



LOOKING
BACK,
LOOKING
FORWARD





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ArtWorks! *Sangai Khelaun* (Let's Play Together) is an ongoing project developed as a partnership between Shikshya Foundation Nepal and Srijanalaya.

INDIA

CHINA



GAMGADI

SEPTEMBER 6 TO OCTOBER 6, 2016
(ASHWIN 22 TO KARTIK 22, 2073)



PITHAULI

FIRST VISIT: DECEMBER 17 TO 21, 2016 (POUSH 2 TO 6, 2073)
SECOND VISIT: JANUARY 17 TO 21, 2017 (MAGH 4 TO 8, 2073)
THIRD VISIT: FEBRUARY 9 TO 14, 2017 (MAGH 27 TO FALGUN 3, 2073)
FOURTH VISIT: APRIL 22 TO 25, 2017 (BAISAKH 9 TO 12, 2074)

NEPAL

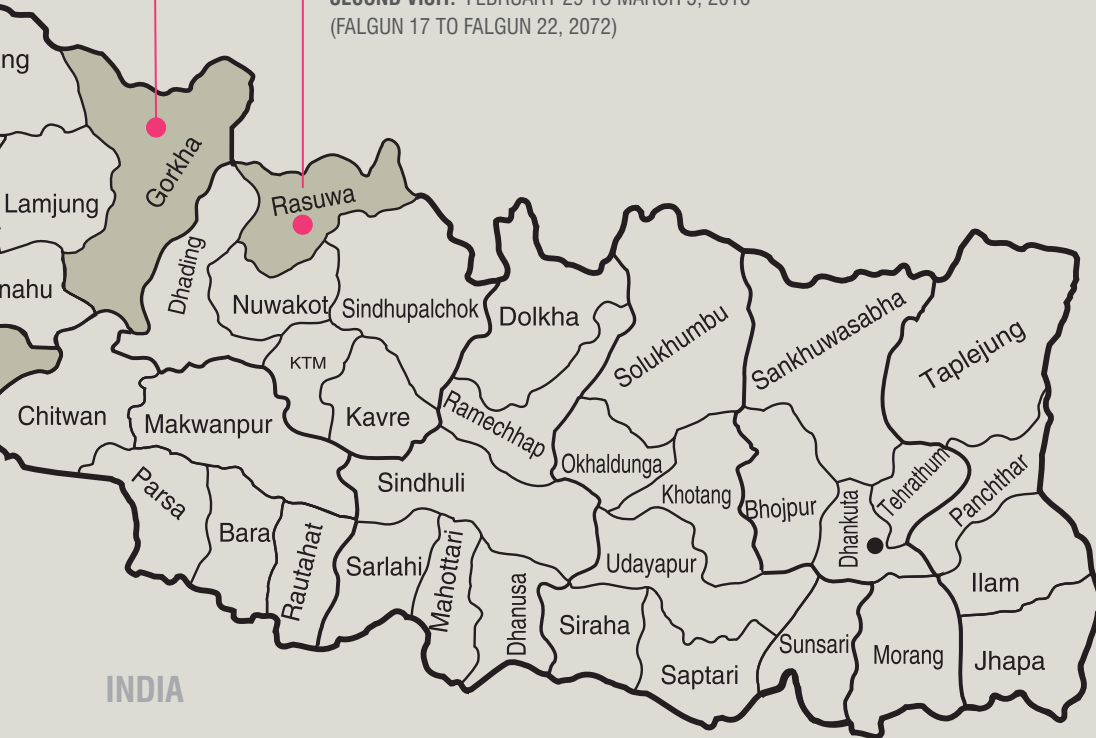
GHYACHCHOK

JUNE 12 TO JUNE 16, 2015
(JESTHA 29 TO ASAD 1, 2072)

GATLANG

FIRST VISIT: DECEMBER 5 TO DECEMBER 9, 2015
(MANGSIR 19 TO MANGSIR 23, 2072)

SECOND VISIT: FEBRUARY 29 TO MARCH 5, 2016
(FALGUN 17 TO FALGUN 22, 2072)



INTRODUCTION

“Imagination is the source of every form of human achievement. And it’s the one thing that I believe we are systematically jeopardizing in the way we educate our children and ourselves.”

