Providing Grassroots Support at a Community Level

by

Supporting Rural Communities with Health &

Education Projects Since 2013

2013 – August 2026

Himalayan Quests Foundation
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Gov. Reg. No: 572/072/73 Social Welfare Council No: 42883

INTRODUCTION

Himalayan Quests Foundation (HQF), a Nepali, non-profit social organisation, was established to manage and expand the growing number of community projects initiated by its sister organisation, Himalayan Quests. The journey began with a series of free health camps in the spring of 2013, designed to serve remote and underserved communities in rural Nepal. It was formally established in May 2015 after the devastating earthquake.

Although only a small organisation, over the years, HQF has made a significant impact through its wide range of initiatives. It has conducted numerous health camps, providing essential services in eye care, dental care, orthopaedics, women's health and general medicine. In addition to healthcare, it has been actively involved in raising awareness on public health issues and contributing to infrastructure development, including the construction and improvement of rural government schools and health posts.

HQF played a vital role in the aftermath of the devastating 2015 earthquake, supporting the reconstruction of 28 classrooms across 13 schools. Contributed to the rebuilding of health post facilities, and launched several other community-based recovery and resilience projects. Through these efforts, HQF has reached and supported some of Nepal's most underprivileged and marginalised communities.

Since its establishment, HQF has implemented projects across seven districts of Nepal; Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Syangja, Sindupalchok, Rasuwa, Makwanakpur and Lamjung - continuing to expand its reach and deepen its impact.

HQ Foundation Blog

GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE

HQF is governed by a 9-member Executive Board, which plays a key role in strategic decisions and organisational oversight. The Board meets annually to review and pass agendas related to the organisation's operations and development. Financial transactions are managed through a bank account that is jointly operated by two designated board members, ensuring transparency and accountability.
The organisation is regularly reviewed and renewed annually at the Ward Office, Municipality, District Administration Office and Social Welfare Council (SWC), maintaining full compliance with government regulations. Gov. Reg. No: 572/072/73 Social Welfare Council No: 42883

STAFFING

HQF is currently run on a part time basis, running projects as and when time allows and funding is available. The organisation has only one paid member of staff, our Project Manager Hari Bhusal, who works on a project-to-project basis, with his costs being covered within each project's budget. The Co-Founders, Amrit and Kate Ale, provide their time at no cost.

FUNDING

As an organisation, HQF receives no financial support from the Nepali Government and is 100% reliant on external donations from private individuals and not-for-profit organisations.

To say we have been overwhelmed by the response and support for our projects to date, is an understatement. Our progress would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment of our partners, donors and stakeholders. Their belief in our mission has enabled us to continue offering meaningful, grassroots-level support and building a more equitable future for all.

However, unfortunately, our main health camp donor, One World One Heart Foundation, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organisation registered in Taos, New Mexico has recently closed due to illness of the founder and a lack of willingness from the Board to take on the responsibility of running the organisation.

Our current largest active donor is the Wishner 5, a family based in New York who channel their funds via Community Foundation New Jersey, a 501(c)3 registered organisation. To date they have supported the post-earthquake school rebuild project; phase 1 of the WASH Programme and are funding the building of a new health post in Lamjung District.

HQF PROJECTS

Health Camps & Cataract Operations

In 2013, Himalayan Quests organised and ran its first series of free, multi-disciplinary health camps in rural villages in mid-west Nepal, providing communities with access to healthcare services that were otherwise unavailable in the region. These camps treated individuals who would have otherwise gone without care and provided essential health education, making a powerful and lasting impact on the lives of thousands of patients.

Over the years, HQF has offered consultations in general health, eye care, dental care, women's health and physiotherapy. More recently, we have concentrated our efforts on two key areas where patients are least likely to seek medical attention - eyes and dental, and where accessible follow-up care is available, we have also included women's health. These three areas allow us to make the most meaningful difference with the funds we have available.

Following each camp, free cataract surgeries are organised for those in need, restoring not only their sight but, in many cases, their ability to work and live independently. Having started out running health camps exclusively in mid-west Nepal, since 2017 these services have been extended to other rural communities across the country. In addition to health camps, the organisation has supported long-term infrastructure projects, including the reconstruction of a health post in Sindhupalchok and the establishment of a birthing centre in Syangja district.

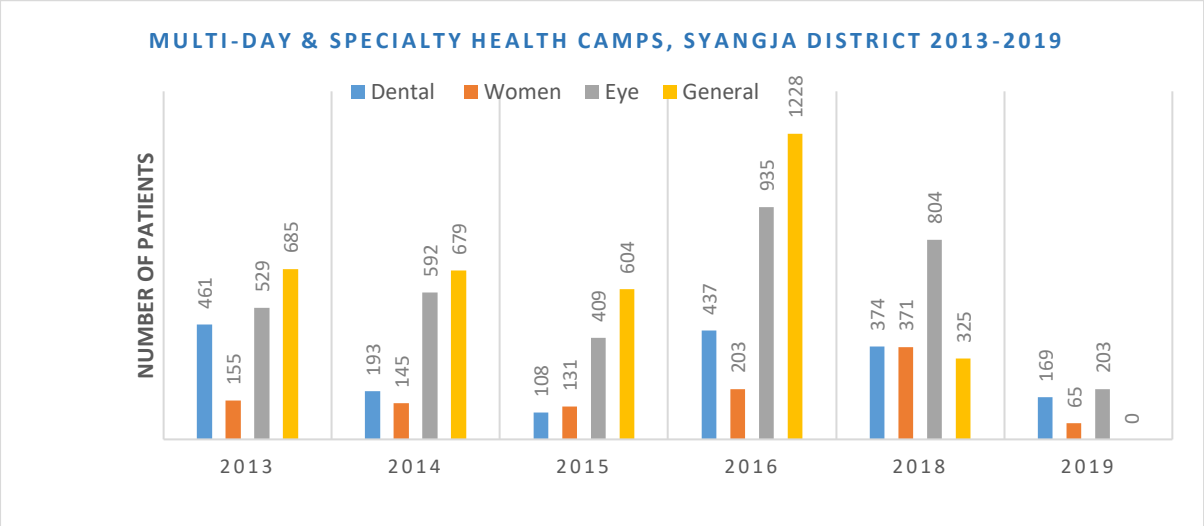
To date, more than 15,000 people have received health services from the health post in Sindhupalchok, and over 315 babies have been born at the birthing centre in Sirkot, Syangja.

