



# DHADING CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE

EDUCATION, MENTORSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR EARTHQUAKE ORPHANED CHILDREN &  
YOUTH

DCI ANNUAL REPORT 2016





DCI Partners





## Context

Nearly 9,000 people died in the devastating 2015 Nepal earthquakes. Tens of thousands of Nepalese people were injured, and hundreds of thousands lost their homes. Children in rural villages who lost one or both parents had their lives irrecoverably changed by this catastrophe. These newly orphaned children face vulnerabilities due to **geographic isolation, severe poverty**, the challenges of ongoing **political instability, lack of infrastructure**, and **intersecting discriminations** including those of sex, caste, ethnicity, and economic and family status. **These children are at high risk of being exploited, and at risk for early school drop out, child marriage, child labor, trafficking, separation from family, and a lifetime of low paying, menial work and poverty.**



*Unisha, a DCI student, was 3-years-old when she lost her mother and sister in the April 2015 earthquake (picture from September 2015). She is currently living with her grandparents in the village, and she is an A+ student in her kindergarten class. Her favorite part of school is coloring, singing rhymes, learning numbers and alphabets (Nepali and English), and being with her friends.*

Dhading Children's Initiative (DCI) is a collaborative response to the needs of these children and their families and communities in rural Nepal, with the purpose of keeping these children in school and with their families while they pursue an education and gain access to various resources and opportunities, allowing them to transcend their circumstances.

*"It was such an honor to spend time with these students and their families, and guardians. They taught me so much about teaching and learning simultaneously, about fear, and about courage. Working with the youth...taught me about humility and loss, as well as the joy in community and family, and how rewarding it is to share your resources with individuals who will make them go farther than you ever could." – Lisa Montalvo, DCI Supporter, who visited Dhading in March 2016.*

## DCI Background

Following the earthquake on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Dr. Arjun Aryal began working remotely with his family in the rural area he is from, which is close to the earthquake's epicenter. The Foundation for Underprivileged Kids, Nepal (FUNKids), led by DP Aryal, conducted a baseline survey and found that over 100 children in the district had lost either one or both parents in the disaster. "We discussed the immediate needs of the students, the impact of the earthquake, and how to make the children at ease through emotional and educational support that we could provide to motivate them to move forward in life," says DP Aryal. The Society of Nepalese in Hawaii (SNEHA) provided an initial grant for immediate aid, and Himalayan Children's Charities (HCC) sent two of their senior students with FUNKids in August of 2015 to help with the relief work. Collaboratively, the DCI partners began to develop and manage the ongoing initiative, which supports students throughout the Dhading district, including in the municipalities and village development committees (VDCs) of Baireni, Jiwanpur, Kalleri, Benighat, Nilkantha, Dhola, Muralibhanjyang, Katunje, Salyankot, Semjung, Lapa, Darkha, Satyadevi, Jharlang, and Ree. The project is carried out in association with the Nepal Ministry of Social Welfare, the Dhading District Children Welfare Committee, the Dhading District Development Committee, and the Dhading District Education Office.