- Sir Ken Robinson, International Educationist

“...participatory involvement with the many forms of art does enable us, at the very least, to see more in our experience, to hear more on normally unheard frequencies, to become conscious of what daily routines, habits and conventions have obscured.”

-Maxine Greene, Arts Educator



The ArtWorks! *Sangai Khelaun* program was launched in the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal earthquakes as a collaboration between Shikshya Foundation Nepal (SFN) and Srijanalaya. Noticing Srijanalaya's post-earthquake work with teachers, SFN got in touch with us with the intention of brainstorming ideas for a project that would serve children in remote, marginalized and earthquake-ravaged school communities. It was a sensitive point in time when we started talking; stakeholders were scrambling to provide basic needs to numerous communities. Through extensive discussions we decided that once basic needs of food, water, shelter, and hygiene were met, it was important to provide more. Our conversations brought even more clarity to the work we do around art education. Together with SFN members, Srijanalaya drafted an initial objective for the ArtWorks program - to engage traumatized students, teachers and community members in art activities and workshops that could potentially relieve their distress. Along with that, we also planned to provide psychosocial support to adults and young students by holding conversations and entertaining them through the arts. We set aside budget for child-friendly art materials and story books that could be distributed to impoverished schools.

Since our first trip to Ghyachchok, Gorkha in June, 2015, we have visited three other distinct marginalized school communities. Although our core belief remained the same, the design of our programs at each location was slightly different. We modified lessons according to local contexts and we continually reached out to our network in Kathmandu and contacts in the locality in order to create various possibilities that would facilitate an exchange of knowledge as well as help the community members. For example, at Gatlang, artists stayed back for a month in order to learn local weaving techniques and explore ways that the craft could turn into a business that would help the community. At Gamgadi, we supported a local theater group and at Pithauli, we planned multiple visits in order to develop the capacity of teachers and create a real impact. Throughout this novel process, SFN members listened to our developing ideas, provided constructive feedback and helped us realize our goals.

Additionally, in each of these locations, ArtWorks members incorporated local art forms in their workshops and rehearsed with students in order to put up a culminating performance for the entire community. During our first trip at Ghyachchok, a group of intergenerational community members put up an elaborate Sorathi performance, a traditional Gurung song and dance piece with unique rhythms, choreography and outfit. Inspired by the Sorathi, ArtWorks members designed performances at Gatlang that included Tamang tunes and steps. The entire program at Gamgadi revolved around the theatrical production, Pampa Phool and at Pithauli, a theater piece, Budhani, was put together for children. We realized that it was important for children in diverse parts of the country to see themselves reflected in their learning materials. When schoolwork gets directly connected to their indigenous cultural practices, learning becomes personalized and meaningful. Children and community members feel validated and hence, more engaged. This is one of the most powerful and impactful approaches one can take to education, as suggested by both Sir Ken Robinson and Maxine Greene.

Through ArtWorks we have led art workshops with 625 young people who exhibited their artworks and performed their poems and plays to over 1500 people, largely from Gurung, Tamang, Khas, Tharu, and Dalit communities.

The table below provides a quick glimpse of our reach.

	GHYACHCHOK, GORKHA	GATLANG, RASUWA	GAMGADI, MUGU	PITHAULI, NAWALPARASI
# Students	330	200	15	80
# Teachers	15	8	-	8
# Community Members Who Attended the Final Performance	500+	200+	200+	900+

The numbers are meant to provide a snapshot only. Throughout our planning and implementation, ArtWorks members have focused more on delivering qualitative, thoughtful lessons. In any case, working with students is often much more effective in smaller groups. For example, we were able to build substantial relationships with students and teachers in Nawalparasi more than in other locations because of the smaller school size and also because of multiple visits.


