

Saathi Teachers Programme

Primary Must Not Be Secondary

NEWSLETTER

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Happy

Nepali New Year

2082



Saathi Teachers Programme

Primary Must Not Be Secondary

The Saathi Teachers Programme, a flagship initiative under the Helambu Education and Livelihood Partnership (HELP), is dedicated to ensuring that primary education in rural Nepal is anything but secondary. With the guiding theme of ‘Primary Must Not Be Secondary,’ this two-year, supervised programme places skilled and motivated teachers in rural communities to teach Math and English, while also nurturing essential 21st-century skills in students. Through a focus on literacy, numeracy, and the development of the 4C skills—Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, and Collaboration—Saathi teachers are reshaping classrooms into vibrant spaces of learning and growth. Working hand-in-hand with local governments, schools, and communities, the programme currently operates in three rural municipalities—Paanchpokhari Thangpal and Tripurasundari in Sindhupalchowk, and Aanbookhaireni in Tanahun.

What sets Saathi Teachers apart is their unwavering commitment to creating a joyful and engaging learning environment. Through innovative teaching methods, extracurricular activities, and the integration of arts and culture, they bring lessons to life in ways that resonate with young learners. Together, we are not just teaching children; we are empowering them to dream, innovate, and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

As we step into the new year, we are delighted to welcome the 6th cohort of Saathi Teachers, marking another milestone in our journey to transform primary education in rural Nepal. This year, we are proud to share that the programme has expanded to two new schools, bringing the total number of schools we work with to 15. With the addition of 16 passionate new Saathi Teachers, our family now includes 30 Saathi teachers dedicated to shaping the futures of countless children. This growth is a testament to the collective efforts of our partners, local governments, school communities, and, of course, our inspiring Saathi Teachers. Thank you for being part of this journey—your support continues to make all the difference. Let’s keep moving forward, one classroom at a time!

Here’s a look at our quarterly roundup, filled with stories of growth, learning, and transformation.

1 Welcoming the 6th Cohort

The journey to selecting our 6th cohort of Saathi Teachers was nothing short of remarkable. This year, we received an overwhelming 821 interests for applications from passionate individuals across Nepal, each eager to contribute to the transformation of primary education in rural communities. From this pool of talented candidates, 142 were invited for phone interviews, where their dedication, skills, and vision for education shone brightly. After a rigorous selection process, 19 exceptional individuals emerged as our newest Saathi Candidates, ready to embark on this life-changing journey.



This group beautifully represents the rich diversity of Nepal, with Saathi Teachers hailing from five provinces and ten districts, each bringing their own unique backgrounds, experiences, and stories to the program. From bustling urban centers to quiet rural villages, they come from all walks of life, yet they share a singular mission: to create classrooms where children feel inspired, empowered, and eager to learn.



A Fun Start: Hike and Potluck for the Saathi Candidates

On 27th February, we kicked off the journey of the 6th Cohort with a fun-filled hike and potluck! It was the perfect opportunity for the Saathi Candidates to connect, share stories, and bond over delicious food. The day was filled with laughter, camaraderie, and a shared sense of excitement for the road ahead.



Parents' Meet: Building a Shared Vision

On 1st March 2025, we organized a Parents' Gathering that brought together 19 new Saathi candidates along with their parents or guardians, fostering a meaningful space for connection, understanding, and shared purpose. We were joined by the remarkable Prof. Dr. Bidhyanath Koirala, member of National Guides of Saathi Teachers Programme and former Head of the Department of Central Department of Education at Tribhuvan University, Ms. Laurie Gossens, Educationist and Representative of Go Global Vermont and Mr. Ashish Shrestha, Vice-Chairperson, HELP. Our Saathi Alumni, Pusparaj Chaudhary and Gopi Waiba, also shared their experiences, highlighting the impact of the programme on both students and teachers.



Including parents in this journey is about more than just a formal welcome—it's about recognizing the vital role families play in supporting our Saathi Teachers. By bringing parents into the fold, we create a stronger foundation of encouragement and understanding, ensuring that our Saathi candidates feel supported not just by the programme, but by their loved ones as well.



