

WAWCAS Newsletter, December 2023



Dear Friends of WAWCAS

By Sangeeta Shrestha, Founder and Program Director, WAWCAS Nepal, and Nina Schriver, Founder and Program Director WAWCAS International, and Torben Bjerre-Madsen, Chairman WAWCAS International.

Soon 2023 will come to an end and a new year will begin. There are places in the world that have experienced a particularly difficult year – war, terror attacks, natural disasters, and human suffering. Let us hope for these places that things will improve in 2024.

In WAWCAS we are proud to play our part towards realizing hopes of decent and sustainable life conditions by empowering women and their children in Nepal to create social change, economic independence and ensure education for the children.

In fact, 2023 has been a record year for WAWCAS. More than 900 women have been enrolled in the 16 months Training, the LNGO project in Lamjung is up and running, Child Groups with 372 children have been established and new Workshops involving Mother-in-law's and gender Workshop for Husbands have taken place.

The impact of the 16 months Training is still very high in terms of increase in the women's financial and social stability and development. The children participating school and the change in the husbands' attitude towards their wife, and their reduction of misuse of alcohol and domestic violence.

You can read much more about this on our homepage wawcas.com where we recently have published our three Annual Reports covering 2022/23 – The Annual Program Progress Report, The WAWCAS Program Report on Finance and Activities and the audited WAWCAS International Finance Report.

WAWCAS Program now consists of three parts: the 16 months Training of the women, Child Groups and LNGO's.

After testing Child Groups and LNGO development we decided this year to include both in the WAWCAS Program.

WAWCAS Program has still each woman as the main participant being a part of the 16 months training. With her follows her children, and we have decided to focus even more on the child part of WAWCAS through the Child Groups.

When the women have graduated from the 16 months Program, they are still a part of and meet monthly with the other 25 women in their group. Through the LNGO it is now possible for all these women groups to be members of an entity owned and run by them together. It is a way of ensuring sustainability and development in the regions and for all women and their families driven by the women, also when WAWCAS team are not active there over time.

WAWCAS LNGO

WAWCAS Lamjung LNGO is the first LNGO in WAWCAS and it is a big success with 1.900 members. All women who have participated in the 16 months Training.

And we have started the information sharing process in Tanahun to start up a LNGO there in 2024. The LNGO is a formally registered entity, owned and run by the women with a Central Committee and 9 Regional Committees. The LNGO has focus on developing women rights and life in the communities and on taking active role in development of the communities. The WAWCAS Team train the women in leadership of the LNGO and in development of the LNGO to make it

sustainable, and in business development and social issues. The participants in the training must pass on the knowledge to the other women in each region. So, it is a way of “train the trainers” among the women themselves to be competent to train many women through the LNGO structure.

In October we had a mega event for the LNGO where 1.800 of the women participated. They came in 32 busses from all over Lamjung. The day was full of presentations by the women, discussions of topics defined by the women, and development of activity plans for 2024. It also focused on how to make a sustainable organization capacity-wise and finance-wise, and each women group planned a fundraising program to take place through various activities.

It was very fantastic to experience the ownership the women took and how they took very much responsibility for the day. Definitely a strong sign of empowered women.

The local TV and radio reported from the day, which is very important for the visibility of WAWCAS Community and their strength in the local communities and to the authorities.

WAWCAS Child Groups

WAWCAS Child Groups are for children (8-14 years) of the WAWCAS Women. Each Child Group runs for 10 months and meet twice a month. The children are very happy to be a part of the group where they meet other children from their village and other villages. They get a space where child rights and life as a child is in focus together with playing and learning about healthy food and sanitation.

Husband and Mother-in-law Workshops

We have over the years worked with both the husbands and the mother-in-laws too. From 2024 we run workshops for both groups when we start a Women Group. From the workshops we have had already we see how big effect it has on the husband and mother in laws and their respect and relationship to their wife /daughter in law.

It is very important that they support the woman in the life changes she is working so hard with.

Finance

In 2022/23 donations were DKK 2.360.042. The Total Operation Costs were DKK 1.795.081 and the Financial Items were positive with DKK 151.779. This means a Surplus of DKK 716.731 and combined with deposits in our bank accounts and important partnership with the funds and private persons that support us, we feel confident that we can continue the positive development in the coming year. But again – have a look at the three Reports on our homepage and you will find many more details.

All this is only possible due a strong support from our donors and a dedicated effort from the WAWCAS Team in Nepal and Denmark. And finally, the incredible effort from all the Women in Nepal – Graduated or in Training, - and their families.

On behalf of the WAWCAS Board we thank you all for your valuable contributions and the interest you have shown in WAWCAS in 2023 and send you all the best wishes for the New Year.

Pabitra: from tea shop owner in Kopan to lawyer

By Sangeeta Shresta, Founder and Program Director, WAWCAS, Nepal, and Nina Schriver, Founder and Program Director, WAWCAS International

Pabitra had a bachelor, but she could not get a job and she lived in poverty in her village.