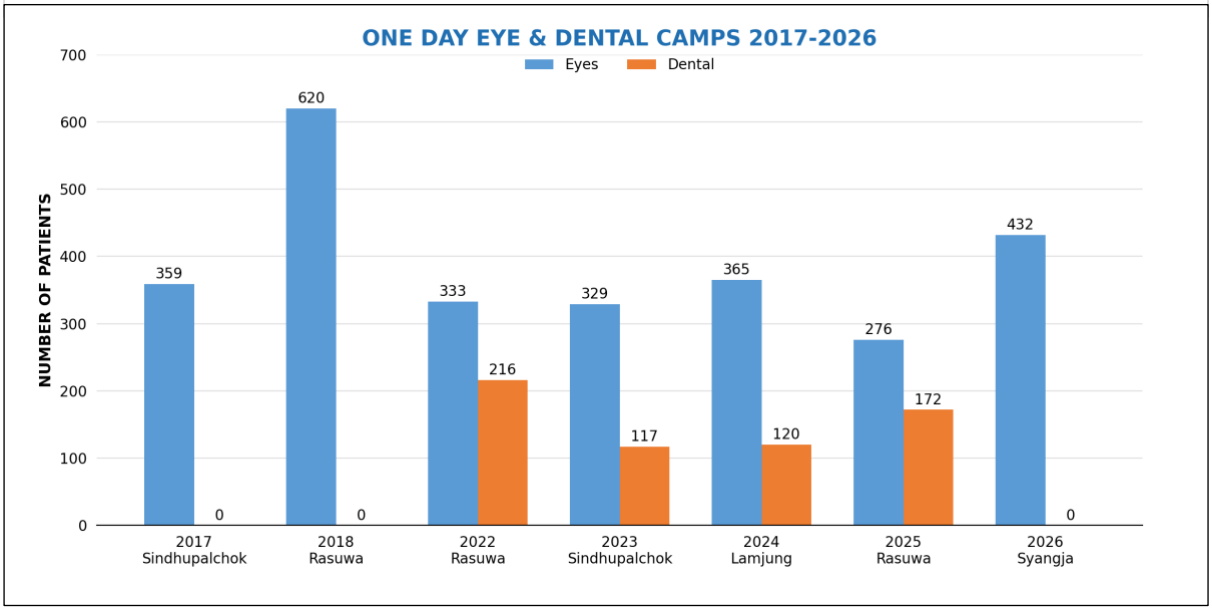
HQF also ran post-earthquake trauma workshops in a rural community in Sindhupalchok. This community was particularly hard hit by the 2015 earthquake and consequent aftershocks, with no buildings left standing and a large loss of life and livelihoods. International trauma experts worked with local health providers, teachers and some community members to help them gain an understanding of their trauma, its effects, and how to renegotiate those effects using Somatic Experiencing, a psychobiological approach to relieving and resolving trauma. The aim was to provide participants with knowledge, understanding and practical tools to better care for themselves and others during and after this time of intense loss and hardship.

HQF Health Camp Blogs

Key Impacts:

- **Access to Healthcare for 13,000+ Patients**
  Through free multi-day health camps, over 13,432 patients have been reached across rural areas of Syangja, Lamjung, Sindhupalchok and Rasuwa Districts, many of whom had never received medical attention before.



