ALUMNI SMALL GRANT (ASG)

The NUSAN Alumni Small Grant (ASG) initiative, empowers local communities through its transformative projects. Each year, this initiative selects seven outstanding community-based ideas from across the seven provinces of Nepal. The ASG program is open for application to USG alumni, offering a grant amount of USD 1000 in funding, enabling USG alumni to lead the implementation of these initiatives.

The ASG program supports projects across various thematic areas, including youth, women, and minority empowerment; social change through performing arts; strengthening peace, security, and governance; protecting women and girls from violence, abuse, and exploitation; supporting political and civic participation, freedom of speech, transparency, and accountability; as well as entrepreneurship, economic prosperity, and addressing misinformation and disinformation.

Through ASG, the USG network is actively contributing to meaningful change and sustainable progress in Nepal's communities.

This year 7 outstanding alumni were awarded the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) - 2023, funded by the U.S. Embassy in Nepal. These selected projects were implemented in 7 diverse provinces across Nepal, starting from the month of July.
Nepal-U.S. Alumni Network (NUSAN) and Alliance for Idol Mission (AIM), Nepal collaborated to organize a training program in Sunsari, focusing on enhancing the capacity of women groups to promote the protection of women and girls from violence, abuse, and exploitation. The program took place on August 27-28.

The two-day training program for women was attended by 35 participants. The first day featured training sessions by USG alumni Mr. Somraj Thapa and Santosh Mehta. On the second day, guest speakers including Ms. Vinita Mehta, Deputy Chief of Inaruwa Municipality, Jai Krishna Yadav, Rajendra Pokhrel from the media sector, and representatives from the Federation of Journalists graced the event. At the event, Ms. Nirala Bhandari, from the district police administration office, highlighted the cause through her speech.

The program started with a welcome address by Ms. Riva Karn, a member of AIM–Nepal, followed by an introduction to NUSAN, its initiative and Alumni Small Grant (ASG) by Ms. Chunni Khatun. The event gathered 35 enthusiastic participants from diverse backgrounds who actively engaged in the program.

The initiative covered two municipalities in Sunsari district: Inaruwa Municipality and Harinagar Village Municipality. Women’s groups were formed in these areas, comprising key women figures from the communities. These groups, totaling 7, each included 5 prominent members from marginalized backgrounds. The aim of the project is to empower these members as agents of change in addressing gender-based violence (GBV). During the event, there were a total of 4 male and 35 female participants.

This event is part of the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) initiative in Koshi Province, led by Ms. Chunni Khatun, recipient of the 2011 U.S. Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).
A training and strategic planning session focused on plantation and plant protection took place at Pushpa Batika Educational Academy, Laxminiya Rural Municipality-1, Dhanusha.

The event was graced by the esteemed presence of Chief Guest Bhogendra Mishra, Chair of Laxminiya Rural Municipality, Dhanusha, along with distinguished guests including Nagendra Yadav (Chief Administrative Officer of Laxminiya Rural Municipality), Jay Kumar Yadav (Education Officer of Laxminiya Rural Municipality), Dipak Jha (Headteacher of Laxminiya Janata Ma.Vi), Damodar Aryal (Principal of Tridev Academy), Ashok Sah (NUSAN Provincial Committee Member), and Nepal-U.S. Alumni Network (NUSAN) Executive Member, Subash Nepali as a part of solidarity towards the initiative. During the event there were total 68 male and 82 female participants.

The event garnered participation of 150 students from 7 schools’ Green Clubs, and a total of 189 participants, encompassing caretaker teachers, school representatives, principals, and stakeholders from the Rural Municipality.

The initiative commenced with the establishment of ‘Green Clubs’ in four distinct schools located in Laxminiya Bazaar.

These clubs comprise students from the respective schools, ranging in age from 13 to 16. The membership count varies across the chapters: Chapter 1 has 27 members, Chapter 2 has 27 members, Chapter 3 has 29 members, and Chapter 4 has 15 members. The overarching goal is to expand this initiative to six additional schools within the Laxminiya Rural Municipality.

