. We decided to discontinue our 6-month weaving training and instead, work with our weaving graduates to build their skills through an advanced weaving course in an effort to help them reach the next level.

In some areas, we have also been taking a more holistic approach to supporting the women in our community and have been collaborating with our Health and Wellness project at Kopila Valley, which this year began a new Family Development Program (FDP) to help strengthen vulnerable families of select KVS students. The FDP assesses the vulnerability status of families and uses this to create action plans and find the right interventions. The Women's Center has facilitated several trainings and workshops for guardians referred by the FDP on topics including finance, empowerment and good parenting skills.

**8. What progress have you made toward achieving your objective? Please address each stated objective.**

We are tracking the results of our training via 'before and after' surveys that are conducted verbally and documented in each trainee's case file. Additionally, we plan to perform an annual income generation survey for all graduates who completed the program within the last three years. The surveys seek to understand changes in economic status and empowerment. It specifically measures:

- Occupation/source of income
- Estimated monthly income
- Self-confidence
- Awareness of reproductive and maternal health topics
- Quality of relationships within family
- Quality of relationships outside of family
- Instances of domestic or verbal abuse
- Legal action taken

The results of these surveys will be provided to Dining for Women/Together Women Rise at the end of the grant period.

**9. Do you anticipate any difficulties in completing your project in the timeframe outlined in your proposal?**

The pandemic and its effects have been our main difficulty. However, we mobilized and reorganized our resources in this difficult time to offer support where it was most needed. We have adapted our programming to suit the immediate needs of the community and



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are currently anticipating training even more women than we initially planned for this year, despite the pandemic. We do not anticipate any further setbacks.

Again, the staff at BlinkNow and the Kopila Valley Women's Center want to thank Together Women Rise for your abiding support of the Women's Center. Your partnership helps to make possible our vision that every child in Nepal is safe, educated, and loved.

If you have further questions regarding your philanthropy, please let me know and I would be happy to answer them. We are very fortunate to have you as one of our most important partners.

Prepared by:  
Ruth Dekker, Chief of Staff



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