The arts - as we can glean from the quotations above by Sir Ken Robinson and Maxine Greene - is meant to foster imaginative, creative thinking and raise conscious, thoughtful citizens. Unfortunately, many working in the educational field hesitate to embrace this idea. Most are focused on managing large schools; most emphasize rote-learning and high-stakes tests. In this context, the guidance provided by SFN members were invaluable. They assured us that if our programs can inspire and support a handful of students to take creative risks and live a conscious life that can help impoverished, marginalized communities, we will have met our basic goals. Thus, we are tremendously grateful to Shikshya Foundation Nepal for not only believing in us but actively encouraging us to take arts education to communities that had had very little interaction with the visual arts, movement workshops and child-friendly literature and theater. Keeping in mind the urgent, chaotic environment during the immediate aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes, we were able to bring professionals together and travel through difficult terrain in order to give back to people who were in dire need. To that end, our program has continually evolved based on our work experiences.

Every trip gave us opportunities to reflect, learn and adapt our techniques to better-suit the needs of a future community. In that sense, one could say that these four editions of ArtWorks! *Sangai Khelaun* were a sort of a unique experiment that allowed us to venture into new territories to take risks, to think outside the box and to constantly negotiate the joys and challenges of working inside the system and outside the system. We really hope to continue this work in the future.

THE COMMUNITIES

GHYACHCHOK village is nestled on a ridge across from Barpak, the epicenter of the April 25, 2015 Nepal earthquake. Over 500 homes were destroyed in Ghyachchok as a result of the earthquakes and 16 people lost their lives. At least three villages within the VDC – Baspot, Thumgaon, and Milim – were looking to relocate due to risk of landslides. But the village hadn't received as much public attention as Barpak. Before the earthquakes, Ghyachchok was starting to prosper - there was a micro hydro power plant which brought electricity and an organized, accessible water system. It took us about six hours on a local bus followed by three hours of uphill walking to get to the village, which is mainly inhabited by the Gurungs, an indigenous group that has been historically marginalized.





GATLANG was largely isolated from the rest of the country until about a decade ago when it was connected by motorable road to the district headquarters, Dhunche. Located at the northwestern edge of Rasuwa district, the village is very close to the Tibetan border. The Tamangs of Gatlang have a history of trade with Tibet and hold rich practices related to music and dance, as well as weaving. We attempted to include these traditional cultural knowledge into our workshops with Gatlang's primary and secondary school students.



GAMGADI lies in the Karnali region, an area in the north-western part of Nepal. Due to poor infrastructure and limited access to modern amenities, the region is pretty isolated from the rest of the country. Gamgadi is the headquarters of Mugu district. Even though the district was not as affected by the 2015 earthquakes, we decided to go to Gamgadi in order to support a local theater group, the Karnali Arts Center (KAC). Workshops were planned so that high school students could research and learn about dying musical practices such as the deuda, bhailo and maangal and participate in a theater production, Pampa Phool.



PITHAULI is a village next to the Narayani River situated in Nepal's southern Terai belt within Nawalparasi district. The government school we worked at, Shree Santu Devi Rastriya Prathamik Vidyalaya, is largely attended by the indigenous Tharu people (historically marginalized), as well as by those that fall into the lowest socioeconomic strata (Dalits and Janajatis). In recent years, private schools have sprung up in the village but the families that send their children to the government school cannot afford these monthly fees.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

At each location, our program involved a series of workshops and lessons with students during regular school hours (except at Gamgadi). Each lesson was thoughtfully planned and the materials prepared in advance. We invited teachers to observe these lessons. Whenever possible, we held meetings with teachers before and after our sessions, encouraging them to take notes, ask questions and brainstorm ways in which they could continue the work after our departure. Typically, each ArtWorks program was conducted over three days. At Gatlang and Pithauli, we planned multiple visits in order to better understand the local context and follow up on our work.