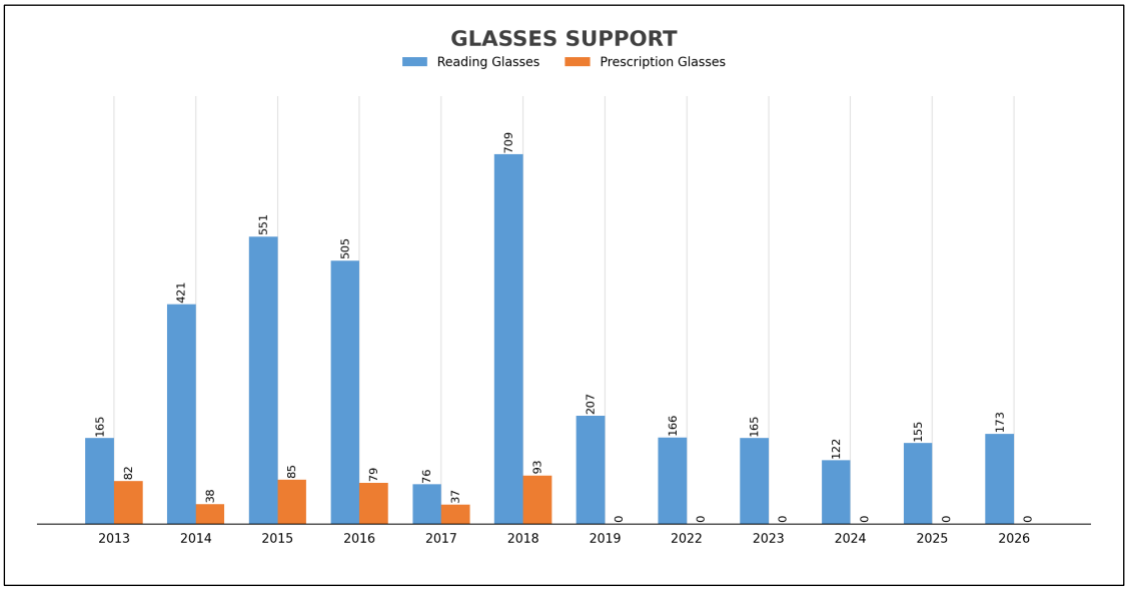


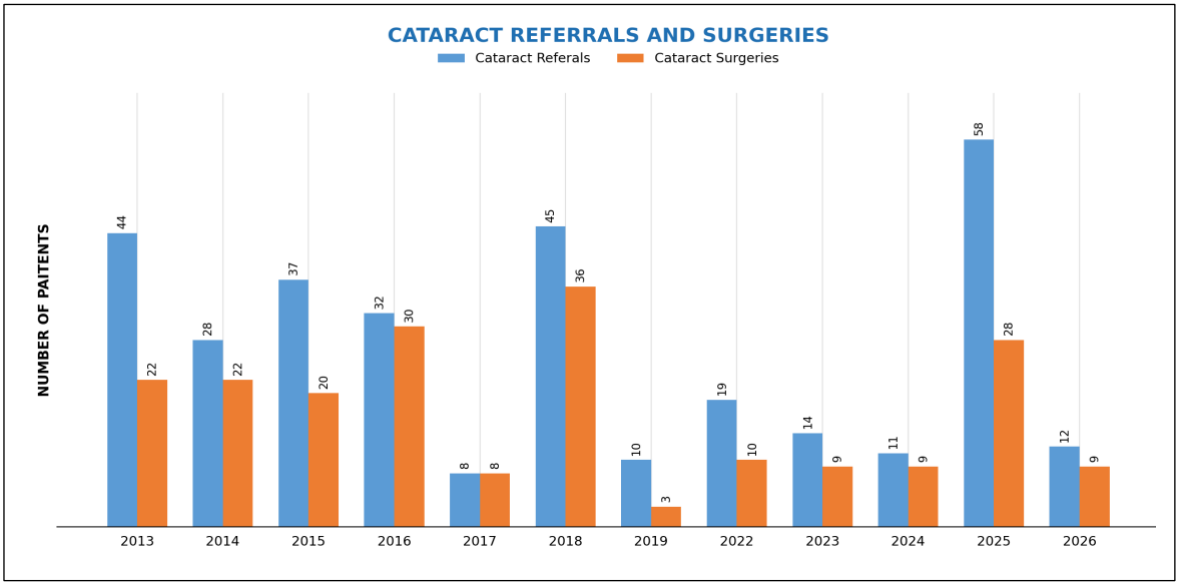
Post camps, a wide range of health services for attending patients have been facilitated, with all costs covered, from transportation, accommodation, subsistence and of course medical and medication fees. From general medicine, 17 ENT cases, 2 hydrocele cases and 1 neurology referral were made. Additionally, we facilitated 2 referrals for detached retina cases to Tilganga Eye Hospital, Kathmandu, and for women's health, 12 ladies received follow-up care and 3 prolapse surgeries were successfully supported. Furthermore, we provided support for 1 pterygium surgery. Through these interventions, we have helped many patients access the specialised care they needed, improving overall health outcomes in the community.

- **Focused Care in Critical Areas**
  By prioritising eye care, dental services and women's health, the programme has addressed medical issues that are often neglected, especially in rural areas. These targeted services help prevent long-term health complications and improve day-to-day functionality.
- **Restoration of Sight**
  Post camp cataract surgeries have restored vision for hundreds of individuals, transforming

lives by enabling them to return to work and support their families and especially for the older patients, regain their independence. One of the most impactful cataract surgeries we provided was for an 18-month-old child, who had congenital, bilateral cataracts. This child went from being almost blind (she could just see over her cataracts) to having her vision restored.

Restoring the gift of sight through cataract surgery, is probably the single most impactful and life changing service the foundation provides.





- **Health Education and Awareness**
  Each health camp and other projects include health education sessions, equipping community members with knowledge about best practice for hygiene and hand washing, including cause and consequence if not practiced; reproductive health, nutrition and disease prevention, empowering them to make informed decisions about their health and hygiene

practices and thus reducing the need for unnecessary trips to a health care facility (where available) and the consumption of antibiotics and other expensive medicines.

- **Strengthening Healthcare in Communities**
  Beyond the camps, support for the reconstruction of a health post in Sindhupalchok and a birthing centre in Syangja has strengthened local healthcare systems, creating sustainable access to services beyond the short-term impact of the camps.
  - **Establishment of Birthing Center**

  The establishment of a birthing canter in Sirkot village of Syangja has had a powerful impact on improving maternal and new born health by providing skilled care, reducing deaths and managing complications during childbirth. Previously, the local communities recorded several deaths each year due to unsafe home births without the support and care of trained health personnel. Today, all villagers come to the birthing centre for safe deliveries. To date, over 315 babies have been born at the birthing centre. The centre has made birthing care much more accessible, saving families from the long, costly journeys previously required to reach distant hospitals. Alongside safe delivery services, the centre has promoted health education, empowering women with essential knowledge about nutrition, breastfeeding and family planning. It has also strengthened trust in the local healthcare system, supported timely birth registration and respected cultural practices, making healthcare more welcoming and familiar. Economically, healthier mothers and babies have led to stronger, more productive families and communities. Overall, the birthing center has transformed village life by ensuring safer births, promoting women's rights and building a foundation for a healthier future.
  - **Health Post Rebuild in Sindhupalchok**

  The health post in Sindhupalchok has played a vital role in supporting the local community, especially after the devastating earthquake of 2015. The original health post was badly damaged during the disaster, leaving thousands without access to essential healthcare. With support from Himalayan Quests Foundation, the health post was reconstructed, restoring a crucial lifeline for the people. Since then, more than 15,000 individuals have received health services from this centre. The rebuilt facility has been a major help for both health workers and patients, providing a safe, well-equipped space for delivering quality healthcare. Its presence has strengthened the resilience of the community, ensuring better health outcomes and a quicker recovery from the long-term impacts of the earthquake.
- **Annual Expansion**
  The transformation of our health camps into an annual event, ensures we are able to reach other districts, further extending our reach. Subject to funding, we would like to run more than one camp a year and return to previous communities that have been served.

