



LITTLE SISTERS FUND

2016 Annual Report

SAFETY. EDUCATION. MENTORING.



**EMPOWERMENT.
LEADERSHIP.**



Our Mission

Little Sisters Fund helps economically disadvantaged Nepalese girls to become empowered leaders through education, mentoring, and community support.



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Letter from the Executive Directors

Dear Friends,

January 2016 seems like an eternity ago. At that time, we—along with all of Nepal—were still reeling from the 2015 earthquakes and months of political unrest. While the destruction and deprivation caused by the earthquakes linger and changes of power in the government continue, we at Little Sisters Fund have settled back into the rhythm of our programs.

As it was for much of Nepal, 2016 was a “rebuilding year” for Little Sisters Fund. In 2015, we added roughly 400 new girls to our scholarship programs, largely in response to the need created by the earthquakes. This year, while we still added new Little Sisters, we focused more on building out and strengthening the support systems that surround the 2,000+ girls we work with.

Specifically, we built up two new programs that were launched in late 2015—the Youth-Led Community Projects Fund and the Higher Education Opportunity Fund. We also continued to increase staff and activities to strengthen existing programs. From a single scholarship for a single girl back in 1998, we have expanded to now offer 11 programs as part of our multi-dimensional, holistic approach to addressing the many manifestations of poverty and disadvantage that impact the lives of the Little Sisters.

None of this would be possible without you, our supporters. Having gone through the tumult of the 2015 earthquakes and now reached a place where we are once again able to look toward the future with plans not just to recover or rebuild or recoup our losses, but to grow and expand and improve, we recognize the deep debt of gratitude we owe to all those who have walked with us in solidarity. We could not do it without you.

Thank you! Dhanyabaad!



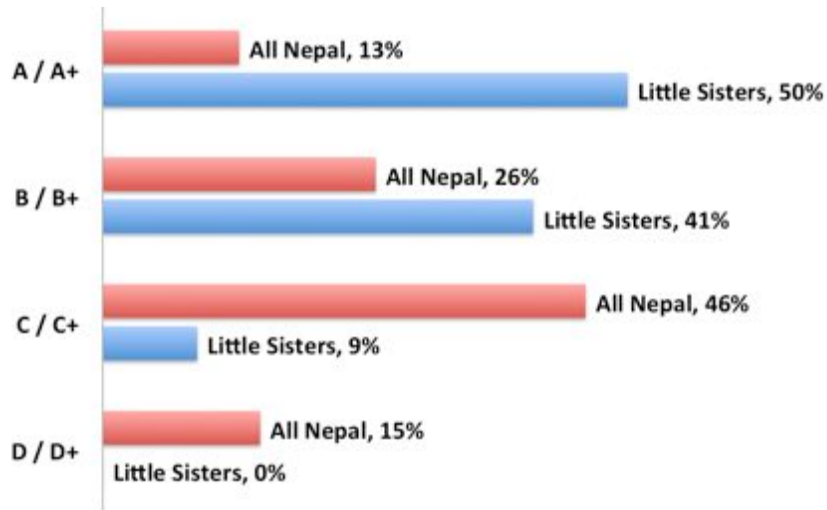
Trevor Patzer
Co-Founder & Executive Director, USA



Usha Acharya
Co-Founder & Executive Director, Nepal

2016 by the Numbers

50% of Little Sisters Score in Top 15% of Grade 10 Students Nationally



135 Little Sisters took the School Leaving Certificate exam. All passed.

90% of Little Sisters earned A or B marks, compared to less than 40% nationally.

4x Little Sisters earned A+ marks at 4 times the national rate!

2,040 Little Sisters in 20 Districts Served

At-risk and economically disadvantaged girls receive full scholarships covering tuition, fees, uniforms, books, and supplies. All Little Sisters also receive comprehensive support that covers health, awareness raising, and mentoring.



