



# Little Sisters Fund

Education for Empowerment



# 2018

ANNUAL REPORT



*Little Sisters Fund helps Nepalese girls to become empowered leaders through education, mentoring, and community support. We aim to contribute to the development of a more equitable, just, and prosperous world where all children can claim their right to education and marginalization does not occur on the basis of gender.*



# Letter from the Executive Directors

**T**wenty years ago, we made the decision to help one girl go to school in Nepal. As children, we were both given the gift of education and the opportunity to go to school by the support of others. Because of those kind acts, we both carry a deep desire to pay the gift of education forward.

Today, through small and large acts of generosity by LSF supporters, over 2,900 girls in Nepal have remained safe and in school with a LSF scholarship. And most importantly, that same desire to pay it forward is being carried on by graduated Little Sisters, many of whom are now sponsoring the education of younger girls who, just like us and just like themselves, were in need of a little outside compassion and generosity.

In Nepal, so many girls are taken out of school every single year at a young age for many different reasons, including trafficking, child marriage, and child labor. These girls deserve the chance to stay in school and live out their dreams. Our experience has taught us that through the combination of a scholarship and ongoing regular mentoring and support, every girl can and will excel. Despite the odds set against these girls, their futures are brighter, thanks to your support and commitment to Little Sisters Fund.

In gratitude, we invite you to take this opportunity to review our 2018 results and achievements that together we made possible. With this report, we are launching the new Little Sisters Fund logo. While similar to our old logo, this new logo truly celebrates the spirit of girls helping girls achieve. Through friendship, mentorship, and family, each Little Sister is elevating the lives of those around her. With time, we can advocate and achieve better lives and opportunities for Little Sisters, their families, their communities, Nepal and, indeed, the world.

On behalf of the entire Little Sisters Fund Family,



**Trevor Patzer and Usha Acharya**  
Co-Executive Directors, LSF



Young girls in Nepal face serious risks when their education is not valued, or their parents do not have enough money to support their family’s needs. Girls who are taken out of school at a young age are highly susceptible to child marriage, child labor, and trafficking for the sex trade.

**In rural areas,** \_\_\_\_\_



**2 in 5 girls are married by age 14.**



**7 out of 10 girls have dropped out of school by age 16.**



**30% of girls are engaged in child labor.**

**10,000-15,000 girls are trafficked each year, primarily for the sex trade.**

Little Sisters Fund protects girls in Nepal from the threats of child labor, child marriage, and child trafficking through education, mentoring, and community support.

We remove the barriers to education through the provision of scholarships.

**Twenty years ago, we started by sponsoring the education of one girl.**

**In 2018, 2,036 girls in Nepal stayed safe and in school with assistance from our scholarship programs.**



Scholarship recipients receive all the supplies they need to excel in school. In 2018, we distributed, along with thousands of vitamins, deworming medicine, and other supplies:

- *2,036 sets of books, uniforms, sweaters, and backpacks*
- *24,432 notebooks*
- *903 reusable sanitary pad kits*
- *227 calculators to all 7<sup>th</sup> graders*
- *105 dictionaries to all new Little Sisters*
- *144 geometry instruments to all 4<sup>th</sup> graders*



## We help girls in Nepal stay in school.

In Nepal, less than 30% of the female population graduates from high school. And less than 20% graduate from college. The Little Sisters are turning these statistics on their head.

Over 98% of Little Sisters graduate from high school and over 92% graduate from college.

Through close relationships with our 91 partner schools and regular contact with each girl in our program and their guardians, we identify potential issues before they become problems large enough to make a girl drop out of school. As a result, the girls in our program thrive in school. That's why close to 100% of Little Sisters continue on to the next grade, compared to 60% nationally.



## We empower Little Sisters to become leaders in their community.

### Youth-Led Community Projects

Through Little Sisters Fund's Community Project Program, older Little Sisters are given the opportunity to identify a need for a small scale development project in their school or community. They then design the project, submit a proposal for review/approval, and oversee the completion of the project. The process creates leadership and teaches important lifelong skills about how to identify a need for change and make it happen.



In 2018, 35 Little Sisters in the 11th and 12th grades proposed, designed, and carried out 15 small-scale development projects in their schools and communities. Projects ranged from installing public trash cans around a community to help decrease litter on the streets to installing 4 science labs in partner schools so that students would have the opportunity to conduct hands on experiments in school. Additionally, we completed 4 community libraries, 2 female bathrooms, and 3 community water projects.