Challenges Faced in Running Health Camps

1. **Logistical Difficulties:**
   Reaching communities in remote areas requires long travel hours, appropriate transportation, careful coordination of medical team movements, timely delivery of medicines and equipment, willing host families to offer accommodation and meals in the absence of hotels, and the flexibility to adapt to weather conditions and other unforeseen challenges.
2. **Limited Local Resources:**
   Some locations lack basic infrastructure, such as electricity, easy access to water, or appropriate venues, making setup and service delivery more difficult.
3. **Short Duration vs. High Demand:**
   The limited number of camp days often made it difficult to serve all patients thoroughly, especially when turnout exceeded expectations.

4. **Follow-Up Limitations:**
   Since camps are short-term interventions, ensuring proper follow-up care for patients with chronic conditions or complex cases remains a major challenge.
5. **Community Mobilisation:**
   In some cases, low awareness or late communication by the local Wards, health posts etc limited the number of beneficiaries who could have accessed the services provided, especially women and elderly populations.
6. **Language and Cultural Sensitivities:**
   In diverse communities, language barriers and cultural beliefs sometimes affect participation, especially in sensitive services like cataract surgery, reproductive or dental health.

Lessons Learned

1. **Advance Coordination is Crucial:**
   Early and close collaboration with local governments, schools and health posts helps secure venues, mobilise communities and ensure smooth logistics.
2. **Community Engagement Increases Reach:**
   Involving local leaders, youth clubs and women's groups before the camp improves turnout and ensures the most vulnerable populations are reached.
3. **Integrated Services Add More Value:**
   Combining multiple health screening services alongside health education in one camp maximises impact and addresses multiple community needs at once.
4. **Need for Referral Mechanisms:**
   Establishing referral systems with appropriate health facilities ensures patients with serious conditions receive follow-up care after the camp.
5. **Data Collection Supports Future Planning:**
   Recording patient numbers, types of illnesses and feedback helps improve planning for future camps and tailor services to local health needs.
6. **Awareness Before and After is Key:**
   Pre-camp promotion and post-camp education (e.g., hygiene tips, chronic disease management) strengthen long-term community health outcomes.

Healing Smiles, Restoring Sight | Health Camps in Rasuwa, Nepal | Himalayan Quests Foundation

2019 Health Camps Video

2014 Health Camps Video

School Building Initiatives

On 25th April 2015, Nepal was struck by a devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake, claiming thousands of lives and destroying homes, schools, health facilities and vital infrastructure. In the immediate aftermath HQF focused its efforts on emergency relief, reaching remote communities where larger organisations had yet to arrive.

Essential supplies were delivered including tarpaulins, corrugated metal sheets, foam mattresses, hygiene kits and food. In every village we reached, we also set up a mini health clinic to deal with minor injuries and issues, ran education sessions on hygiene best practice and taught community members how to construct simple drop-pit toilets to help curb open defecation, and thus the spread of disease. Relief was provided in Kathmandu, Syangja, Rasuwa, Dolakha, Sindupalchok and Solukhumbu regions.

As the crisis response evolved, the focus shifted to the education sector. Using tin sheets, bamboo and salvaged materials, temporary classrooms were built to replace those destroyed in the quake. This gave children a safe space to continue learning and regain a sense of normalcy amidst the upheaval. School uniforms, bags and stationery were also provided to replace those lost in the rubble.

Temporary classrooms were repaired and rebuilt in Rasuwa, Dolakha and Syangja districts.

According to the Nepal Ministry of Education, the earthquake impacted over 8,620 schools, destroying 19,692 classrooms, severely damaging 11,935 and causing minor damage to a further 17,434.

The next phase in the recovery process was to focus to on the long-term, beginning with the construction of permanent classrooms to replace hastily built temporary classrooms, many of which were in severe disrepair, and to ensure the students and teachers had safe, strong, weatherproof buildings to continue their education in. To date, we have successfully completed 28 classrooms across 13 schools in the districts of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Makwanpur, Sindhuli and Syangja.

HQF Blogs - Earthquake Rebuild Project

2015 Earthquake School Rebuild Project

SN	District Name	Number of schools per district	Number of Classrooms per district	Student registration numbers at time of build	No of teachers at time of build
1	Kathmandu	1	2	90	8
2	Lalitpur	1	2	110	10
3	Makwanpur	3	6	866	39
4	Sindhuli	7	15	1,418	63
5	Syangja	1	3	258	15
	TOTALS	**13**	**28**	**2,742**	**135**

Thanks to these efforts, over 2,700 students were able to move out of Temporary Learning Centres and into safe, secure and child-friendly classrooms. This transition marked a vital step in restoring stability and hope to communities still recovering from the trauma of the earthquake. Year on year more children and teachers will also benefit from this legacy project.

Key Impacts:

Emergency Relief Impact

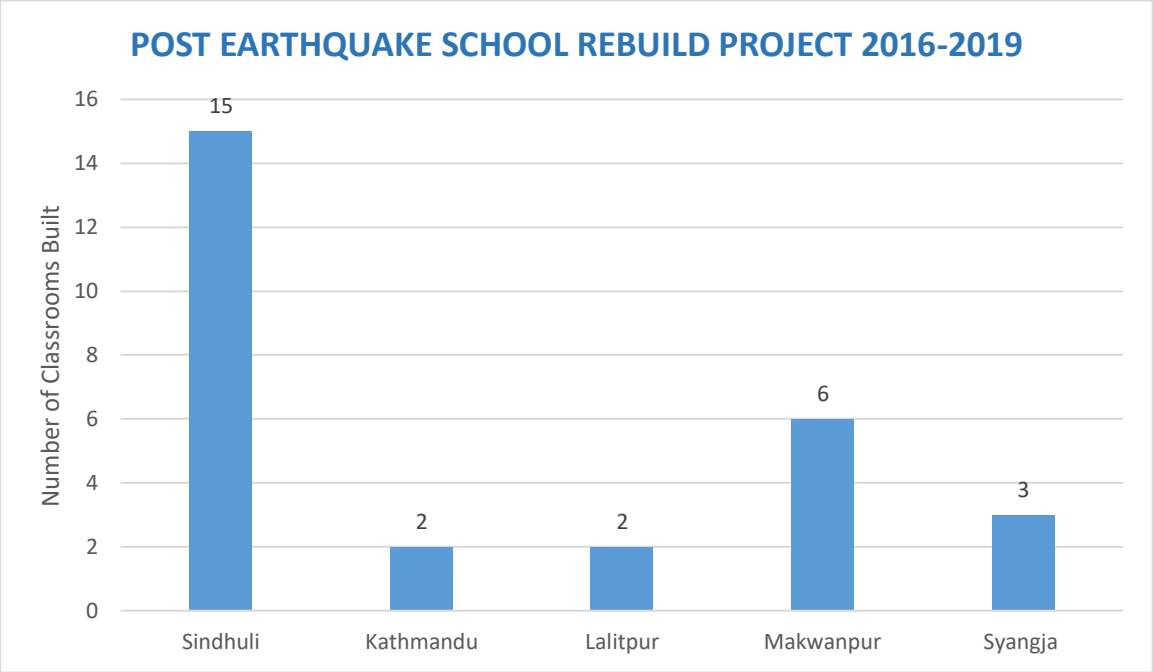
- **Reaching vulnerable communities** in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake, HQF provided direct support to over 1,500 individuals across Sindhupalchok, Rasuwa, Dolakha Syangja and Solukhumbu districts. The emergency response included the distribution of food and hygiene supplies, temporary shelter materials, psychosocial counselling for trauma recovery and community-based Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) sessions. These interventions not only addressed the immediate needs of affected families but also contributed to long-term resilience by promoting mental well-being and preparedness for future disasters.
- **Established mobile health clinics** during relief missions to Rasuwa and Sindhupalchok providing immediate care and raising awareness on critical health and hygiene practices.
- **Promoted sanitation and disease prevention** by teaching communities how to build simple drop-pit toilets, helping curb open defecation and protect public health.

Educational Recovery and Support Impact:

- **Constructed temporary classrooms** from local and relief materials, enabling children to return to school safely and quickly after the disaster.
- **Distributed educational materials** such as school uniforms, bags, notebooks, pens, and pencils, ensuring no child was left behind in their learning journey.
- **Restored normalcy** for thousands of children through access to safe spaces for learning, play, and social connection.
- **The establishment of a well-equipped library and computer facility** at Bal Sikshya Nikatan Basic School, Syangja, has significantly enhanced the learning environment, directly benefiting over 500 students year on year. The access to diverse books and digital resources has encouraged reading habits, improved digital literacy and opened doors to self-learning and exploration beyond the traditional curriculum. This support has not only bridged the gap in educational resources for rural students, but has also empowered them with the tools necessary for a brighter academic future and stronger career prospects.

Long-Term Infrastructure Development Impact

- **Built 28 permanent classrooms across 13 schools** in Lalitpur, Makwanpur, Sindhuli, Syangja and Kathmandu districts.
- **Helped over 2,700 students and teachers** transition from unsafe Temporary Learning Centres to secure, child-friendly, weather proof classrooms.
- **Provided strong, safe, permanent classrooms** for future generations of students.
- **Strengthened community resilience** by working closely with local stakeholders and involving them in the rebuilding process.