GHYACHOK:

ENGAGING THE THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS OF DISASTER VICTIMS THROUGH ART WORKSHOPS AND PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION

“Connecting the external with the internal through the art-making process is at the heart of Debra Kalmanowitz and Bobby Lloyd’s argument which they have explicated in an article titled ‘Inhabiting the uninhabitable: The use of art-making with teachers in Southwest Kosovo’. They believe that after the first step – once basic physical needs, such as food and shelter, have been addressed – it is important to engage the thoughts and emotions of disaster victims, to get them to share their feelings so that they can flow out, rather than remain stuck inside. Making art provides an organic way to do that.

Our program had five specific workshops - Storytelling & Performance; Mural Making Using Natural Materials; Dream Spaces Using Print Media; Primary School Program & Teacher Workshops and Circus Kathmandu Workshops & Performances - spread over three days.

Each workshop was run by an artist or an educator and usually in collaboration between both professionals as well as with a psychosocial

counselor. We attempted to be fair to all the students as well as our team members regarding workload, but this was not always possible. For example, the schedule below demonstrates that Circus Kathmandu worked with both secondary school students and primary school students. But at Ghyachchok, most of the workshops were suitable for older students; the primary students mainly read story books and participated in child-friendly activities.





Below is a schedule of one of the three days we spent at Ghyachchok. This is an example to show how we used various art forms with different groups of students.

Sunday, 14 June, 2015				
7:30 Black Tea				
Team Meeting				
Early Lunch				
Workshop 1: Circus Kathmandu	Workshop 2: Storytelling & Performance	Workshop 3: Mural using Natural Materials	Workshop 4: Print Media	Primary School Program (reading, drawing, singing, circus)
10:00-12:00 Session 1 Class 6,7,8	Preparation/ Documentation	10:00-12:00 Class 9&10	Preparation/ Documentation	10:00-12:00 Class 1-5
12:00-12:30 Water/Toilet Break		12:00-12:30 Water/Toilet Break		12:00-13:00 Snacks
13:00-15:00 Session 2 Class 3,4,5	12:30-16:00 Class 6&7 (14:00-14:30 Snacks)	Documentation	12:30-16:00 Class 8 (14:00-14:30 Snacks)	13:00-15:00 Class 1&2
18:00 Team Meeting				
18:30 Dinner				

SHREE DHANSIRA SECONDARY SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

Students

Class	Pre-School	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
#	24	13	19	23	29	32	36	35	53	34	32

Total Number of Students: 330

Teachers

Villages	Ghyachchok	Dhansira	Duwolsora	Milim
#	4	7	3	4

Total Number of Teachers: 18



For a more detailed reflection, an article, “An Art Experiment in Gorkha”, is available online at *Himal Southasian*. <http://himalmag.com/art-experiment-gorkha-earthquake>



GATLANG: INCORPORATING LOCAL CULTURAL PRACTICES INTO THE CURRICULUM

“I had heard the terms ‘project-based learning’ and ‘integrated curriculum’ during trainings offered by the government but I had never seen them implemented. It was only after observing the Found Objects lesson in Class 3 with Sunita Maharjan and Sharareh Bajracharya that I finally understood its importance as well as how to plan and prepare these lessons. I was also impressed to see the students so engaged.” - a teacher at Gatlang



We went to Gatlang three times: a recce trip followed by a trip devoted to primary school students and another trip devoted to secondary school students. The younger students worked with play dough, blocks and participated in music and art workshops. They also listened to read alouds.

During the second trip, students were split into four mixed groups. Each group took turns rotating between four different activities: Spoken Word Poetry, Mural Making, Dance/Theater and Music. The older students also composed and practiced segments from these activities which they performed in front of the wider community on the final day.