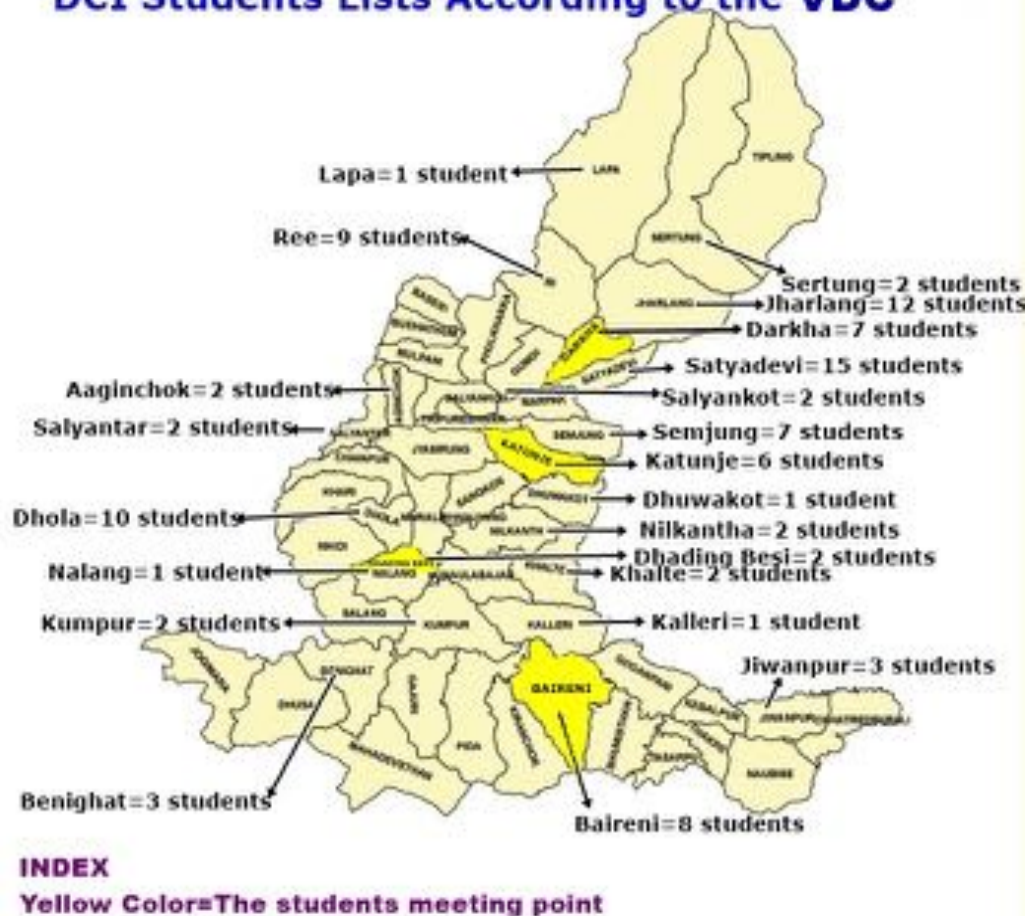
*Dr. Arjun Aryal, visiting with DCI students in Baireni, Dhading in January 2016.*

*"I have a positive mindset that the continuity of this program will help these children... My hope is that this program will educate the children up to their school level." – DP Aryal, FUNKids Nepal*

## DCI Program Design

DCI's five collaborating partners work together to accomplish DCI's mission of educating, mentoring and providing resources and opportunities for earthquake-orphaned children in Dhading. This includes organizing logistics, distributing scholarships and running programs in rural villages, as well as developing the DCI program structure, completing legal and administrative work, and program and personnel funding and fundraising. The DCI team in Nepal visits the children, their families, and schools two to three times per year, in four central locations throughout the district. During these visits, and over the phone throughout the year, the children and their families are counseled, provided with financial and material resources, and engaged in fun and educational programs run primarily by HCC's youth, who themselves have much to share with the children<sup>1</sup>. Throughout the year, we keep up-to-date on the children's wellbeing and academic progress. Schoolteachers and principals also participate in the village programs and serve as communication liaisons.

### DCI Students Lists According to the VDC



\*Map and numbers reflect total students served through DCI since Summer 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Visit [hccnepal.org](http://hccnepal.org) to read HCC's reports from the field, including DCI program coordinators Laxmi and Mun Maya writing about their experience as HCC students and as mentors for the DCI Students: <http://hccnepal.org/guest-column-mun-mayas-transition-from-hcc-student-to-hcc-staff-member/>