24 days of pre-service residential training, the Saathi School

Following the Parents' Event, our 19 new Saathi candidates embarked on a 24-day residential pre-service training at GAN Research and Learning Resource Centre, Lalitpur. This intensive training, which began on March 17, is designed to equip them with a holistic understanding of the primary education system, curriculum, and innovative teaching methodologies.

Through hands-on workshops, interactive sessions, and collaborative learning, the candidates explored creative approaches to teaching that foster curiosity, critical thinking, and collaboration in young learners.



(Core Sessions: Understanding education system and National Education Goals and policies, Classroom Management, Child Psychology, Curriculum, Pedagogy and Evaluation, Subject Sessions and Practice Teaching, Understanding 4Cs, First-Aid, HELP Child Protection Policy, ICT and documentation)

On March 19, the cohort observed classes at Shree Kalika Secondary School, with candidates conducting practice lessons for Grades 1 to 5. Later, from March 28–31, the group traveled to Aanbookhaineni Rural Municipality for an intensive teaching practicum at three local schools—Shree Chimkeswori Secondary School, Shree Chandrodaya Secondary School, and Shree Chandeshwori Basic School—where they refined lesson delivery and classroom management under mentor supervision



The experience concluded on April 1 with an insightful discussion with local government officials, including the Rural Municipality Chairperson and the Education Officer, about recent educational improvements and community-led initiatives. A follow-up homestay in Giranchaur allowed deeper engagement with parents and families, helping the trainees understand community perspectives on schooling and the real challenges students face.



Placement Announcement

At the end of the residential training for the 6th cohort, Day 21 brought a special evening with the Placement Announcement. We are proud to share that 16 of these candidates have successfully graduated and are set to begin their placements in our partner schools, ready to bring transformative and student-centered learning into the classroom. They have been placed as Maths and English teachers in the primary level of 15 partner schools across our three partner rural municipalities.

Distinguished guests Mr. Sudeep Acharya, Mr. Arna Raj Silwal, Mr. Yash Kumar and Mr. Ashish Shrestha joined the event on this joyous occasion.



Celebrating Milestones: Graduation Day for Saathi Teachers

Graduation Day on April 8th at Grand Norling Hotel's Resort marked a momentous occasion for the Saathi Teachers programme, as we celebrated the journeys of both the 4th and 6th cohorts.

For the 4th cohort, this graduation signifies the culmination of a remarkable two-year journey—a chapter filled with learning, growth, and resilience. As they prepare to embark on new paths beyond their placements, we took a moment to honour their dedication and the meaningful impact they have made in their schools and communities.



At the same time, we extended a warm welcome to the 6th cohort of Saathi Teachers, as they officially graduated from Saathi candidates to Saathi teachers and stepped into their roles with enthusiasm and purpose. As they begin their own two-year placements in our partner schools, this day also marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter—one that promises transformation, service, and lifelong learning.

The event opened with a moving journey video of the 4th cohort, capturing their dedication, growth, and shared memories of two years. Ms. Kabita Karki, one of the graduates, shared how this journey will stay with her forever. “It helped me find purpose,” she said, “My journey as a Saathi Teacher has come to an end, but my journey as a government teacher has just begun.”



The event was graced by the Director General of the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), Mr. Krishna Prasad Kapri, who reminded us that transforming education is a shared responsibility—and that together, we can support the growth of teaching as a profession. Mr. Bhakta Dhoj Bohara, Chairperson of Tripurasundari Rural Municipality, shared how the Saathi Teachers Programme is helping local governments come together for real change in education. Mr. Tasi Lama, Chairperson of Panchpokhari Thangpal Rural Municipality, echoed his support, saying the programme's impact is visible, and the municipality is always ready to collaborate with Saathi Teachers.

In a symbolic moment, the 4th cohort passed the torch to the 6th cohort—an exchange of stories, spirit, and shared purpose.



Together, this dual celebration is a powerful reminder of our growing community of changemakers and the shared commitment to reimagining education through empathy, equity, and action.