## We develop a sense of confidence and understanding that girls can do anything.

### Coordinating Mentors

LSF's 29 Coordinating Mentors, the majority of whom are graduated Little Sisters themselves, provide younger Little Sisters with the role models they all too often lack. Not only are these mentors visible proof to the younger girls that hardworking girls from disadvantaged backgrounds can achieve remarkable accomplishments when given the opportunity, but the bond between the Coordinating Mentors and the 2,000+ girls in our scholarship programs is similar to the relationship between a big and little sister. From their big sisters, younger girls learn to stand up for their rights, care for others, and work hard to excel in school and beyond.



## Menstrual Health Management

Coordinating Mentors and LSF staff also teach the Little Sisters that menstruation is normal and healthy—and something that should not cause a girl to miss school or be banished to a shed, as is practiced in some communities in Nepal. This knowledge, combined with the distribution of reusable sanitary pad kits to all Little Sisters of menstruating age, helps the Little Sisters feel comfortable with their bodies and their periods, and keeps many Little Sisters from missing school because of her period. In 2018, we distributed reusable sanitary pad kits to 903 Little Sisters.



### Little Sister Spotlight

*Ganga, LSF graduate and HEOF recipient*



I am Ganga. I am the second daughter of my parents. I was born in a poor but conservative family where sons are given more priority. It was me who was expected to be born a son. When I was born my father and grandmother were very unhappy and they built a separate hut for my mother and her two daughters and discarded us. My mother could not tolerate the situation. She thought about her daughters' futures and decided to leave our village forever. Without my father's support, she raised us and provided an education. My mother worked hard in a stranger's home as a servant. But she could hardly manage my school fee for five years. I was about to drop out of school, but I was lucky. Little Sisters Fund started supporting my education when I was in Grade Five. It was a turning point in my life. I was very excited and felt like LSF was my family supporting me to build my future. It was a beautiful opportunity that is not common for all needy children. I completed my Grade 12. I completed a Bachelor's in Business Studies by taking the Higher Education Opportunity Fund (HEOF) from LSF. And I have already paid back the entire loan that I took. I am now a Coordinating Mentor and I am proud to be a part of LSF. My family's condition has improved a lot. My mother runs a tailoring shop in the same house where she started working in the beginning of our life. My elder sister got a chance to go to Australia and is pursuing her Master's in Accounting. The three of us are empowered. I would like to thank LSF for bringing a vast change to my and our life. My smile shows it all the time.

# The Little Sisters excel in every way possible.

## Top marks on national exams

The Little Sisters achieved remarkable success on the School Education Exam (SEE), which is a national exam taken by all 10th graders. Of the 218 Little Sisters who took the SEE, 15% got an A+, which is 5.6 times the national achievement rate for girls. 68% of these girls received top marks (A+, A, or B+) compared to only 21.5% of girls nationally, effectively tripling the national female achievement rate.



## U.S. bound

Graduated Little Sisters Pratima, Minakshi, and Slesha were accepted to attend college in the United States in the fall of 2019. Pratima won a scholarship from the U.S. Education Foundation to help her apply to U.S. Universities. She will be attending Lynn University in Florida. Minakshi will be joining graduated Little Sister Susmita at Shenandoah University and Slesha will be joining Puja and Benajil at Keene State College.



### Little Sister Spotlight

*Tejashwee, LSF graduate preparing to go to college*

“ One of my most vivid childhood memories was when I was 8 years old and my dad was deprived of his job and my mom was working really hard in two to three places at a time to fulfill our basic requirements. The situation was so bad that it was hard for my parents to manage the financial status of our family. During Dashain that year, the main Hindu festival, my cousin sister, who was a member of Little Sisters Fund, told us that she would inform LSF about our family condition and ask if I could join the organization. Luckily, I was called up to the LSF office, where they handed me a bag with supplies like medicine, notebooks, pencils, color pencils, and an umbrella.

## Scholarship to Asian University for Women (AUW) in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Five graduated Little Sisters have received full or near-full scholarships to attend AUW for their bachelor's degree. They will join 10 Little Sisters who are already studying at AUW.



