



MITRATAA
FOUNDATION



**ANNUAL
REPORT
OUR IMPACT**

2018-2019

Mitrataa Foundation

Annual Review - Our impact 2018-19

Note from Bec and Nimu

Another busy year full of learning, laughs and love for the Mitrataa family in Nepal.

The Dream Recipe is our recipe for success. It is based in the principles of positive psychology – building on what is working rather than focusing on what is broken. It forms the basis of all of our work which uses dreams and goals, coupled with passions and strengths as tools of change to overcome challenges and disadvantages. The Dream Recipe consists of 6 ingredients:

- Passion
- Belief
- Plan
- Cheer squad
- Persistence
- Hard work

And of course, FUN is crucial too!

These ingredients can be used for individual goals, community goals, or social change. We've structured our Annual Report around these ingredients so you can see how they work in practice in our work in Nepal.

You can use this Dream Recipe too for your own dreams, goals, business or family. We would love to hear how it works for you – it would really inspire the kids to know that others use it too.

With gratitude



Bec Ordish
Executive Director



Nimu Sherpa-Ordish
Country Director

PASSION

It's very hard to struggle through the hard work and challenges which are natural partners of achieving a dream or change unless we are passionate about it. We believe firmly in the power of using and developing our strengths and passions as tools for overcoming challenges.

One of our core projects is our Passion Box – an opportunity for the children and women to build on what they are interested in and on their strengths. A few highlights from the Passion Box this year:

Debaters - Our debate team of Pushpa, Kusum and Sneha, got through to the third round of the Mahakumbha debate tournament in January 2019. It was their first major tournament so a great achievement;



English confidence - Sandhya joined our debate team to help build her confidence in English. Having a platform and encouraging team to practise with has seen her confidence go from strength to strength;

Story Writing - We started a story writing group on Saturdays with Sushma, Amrita, Smriti, Kanchan and Shila enjoying time with Aanya, one of our coaches, exploring their creativity;

Dance - Dance is a popular passion with our students with Rojina really thriving as a result of her dance classes and Sajan, Jyoti and Sudip completely committed to their b-boying classes;



Cricket - Keshav and Sagar live and breathe cricket and it has really given them a way to keep their focus at school while building on their strengths;



Basketball - Many of the children are passionate about basketball, especially our Wilson students. At the annual Wilson Hoops tournament, several Mitrataa students were involved, including Binod and Chitiz who were part of the winning senior boys team (and Binod won the Most Valued Player Award), Ashalal who was a crucial part of the junior boys team which finished as runners up, Dikshya and Sneha made it to the semi-finals as part of the senior girls team. At half-time, lots of our students showcased their passion for dance too with Sujata, Anisha, Manisha and Sudikshya dancing and Sudip and Sajan entertaining the crowd with their hiphop skills;

Worms - Our farmers in Panchkal as well as several of our students are passionate about the environment and nature and so we took them to a day of vermiculture training – worm composting! They loved it and we are now the proud owners of over 1,000 very hungry and hard-working worms who eat our scraps and create some of the best compost we have ever seen.



Belief

If we don't believe in our dreams, ourselves and our ability to achieve them, we have no chance of getting there.

A couple of examples of the power of believing in ourselves from this year:

Our first student successfully completed her bachelors degree – Puja topped her class in her Bachelor of Business Administration. We are so proud of her hard work and belief in herself in reaching this exciting milestone;



Every month, groups of our Dream Catchers scholars meet to network, learn some new life skills, check in with the team and, most importantly, have some fun. Some of the topics this year included the role of entrepreneurs in development, getting to know and love ourselves and how to support each other in times of stress and exams. This is one of the ways we focus on building the resilience, confidence and belief in themselves of our scholars;

We love attending the school exhibitions of our students, including the exhibition of Tapas' class 12 artworks, to show them that we believe in them and to encourage their hard work;





The students in our community school in Nuwakot exchanged letters with us in English and with a school in Australia to showcase their new English skills in “real life situations”

Members of the High Spirits Escapes tours from Australia spent time with our Mitrataa family members, including running a workshop on stress management and participating in a treasure hunt in historic Bhaktapur. These visits gave the students an opportunity to build their confidence in communicating with new people and sharing their culture with visitors in a mutually rewarding exchange;

Leadership is an important skill for our students to learn and so we were excited that so many of our students were elected to leadership positions in their schools this year including Keshav who was School Captain at Belmont, Kanchan and Binod who were Vice Captains at Wilson, Kris was the Music Captain at Wilson, Sagar was the House Captain at Belmont, Sujata was the Hostel Captain at Wilson and Manisha, Bidisha, Ashalal and Sagar were Class Monitors at Wilson.



