

IWEN (Intercultural Women's Education Network)

IWEN is DKG Canada's two year project (2014 – 2016).

Its mission is to raise awareness of the importance of and increase access to education for (primarily) marginalized females, by funding education programs in Nepal, Canada, and other countries. We are supporting the project in Nepal entitled 'Empowerment Through Education' (ETE). ETE has been IWEN's key program since 2007 and has been their main thrust this fall.

I had the privilege of attending the AGM of IWEN in Kelowna in September. I was impressed by the diverse programs IWEN has branched out to encompass. They are assisting young girls with their education to keep them out of the slave workforce. They are also helping the women to become independent through forming women's groups in many villages - 360 mothers in 19 groups so far. The mother's communal funds help to establish businesses to raise fees for the girls schooling and other needs. Many of us were privileged to purchase lovely scarves made by these women at the NW Regional in Regina. Since 2005 IWEN has provided educational scholarships for over 259 females in rural Nepal and Kathmandu Valley through the generosity of IWEN sponsors. Another interesting part of the program is the bicycle loan program where grade 7 students and above are given a bicycle in order to get to school. We may not realize it but without the bicycle students have difficulty attending school which leads to dropouts. When they graduate or no longer attend school the bike is given to another student. Since the first bicycle allocation in 2012 IWEN has presented the students with over 130 bikes.

There are more arms of IWEN of which we are a small part. The stories told by the Nepalese representative (Nura) were very touching and heartwarming. A girl named Sabita feels she is very lucky as her sisters were bonded so they could not go to school. They are trapped in a home that was not good. Sabita is proud to go to school and of her 91.44% grades. Her mother is an active member of Gadwa Mother's Group.

Although the effects of the earthquake will be evident for many years to come, IWEN's President Kevin Edgecombe says they helped provide metal roofs for over 100 homes preparing for the summer monsoons, built 12 classrooms, and three personal homes, and provided hugs and blankets for many in need. This was done partially through earthquake funds raised in the Okanagan, Ontario and Quebec.

IWEN's Board expressed their heartfelt appreciation of our support. We have contributed over \$7000 with our donations and scarf sales. Please continue your generous contributions to this very needy cause and rest assured it is going to the source of those in need. IWEN has one half-time employee in Kelowna all the rest are volunteers.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna-Faye Madhosingh
Area Representative Canada

January 10, 2016.