

Our objective at Kina is simply to “keep girls in school”.

This may sound simple in western terms but the cultural and economic dynamics in a developing country such as Nepal make this extremely challenging. To appreciate the situation you need first understand what it means to be a young girl in rural Nepal.

- A girl as young as 12 or 13 is often viewed as a woman, creating an extremely challenging set of circumstances for her to overcome.
- The impact of poverty on the family is high, requiring that the children work to help provide food. Access to basic healthcare and the cost to send children to school can be out of reach for many.
- The influence of an inherent gender bias towards boys magnifies the challenges she faces. If there is a choice for school the brother usually comes out on top, the girl stays home to work the fields and clean the house. A saying in Nepal sums up the bias – “Educating a daughter is like fertilizing your neighbor’s crops”.
- A girl can be pressured into an early marriage by the time she is 14, and then soon after pregnant.
- In dire situations she might be taken by others through deception and sold into prostitution. Drastically increasing her odds of contracting and spreading HIV.

Even though it might be difficult to fully grasp, you can begin to imagine what it might be like to be a young girl living under these conditions.

But there is a solution ... education is the key.

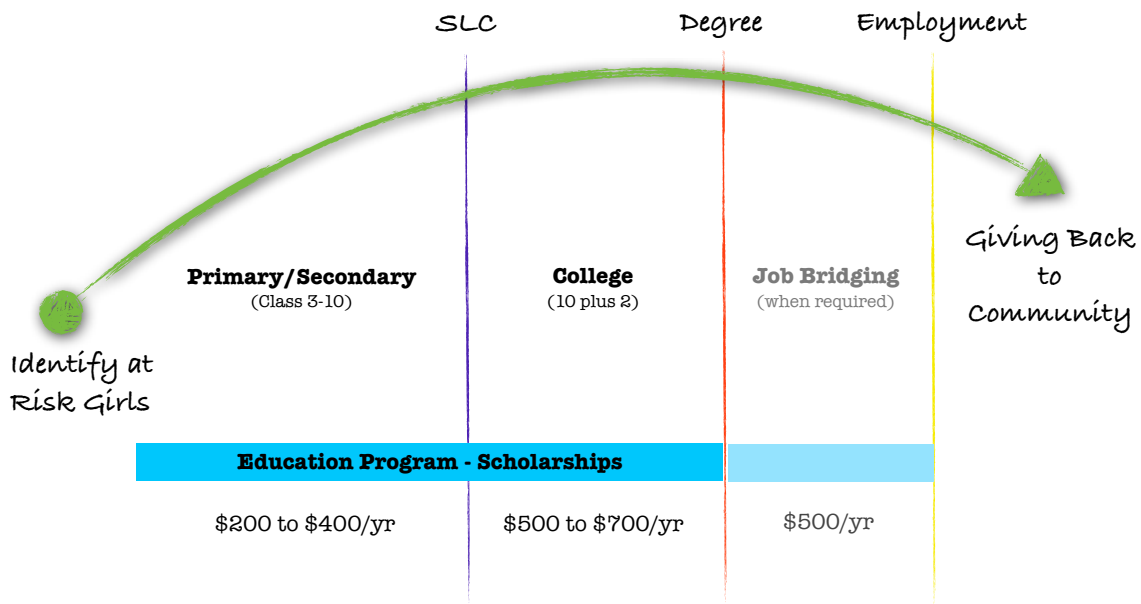
1. We need to keep her in school, where she is safe and can grow in so many positive ways – she needs educational support for supplies, uniforms, tuitions, food and possibly lodging.
2. We need to take the extra economic burden from the family or guardians so they have the choice to send her to school.
3. We need to ensure that she has access to adequate healthcare when sick or injured so that she can remain in school.

By providing her with an education and access to healthcare the effect is huge...

- With an education she will have more confidence to choose when to marry and when to have children – on her terms.
- An education will allow her to earn a better living for herself and family – passing the change on to her children, and next generation.
- She will have an equal voice within her community through the empowerment that an education brings – literacy, knowledge, skills, confidence, job opportunities, etc.