Plan

Having a plan, at least the bones of one, is important to achieve our goals and dreams. Without it, we go around in circles. Our direction and some of our core stepping stones need to be laid out, incorporating flexibility to deal with those pesky challenges and detours which arise along the way.

We have several overarching projects which plan to address systematic challenges that the children, families and communities that we support face:

Community Kindergartens – We ran 2 community kindergartens this year to address development issues we had witnessed in children in village communities. Our Panauti students, supported by our very passionate teachers, Sarita and Mandira, learned a lot about hygiene, nutrition, the English and Nepali alphabets, lots of songs and rhymes, teeth brushing and health checks. They picnicked with our CSU Education Faculty visitors and they experienced their first “No Exams” assessment which they completed one-on-one with their teachers, celebrating the milestones they have achieved over the year. Our Panauti kindergarten saw the first graduation of students in March – their very proud parents seeing the children in a different light, confident, healthy and happy little learners;



Financial Literacy - This project is a crucial part of building financial independence for our children and their families. Our wonderful maths tutor, Kal Bahadur, has expanded his role to support our students in overcoming their maths trauma. Activities included an art therapy workshop aimed at empowering the students to face their fears specifically for maths and a Maths Olympics for our class 1-6 students.

Opportunity Box - One of Mitrataa's core responsibilities is to fill the opportunity gap for our students – research globally shows that one of the core challenges of the poverty trap is the missed opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills. One of the biggest indicators of the learning gap tends to be what happens in school holidays - students from wealthier families tend to visit new places, go to museums and experience other educational enhancement activities while students from less advantaged families tend to stay home not doing much in the holidays. Part of our role is to fill this gap for our students. A couple of examples: we gave our Panauti students a budget to spend at a local festival, giving them an opportunity to learn budgeting and practise maths with freedom of choice, all disguised as a fun shopping outing. As a reward for all their hard work this last year and as a networking opportunity for students across our different projects, our Panchkal group as well as several of our Nuwakot students travelled to Kathmandu for a 2-day cultural tour during their school holidays. Several of our Kathmandu students took turns being their guides as they visited 5 of the 7 UNESCO heritage sites in Kathmandu Valley - Boudha, Swoyambhu, Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square and Pashupatinath. Students in Nepal learn about the 7 UNESCO Heritage Sites in Kathmandu Valley in Social Studies at school, so it was great for them to see them;



Cheer Squad

Sometimes, when things get challenging or we fail or hit a roadblock on the path towards our dreams, we need to have someone to believe in us and support us until we believe in ourselves again. Being members of our Mitrataa family members' cheer squads is one of the biggest privileges of the work we do. And we are very lucky to have an amazing cheer squad which supports us too (see later in this report for some of our most valued Cheer Squad Members).

Here are some of our favourite Cheer Squad moments of this year:

Warm Feet - Our Women Entrepreneurs Group in Bhaktapur knitted almost 200 pairs of warm woollen winter socks for our staff and kids, building the women's confidence and getting their business off the ground;



Roshani Award - Our Roshani Award Scholarship student, Rojina, has thrived with her dance classes, fun-runs and outings with staff to build her confidence and life skills;

Academic Results - Celebrating our students who came in the top 3 students in their classes. We recognise that school performance is not the only way to show success, but it shows their hard work and commitment to themselves when the students do well and we like to recognise this. We had 25 students finish the school/college year in the top 3 in their classes and we celebrated with a dinner for them all. Worthy of special mention is Kalbahadur who topped his fifth semester of his Diploma of Civil Engineering and Pujan who topped his school for his SEE (class 10 exams);



Organic veggies -

Our organic farming cooperative who are constantly learning and developing their farming methods and businesses with us cheering from the side-lines (and benefiting from their very tasty organic veggies!) as well as one of our families which has now built a very successful mushroom farm with a gentle nudge and encouragement to believe in themselves.