## Accomplishments

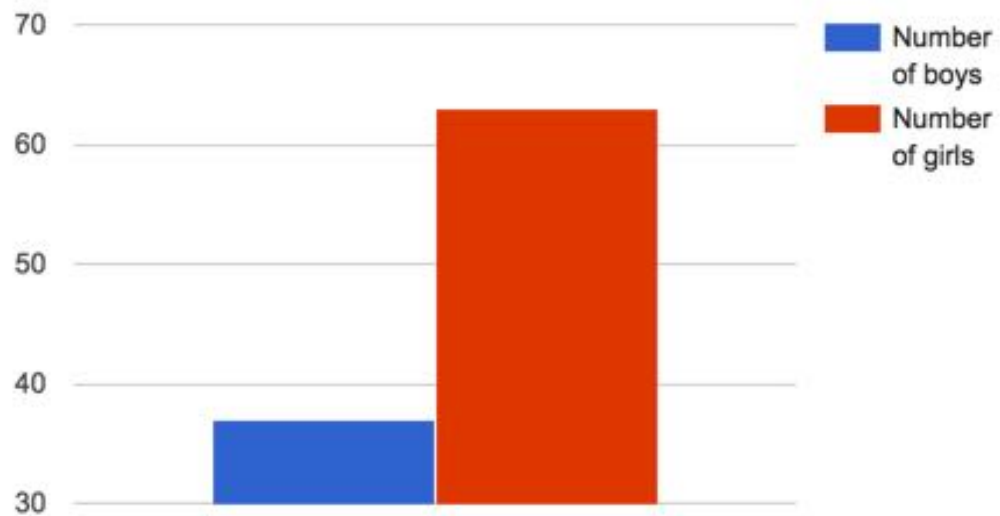
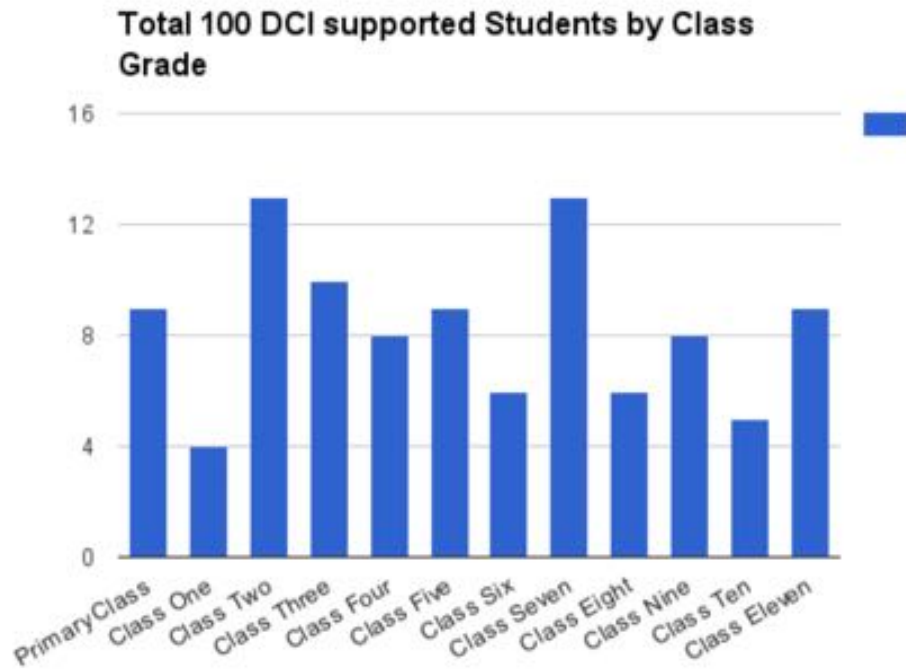
- **Immediate relief funds distributed** – 3,000 rupees per child
- **Bi-Annual educational scholarships distributed** directly to the children and their guardians (and to the schools when applicable) to pay for school fees, books, stationery items, exam fees, tutors, uniforms, and basic personal care including for food, warm clothes and medicine
- **Educational supplies distributed** including backpacks, pens and paper, geometry boxes, and educational books and comics
- **Warm clothes distributed** includes hats and scarves/blankets, clothes
- **Art supplies and toys distributed** including colored pens and pencils, paints
- **Health materials distributed**, including first aid materials, and sanitary items for females
- **Community-building programs** for DCI students and their families
- **Health and hygiene education classes provided**
- **Special art workshops held**
- **Mentorship programs for graduating students**
- **Tutoring made available** for students in grades 8, 9, and 10
- **College scholarships provided** for select students in classes 11 and 12
- **Advocacy, networking, and family support services provided**
- Partner organization programs including rebuilding local schools (FUNKids) and connecting schools with WIFI and Internet Services (HCC)



*Pasang and Chandika, sisters, with their new winter hats donated by Operating Infinity (Oi) and anti-trafficking books from CauseVision during a Nov. 2016 DCI scholarship distribution and DaysForGirls Australia sponsored health education program.*

## Facts and Figures

Total number of children served through DCI since Summer 2015: **100**





Number of students who graduated from high school and are currently attending college with Higher Educational Scholarships: **2**

Number of DCI programs held in Dhading since Summer 2015: **8**

Current number of students in DCI: **83 students** as of January 2017

*\*The reasons for the decrease in number of DCI students is mainly from students being supported by or in the care of other organizations, and the graduation of students from secondary school. There were also several students who moved out of the Dhading district, as well as one case of child marriage.*

DCI supported students come from a diversity of communities, including castes, ethnicities, and religions. It is the goal of the DCI program to serve the needs of as many affected students as possible, ensuring that the children are able to receive at least an equivalent high school education and remain near to their families. We hope to continue to improve our programs and serve more children, as the need remains great.



