

## **BlinkNow Supports Women in Nepal**

### **For Immediate Release:**

As we grapple with women's rights and reproductive freedom in the United States, it is time to reflect on women in other places around the globe such as Nepal where the BlinkNow Foundation is working to educate and empower women who have faced a life of discrimination.

In a society where girls are told that they are not good enough and many do not have access to education, the BlinkNow Foundation is working to make a difference in the lives of these women.

"The world will change when our girls and our women are educated," said BlinkNow Founder Maggie Doyne.

The foundation started when Doyne met a hungry child in Nepal on a backpacking trip around the globe and then used her life savings to help the child. In the blink of an eye – and with a lot of demanding work from a lot of people – that hope turned into a home, a school, and a community dedicated to building a world where children are safe, educated, and loved. Today the foundation has grown to a school serving more than 400 children as well as a health center and a women's center.

The Kopila Valley Women's Center serves the most at-risk and vulnerable women in our community with life-changing vocational and empowerment training, Doyne said. "We believe that investing in women and girls creates healthier families, more prosperous communities, and more peaceful nations," she said.

Many women in Surkhet still struggle with unsafe living environments, lack of access to education, and little economic opportunity. When we talk to Women's Center trainees, we hear stories of abuse, deprivation, and loss: 94 percent have experienced domestic or gender-based violence; 97 percent report little to no knowledge of their legal rights prior to joining our program; 32 percent have had no access to schooling and 51 percent were married before the age of 18. These statistics are shocking, but true.

The center's women now design and create many goods based on traditional crafts and have expanded to offer customized products as well. The ties to our founding organization remain strong; the women still make the students' uniforms for the [Kopila Valley School](#), and serve as mentors to the new members of the [Kopila Valley Women's Center](#) job skills training program.

They also create wares for local businesses and the women have decided to branch out and launch their own for-profit cooperative, bringing together various artisans from the Surkhet Valley. The BlinkNow Foundation is thrilled to see the women's enterprising spirit thriving and is proud of the business they have built with their own hands. Purchasing a wholesale order from this website is an excellent way to help the women of Surkhet become independent businesswomen. Buyers in the United States can find cooperative products sold online at [BlinkNow Goods](#) which have the added advantage of supporting the Kopila Valley Women's Center. Amazing things happen when women come together and support each other.

Through a combination of vocational training, empowerment education, and comprehensive counseling, the Women's Center aims to provide each of our trainees with the tools necessary to do just that.

Man Kumari Magar was married at age 18, bore two children whom she raised, but wanted to learn weaving skills. Her neighbor suggested she enroll in training at the Kopila Valley Women's Center, which not only provided her with vocational skills, but also problem-solving skills. After she graduated from the program, she joined the weaving industry. In August 2021, she received business start-up funds including a weaving loom from Kopila Valley which enabled her to start a weaving business with her neighbor. She now earns money and receives love and respect from her husband and in-laws. "My husband is very happy that I am managing home as well as earning some income," she said.

Samina Khatun had an arranged marriage at age 16, but the marriage was not successful. She went to the Kopila Valley Women's Center where she studied cosmetology and was able to start offering salon services in her parent's general store where she set up a chair. She provided threading and cleansing services and was able to enhance her business with funds from the Women's Center. "Skill, counseling service as well as some money provided by Kopila Valley Women's Center has changed my life," she said. "I used to think that I could never be happy and not earn money, but I am happy and earning as well."

Thanks to our supporters, like [Together Women Rise](#), the Women's Center **opened its doors in 2013**. Over the years, the vocational program has evolved to address women's technical interests and the changing markets in Surkhet and has included instruction in sewing and tailoring, traditional weaving, and a cosmetology course on women's care and personal services. As of December 2018, the Center has provided over 130 women with certification in a vocational skill. Through this training, our graduates can leave harsh physical labor work to seek dignified careers, find higher paying jobs, and pursue new economic opportunities. **Purchase your own goods and support the Women's Center programming here.** For more information about the BlinkNow Foundation, please visit [our website](#).

*The Kopila Valley School and Home are supported by the BlinkNow Foundation, whose mission is to change the world by empowering Nepal's youth. BlinkNow works towards a day where every child is safe, educated, and loved. We do this by providing quality education and a loving, caring home for orphaned and at-risk children in Surkhet, Nepal. We also support our local community to reduce poverty, empower women, and improve health, while encouraging sustainability and social justice.*

*Our journey starts in the foothills of the Himalayas when 19-year-old Maggie Doyne was driven to action after seeing how poverty in Nepal was preventing children from living the lives they deserve. She joined forces with Tope Malla, who built a career supporting children after growing up as an orphan in Nepal, and together they founded the Kopila Valley Home using Maggie's life savings of \$5,000. Kopila Valley has since grown into a thriving community relentlessly focused on our mission.*

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