Persistence and Hard Work

The reality is that we will encounter challenges and detours along our journey. These are all opportunities to learn and grow. Persistence and resilience are key and of course there is no escaping hard work. No dream or goal has been achieved without it.

Here are some of our favourite examples of persistence and hard work this year:

Running! – Fourteen of our staff and students participated in the Panauti Mental Health Marathon, with two students completing the half marathon and the rest completing the 5km run. A great example of hard work and persistence leading to success;



LEGO – We had regular LEGO afternoons with the kids to build their persistence, problem solving, patience and team building skills;

Student teachers from Australia

– For the tenth year in a row, we hosted a group of CSU Bachelors of Education students for three weeks of practical teaching experience. It's a lot of hard work for the visitors and they have to persist through their fears of teaching students in a totally foreign environment, often topics they aren't familiar with. These visits are a great example of mutually beneficial exchanges– the CSU students get some classroom experience, our teachers get the opportunity to mentor beginning teachers which builds their confidence and skills, and our students get access to native English speakers and new, creative teaching methods.



Fun!

Fun is the most important ingredient of the Dream Recipe. It revitalizes us, connects us and fills our smile buckets.

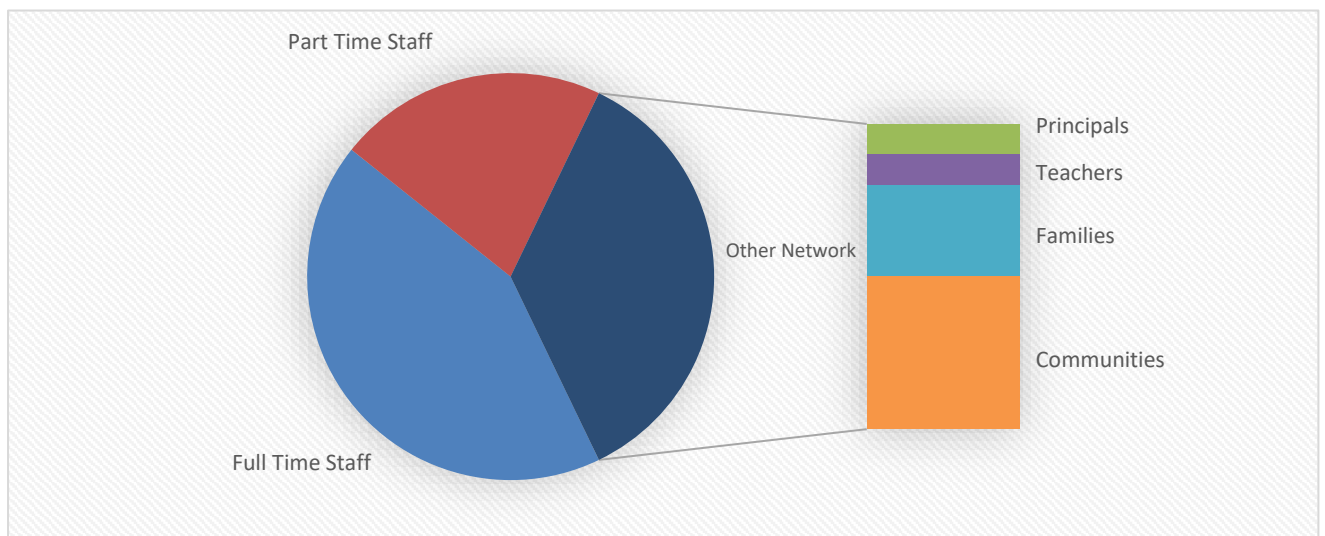


Snapshots

We know people love numbers so here are some snapshots of our work from this year.