9,000+ children benefit from improved teaching practices

360 Teachers participated in trainings

Stronger Teachers for 9,000+ Learners

The poor School Leaving Certificate results at the national level are indicative of the overall quality of education in Nepal. To address this challenge, Little Sisters Fund offers Primary Educator Training to all partner schools, ultimately impacting many children, both Little Sisters and thousands of their schoolmates.

2016 Highlights

➤ Higher Education Opportunity Fund

We started this microfinance initiative in 2015 to support graduates through their university-level studies and we expect the program to truly take off this year. We're excited about the promise of this new program to both open up much more diverse academic and career options as well as create a smooth transition between fully-funded education (through scholarships) and full financial independence in adulthood. We are deeply grateful to our friends who pitched in to help raise over half of the total cost to launch and run this program long-term, especially to the two donors who generously provided matching grants.

Right: LSF graduate Sapana



➤ Academic Excellence

Little Sisters continued their track record of outstanding academic achievement. In 2016, the girls vastly outperformed their peers nationally on the 10th grade exam (check out the graph on the previous page!), and our 12th grade students also achieved remarkable success on their respective exams. Overall, 40% of the 2,000+ Little Sisters rank in the top 10% of their class. We are so proud of their achievements!

Right: An older Little Sister tutors a younger Little Sister



➤ Promising Partnerships

In 2016, we established a number of new partnerships. Keene State College in New Hampshire became our third U.S. University Partner. LSF also joined Girls Not Brides and the Global Campaign for Education, coalitions working to prevent child marriage and advocate for universal education. In addition, we have strong relationships with WomenLead, another leadership development organization, and Asian University for Women, to which two Little Sisters earned full scholarships.

Right: Little Sisters at WomenLead graduation



Program Spotlight: Community Projects

In late 2015, we launched our new Youth-Led Community Projects Fund, which provides small grants to support community development projects planned and implemented by Little Sisters, their mentors, and local partners. Due to the political instability late in 2015, the new initiative was slow to get up and running. Now, we are excited to report that the new program has tremendous momentum and has already impacted almost 3,700 people through 10 projects. Below are snapshots of just a few of the projects that Little Sisters have launched to improve their schools and communities.



In Makwanpur, Little Sisters repaired a damaged water supply for drinking and a school toilet.



In Kavre, Little Sisters worked with community members to build a new school toilet.



Little Sisters from Chitwan helped establish a community library.

Below: LSF parents and community members break ground on the site of a future community center and library.



Voice of a Little Sister

“The practice of considering girls untouchable and keeping them away from family during their menstrual period is one of the oldest social beliefs that has been prevailing in our Nepalese society. This practice prevails even in the educated families of urban areas to some extent.”

Girls and women are typically forbidden from entering the kitchen and touching others’ dishes or utensils during their periods. If you’re menstruating, food will be passed to you over the threshold, and you’ll eat apart from everyone, outside the kitchen. You’re also forbidden from entering temples, because you’re considered “impure” and “unclean.” You might be told to walk on the other side of the road away from the temple, or even to find a different—often longer—route to school altogether.

“I faced this practice of untouchability in my family during my early menstrual days. And I remember the time when I stood against this practice. At first, I was scolded by my parents when I suddenly refused to follow the practice of not touching things and not being allowed to enter the kitchen and the temples during the period. I faced lots of problems when my relatives knew that I was not following the practice. Although I got lots of criticism at first, I kept on doing things my way and when they knew nothing wrong happened after I didn’t follow the practice of untouchability, they also gradually stopped the practice during menstruation.”

Why was this Little Sister suddenly able to change a set of beliefs and customs that had been passed down from generation to generation? The answer, as she says herself, is education. What happens when you educate girls about their health, their rights, and their potential? They stand up for themselves! But not just for themselves, for others, too—for their sisters and friends, and for future generations.

“The main reason that I stood against that belief was that I know menstruation is just a natural process that happens to all the women and there is no reason why girls should be made untouchable. I know we should remain clean during the period. So, I refused to follow the old superstitious belief. In my upcoming days I definitely would like to stand against those superstitious beliefs and try my best to eradicate those practices of my country.”

