

NIVAS

Impact Report

# ReCover Nepal

2015-2018





In our 5 years as a tenacious organization, together with our unshakable supporters and courageous partner families, we have managed to create healthy sanitation in every home over a 9 village district, rebuild every earthquake damaged home in 5 villages, provide education on hygiene, sanitation, and construction techniques to all involved, and supply over 1,700 good-paying day jobs to skilled workers. All this for under \$50,000 annually.

This is all made possible through sweat and conviction: ours, yours, and the families who are determined to make life better for themselves and their kids. Working diligently together, with patience and resolve, we break the cycle of marginalization

that has kept these families in a bind with few places to turn that don't culminate in a dead-end. This commitment drives inclusion, innovation, and equity- features of our work throughout the region. It is our resolution to never be too big or move too fast to stop and wait patiently for the person struggling the most to catch up and grab hold.

The 300+ people who now have new homes, 2,000+ with good sanitation, and 100s+ having earned living wages, believe in the power of collaboration across borders, and so do we. We cannot thank you, our donors, enough for using your tools and strengths to ensure that families beyond your own have a shot at homeownership and a life filled with hope.

**Lindsey Kruger**  
Nivas Executive Director

*Without safe housing, it becomes difficult if not impossible to reach the incremental goals necessary to alleviate poverty and create a more equitable world.*

# 2015-2018 Program Report: ReCover Nepal

Location: Dhamku, Solukhumbu, Nepal

Status: Complete

Three weeks after celebrating the completion of our Taksindu Sanitation Program, a 7.8M earthquake hit Nepal in April of 2015 followed by a second 7.3M only days later. 9,000+ people lost their lives, 18,000+ were injured, and well over a half million lost their homes. Large numbers of homes were destroyed in pockets of the district Nivas had been working in, leaving families living outside under tarps and woven bamboo. Yet as the country began to rebuild this district remained outside the focus of their reconstruction efforts.

Nivas realized the recovery need was great in this overlooked region. We joined with our ground partners and a community called Dhamku, comprised of 5 villages, to begin the process of rebuilding. We began with community meetings aimed at designing a program that could get

the materials over the mountain passes and into the community center. From there, resources would equitably reach every family. The program needed not only to include materials and labor, but information and education on recommended earthquake-resilient construction techniques. Disseminating this information would be critical for many feared even attempting to rebuild their home after watching their structures fail before their eyes.



# Program Components

The program stretched over 3 years and 3 phases, each one expanding to our maximum financial capacity and defined by 3 main components for effectiveness:

## **Education, Materials, and Partnership.**

### **Education**

The community immediately identified that one of their main barriers to beginning the rebuilding process was the lack of information on EQ-resilient building techniques and engineering practices reaching these remote villages. They watched their homes crumble, some with their children inside. They did not want to rebuild only to recreate the same risk. With Nivas, they were able to identify Nepali engineers to lead the community in understanding the newly released Nepal Reconstruction Authority building codes via local workshops. The future homeowners reviewed the possible layouts, studied the new construction techniques, and then designed the appropriate home that would suit their family.

### **Materials**

The next identified barrier: resilient construction materials. This region has gone on for thousands of years using stone and mud construction. The vernacular architecture has a beautiful appearance that is quintessentially Nepal, with thick white plastered walls and blue or green trim. Now with EQ-resilient techniques requiring added steel and concrete, the cost of building a home skyrocketed out of the reach of local people. Acquiring and transporting the materials over the rocky landscape became an essential component to the program.

### **Partnership**

The concept of committed partnership expanded and grew across this program, moving in every direction, and becoming increasingly vital as the days passed. Who we call partner families others may call "recipients", but they are truly partners and collaborators. Beyond their contribution to the design of the program, these families provided the sweat equity, reclaimed and local materials. Our end of the partnership came in unwavering commitment (financial, technical, and emotional) to those families who signed up to join the program. Knowing that Nivas would keep coming back until the job was done is not something these families had experienced before, especially the women-led households. Having a dedicated ally, creates the conditions for confidence and hope.