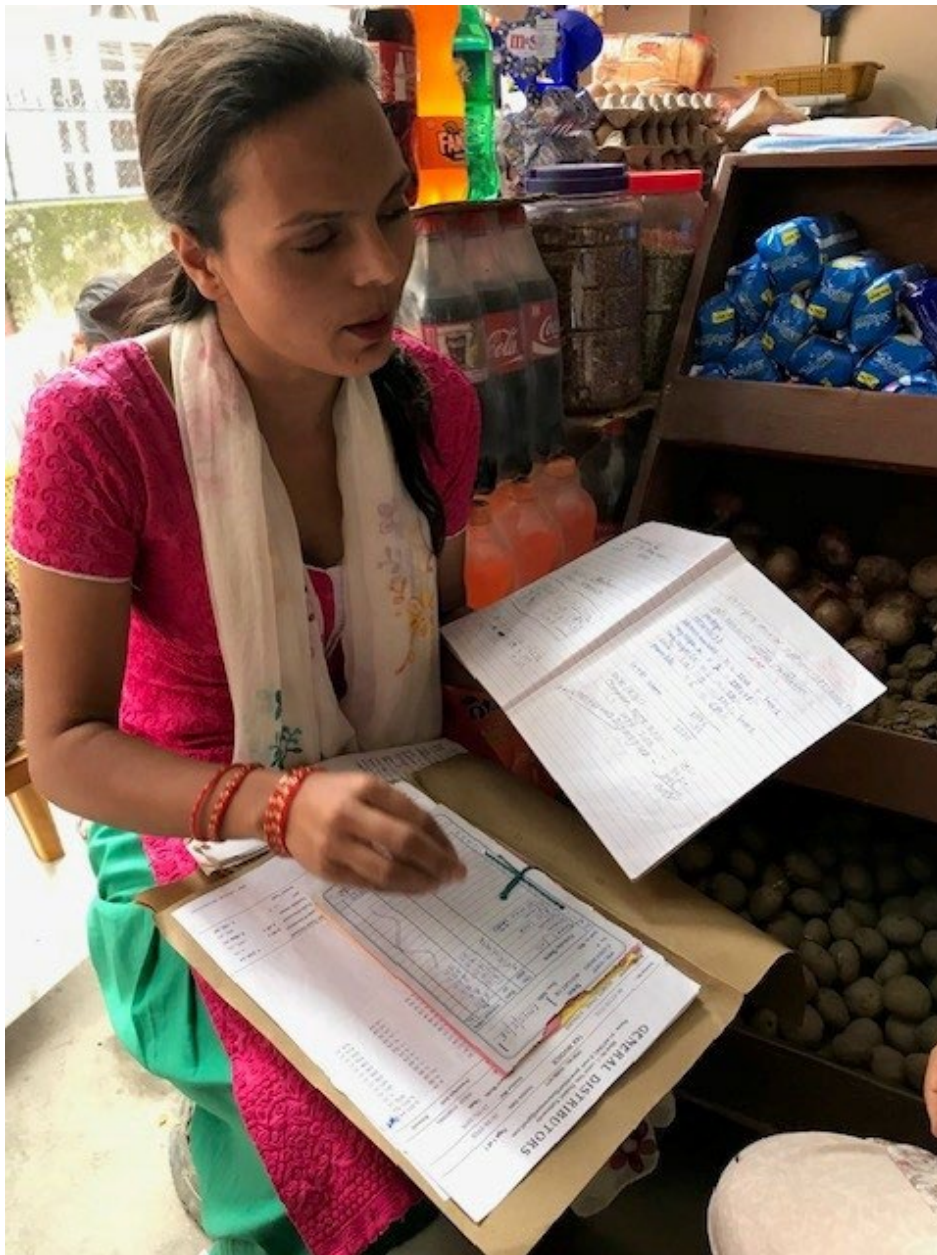
Therefore, she decided to join the WAWCAS Program in 2016, and she started a small tea shop. People were teasing her because she had dreamed of a government job with her bachelor and now, she had ended up with a small tea shop.



Pabitra has always been very ambitious and hard working. Always updating her pass book (book capturing savings and loans), saving money and keeping overview of her stock, sales and costs. And every day she writes her diary with all her learnings, questions, and goals.

Shortly after starting the tea shop, she expanded her business to include three grocery shops. And she hired five employees. She has never given credit to any customer and from the saving finance institute she was after some years accredited with an appreciation letter as being a very good saver.

In 2019 she started a group for women and men living in poverty to support them to become entrepreneurs. Now the group has 52 members, and she supports all members.



She had a big vision to expand her shops and to start a wholesale shop., and she managed to do so in 2021.

Pabitra decided that she wanted to get a higher education. To manage financially she sold all her businesses except one. So, over the last years she did a bachelor's in law and a master's in sociology.

We met Pabitra in March 2023, where she came to WAWCAS office as a surprise. Here she stood in black business dress, proudly sharing how she managed to graduate from Social Science and to become a lawyer. Now she works as a lawyer in a private company and still has one grocery shop run by her employees.

She continues to inspire and help women to become members of WAWCAS.



As the first woman ever, she has been elected as President of the Nepal Akhil Student Association.

Pabitra is a great example of how far you can reach with stamina and focus and with support to be able to unfold your dreams and competences.

Pabitra is a fantastic role model not only for WAWCAS women but for women in general. And always ready to actively help others who live in poverty to manage to create changes in their lives.

Her journey is so touching for us to hear and follow.

More Stories from the WAWCAS Women and Their Children

Every month, three WAWCAS women add a new blog to their story on the website. And also one of our many Child Groups upload a monthly story. You can get insight into the daily struggles and happy moments in the lives of these women and children by clicking the link below.

[Meet the Women and Their Children • Wawcas International](#)