Apart from conducting workshops, artists from our team interacted with community members in the afternoons. Consequently, Kathak dancer Subima Shrestha learned steps from Tamang women which she later incorporated into a contemporary dance sequence. Similarly, ethnomusicology students from Kathmandu University explored local instruments and composed tunes that accompanied Shrestha's choreography. Visual artist Sunita Maharjan and Sanjeep Maharjan participated in a one-month Artist Residency, an extension of the Gatlang Art Works program.

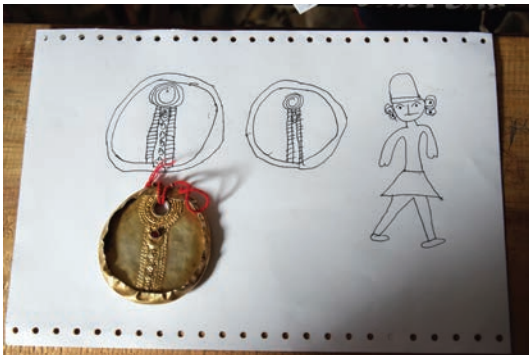


NEPAL RASTRIYA SECONDARY SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

Students

Class	Pre-School & 1	2	3	4	5	6-9			
						Poetry	Music	Mural	Dance/Drama
#	77	21	20	31	16	19	20	21	20

Total Students: Over 200 (Official Number: 283)



For a more detailed reflection, an article, “**Reclaiming Possibilities**”, is available online at *The Kathmandu Post*: <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-19/reclaiming-possibilities.html>



GAMGADI: PASSING TRADITIONAL CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE TO YOUNG STUDENTS

“We made new friends,” said a high school student. “We learned how to sing the deuda, the bhailo and the maangal,” said another. The dialogues and lyrics were written in the regional Khas language, spoken and sung beautifully by the actors. In fact, we planned the Gamgadi program because Hira Bijuli Nepali, a founder of Karnali Arts Center and director of Pampa Phool, expressed to us that their main agenda was to capture and pass on dying Karnali musical traditions to young students.

Details of the three-phase program are outlined below.

PLAN

The ArtWorks program was conducted in three phases in order to create an environment where young students (as well as director Hira Bijuli) could immerse themselves in the project. Plans were made so that there was adequate time to rehearse. The collaboration with Karnali Arts Centre allowed Srijanalaya to extend the usual few days of school workshops to 20 days.

PHASE 1: PREPARATION, (August/September)

Kathmandu

- Story selected
- Script written
- Director, Choreographer and Music Director finalized
- Sets and Props planned
- Preparation for workshops with students
- Schedules set
- Necessary materials purchased
- Travels planned

Mugu

- Students selected
- Supporting Khas musicians and dancers selected
- Workshop schedules prepared and communicated to students and their guardians
- Permission to work in the district secured

PHASE 2: WORKSHOPS I (September 12 to 30)

Mugu

Facilitator/Director: Hira Bijuli

Workshops with students were conducted over 15 days (3 hours each day) to familiarize them with the story and script. Workshops allowed students to improvise as well as experiment with physical theatre. Students also researched costumes and the historical context of the play. Songs and dances were incorporated from the very beginning. At the end of the 15 days, the students were familiar with their characters and dialogue, and were immersed in the traditional folk music and dance styles.

PHASE 3: WORKSHOPS II & PERFORMANCE (October 1 to 6)

Mugu

Five days were dedicated to:

1. polishing the choreography, dance and music with the help of ArtWorks team members
2. creating the set and props by Art Works team members with sporadic assistance from participating students.

The performance took place on October 6 at a public space in Gamgadi. Invitations were sent out to neighboring schools and community members. Announcements were also made on the radio.