This is an initiative under NUSAN Alumni Small Grant (ASG), led by ASG finalist from Madhesh Province, Mr. Dinesh Kumar Yadav, Teaching Excellence Achievement (TEA) program participant– 2013, in collaboration with Laxminiya Rural Municipality.
Nepal-U.S. Alumni Network (NUSAN) in collaboration with Women Service Institute, Nepal (WSI), recently hosted a Policy Dialogue addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Midterm Review and the Youth, Women, and Marginalized Issues.

The event was graced by a heterogeneous list of panelists including, Special Guests: Hon. Prakash Pantha, Member National Assembly & Chairperson of Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee, Federal Parliament; Hon. Kamala Kumari Parajuli, Chairperson at National Women’s Commission; NUSAN executive member and UN Economic and Sustainable Development Advisor, Mr. Subhash Nepali; Chairperson of NGO Federation of Nepal & Nepal SDG Forum, Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi; Member of National Assembly & Goal 5 subcommittee member under SDG and Good Governance parliamentary committee, Hon. Bimala Ghimire.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Ms. Lila Sharma, Secretary (WSI), followed by an introduction to the Nepal-U.S. Alumni Network (NUSAN). This introduction included NUSAN’s role, initiatives, the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) program, and its active engagement in various thematic areas, articulated by NUSAN President, Mr. Saroj Bista.

The session chair, Ms. Bhawana, highlighted current issues related to youth, women, and marginalized communities in the context of SDGs. This was followed by a presentation on the SDG Midterm Review Process, improvement areas to achieve SDGs, and the Way Forward by Mr. Subash Nepali. During the event 5 male and 40 female participated.

The event witnessed 45 enthusiastic attendees from diverse backgrounds who actively participated in open mic sessions, discussing a range of topics including youth, women, marginalized groups, people with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, and Dalit youth, by directing questions to relevant stakeholders.

This event is part of the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) initiative in Bagmati Province, spearheaded by ASG finalist Ms. Bhawana Bhatta, Professional Fellows Program (PFP) participant– 2018.
Alumni Small Grant (ASG) finalist Binod Neupane, Community Solutions Program Participant-2021 in collaboration with United Community Nepal, led a workshop titled “Introduction & the use of popular educational/employment websites” which marked a pivotal chapter within his ASG project, ‘Empower Fedi’ in Gandaki Province.

The event drew a dynamic group of 37 enthusiastic participants, comprising students and women, who actively engaged with the invaluable insights shared. This event aimed to navigate attendees through the digital landscape, revealing the abundant possibilities inherent in these platforms. A total of 13 male and 17 female participants took part in the event.

The project’s primary aim was to empower the youth, women, and minorities in Ward 1 of Fedikhola Rural Municipality by providing them with digital literacy/skills training and resources. This initiative sought to equip these target groups with the essential skills and knowledge needed to access economic opportunities, ultimately leading to economic development and job creation in the community.

As a result of this endeavor, participants gained a diverse set of digital skills, including proficiency in mobile applications and Office packages, among other relevant tools. Additionally, they received education on the effective use of social media for raising awareness about cybercrimes. Furthermore, the project successfully heightened awareness about gender and social inclusivity, as well as human rights, enhancing participants’ understanding of the importance of inclusivity, diversity, and equal opportunity. This, in turn, contributed to creating a more inclusive and unified community.

The panel comprised five esteemed panelists: Ms. Laxmi Yogi, Deputy Mayor of Lamahi Municipality; Mr. Ganesh Chaudhary, Acting President of Ward No. 8 Satbariya; Mr. Suraj Shahi, Sub Inspector at the Lamahi Police Department; Ms. Laxmi Acharya, Women’s Rights Activist and Editor of Yugboodh National Daily; and Ms. Lila Shah, Coordinator and News Editor of Radio Highway Lamahi Dang.

The event commenced with an opening address by Mr. Durga Pandeya, NUSAN’s Provincial-Level Coordinator for Lumbini Province, who shed light on the Nepal–U.S. Alumni Network (NUSAN) and its engagement in various social initiatives.

The panel discussion was skillfully moderated by Ms. Sita Sharma, who effectively directed the course of the event. The core objectives of this panel discussion revolved around pinpointing the underlying causes of physical violence against rural women and empowering them to collectively raise their voices against this pressing issue.