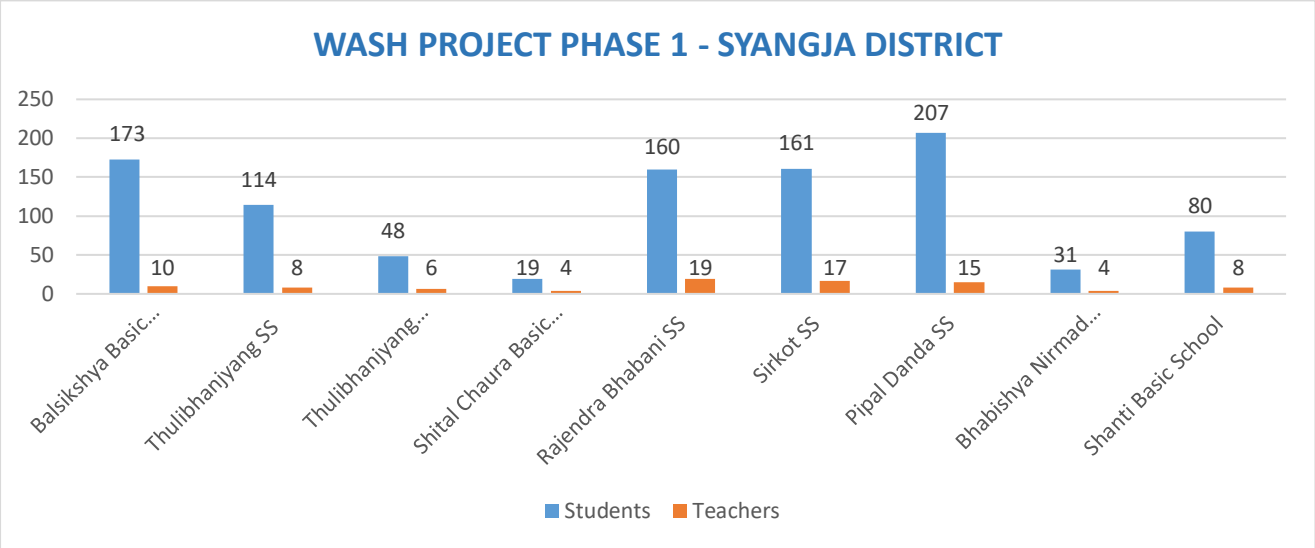
WASH Programme

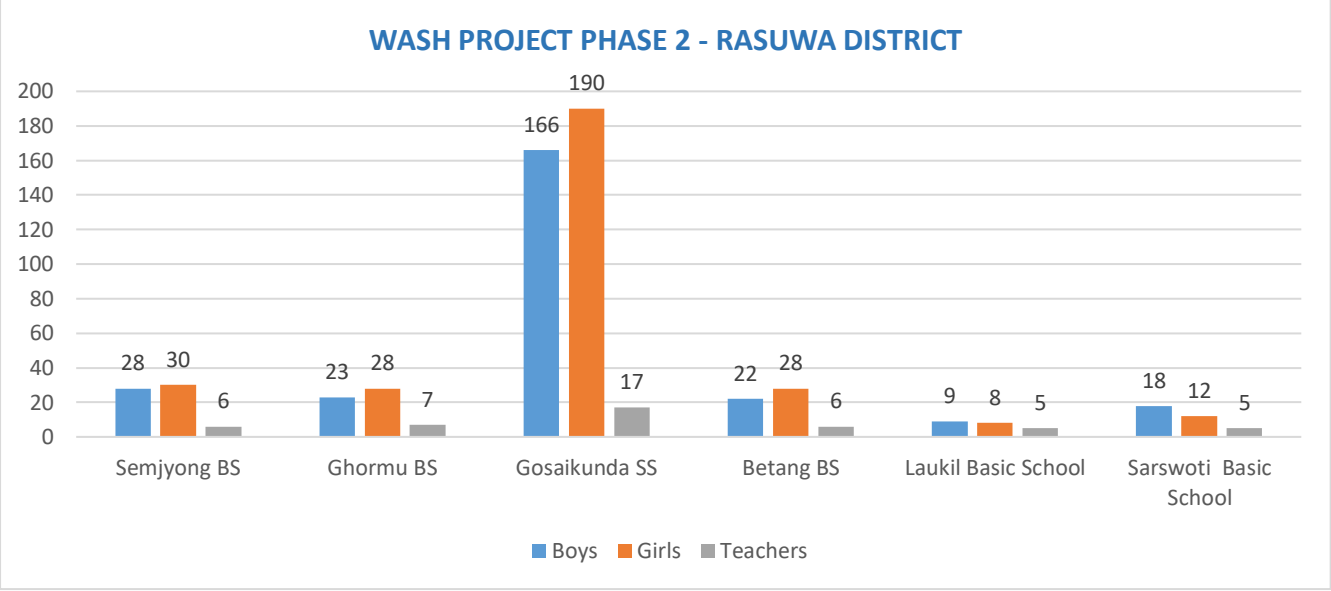
The WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) project is one of the sustainable, flagship, legacy initiatives of Himalayan Quests Foundation. Safe water, working toilets and hygiene facilities help keep children alive and healthy and girls in education for longer upon reaching menstruation age.

In Bhirkot Municipality of Syangja District, we successfully supported the installation of over 8 handwashing stations, along with water pipe connections, water tanks, and the maintenance of toilet facilities, making them more hygienic, accessible and child-friendly.

The project also includes WASH education, reproductive health sessions and awareness campaigns on child marriage prevention. In addition, we provided training to existing school clubs to empower students to lead ongoing WASH activities in a sustainable manner. Building on this success, the second phase of the project is now being implemented in Rasuwa District, extending the impact to more schools and communities.

HQF WASH Programme Blogs





The WASH project implemented by Himalayan Quests Foundation has had a transformative impact on both schools and community health centres.

Key Impacts

- **Improved Hygiene and Health:** The installation of handwashing stations, water tanks, and improved toilet facilities has significantly enhanced hygiene practices among students and health centre visitors.

- **Child-Friendly Infrastructure:** Upgraded toilet structures and accessible handwashing facilities have made school environments safer and more inclusive, especially for young children and girls during menstruation.
- **Behavioural Change Through Education:** WASH education and reproductive health sessions have increased awareness of personal hygiene, menstrual health and the importance of clean water. These sessions have helped break taboos and promote healthier practices among students and communities.
- **Empowered Student Leadership:** By training existing student clubs, the project has empowered youth to take ownership of WASH initiatives, ensuring long-term sustainability and continuous peer education within schools.
- **Social Impact:** Awareness campaigns on child marriage and reproductive health have sparked important conversations and empowered young people, especially girls, to make informed decisions, fostering a more informed and equitable community.
- **Scalable Model:** The success in Syangja and the demand for such a project has laid the foundation for expansion, with the second phase of the project now underway in Rasuwa District. Most rural government schools do not have budget to fix toilet and water infrastructure issues and thus repairs remain undone and the state of disrepair increases. Subject to funding, this project can be replicated and expanded throughout many rural government schools, increasing the impact in remote and underserved areas.
- **Child-Friendly WASH Facilities Boost Girls' School Attendance:** Having running water in the toilets, especially in the girls has a significant positive impact. The new facilities enable girls to attend school more regularly, especially during menstruation as they are now able to keep themselves clean. Prior to the installation of running water in the girls' toilets, many students would miss days of school each month, often leading to early school drop-out rates. With access to clean, safe and private facilities, girls now feel more comfortable and confident attending school throughout the month, leading to improved education outcomes and greater empowerment.

Challenges Faced with Implementing the WASH Programme

1. **Infrastructure Limitations:**
   In some remote areas, lack of existing water supply infrastructure made installation of handwashing stations and water tanks more difficult, time-consuming and costly.
2. **Maintenance Issues:**
   Despite initial improvements, maintaining toilet structures and water systems remain a challenge due to limited local technical capacity and lack of ownership in some communities.
3. **Coordination with Government Line Agencies:**
   One of the key operational challenges in implementing even short-term projects is the complex and time-consuming coordination required with government line agencies. Approvals must be obtained from multiple offices, including the Chief District Officer (CDO), the respective Municipality, and the Social Welfare Council (SWC). While necessary for ensuring compliance and alignment with national priorities, the bureaucratic procedures are often lengthy and unpredictable, and can cause significant delays in project implementation. Administrative bottlenecks, frequent staff changes or unclear documentation requirements further complicate the process, even for well-prepared and community-driven initiatives.
4. **Limited Resources in Schools:**
   Many schools lacked dedicated budgets or trained staff to continue WASH and awareness activities independently after the project's first phase.
5. **Weather and Accessibility:**
   Especially in hilly areas like Syangja and Rasuwa, transportation of materials and team mobilisation is hindered during wet weather due to roads becoming impassable.