What does Kina do for these girls?

Kina has been supporting Nepali girls to stay in school since 2002. We currently provide educational scholarships and healthcare services to between 60 and 70 girls, and growing. We are very careful not to introduce new girls into the program unless we can ensure full support through their complete educational arc – it is a long-term responsibility that we take very seriously.



Our approach to selecting girls for the program is based on a participatory style, with our Nepali program coordinator working with teachers, local NGO's, women's groups and PTAs to identify girls that are at risk of not staying in school due to circumstances out of their control. We push the decision making to the community members who better understand the needs, background, and the potential of the girls. The western directors of Kina are not involved in the selection process other than monitoring and setting the number of girls in the program based on funding projections.

The level of financial funding is tailored to the specific needs of the individual – ranging from orphans and single parent families who can't afford to send their daughter to school, to those needing to stay in a hostel while attending a school not in their village area (for example attending a regional college). Keeping them in school also means supporting their medical needs as they arise (e.g. illness and surgery).

To help them make the most of their education we provide funding for tutors to assist the girls in preparing for the national SLC exams - helping to ensure their success and forward momentum.

Once a girl is in our program we monitor her progress through regular field visits, requesting copies of school transcripts, and mentoring is provided by our program coordinator who is a Nepali woman that has completed two university master level degrees in social and community development – she is a true role model that the girls look to for inspiration.

So what does this really mean?

Slow is Fast – a 5 to 10 year educational arc is a long process, but the fastest way to generate social capital is through access to an education - it is also the best tool we have in the fight against poverty. By educating girls, they will become more productive citizens, contribute more to the development of their communities and take their rightful place as equal members of society.

We also believe that **small is BIG** – focusing on a small group of girls and helping them succeed as young women will have a major impact on their families and the community. The rest will take care of itself through the empowerment that an education provides them: Poverty Reduction, Gender Equality, and Improved Health.

Kina Education Program

Phase

Specifics

Secondary School

Participants will complete Class 10 and work towards earning a School Leaving Certificate.

To the extent possible, students will study in or near their home community. Kina will provide school fees, supplies, uniform and room-boarding costs **up to** 25,000 rupees per year (\$400CAD).

Advanced Education College

Support post-secondary course of study.

Vocational/technical/College training in relevant field.

Kina will provide school fees, supplies, uniform and room-boarding costs **up to** 40,000 rupees per year (\$700CAD)

Giving back – Bridging

Upon completion of advanced education, participants must commit to working in community– with emphasis on healthcare, education or business. Kina will provide financial support – **up to** 30,000 rupees per year (\$500CAD).

Program Goals

- Cultivate women community leaders who will be role models and mentors in their community.
- Support girls as they work to attain a vocational, technical and/or university degree that will help them give back to their community.
- Encourage the development of leadership skills and facilitate direct involvement with community projects – able to work with community groups, NGOs and governmental organizations.
- Prepare them to work in their community after the completion of advanced education.

Who is the program open to?

- Girls who have completed class 4 or 5 – typically 10 to 12 years of age.
- Girls without the financial means to continue their education.
- Girls from all social, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

How do we choose the candidates?

- With great difficulty – based on need, motivation and commitment to community service.
- Our Nepali staff performs interviews with the candidates, their families and community members.
- We will only bring on a new candidate when we have confirmed financial sponsorship for the duration of their involvement (5 to 10 years).

What is the commitment of the participants?

- Work hard at school and maintain a high level of academic achievement.
- Give back to their community and provide support to other girls in the program.

What does Kina commit to?

- Subsidizing the cost of tuition and living expenses while participants complete their education, amount varies on each girl's specific situation.
- Provide healthcare support, including emergency medical care when required.
- Once a girl has completed her advanced education will we provide bridging employment salary support for up to 2 years in their chosen work.
- Assist them in community service work – help them define projects, assist with facilitation, work with local NGOs and provide support as needed.

How do we manage their progress?

- A Nepali coordinator will monitor participants' school progress, conduct field visits and provide mentoring.
- Kina directors conduct yearly visits and monitor program development.