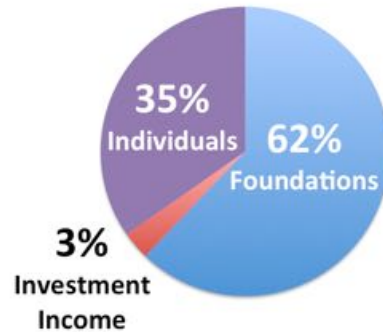


Financial Review

Please note that the figures included here are estimates. Our U.S. form 990 and audited financial figures for fiscal year 2016 will likely be complete by August.

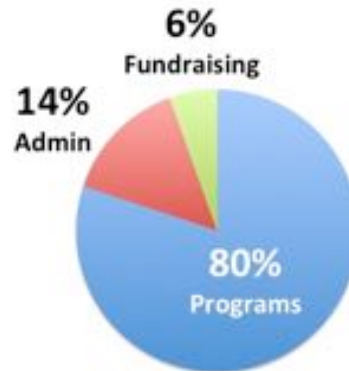
Income

Foundations	\$449,995	■
Individuals	251,328	■
Investment Income	22,649	■
TOTAL	\$723,972	



Expenses

Programs	\$530,695	■
Management & Administration	95,493	■
Fundraising	36,445	■
TOTAL	\$662,633	



Below: A Little Sister's father makes a donation during LSF's Annual Donation Drive in Nepal. Every year, parents and Little Sisters come together to raise money for additional girls. Last year, Little Sisters and families donated \$1,470USD.



**Integrity.
 Transparency.
 Accountability.
 These are more than just goals.
 These are habits.**

Looking Ahead

➤ **Menstrual Hygiene Management:**

Menstruation impacts half of the world's population, yet it remains a taboo subject in many places. In Nepal, menstruation is a major factor causing female students to miss school or drop out completely. Teaching girls and their families about menstruation so it is viewed as a normal, healthy part of life, and no longer taboo, is one part of the solution. Another part of the solution is providing girls with reusable sanitary pads. In 2017, we will employ both strategies. Through menstrual health education and the provision of basic, reusable feminine hygiene products, we will break the taboo, empower girls with knowledge, and drastically reduce missed days due to menstruation.