Lessons Learned

1. **Community Ownership is Key:**
   Involving local stakeholders such as the school management committee, parents and the students themselves from the beginning ensures better acceptance, use and maintenance of WASH facilities.
2. **Capacity Building Strengthens Sustainability:**
   Training school clubs and health workers to lead WASH activities fostered long-term sustainability and helped continue awareness even after the project phase ended.
3. **Holistic Approach Works Best:**
   Integrating hygiene infrastructure with education (WASH, reproductive health, child marriage awareness) create a broader and more lasting impact on student behaviour and school culture.
4. **Flexibility Improves Implementation:**
   Being adaptive in project planning, such as adjusting activities based on terrain, seasons and local customs helps ensure smoother execution in diverse communities.
5. **Follow-up is Crucial:**
   Regular monitoring and follow-up support is essential to keep the facilities functional and maintain the momentum of behaviour change.

TESTAMONIALS & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Ward Chairperson

"The Municipality is supporting toilet block construction, but they often overlook the small, basic needs. Neither the Ward nor the schools have budgets for these necessities. HQF and the support from Wishner5 are very much appreciated."

Rajendra Rana, Head Teacher – Sirkot Secondary School:

"We feel very fortunate to be connected with HQF. Their support has greatly contributed to the improvement of our school and our community's health and education sectors."

Sapana Rana, Treasurer – Pipal Danda Children's Club:

"I've seen nice structures like this only in some hotels and colleges. All of us girls are very happy to have a beautiful wash station and water taps inside our toilets. Also, the health session on sexual and reproductive health was very useful. It was great to learn about the youth-friendly services available at the health post."

Romakanta Ghimire, Head Teacher – Pipal Danda Secondary School:

"We are very happy with HQF's support. We will continue WASH activities and aim to become a model school for WASH practices."

Binid Saru, Assistant Head Teacher – Bhabishya Nirman School:

"Previously, we faced great difficulty cleaning the toilets because of the rough surfaces, poor water storage systems and the absence of proper handwashing stations. Now, all these problems have been solved."

Kumar Rana Magar, Health Post In-Charge – Sirkot:

"Himalayan Quests Foundation has become a true catalyst for change in rural communities, particularly through its health camps, support for the birthing centre, WASH projects and school improvement initiatives. Villagers frequently ask when the next health camp will be organized."

Ravindra Shakya, Country Director – Restless Development Nepal:

"We were closely observing Himalayan Quests' support in building schools in Makwanpur and Sindhuli. It was a tremendous help in very needy areas, providing children with safe learning spaces outside of damaged classrooms and temporary learning centres post-earthquake."

Ongoing Projects

Simpani Health Post Build

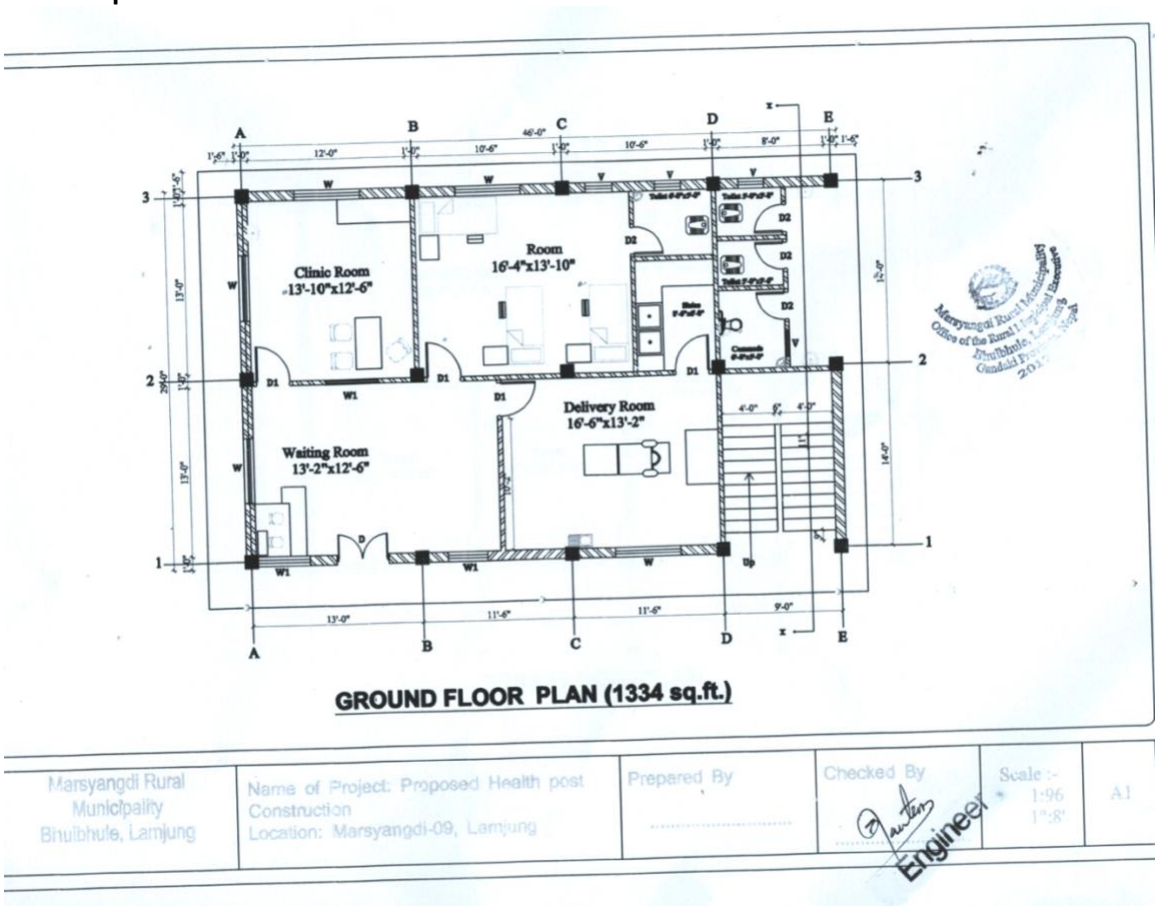
For the fiscal year 2025/2026, HQF's new health post in Simpani, a small rural community in Lamjung District, is now under construction, replacing the old, leaky two-room health post that currently serves the area and is generally unfit for purpose. With a planned budget of NPR 180 million (US$135,000) for the building structure, this project is being made possible due to the generous support of the Wishner family, collectively known as the Wishner5. Simpani Ward had remained the only ward among the nine wards of Marsyangdi Rural Municipality without a newly built health post, and its future was uncertain, especially given the Nepal Government's ongoing struggles with health infrastructure budgets. Construction is now moving forward as the Municipality finalises its budget for the upcoming Nepali fiscal year.

