



Rescue and reintegration for women with mental illness in Nepal



The Nepalese NGO Koshish will rescue and house some 60 women with mental illness in the course of a year, for 3 months on average, depending on individual needs. Koshish will provide treatment and counselling, as well as skills development and income generating activities.

Following their time at the transit home, the women will be supported to reintegrate into their communities, families, and/or into independent life, with ongoing contact and follow-up visits. Koshish will keep track of their progress, and make connections with available local support systems to promote sustainable recovery.

The funds we are raising are needed to cover the costs of accommodation, food, medicines and supplies for the women while they stay at the transit home. Koshish will also engage the services of a psychologist, a nurse, a carer, and a guard to ensure the women's security. This project will provide therapeutic activities including art, handicrafts and skills for future income generation, and cover the costs associated with creating and maintaining a secure electronic record system of Koshish's interventions as well as transport and logistics for rescue missions and follow-up visits.

Koshish will also raise awareness in the community about people with mental illness, using radio, print and TV media to change public attitudes towards mental illness and influence local and national government policies and strategies. Koshish will promote the message that mental illness is both manageable and treatable, in order to combat widespread stigma and abuse.

DDP is extremely grateful for all donations towards our target, support the amazing and untiring work of our partners at Koshish (which means 'making an effort'). Koshish is the first mental health self-help organization in Nepal fighting to improve mental health policy, quality of care, and to challenge prejudice and discrimination suffered by people affected by mental illness.

A case study: Life – an unpredictable journey

Sunita, a young Nepalese woman, got married at a young age to an older man – but married life was happy at first. However, it was not long before her husband began to abuse her physically and verbally. He developed a drink problem following the 2015 earthquake and, instead of being a source of support for Sunita, became more and more abusive. Although their primary source of income was from agriculture, they were not able to earn a living. Sunita lost her house in the earthquake. The trauma of homelessness and her husband's drinking became problems beyond her control, and Sunita began experiencing psychosocial problems. She was rescued to the Koshish transit home for treatment, at the initiative of the District Women's Development Officer.

Sunita was rescued by a community outreach team and admitted to the transit centre. At the time of admission, she was not presenting with normal behaviour or good hygiene. She was very fearful and anxious, which prevented her from showing interest in activities or engaging in conversation. Most of the time she isolated herself, and due to poor sleeping patterns and restlessness she used to wander aimlessly at night.

She was assessed by the consultant psychiatrist and was treated with antipsychotic and supportive medication. During Sunita's time at the transit home, thanks to the determined efforts of the staff, she gradually started to respond. Staff noticed a remarkable improvement due to her involvement in therapeutic activities; Sunita also helped with household chores and expressed a desire to work and support her family.



Sunita receives continuous follow-up from Koshish staff. There has been a remarkable change in her family and community, who have been impressed by Sunita's successful recovery. These days, Sunita is happy with her husband, and is generating income for their family. She expresses her indebtedness to Koshish for their efforts to give her a new life, and her husband, who has stopped drinking, also gives her hope for their life ahead. He is grateful for the reunion with his wife. Having assessed Sunita's economic condition and her capacity for rearing livestock, Koshish has provided a goat as livelihood support. Sunita's self-esteem has increased, and the attitudes of her family and community towards her have changed for the better.

About DDP – Disability and Development Partners

DDP has been working on disability and development for over 27 years. Our vision is one of inclusion, where disabled children and adults can access all the opportunities that their societies have to offer. In our partnerships with disabled people's organizations, inclusion is at the heart of everything we do – so that disabled people are not left behind.

Working in partnership is our dedicated priority. Run by and for disabled people, our local partners are best placed to understand their needs and challenges. We play an essential practical role for our partners in countries such as Nepal, Ethiopia and Mozambique: supporting, developing and realizing projects, raising funds, building capacities in project and financial management, ensuring that objectives are met, and facilitating South-to-South exchanges of experience.

As they work towards a sustainable future, many of our partner organizations have used our partnership as a springboard to funding, independence and further success.