## Current Little Sister represents Nepal at the United Nations in New York

In the fall, 10th grader Sweta was selected as one of three young women from Nepal to travel to New York to celebrate seven years of the International Day of the Girl at the United Nations. Out of the 50 young women who traveled to New York from around the world, Sweta was selected to present a speech at the event.



## Outstanding Women of New Hampshire

Puja and Benajil, two graduated Little Sisters currently attending Keene State College in New Hampshire, were awarded Keene State College's Outstanding Women of New Hampshire Award. The award's theme was "Nevertheless She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women." Puja and Benajil were honored alongside Congresswoman Ann Kuster (D-NH), Jill Bassett, assistant dean of student affairs and retention at Franklin Pierce University, and Patricia Pedroza Gonzalez, professor of women's and gender studies at Keene State.



I am very grateful for LSF as they gave me a golden opportunity to be part of this organization and helped me get a quality education in a reputed school. For the past 8 years, LSF has been like my own family members who cherish me, care about me, support me, and most importantly, show me the right path to take toward a bright future. I extend gratitude to my sponsors, John and Janet, for their love and support. The person that I am today is all because of them.

I want to be an independent woman and in the future, I want to make my parents and LSF proud by working hard and achieving success. And in the coming future I want to contribute my remuneration to those girls who, like me, want to get a quality education and have big dreams to achieve. I want to sponsor the education of a group of girls so that they can get a glimpse of happiness in their life, just like I got from LSF and my sponsors.



## Graduated Little Sisters are **beating all odds.**

- Little Sisters are 4.5X more likely to go to university than the national average. Over 92% of recent LSF scholarship graduates are pursuing an education beyond grade 12.
- LSF's Higher Education Opportunity Fund (HEOF) is making it even easier for Little Sisters to attain degrees they previously would not have been able to afford. With the help of an HEOF loan, 78 Little Sisters are pursuing their dreams by studying physical therapy, engineering, hotel management, nursing, medical school, accounting, pharmacy, education, social work, and more. Two Little Sisters are now even studying to become medical doctors and one to be an oral surgeon, thanks to the HEOF.
- After college, graduated Little Sisters are pursuing careers in education, health, the private sector, government, banking, and business. Most graduated Little Sisters are earning multiples of what they would have earned without LSF support.






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## Little Sister Spotlight

**Ranjana, LSF graduate and director of Morning Star Montessori School in Kathmandu**

“ I am Ranjana. I am from a so-called Dalit or marginalized group. The society says we are untouchable. Now I live in Kathmandu with my family.

My parents arranged my marriage when I was 15 years old. There was nobody to raise the voice to stop it. I was in 10th grade. My husband was an orphan and grew up in an Orphanage Home. Due to my family problems, I stopped my education for some time and came to Kathmandu. In this difficult situation, LSF Co-Founder Usha Acharya helped me continue my studies. It was a blessing for me. I completed 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade and am now getting a Bachelor's in Education.

In the meantime, I had two children so I had a difficult time making a living. I started working at Nobel Academy School. I worked honestly and they promoted me to a teacher's position within 3 months. It was a golden opportunity for me. I took Montessori training and moved to a Montessori school. I worked there almost 8 years. Now I have started my own Montessori school. I am very proud of it. My life has been changed. This all happened because of LSF. I remember a saying that Usha used to tell the girls all the time. 'If character is lost, everything is lost.' This became the lesson that kept me in discipline. Now I try to do the same thing for the 80 Little Sisters I mentor. I feel proud to be a guardian of these girls. Since I had my own experience of child marriage, I try to convince them that it is the worst thing in life.




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## Little Sister Spotlight

**Tripta, LSF graduate and one of the first Little Sisters**

“ I am always grateful to LSF for the opportunity I got with regards to my education. I felt very happy and proud as I signed up for the monthly gift [to support another Little Sister]. It was my dream come true.

My husband and I have also been supporting my brother and helped financially for my husband's siblings' education too. They are doing very well in their life now. It's rightly said 'when you educate a girl, you educate a whole family and system.'