Dipa, who is 16-years old and from a so-called “untouchable” caste, says: “I have many aims in life. I have a goal to become a successful bank manager, but I also dream of being a model and actress, because I really enjoy performing.” In the picture on the left, Dipa is seen with her surviving grandmother and her new DCI backpack and supplies during her 10<sup>th</sup> grade exam preparation (January 2016). Since then, she has graduated secondary school with a 3.0 GPA, and has begun her study in a business management college with an HCC Higher Education Scholarship. The picture on the right was taken in November 2016, in which Dipa is happy to have received a necklace gift sent by her sponsor. “Thank you for your support, which is making a great difference in my life.”

## Financial Overview (\$1 USD = 105 NRs)

### DCI Program Funding in 2016:

**Contributions from SNEHA in 2016:** \$2,189 USD

**Contributions from HCC in in 2016:** \$10,071 USD

**Contribution from HCC and SNEHA jointly:** \$1,805 USD

*\*FUNKids Nepal, the Keenan Foundation, and CP Nepal have also contributed invaluablely to DCI through their continuing provision of pro-bono professional services including program coordination, management, accounting, and administrative work.*

### Program Expenses in 2016:

**Educational Scholarship Funds Distributed in 2016:** \$7,834 USD

**Materials Distributed in 2016:** \$1,186 USD

**Programming Expenses in 2016:** \$2,241 USD

DCI is made possible by the generous donations of individual supporters and the dedicated work of our partner organizations. DCI costs are minimized in every way possible, including through the pro-bono work of our partners and lowest possible cost field visits.



*DP Aryal, distinguished Nepali civil servant, serves voluntarily as DCI's district coordinator. He is seen here with a DCI student in his home village in Dhola, VDC (January 2016)*

<b>*DCI Program Funding for 2016*</b>	<b>Total Amount in Nepali Rupees</b>
Donations from SNEHA	229,865.80
Donations from HCC	1,057,500.00
Donations from HCC and SNEHA joint fundraising effort	189,523.95
<b>Total Funds:</b>	<b>1,476,889.75</b>
<b>*DCI Program Expenses in 2016*</b>	
<b>Student Scholarship and Material Distributions</b>	
<b>Educational Scholarship Funds Distributed to Students</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Total Amount in Nepali Rupees</b>
January, 2016	
Distribution to 12 students in grades 6-10, and 18 students in pre K-5	96,000
February, 2016	
Distribution to 29 students in grades 6-10, and 28 students in pre K-5	188,600
March, 2016	
Distribution to 8 students in grades 6-10, and 12 students in pre K-5	88,000
July, 2016	
Distribution to 2 college students	60,000
Sept-Oct, 2016	
Distribution to 13 students in grades 6-10, and 16 students in pre K-5	158,000
November, 2016	
Distribution to 17 students in grades 6-10, and 26 students in pre K-5	232,000
<b>Total Scholarships Distributed:</b>	<b>822,600</b>
<b>Materials Distributed to Students</b>	
School book bags (backpacks)	60,282
Winter Shawls/Blankets	42262
Stationary items (notebooks, geometry boxes)	19648
Menstrual hygiene kits	1300
Food and snacks	1030
Anti-trafficking comic books	0
Warm hats, baby clothes, art supplies, and toys	0
<b>Total in Materials Distributed:</b>	<b>124,522</b>
<b>Programming Expenses (travel, accomodation, distribution programs, educational programs, monitoring, taxes, and admin)</b>	
Jan. - scholarship distribtuion and visits in Southern Dhading	21,970
Feb. - schoalrship distribution and visits in Northern Dhading	27,100
March - art programs, and stakeholder meetings in Dhading Besi	60,870
May - SWC monitoring costs	52940
July - higher education mentoring programs - Dhading Besi	7,170
Sept/Oct - scholarship distribution and visits in Southern Dhading	24,010
Nov. - scholarship distribution and educational programs in Northern Dhading	41,285
<b>Total in Programming Expenses:</b>	<b>235,345</b>

## **DCI Challenges, Feedback, and Future**

**Communication** - Cell phones and Internet connection are still limited, and sometimes unavailable, in the remote areas in Dhading district. Lack of reliable access to the Internet makes collecting information and data, including school reports, in a timely manner a huge challenge. It also makes the logistics of planning programs more difficult, meaning we must continue to rely on a network of local volunteers to help us organize and spread the word about distribution programs and special events. Language is also a barrier to good communication, as many of the people served by DCI speak local languages and little to no Nepali/English.

