



Empower Dalit Women of Nepal

may 2005

NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Supported by an ever widening circle of friends and benefactors, EDWON started this year in a strong financial position.

Three years ago we had \$5,000 to spend in Nepal, this year it has increased to \$25,000. And we are happy to inform you that our overhead expenses amount to only 10%. Your enthusiastic support is changing the lives of hundreds of disadvantaged women and children. We are immensely grateful to you all, and appreciative of your continued support.

This winter we launched an extensive website, created with the generous professional contributions of Muthu Arumugam, Kim Mulholland and Cris Carter. Please visit

www.edwon.org to learn more about our programs and the cultural background of EDWON's work.

A logo and a beautiful new print brochure was designed last Fall by Laura Searle, Venus Wan, Samuel Lakas and Jannah Haque—all senior design students at the Art Institute of Boston—under the guidance of their teacher, Rick Rawlins.

Thank you all for your valuable contributions of time and creative talents.

Eva Kasell,
President

NEWS FROM NEPAL WOMEN DEMAND TRAINING FROM DISTRICT OFFICE

Despite continued civil unrest, several leaders from the Chappani Women's Group of Taklung recently walked four hours to Gorkha City, the District headquarters, to meet with high caste government officials at the local development office. The women had come to apply for a skills training program they had heard

was being offered to women's groups. Their visit paid off. Next week a teacher will arrive in their village with sewing machines and supplies, ready to begin three months of sewing training for the whole group of 25 women. They will then be able to start a small cottage industry, hopefully selling their products to suppliers in Kathmandu. This group is paving the way for other women's groups to receive skills training from the local development office in sewing, agriculture and animal husbandry.

This is a groundbreaking initiative and a first among any ADWAN group. Women and Dalits have been conditioned to be subservient, humble and passive. The Chappani Group took a courageous step forward by initiating contact with a government official revealing a strong sense of self worth.



This group has worked together to build their savings since 1996. The women have benefited individually and have also undertaken innovative improvements for their community. They feel great about themselves and their accomplishments. Now they are looking beyond their village to a wider horizon.

ADWAN, Association for Dalit Women's Advancement of Nepal is the original organization in Nepal, which carries out the programs. EDWON, Empower Dalit Women of Nepal is the American sister organization devoted to fundraising and education.



VISIT EDWON'S NEW WEBSITE: www.edwon.org

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NEWS FROM NEPAL

OTHER INITIATIVES THIS SPRING:

- Five new women's groups have been created already this calendar year. One is a pioneer group in a district where ADWAN had no previous presence. Right now **120** women are busy meeting every evening for literacy classes and discussions on how to improve their lives. In a few months they will start their savings and loan groups.
- Last week ADWAN organized **two** regional workshops for leaders of **20** local established women's groups, where they discussed successes and challenges.
- Thanks to your support, **1,500** young Dalit children from several villages will be ready this month to start the school year with a blue uniform, pencils and paper. These children would be barred from attending school without this help, because their parents are too poor to afford the five dollars for uniforms.



Patiswara Workshop, May 3, 2005



SHAWLS

A new shipment of cashmere and silk pashmina shawls in beautiful summer pastels has arrived from Nepal.
Sm: \$25 • Med: \$50 • Lg: \$80

100% of the profits are applied to programs in Nepal. To purchase at any time, call Eva at (781) 862-8047 or email at info@edwon.org


BISHNU TO SPEAK AT NEWTON FREE LIBRARY

We will be showing *We have the Same Kind of Blood*, the documentary about caste discrimination in a village in Nepal, after which Bishnu will speak about her life and work.

TUESDAY NEWTON FREE LIBRARY
JUNE 21 330 HOMER STREET
7 TO 9 PM NEWTON CENTRE

HELP US SAVE ON POSTAGE

By sending us your e-mail address at info@edwon.org. We do not share it with anyone. We will occasionally contact you about news or events.

 **Empower**
Dalit Women of Nepal

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