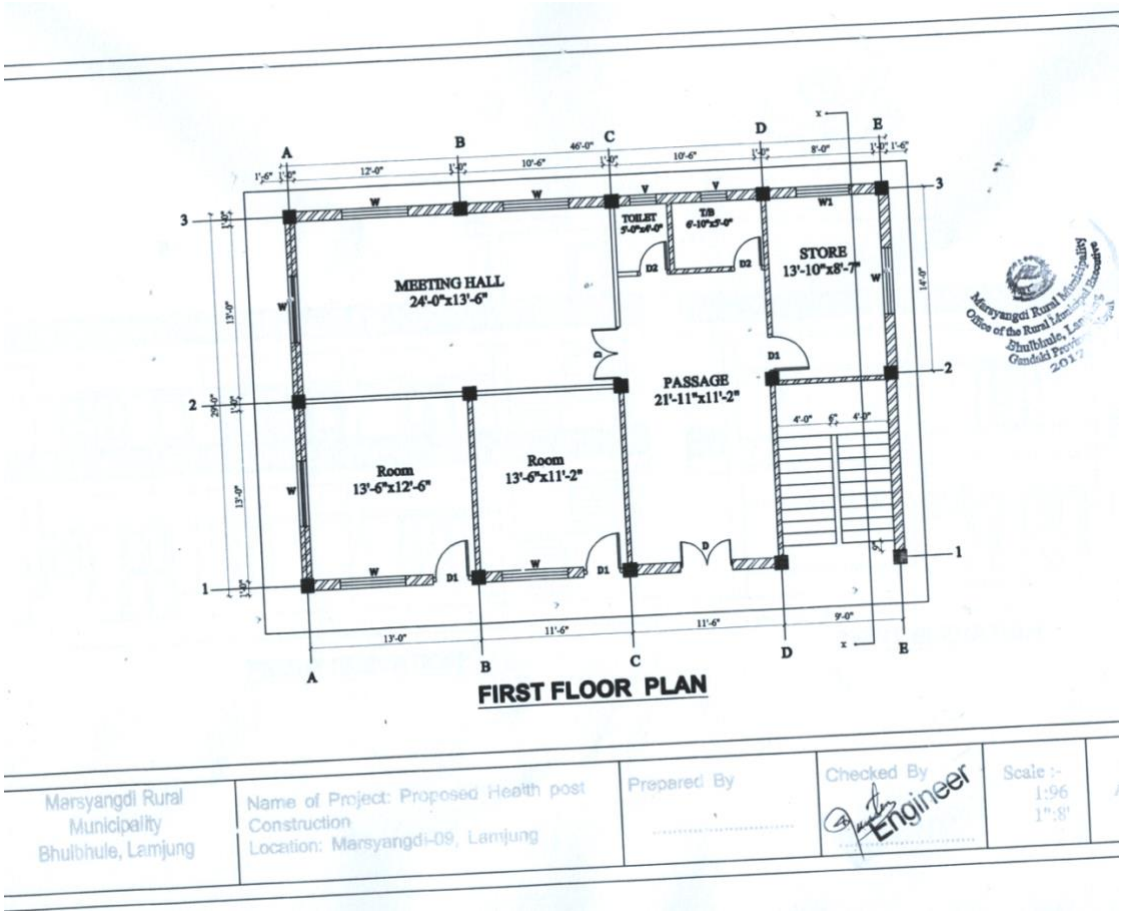
The mayor has expressed strong support for the health post build, confirming that this project is included in the Municipality's budget book, with funds allocated for both the preparation and operation phases to ensure sustainability before and after construction. Built on land donated by the local community, the new health post will incorporate a small laboratory for simple tests and a birthing centre alongside the usual OPD rooms. It is also planned that the old health post will receive the necessary repairs so it too can be utilised in a functional manner.

HQF Rural Community Project Blogs

Simpani's Story Of Resilience | Health Post in Lamjung | A New Beginning For Rural Healthcare

New Simpani Health Post Plans





WASH Programme

Looking forward, HQF would like to continue to roll out its WASH programme and support school infrastructure development in rural villages, where school conditions are extremely poor. Many schools face the lack of child friendly WASH structures and communities have repeatedly requested assistance. Subject to funding, HQF is committed to addressing these urgent needs.

Health Camps

As an organisation HQF is committed to continuing these annual screening initiatives, focusing on eye, dental and women's health, alongside follow-up cataract operations. We receive frequent requests from rural communities and would very much like to expand our reach and impact by running more than just one per year.

CONCLUSION

Despite HQF only being a small foundation, built out of the desire to support the more remote and marginalised communities while giving back to those communities that support its sister organisation, Himalayan Quests & Adventures, over the last thirteen years the foundation's achievements have not been insubstantial.

With a focus on basic health care, health education and education infrastructure, we have created lasting legacies for all involved, with most of our projects impacting future generations and not just those at the time of implementation.

The need is great in rural Nepal and HQF's only limitation is funding. With sufficient funds we can grow the Foundation and extend the support and reach we are able to provide.