The article, **“A Flower on a Lake”** provides a more personal reflection about the program. It can be accessed here: <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-10-15/a-flower-on-a-lake.html>



PITHAULI:

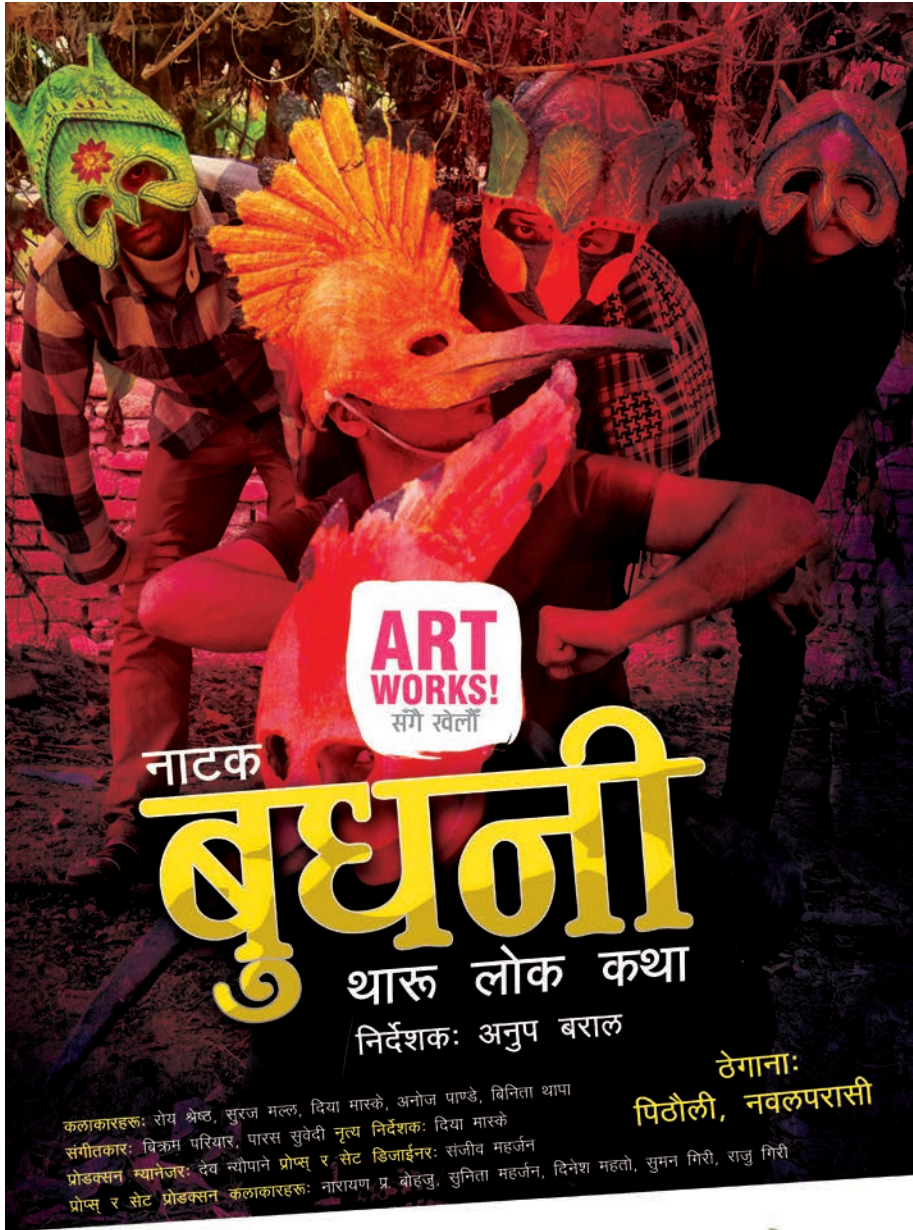
BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF TEACHERS THROUGH MULTIPLE VISITS, DISCUSSIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

For one lesson, Sunita Maharjan collected leaves from the school compound and used them for collage work with kindergarten students. Students were then asked to pay attention to sizes and shapes, textures and colors which informed them about the village's plant diversity. By observing this lesson, as well as a lesson on multiplication that allowed students to use colors and notice patterns, teachers understood how the arts can be used in an interdisciplinary way that fosters conceptual understanding.