## Why Housing?

The most widely discussed topics behind global issues today are poverty, health, and education. So why do we focus our efforts on housing? Evidence resoundingly points to housing as a tool that has a strong positive effect on these three major global issues and beyond. “Home ownership is a determinant of better physical and mental health and reduced mortality” among adults (Cairney). This means that parents are better able to care for their children. Beyond this, many researchers have found a strong correlation between parents’ homeownership and children’s grade level attainment, which in turn correlates to higher income achievement of the children in adulthood. Many studies indicate that property ownership increases investment in home improvements, which in turn improves conditions for young children who spend the majority of their time at home.

This investment also increases overall safety of the structure, which in turn improves the resiliency of neighborhoods in times of crisis. The positive impacts are endless. So, while homeownership may not single-handedly alleviate poverty and its negative impacts, it is one major part of the solution. And we love creating the piece in a dynamic approach that provides tranquility, safety, warmth, and physical security to people living in difficult circumstances.

Check out our Research Cache for more information on housing and its effects.

[www.nivas-built.org/housing-research](http://www.nivas-built.org/housing-research)

*“Home ownership and the quality of the home in which children live exerts a powerful impact on their emotional and behavioral well-being” (Cairney).*

# ReCover Nepal

PROJECT COST

\$98,051

PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

311

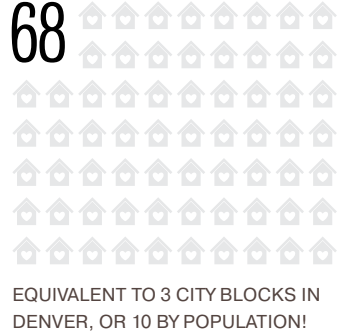
COST PER PERSON

\$315.28

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH NEW HOMES



NUMBER OF HOMES BUILT



## The Owner-Driven Model: Dignity In Collaboration

Amounts averaged across program. Some family situations require more investment, some less.

COST INVESTMENT PER HOME

### Owner Investment

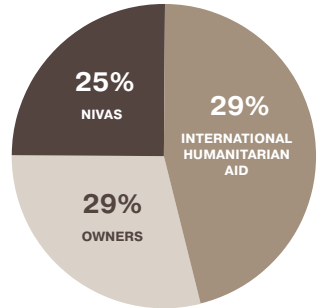
Labor	335 Hours
Materials & Trades	\$1,232.75

### Nivas Investment

Materials	\$1,167.41
Education	\$29.48
Advocacy	\$245.04
Total	\$1,441.93

### International Humanitarian Aid

Total	\$2,702.70
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## Unlocking Humanitarian Aid

Imagine going to the building department in your own county without the skills of an architect, engineer, or builder and asking them permission to build a home. Now imagine your county has never before had any codes until today. And now, for some, imagine that you don't have the skill of literacy to read the documents they give you. And last, imagine that their office is over a big mountain pass and the only way there is on foot. This scenario is similar to the experience Nepali families have in trying to access the aid money for which some but not all of them technically qualify. Many countries

donated aid to Nepal shortly after the earthquakes occurred. Getting that resource out to the people who need it has not been so simple. Nivas is there to provide advocacy in accessing that resource, through education on codes and the process required by code enforcement. Through providing education and advocacy, we are breaking down the barriers to reconstruction and helping families advocate for themselves. Just as important, we are grasping a financial resource that allows us to stretch our donors' dollars to even more families and communities.



## Homeowner Stories

### TEK, NIRMALA & BINISHA

Tek, Nirmala and their daughter Binisha were one of the very first families to join our ReCover Program. When they heard about the program, what it could do, and what it could provide for their family, they saw how big this opportunity could be. Being a young couple they saw this as more than just a home, they saw an opportunity to leverage what they had into future financial resources as well as shelter for their family.

First they gathered every resource they could find and made sure they were ready when the program launched. Through the program they built a beautiful cut-stone 1 story home for themselves and (at the time) 3 year old Binisha.

From here they set about gathering what they needed for the remaining stages of their vision. They split their one story home into two rooms. On one side the three of them made their small living quarters. On the other Nirmala launched her tea shop, a new spot for locals and passers-by to get tea, cookies, coffee, or a soda. Suddenly, they had become a two income household with Tek picking up construction and portering work.