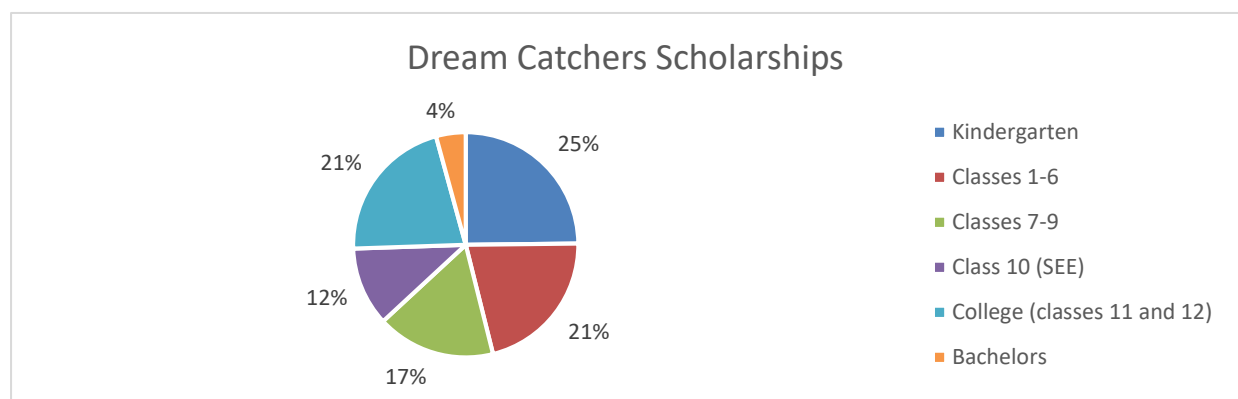
Team

Mitrataa's model is to create networks and empower communities to provide support for each other. Our work would never be sustainable without the contribution of every team member.



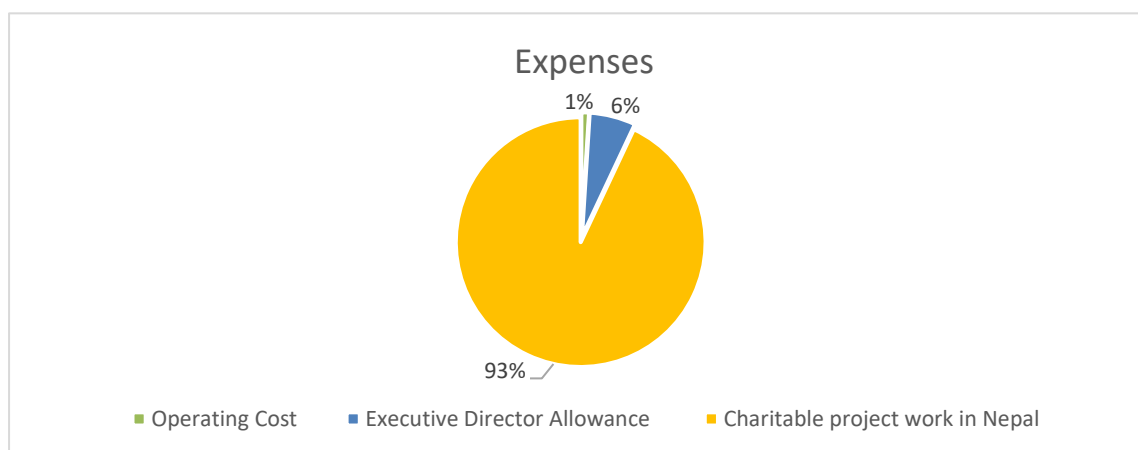
Dream Catchers Scholarships

Offering an opportunity for an education is one of the best initial ways to give children, especially girls, a chance to achieve their dreams and therefore our Dream Catchers Scholarship Program remains one of our cornerstone projects. Although our focus is on educating girls and women, we have inherited a couple of brothers and other young men along the way.



Finances

We take finances very seriously. Our supporters entrust us with their generous gifts – our role is to deliver it with love in the most effective way possible to the people of Nepal. Our income for this year was \$187,949.40.



Thanks to our key supporters

We are eternally thankful for the generosity of those who share our vision of Nepal's future. Thank you all for your support. In particular, we would like to thank this year:

- ☆ John Wiley & Sons – for our ten-year partnership which includes financial, moral and technical support
- ☆ GPP Audit – for completing our audits pro-bono
- ☆ Quinn Family, Queensland
- ☆ Rouse & Co International
- ☆ Ylenia dal Bianco and her supporters in Italy
- ☆ Charles Sturt University – for our ten-year partnership bringing students to Nepal for lifechanging adventure
- ☆ Virtual Done Well – for designing and delivering our new website and our annual report pro-bono



For more information, please visit our website (www.mitrataa.org) or contact Bec (bec@mitrataa.org). We welcome your feedback and ideas.



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