**Difficult topography** - The mountainous area and lack of contemporary infrastructure in this area of Nepal forces Dhading to be equipped with an extremely limited dirt road network. Traveling to remote villages in Dhading district, where the children are located, is dangerous and impossible for many months of the year. We have sent teams in by foot, but in order to transport materials we rely on four-wheel-drive jeeps and trucks that can only traverse central dirt roads during limited post monsoon and winter months. Even these road systems do not reach the most remote areas of the district, which are accessible only by several days of walking.

**Impoverished circumstances and mentality** – Due to the extreme poverty and hand-to-mouth problems faced by the families we serve in the remote hills and mountainous area, uneducated guardians often think differently about their survival, and to do not value formal education in the same way, or to the same degree. Likewise, the schools in remote villages of Dhading are substandard in that they lack resources such as books, paper and pens, and trained and motivated teachers and staff. Many schools were destroyed in the earthquake and now function out of temporary shelters that are open to the elements. Due to these reasons, students' studies and their motivations to study are often weak. We have also observed a lack of impetus on the part of government schoolteachers to actively participate, perhaps due to embarrassment over poor results and lack of incentive, as they are salaried workers.

The nature of the work is itself difficult - but we have received positive feedback from the various stakeholders, who have mentioned the impact of our programs including:

- The ability for widows and widowers to continue to care for and financially support their children and their studies.
- A sense of community and belonging with other children and families in similar circumstances, and with a global network of people who care.
- Hope for the future, expressed both by students themselves and families.
- Increased and sustained focus on the children's academics and general wellbeing from the family, school, and wider community.





*"You are helping my children with their education and I am working hard to fulfill their other basic requirements. I'm very grateful for this support that is allowing me to continue to care for my children, even as a single woman in the village here. I want to thank the sponsors of my children, and all of the people who are directly and indirectly involved in this program. Thank you for giving us a helping hand and making my children's life different and meaningful." - Madhu, mother of DCI supported students Sushila, Puja, and Yaman Singh*



*"Now I spend all of my time cooking for my children, cleaning, and washing their clothes. I do not want to leave my children. I want to be there for my children and give them a good life and education. I am sure that my children will do something great and I will be a proud father. Your help and service for my children and the rest of the children of Dhading is much appreciated. Thank you for helping to keep my family together." - Dal Bahadur, father of DCI supported students Asmi, Ram, Laxman, Shanta, and Belama*

Moving forward, DCI hopes to continue to build on our successes by improving our programs and the needs of the children, their families, and their communities at large. Along with continuing educational support, DCI intends to provide more mentorship programs for and by the Nepali youth, and further educational resources including Internet services, teacher trainings, and rebuilt schools, through our partners' programs. HCC is also looking into the possibility of expanding an orphan scholarship program to more earthquake-affected districts.

To make a tax deductible donation to the Dhading Children's Initiative (DCI) or sponsor a child of your own (and get an individual child profile and annual updates) donate online at [www.hccnepal.org](http://www.hccnepal.org) and under "purpose", list "DCI"

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## Meet a few of the Children



4-year-old Sadiksha is in Lower Kindergarten. She is intelligent and multi talented, and currently working on figuring out numbers and alphabets (Nepali and English). Sadiksha's father was killed in the earthquake-triggered landslide while working as a laborer at a hydropower plant in a neighboring district. Sadiksha lives in a rented room with her young, widowed mother and her toddler brother Shree Krishna, who was born just four months after the earthquake took her father's life. As a young, widowed woman in rural Nepal, her future prospects are precarious and she has struggle immensely since the earthquake. Two other families of widowed mothers and their children (also supported by DCI) now live in the same house, so that they can share resources and support each other. The three mothers have been working for a local businessman, stringing wedding bead necklaces to be sold in the city, for which they make about \$20 each per month.



Sadiksha enjoys going to school and learning new things. She says her favorite part of school is playing, eating snacks, coloring, attending dance class, and singing rhymes. Her favorite subject is Mathematics because she enjoys numbers and doing addition and subtraction. She says she also

loves her younger brother dearly and likes to play and cuddle with him. Her mother is doing her best to take care of her kids and provide all the requirements that they need. During our last visit, she tearfully told us that she is grateful for our support - both financial and emotional.