Retreat: Reflecting, Recharging, and Rafting at Trishuli Villa



On 9th April, the 5th cohort of Saathi teachers, along with the Saathi team, came together for a memorable retreat at Trishuli Villa—a space thoughtfully crafted to blend reflection with recreation, offering the perfect pause before stepping into Year 2.

This unique gathering provided an opportunity to look back, breathe deeply, and look ahead with renewed energy. The retreat opened with a Saathi Journey Clarity session, where teachers reflected on their first-year experiences and celebrated personal and professional milestones.



The reflection sessions proved to be truly fruitful, as every Saathi teacher took the opportunity to share heartfelt insights. They reflected on their proudest achievements from Year 1 and the moments that brought them the most joy. They also openly discussed the times when they felt most hopeless or faced challenges, which fostered a deep sense of vulnerability and trust. Additionally, the teachers expressed the kind of support they hope to receive from the Saathi team moving forward.

Of course, the retreat wasn't just about introspection. There was also rafting, which brought plenty of laughter and adrenaline, and a cozy and fun-filled BBQ night, where stories, food, and laughter were shared under the stars.

This retreat served as a gentle reminder of how important it is to pause, connect, and realign—both as individuals and as a community. Here's to an even stronger Year 2, filled with purpose, passion, and support!



Closing off 2024: Annual Review Meetings



As we look back on 2024, the Saathi Teachers Programme has achieved significant milestones, thanks to the collective efforts of our teachers, local government partners, and communities. This year, we conducted review meetings in Panchpokhari Thangpal, Tripurasundari, and Aanbookhaireni Rural Municipalities to assess the programme's impact and chart the way forward. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Chairpersons or their representatives from all three municipalities, as well as the Education Officers, Saathi Teachers, and school representatives, for joining these meetings and contributing to fostering collaboration and shared ownership.

In Panchpokhari Thangpal, the five-year review revealed remarkable progress: a 31.3% increase in students recognizing alphabets and a 40.5% rise in word recognition. At Shree Saraswati Basic School, Grade 1 students reading alphabets jumped by 40%, and all students can now recognize single-digit numbers—up from just 33% in the baseline survey. Excitingly, schools not yet part of the programme expressed interest in joining, highlighting the growing trust in our work.



In Tripurasundari, a two-year impact assessment provided valuable insights into the programme's effectiveness, while in Aanbookhaireni, the review celebrated the strides made in improving learning outcomes. These meetings underscored the power of collaboration and the shared commitment to transforming primary education in rural Nepal.

Third Round of TUBU Meetings Across Clusters

The third round of Tune-Up Build-Up (TUBU) meetings across various clusters was successfully completed by our dedicated Teachers Development Coordinators. These sessions offered invaluable opportunities for reflection, skill-building, and community engagement, furthering our mission to enhance education in rural communities.

Third TUBU Meet – Lungdar Cluster



Held from 28 to 30 December in Bhotang, Panchpokhari Thangpal Rural Municipality, the TUBU meeting was a dynamic combination of outdoor activities, professional development, and community engagement. Saathi Teachers participated actively in discussions about classroom practices, met with the Ward Chief, and visited Satkanya Devi Basic School, strengthening ties within the community.

The primary focus of this session was on addressing classroom challenges, formulating Community Action Plans, and promoting the well-being of teachers. This engagement revitalized participants, providing them with strategies to enhance learning outcomes and create meaningful change in rural education. Discussions with parents, principals, and local stakeholders offered Saathi Teachers valuable insights into the critical role of community involvement in supporting children's education.

Third Support Visit & TUBU – Suvaaramva Cluster

The third support visit to Tripurasundari took place from 22nd to 28th January, offering essential insights into the dedication and hard work of Saathi Teachers.

On 29th January, a TUBU session for the Suvaaramva Cluster was conducted in Barabise, hosted by Saathi Teachers Diwas Chaudhary and Yasoda Dhakal at Shree Setidevi Basic School, Tungathali. The theme of the TUBU session was “Strengthening the Suvaaramva Cluster Through Peer Support to Improve Students’ Learning.” All eight Saathi Teachers participated, sharing their experiences, challenges, and best practices to enhance student learning.