Within a year they were able to put on a second floor and now the family lives upstairs. Downstairs are both a tea shop and a goods and wares shop. A family with a vision on the rise. We could not be more proud of their accomplishments.

*“Without a safe place to stay, we couldn’t really do anything; we could not focus on farming or any other work.” -Tek*



## OM KUMARI

Om Kumari, mother of 5, is a beaming light and force to be reckoned with. She birthed all 5 of her children at home, none of whom have ever been to the doctor. When we asked, “Om Kumari, what did you cut the umbilical cord with if you didn’t have any help?”, “Whatever I could find” she responded. Well, her and her husband Padam brought this same level of tenacity to getting their family into a new home and new situation.

Their previous home was both tiny at only about 110 square feet and severely damaged in the earthquakes. They had also lost a significant section of their farm land to landslides and the remaining land was only able to produce about 15 days of food per year for their family. This resigned them to the low returns of working other’s land. In Nepal, more than 30% of children 6 months to 5 years old are

underweight for their age (Nepal SDG Report 2015). Given their conditions, Om Kumari’s kids were at risk of falling into this category or potentially already had. In addition, they were unable to get a loan to buy more land or rebuild because they didn’t have enough collateral, which is generally land or home ownership in this region.

By joining forces with Nivas in Phase 2 of our ReCover Program, Om Kumari and her family were able to leverage their own sweat equity and resources into creating a new reality that would both support their physical health and financial well-being going forward. They bought new land where they built a new beautiful home and reclaimed their old homestead into farmland. Today all 7 are thriving.

*“Before it was difficult to live. After building a new house, everything has become wonderful and I believe it will continue.” – Om Kumari*





## HARKI MAYA, ANITA & RAJU

When the earthquakes hit Harka Maya was 89 years old. She had lost her children 10 years earlier and was raising her grandkids, Anita and Raju. Their situation was so dire the community listed them as the most vulnerable family.

These kids had no assets and the one person to care for them was in the twilight of her life. So the whole community donated their labor and even local materials in order to ensure this family would not spend another winter outside.

And Nivas designed a new system to ensure single mothers (and grandmothers), often experiencing

structural barriers and limited access to resources, have inclusion and an equal footing in our programs.

Anita told us a while back “Happiness doesn’t come to unfortunate people like us”. Though they’ve experienced substantial loss, including Harka Maya’s passing, today Anita and Raju have a new outlook. They are attending grades 10 and 6 and are leasing out their land to farmers to generate income for their expenses. They have a new home that keeps them safe, allows peace for studying, and they have an asset that they can use as a bargaining chip toward a future of their own design.

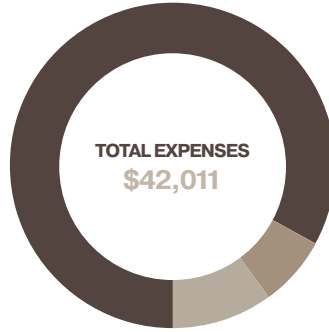
Visit our [Success Stories](https://www.nivas-built.org/success-stories) page for more  
[www.nivas-built.org/success-stories](https://www.nivas-built.org/success-stories)

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION SPANNING PROGRAM YEARS 2016-2018

## 2016 USE OF FUNDS



## 2017 USE OF FUNDS



## 2018 USE OF FUNDS

Program spending in 2018 was lower as we gear up to make payments for ReCover 2 in 2019.



- PROGRAMMING
- ADVOCACY / FUNDRAISING
- OFFICE & ADMIN
- DEVELOPMENT

Between 2016 and 2018, over \$8,000 in personal out-of-pocket funds were spent by board members for professional and business development for the organization.

\* Pre-990 Figures

## VOLUNTEER HOURS



FROM US-BASED  
VOLUNTEERS

5,118



FROM NEPAL-BASED  
VOLUNTEERS

24,732

# Looking Ahead

After completing our mission to rebuild every EQ damaged home in the 5 villages of Dhamku in late fall 2018, our staff set out to determine who has been left out of the reconstruction effort, how our services can be most effective, and how we can keep the momentum of our supporters making a big impact for families living in difficult conditions. They have discovered, by searching deep into the databases and into the remote villages, that there are still many people living in temporary shelter today, 4 years after the earthquakes. These families have experienced barriers due to mental and physical disabilities or their status as single mothers, widows, or elderly people.