Five visits were planned at the government school in Pithauli in order to build on lessons and follow up with teachers. During the first two visits, we demonstrated various lessons that included but was not limited to the visual arts.

For our third visit to Pithauli, Srijanalaya collaborated with the Kathmandu-based theater group Actors' Studio and put up a children's theater production for the community members, using a Tharu folktale and the regional context as a framework for the narrative. The production was attended by students from neighboring schools as well as various different community members. An educational booklet focusing on the main ideas of the play was distributed to students. During these shows, Santu Devi student work from our previous visits was also exhibited. This aspect of the Art Works program was designed in order to bring in various art forms together in a theatrical production, to inspire students and teachers to participate in arts appreciation, as well as to value and preserve local cultural traditions.





**ART
WORKS!**

संगै रवेलाँ

नाटक

बुधनी

थारु लोक कथा

निर्देशक: अनुप बराल

ठेगाना:

पिठौली, नवलपरासी

कलाकारहरू: रोय श्रेष्ठ, सुरज मल्ल, दिया मार्के, अनोज पाण्डे, बिनिता थापा
संगीतकार: विक्रम परिथार, पारस सुवेदी नृत्य निर्देशक: दिया मार्के
प्रोडक्सन म्यानेजर: देव स्योपाने प्रोप्स र सेट डिजाईनर: संजीव महर्जन
प्रोप्स र सेट प्रोडक्सन कलाकारहरू: नारायण प्र. बोहजु, सुनिता महर्जन, दिनेश महतो, सुमन गिरी, राजु गिरी

SHIKSHYA
FOUNDATION
NEPAL
शिक्षा फाउन्डेसन नेपाल

सृजनालय
SRIJANALAYA

पिठौलीको साझेदार
महेन्द्र प्रधान

Actors
STUDIO



We planned the fourth visit towards the beginning of the school year and demonstrated lessons that had to do more with classroom culture and community-building. As we had done during other visits, we also sat with teachers and held meetings to answer questions and helped them plan follow-up lessons.





Masks of birds made by class 3 and 4 displayed on the ground of Santu Devi Primary School, Pithauli

About Shikshya Foundation Nepal

Shikshya Foundation Nepal, through contribution in education, aims to create a critical mass of leaders who will be instrumental in turning our society into a just, equitable, secular, accountable, thinking, questioning, progressive society. Shikshya means Education – and we strongly believe that while the emphasis on formal education is important, it is equally important that education can take place beyond classrooms, especially through reading, arts and culture.

Shikshya Foundation Nepal was established in 2011 by New York based Fashion Designer Prabal Gurung with his sister Kumudini Shrestha and friends Rati Shah, Rupali Golchha and Riva Thapa.

About Srijanalaya

Srijanalaya is a growing community of artists and educators in Nepal who offer creative mediums as an alternative approach to rote-learning and static textbooks. We develop programs that create safe spaces of learning through the arts. Our Vision is for every child in Nepal to have access to safe spaces to express herself or himself and to be heard.

What do we mean by ‘learning through the arts’?

- to communicate and express oneself through any medium
- to have access to the visual, performing, and language arts
- to ask questions, look for answers, and take a stand
- to make sense of one’s world

What does it mean to create ‘safe spaces’?

- Support children’s emotional, cognitive, physical, social, and cultural development
- Give special attention to the most vulnerable and marginalized
- Provide children the time, materials, space, and guidance to make connections and foster learning
- Emphasize the relevance of learning materials, language, and context for children
- Strengthen and respect diversity, individuality, and collectivity
- Build a support network of children, parents, educators, artists, development practitioners, and p4rs who understand the need for creative spaces

Srijanalaya is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization established in Nepal in 2013





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