Third and Fourth TUBU Meet – Aarambha Cluster



The third and fourth TUBU meets for the Aarambha Cluster were held in close succession, creating a meaningful space for reflection, learning, and celebration. The third session, conducted on February 8th and 9th in Anbookhareni Rural Municipality by Saathi Teachers Ajay Khadka and Dhan Bahadur Saud, focused on fostering collaboration through a hands-on approach to material-based teaching, ensuring real-time learning experiences that could be effectively implemented in classrooms. A reflective session on values and choices further strengthened the sense of belonging and shared purpose within the cluster.

Building on this momentum, the fourth TUBU meet followed on March 7th and 8th marking a significant milestone as it celebrated the achievements of graduating Saathi Teachers. They shared their experiences, memories, and challenges from their two-year journey, providing valuable feedback and insights to inform strategies for future cohorts and the organization. The meet also included a co-Saathi reflection, reinforcing the bonds between co-Saathis and ensuring their partnership ended on a meaningful note. Additionally, discussions on strategic planning and review meetings focused on improving student outcomes and identifying ways for the cluster to enhance its efforts moving forward.

Community Action Projects

Ajay Khadka and Dhan Bahadur Saud, Saathi Teachers from the 5th Cohort 'Aarambha Cluster', successfully led a Community Action Project (CAP) on Online Safety & Awareness at Shree Chhimkeshwary Secondary School, Aanbookhareni-4, Bhanghe. The project was split into two productive and engaging sessions. The first session featured a hands-on workshop where students actively participated, giving mini-presentations and learning valuable skills.



The second session focused on raising awareness about online risks such as scams, bullying, and privacy issues, with Ajay and Dhan facilitating an open discussion. This initiative was especially important, as it provided crucial knowledge to help students navigate the dangers of the online world, with the sessions scheduled on both a school day and a holiday to ensure maximum participation.



Saathi Teachers Bishal Pangmi Ale and Jaya Baidhakota from the 4th cohort also successfully completed their Community Action Project titled "Waste Management and Seed Distribution Program" at Shree Chandidevi Basic School in Purlung-6, Tanahun.

As part of their initiative, they focused on promoting environmental awareness and sustainable practices among school children and the local community. To support proper waste management, they distributed essential cleaning materials such as dustbins, dustpans, and brooms to the school. Their project showcased how simple, practical actions can inspire long-term behavioral change and community engagement.

Community Action Projects (CAP) are a key part of the Saathi Teachers' Programme, empowering teachers to take initiative and address important issues within their communities. These projects allow Saathi Teachers to drive change by identifying local challenges and finding practical solutions to improve the lives of those around them.

Their efforts with Online Safety Awareness and Waste Management are a perfect example of how CAPs can create lasting impact. We deeply appreciate their hard work, passion, and dedication to the well-being of their students—their efforts are a true reflection of the spirit of Saathi Teachers!

Educational Fair at Anbookhaireni Rural Municipality

On 5th February, the students of our partner school—Shree Chhimkeshwary Secondary School—took part in a vibrant and enriching Learning Fair organized by Anbookhaireni Rural Municipality at Ram Shah Secondary School. The event was a grand celebration of creativity and learning, filled with handmade materials and innovative displays.

Accompanied by their teachers, 36 enthusiastic learners from primary to secondary levels joined the fair with a clear goal: to learn, share, and give their best. The day was packed with opportunities to interact, present, and compete, allowing our students to step into the spotlight and grow beyond the classroom. By the end of the event, the impact was palpable. The students returned not only with new skills and ideas but also with a renewed sense of motivation and confidence.



Panchpokhari Learning Fair



On 10th February, the 6th Panchpokhari Learning Fair was successfully held at Shree Satkanyamati Secondary School in Gunsa, with strong collaboration between Panchpokhari Thangpal Rural Municipality, Saathi Teachers, Teach For Nepal Fellows, and other passionate local educators. The event was graced by the presence of Panchpokhari Thangpal Rural Municipality's Chairperson Tasi Lama, adding to the significance of the occasion.