We are now launched ReCover 2, assisting these marginalized families not only to rebuild their

homes gaining shelter and self-reliance, but also to help them gain knowledge and education around subjects that empower them to take action toward a brighter future. Having met with such adversity over the past 4 years and prior, many of these families need a new lease on life in order to enjoy their new home and actively seek prosperity. Our ReCover 2 program ensures they have the necessary tools to do so. By partnering with local nonprofits specializing in everything from livelihood generation to land tenure, we are bringing a full-service holistic program to our constituents. This is no easy feat, but our background and passion for providing transformative benefit for the families and communities we serve empower us to navigate the difficult terrain and overcome the inevitable hurdles.



**Sheela Sen**

Project Officer



**Sanchita Neupane**

Construction Program Manager



**Savitri Rajali**

Research & Implementation



## Direct Support

We work hard to keep the cost of construction and supporting a family lean so that we can reach as many families as possible.

\$30	<b>Nails &amp; Screws</b>
\$75	<b>6MM Steel Rebar</b>
\$150	<b>Childcare during training &amp; construction</b>
\$162	<b>Solar Power &amp; Lighting</b>
\$200	<b>Training Enrollment Fees</b>
\$270	<b>Doors &amp; Windows</b>
\$292	<b>Concrete</b>
\$360	<b>Bathroom (including plumbing, walls, roof)</b>
\$428	<b>Plaster Work &amp; Paint</b>
\$434	<b>Corrugated Steel Roofing</b>



We need your help to get marginalized families the specific resources they need to start anew. Our donors have changed lives now and for generations to come.

If you can, continue this momentum by becoming part of the support crew for another family in need of a leg up.

**[www.nivas-built.org](http://www.nivas-built.org)**

# Our Support Crew

Our very sincerest apologies if anyone has been left off this list.  
Please know we appreciate everyone who has been a part of this wild ride.

## Project Major Backers

186 Lighting Design  
Group, Gregg Mackell  
Burners Without Borders  
Fentress Architects  
Inhabit Denver,  
Kendra & Aaron Graybill  
Old Greenwich Builders,  
Chris Withers  
Shopworks Architecture,  
Chad Holtzinger  
Soaring Hawk Elementary  
South Jeffco Rotary Club  
Storm Design Build,  
Kenneth Storm\*  
Veselbrand, Kevin Vesel

Elizabeth Averbeck  
Michael Scott Bailey  
Rhonda Bailey  
Peter Blank  
Rob Cyman  
Paulette DePumpo\*  
Bob & Suzanne Fanch  
David Grossman  
Eric Hutchinson  
Bryan & Mary Jane Huth  
Rose & Jim Kruger  
William McKinley  
Florence Parnegg  
Kenneth Pitzen  
Adam Sokolowski  
Sara Sullivan\* & Ben Sperr  
Sarah & Devon Tilly  
Joshua & Zoe M. Ward  
Douglas Whaley  
Mike Zakhem  
Isaac Zuercher

## Project Key Backers

Boa Technology  
The Dove Inn  
Gabba Gallery, Jason Ostro  
MH Lighting  
North Face  
Pablo's Coffee  
St. Ansgar High School  
Visual Interest Lighting

Katherine Agramonte  
Kimberly Alston-Stepnitz  
Aaron & Jennifer Alwell  
Matthew Amstutz  
Mary Anderies  
Lindsay Anderson  
Wayne Anderson  
Ann Audrey  
Adam Avello  
Edmond Bailey  
Michael Scott Bailey  
Scott Baldermann  
James Barnum  
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Mandy Bauernfeind  
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Ransom Beegles  
April Berg  
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Ryan Bissett  
Jeff Bludeau  
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Kathleen Brandt  
Patricia Bringenberg  
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Chip Duval

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Linda Hoelzle Hoelzle  
Tim & Liz Hoelzle  
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Nora Hoffman  
Carleen Holloway  
Susan Hopper  
Cheryl Huebner  
Travis Hughbanks  
Ellie M Hurley  
Eric Hutchinson

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**\*Current board member.**

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