During the event, 60 participants actively engaged in the discussion, including panelists, Alumni members from Lumbini Province, former Access teachers, community activists, 35 women from Lamahi’s Satbariya Village, 6 USG Alumni members from Lumbini Province, and 10 women who had directly experienced physical violence. During the event there were total 5 male and 44 female participants.

This event is part of the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) initiative, led by ASG finalist- Lumbini Province, Ms. Sita Devi Sharma, who participated in the English Access Micro-scholarship Program and the TESOL Conference in 2023.
In a harmonious convergence of purpose and progress, the Nepal-U.S. Alumni Network (NUSAN), in partnership with American Corner Surkhet and Youth For Change (YFC) organized a significant event titled “The Rainbow Bridges: Building a More Inclusive Society” on August 27.

The event was graced by the presence of esteemed dignitaries and distinguished guests, including the Mayor of Birendranagar Municipality, representatives from Karnali Province’s Ministry of Social Development, National Human Rights Commission, Nepal Police, FNCCI, Surkhet, and a diverse array of NGOs, GOS, and INGOs. Noteworthy attendees encompassed journalists, social media influencers, LGBTQI advocates.

Commencing with a warm address from, Mr. Hirdesh Kumar K.C, the discussion delved into prevailing challenges confronted by the LGBTQI+ community where he emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive society by working together to overcome differences. NUSAN executive member, Ms. Swarna Tamrakar, stood in solidarity with the project and presented about the Nepal-U.S. Alumni Network (NUSAN). Her introduction comprehensively outlined NUSAN’s pivotal role, its far-reaching initiatives, and the transformative impact of the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) program across diverse spheres. Ms. Tamrakar passionately advocated for unity in fostering solidarity and nurturing a society that embraces inclusivity. Subsequent to this illuminating preamble by NUSAN, a profound 19-minute documentary unfolded, illuminating the intricate lives, struggles, and obstacles faced by members of the LGBTQI community. During the event there were total 7 male and 5 female participants, and 3 participants from LGBTQIA+ community.

Subsequently, LGBTQI members Ms. Anjali, Jenisha, and Meena courageously shared their personal journeys, igniting an open and impactful discussion on relevant issues.

This event is part of the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) initiative in Karnali Province, led by Mr. Hirdesh Kumar K.C, recipient of the 2016 U.S. Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).
At the finale episode of the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) - Sudurpaschim Chapter, NUSAN Vice-President, Ms. Pravina Amatya, and NUSAN Treasurer, Mr. Niroj Shrestha, participated in a show of solidarity to support the ASG project, ‘An Entrepreneurial Kuragraphy: Podcast towards Prosperity,’ in Dhangadi, Kailali on 26 August.

The “Entrepreneurial Kuragraphy” project is an initiative aimed at fueling youth entrepreneurship through insightful podcasts. These podcasts delve into the youth entrepreneurial landscape of the Far West province. Each episode captures the essence of promoting an entrepreneurial ecosystem with specific objectives of analyzing talks (Kura) with young entrepreneurs across various fields.

With a total of 10 episodes, this project collaboratively partnered with Radio KMC 104.6 Mhz for recording, editing, and dissemination steered by a dedicated youth team including Mr. Surendra Kumar Bohara, Ms. Ritu Nath, and Mr. Chandrakant Paneru. The podcast featured a total of 8 male and 4 female guests.

This podcast series is part of the Alumni Small Grant (ASG) initiative, led by ASG finalist-Sudurpaschim Province, Mr. Surendra Kumar Bohora, recipient of the 2023 US Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).

Check out, Entrepreneurial Kuragraphy on Youtube: https://youtube.com/@radiokmc104?si=22PJ26Sdfv65vzAW
In retrospect, the ASG project witnessed an impressive turnout of 309 participants across the seven provinces. The breakdown by gender and province is as follows:

Koshi Province: 4 male and 35 female participants
Madhesh Province: 68 male and 82 female participants
Bagmati Province: 5 male and 40 female participants
Gandaki Province: 13 male and 17 female participants
Lumbini Province: 5 male and 44 female participants
Karnali Province: 7 male and 5 female participants, and 3 participants from LGBTQIA+ community.
Sudurpaschim Province: 8 male and 4 female participants.

Furthermore, a noteworthy contingent of 24 USG alumni actively participated in the ASG project across the 7 provinces.