Estar is 13 years old and is now in grade 6. She lost her mother during the earthquake, who was alone in the house when it collapsed and crushed her. Estar is living with her father, grandparents and younger sister. They live on the side of a steep mountain in the shadows of the Himalaya. Their main source of income is agriculture. Estar lends a helping hand to her father in the field and also helps to take care of her elderly grandparents and younger sister. They cultivate maize, corn, wheat, rice and other seasonal produce. She says that she has lived happy and sad moments like everyone, but she is determined to continue with her life. “She makes me feel very proud for that reason,” said Mun Maya, a graduated HCC student who now helps run DCI. Estar says that she will continue to grow up to become “the best version of herself,” and work hard to make her family proud. Her favorite subject in school is “Occupation,” where she gets to learn about all of the different work-related possibilities. She is considering becoming a police officer, as she likes the uniforms that they wear and also enjoy working in a team environment. Beside studies she is fond of singing and dancing. Her younger sister Swastika says, “I am fortunate to have my sister Estar in my life because she is the one whom I trust and share all my problems.”





Above: Estar, in February 2016

Below: The area (the hills in the distance), where she lives in upper Dhading



Bikash is in grade 3. He lost his father in the earthquake, who was away working in a remote village as a teacher and was crushed by the school building. Bikash, which translates as “progress,” is a very determined and studious boy. He consistently comes in as the top student in his class, and says “I am working hard to maintain this position.” He has an elder brother, Bishal, who is studying in grade 8 and his mother, Shobha, who is deeply concerned about the future and wellbeing of her sons. Since the earthquake, she has been staying with her late husband’s parents and extended family, but faces the pressures of being a widowed woman in the village, and fears what lies ahead. Both Bikash and Bishal are motivated to learn, and have big goals for their lives. Bikash’s favorite subjects in school are Mathematics and English. Recently, Bikash finished his third terminal examination and he secured an overall 97.60%. He says that he is fond of his school (he goes to a great school in the district headquarters!) and friends and also likes to spend time with his mother and brother. He says -” beside studying I enjoy watching movies, reading books, playing soccer and travelling.” Bikash’s mother, Shobha, says that she is very proud of her sons. “Having them in my life means everything to me,” She says. “I am working hard to fulfill their basic requirements, and your support of us helps. Whenever I look into their face they reminds me of their father and I am sure that one day my two son will also be like their father and work for the welfare of the people.”



Sweet, smart and talented Sanjita is 10 years old and in grade 2. She is a bit timid, but can also be easily engaged and is very personable. She lost her beloved mother during the earthquake, who was gathering firewood in the forest at the time of the first big earthquake. Sanjita is from a remote village in the high hills, and a marginalized, indigenous community. She has her father, grandmother and two younger siblings. Her father was out of the country working as a migrant laborer at the time of the earthquake, and returned soon after to take care of his children and aging mother. They now live in a shanty, and he is planning to go abroad again soon in order to earn money to rebuild a house for his family. Sanjita is an average student and says that she is doing her best to improve her results. Her favorite subject in school is social studies, because she "wants to understand the world." She also enjoys playing soccer, singing, and being with her friends at school. Besides studying, she helps her grandmother in the fields, cuts grass and collects fodder, fetches water, washes dishes and cooks, and grazes the cows and goats. She says, "I'm happy for your support."





## Action Shots from the Field



Laxmi and Mun Maya meeting with DCI students in Satyadevi, Dhading in August 2015.



DCI program underway in Katunje, Dhading. February 2016.



Bachchhaladevi School destroyed by the earthquake. One of 587 schools destroyed in Dhading.





DCI team of HCC and FUNKids interns trekking from village to village throughout the district in August 2015 distributing immediate earthquake relief and collecting survey data.



A temporary shelter being lived in by 3 DCI students, with their elderly grandparents, in Benighat, Dhading after their mother was killed and their house destroyed.



A group of female DCI students showing off their bags after receiving a health education class and washable menstrual hygiene kits in a DCI program in Darkha, Dhading in November 2016.



Art program with DCI students and parents run in Baireni in March 2016.





Distributing DCI scholarships and materials in a makeshift school in Darkha in upper Dhading.



Mun Maya providing a health and hygiene class for students at a DCI program in November 2016.









## CHANGE A LIFE TODAY

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