## Thank you to **our supporters**

- **221 individuals**
- **30 foundations**
- **100s of volunteers**

### **Maggie Cahoon, student at Keene High School in New Hampshire**

Keene High School student Maggie Cahoon's presentation about Little Sisters Fund was awarded the top prize from the Mariposa Museum and World Culture Center's Youth Engaged through Service program—winning the \$3,000 for Little Sisters Fund. She writes:



**“** When deciding on an organization to advocate for in my presentation, Little Sisters Fund instantly came to mind. After meeting Puja and Benajil, I felt so inspired by how driven they were to make a difference. I was very moved by how motivated they were to obtain an education, coming from such a difficult background, and it was visible how much it meant to them to be at Keene State. I wanted to win the top prize for them, and for all of the other young women in the organization, so that they can all experience the same joy that I see in Puja and Benajil. They are both such incredible young women and I think that continuing to support this organization will be nothing but beneficial.



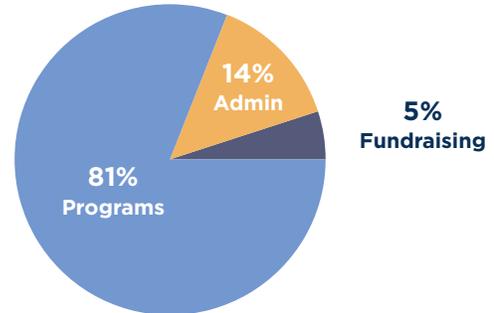
### **Andrea Coppick, LSF donor since 2005 and former sponsor of 3 Little Sisters**

**“** The Little Sisters Fund is making an amazing difference in the world! After supporting LSF for a decade, I had the opportunity to travel with the program founder, Trevor, to Nepal. I visited several schools, met some staff members, observed the inner workings of the program, and learned more about the challenges faced by young girls in Nepal. I had the honor of meeting two of 'my little sisters' which was a happy surprise after many years of exchanging letters. I was impressed with the program's level of education facilitated by a kind, capable, and dedicated staff. Each Little Sister receives her individual education, but is also highly encouraged and educated on her role in 'paying it forward' to future Little Sisters—a key ingredient in the program's success. Based on these experiences, I wholeheartedly endorse the Little Sisters Program.

# Financial Stewardship

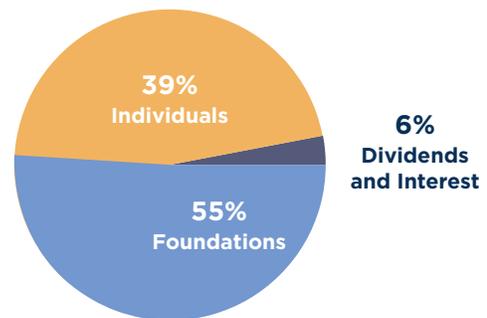
## Expenses:

Programs:	\$515,600	<span style="color: blue;">■</span>
Management & Administration:	\$92,936	<span style="color: orange;">■</span>
Fundraising:	\$28,008	<span style="color: darkblue;">■</span>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$636,544</b>	



## Income:

Foundations:	\$353,978	<span style="color: blue;">■</span>
Individuals:	\$248,176	<span style="color: orange;">■</span>
Dividends and Interest:	\$38,888	<span style="color: darkblue;">■</span>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$641,042</b>	



## Jonathan Kaufelt, LSF donor since 2012



*There is a lot of philanthropic writing about how best to use scarce charitable dollars. Going abroad is one way to 'leverage' dollars. Education is another. And looking after girls and women is a third. All of these principles are combined in LSF's work and leveraged again by LSF's energy and commitment.*





# The Little Sisters Fund Team

**Trevor Patzer**, *Co-Founder and Executive Director, USA*  
**Usha Acharya**, *Co-Founder and Executive Director, Nepal*

## **Nepal Staff**

**Ramesh Wagle**, *Finance Officer*  
**Yashoda Dhakal**, *Program Officer*  
**Trimuna Shiwakoti**, *Health and Program Assistant*  
**Sangita Adhikari**, *Primary Educator Trainer*  
**Neeti Sherpa**, *Alumni Coordinator*  
**Tilak Kumari Khatiwada**, *Office Helper*

## **US Staff**

**Abigail Akre**, *Director of Development and Communications*

**Juni Kiran Chaudary**, *Administration and Program Assistant*

**Susmita Shrestha**, *Finance Assistant*  
**KB Lama**, *Driver and Runner*

**Indira Chaulagain Sharma**, *Parent Liaison and Inventory Manager*



Front Row Left to Right: Neeti, Trimuna, Usha, Januka, Juni  
Back Row Left to Right: Ramesh, Yashoda, Sangita, Susmita, Indira, Lama



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