The Sikai Mela provided an exciting platform for students to exhibit their creativity, communication skills, and leadership abilities. Their innovative exhibitions showcased not only their talents but also their enthusiasm for learning, making the event an inspiring celebration of student achievements.

Saathi Teachers Programme Expansion – Welcoming two new schools

We are excited to announce the expansion of the Saathi programme with the addition of two new schools—Shree Satkanyamati Secondary School, located at Gunsa, Panchpokhari Rural Municipality and Suryodaya Primary School, located at Aanbookhaireni Rural Municipality. This milestone marks a significant step in our mission to empower more educators and students across rural communities.



**Shree Satkanyamati Secondary School
Panchpokhari Thangpal RM, Sindhupalchowk**



**Shree Suryodaya Secondary School
Aanbookhaireni RM, Tanahun**

Looking forward to the next trimester

As we prepare for the upcoming trimester, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our partner municipalities, wards, schools, and communities for their unwavering support and collaboration. Your trust and encouragement continue to strengthen our mission and deepen our impact. A special note of appreciation goes to our funding partner, Mondo Foundation, and our valued partners Interhands and International Teachers Association (ITA). Your continued belief in our vision fuels our efforts and inspires us to keep striving for meaningful change.

With the placement of our 6th Cohort and a strategic workshop underway, we are excited for what lies ahead. These milestones are not just markers of progress but a reflection of the collective commitment that powers our work.

To everyone who has contributed to this journey—thank you. Your support, in every form, enables us to keep moving forward and make a lasting difference, one step at a time.



Appeal

Join Us in Making a Difference!

The Saathi program has already made significant strides in creating impactful change for both teachers and children. Through the dedicated work of our Saathi Teachers, we have fostered environments where children feel valued, heard, and empowered to learn. As our reach expands and our impact deepens, we are excited to welcome more like-minded individuals and organizations into our growing community.

By supporting our work, you help create brighter futures for countless children who are benefiting from this unique and transformative education model. With your partnership, we can ensure that the Saathi program continues to grow and positively influence even more communities.



Samiksha Prasai
4th Cohort Saathi Teacher
Shree Bhotenamlang Secondary School
Panchpokhari Thangpal RM, Sindhupalchowk

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"Teaching in a rural area for two years, I found connection in the smallest moments—sharing stories on the school's ground, celebrating small victories, and learning as much from my students as they did from me. Their resilience and curiosity turned a classroom into a family, and their dreams became a part of my own."



Sanjita Shrestha
4th Cohort Saathi Teacher
Shree Chandrodaya Secondary School
Aanbookhaireni RM, Tanahun

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"Two years as a Saathi Teacher—more than a journey, it was a transformation. I taught, I learned, I stumbled, I soared. Every challenge shaped me, every opportunity elevated me."

Progress That Speaks Volumes!

Back in 2019, we set out on a mission to strengthen early learning through the Saathi Teachers Programme—and the results are nothing short of inspiring. In Panchkhal Thagpal Rural Municipality,

✓ Students who can now recognize alphabets have increased by 31.3%

✓ Those who can recognize words have grown by a remarkable 40.5%

At Shree Saraswati Basic School the transformation is even more powerful:

abc 40% more Grade 1 students can read alphabets

$\frac{12}{34}$ 100% of Grade 1 students can now recognize single-digit numbers—up from just 33% in 2019!

These numbers aren't just statistics—they're stories of potential unlocked, futures reshaped, and confidence nurtured in the classroom.

Want to support our mission? Whether through partnership, donations, or volunteering, your contribution makes a difference. Join us in shaping the future of education!

Get in touch today!

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 Saathi Teachers Programme

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Stay tuned for our upcoming events and initiatives—or reach out to see how you can be part of this movement.

Together, we can continue transforming education, one classroom at a time.

Primary Partner



Associate Partner