➤ **Expanding Counseling & Awareness Raising:**

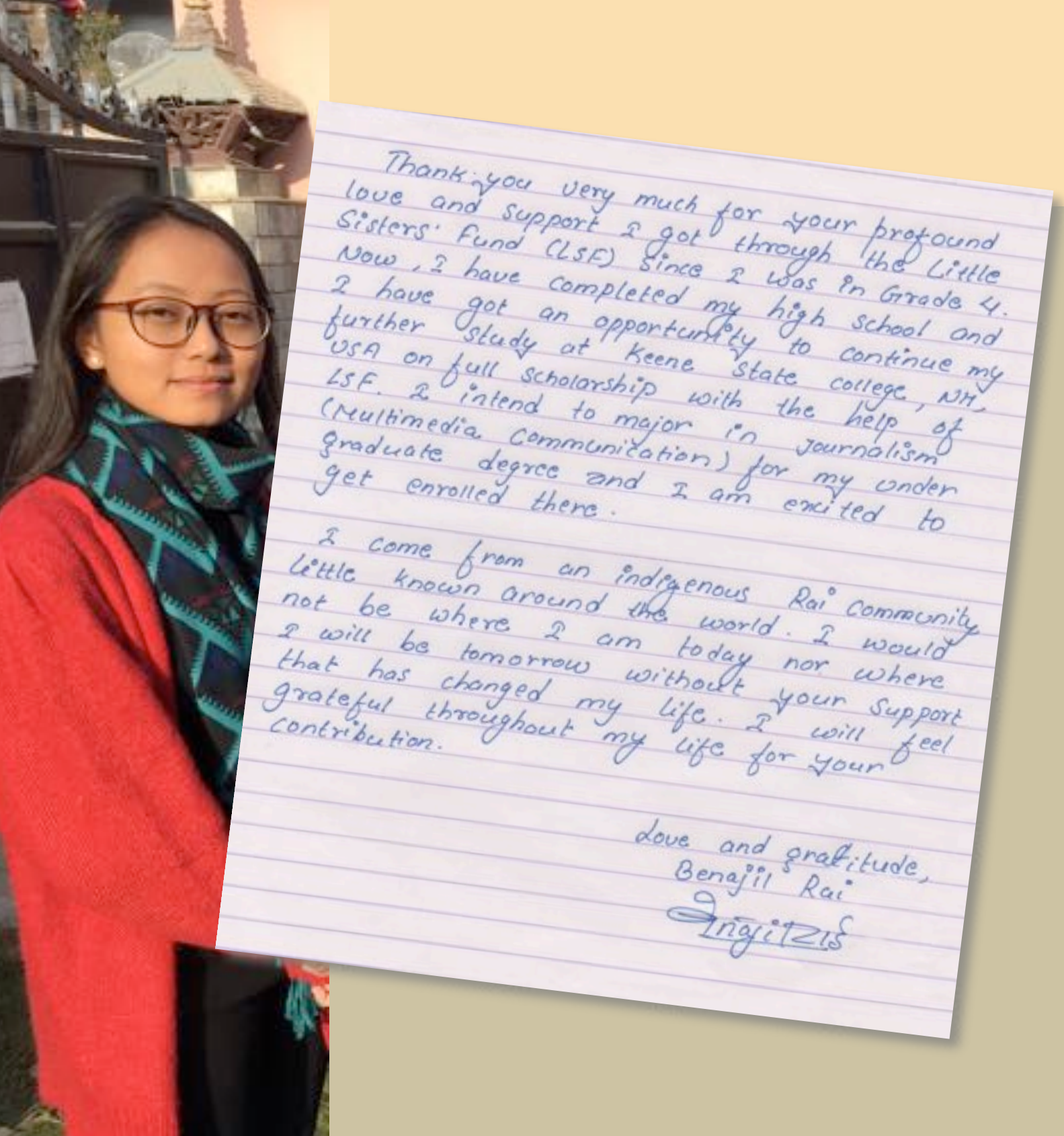
Over the past year, we have piloted multi-day workshops involving more community members in discussions about education, human rights, gender discrimination, and child marriage. In 2017, we will continue to expand and deepen this program, which is critical to our success, as it provides the socio-emotional learning and empowerment that students often fail to get from their classroom studies.

➤ **Enhancing Monitoring & Evaluation:**

Not too many years ago, we could still count our partner schools and graduates on our fingers. While we have always maintained a high-level of hands-on support for each and every girl, we plan to focus more in the coming year on building out systems and processes to help us better capture and analyze the information we manage for over 2,000 girls at 90+ schools in 20 districts. Doing so will help us strengthen our programs, proactively identify challenges, and better communicate the tremendous impact we have on individuals, schools, and communities.



Your Support Matters



Thank you very much for your profound love and support I got through the Little Sisters' Fund (LSF) since I was in Grade 4. Now, I have completed my high school and I have got an opportunity to continue my further study at Keene State college, NH, USA on full scholarship with the help of LSF. I intend to major in Journalism (Multimedia Communication) for my under graduate degree and I am excited to get enrolled there.

I come from an indigenous Rai Community little known around the world. I would not be where I am today nor where I will be tomorrow without your support that has changed my life. I will feel grateful throughout my life for your contribution.

Love and gratitude,
Benajil Rai
Benajil Rai



THANK YOU

धन्यवाद

PO Box 909
Hailey, Idaho 83333
USA
+1 208-293-2499

www.littlesistersfund.org
info@littlesistersfund.org
@LSF_Nepal
www.facebook.com/littlesistersfund

PO Box 20636
Kathmandu
Nepal
+977 01-4352348