

About Madi

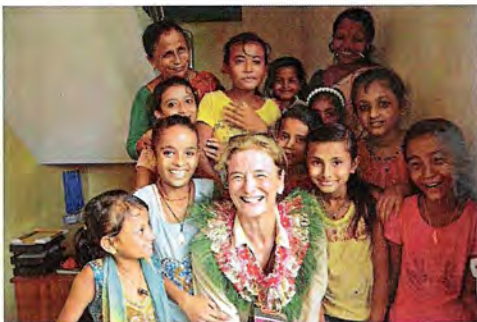
Madi is a remote, rural village neighboring the majestic vistas and wildlife of Chitwan National Park in Nepal. It takes two hours of driving on rough roads to reach the nearest village, and Madi's low-lying areas are prone to heavy floods, rendering the village even less accessible during the monsoon season. There's no electricity in the village, making communication with surrounding areas difficult.

Literacy rates are low—38% of men and 33% of women cannot read. The majority of the population subsists on agricultural production, with 37% of villagers practicing corn, wheat, millet, and rice farming, as well as animal husbandry. Madi is a very diverse community of underprivileged ethnic groups such as Dalits and indigenous communities, including Tharus, Magars, and Gurungs. Through no fault of their own, this diverse, rural community lacks the most basic resources to break the cycle of poverty.

Yet tremendous potential lies in Madi. While Madi is very isolated, the nearest village, Jhuwani, is home to a thriving community that has made enormous strides through its READ Center. The community of Madi was inspired by the transformation they saw in Jhuwani, and took the initiative to open a READ Center in their own village. They are ambitious and excited about the prospect of taking development into their own hands to build a brighter future.

The Madi READ Center

On August 10, 2013, the Madi READ Center opened to the public. To show their excitement and investment in the Center, the Madi community donated land and a building to be renovated. Additionally, they have agreed to donate 15% of the cost of establishing the Center and have fundraised another 15% from the Village Development Committee, for a total co-investment of 30%.



Sarah Street at the Madi READ Center.



Madi villagers visiting the Center's library.

Madi READ Center at a Glance:

Local name: Gardi Community Library and Resource Center
Village: Madi
District: Chitwan
Region: Terai
Country: Nepal
Population of Madi: 12,004
Reach:* 25,375
For-profit sustaining enterprise: Room for rent; Fish pond
Hub READ Center: Jhuwani
Center resources:

- Library
- Children's section
- Women's section
- Computer room

Partner: Sarah Street and friends

Opening Date:
August 10, 2013

**Includes all villages within a 5km radius of Madi.*



Sustaining Enterprise Update

To ensure the continued success of each READ Center, READ works with the local community to develop and seed at least one enterprise to generate income to sustain the Center. The Madi READ Center has already initiated two enterprises: a room for rent and a fish pond. The Dairy Development Corporation of Nepal currently rents a room from the Madi READ Center. In addition, the Madi Center plans to launch a fish farm. The President of the Madi Center Management Committee (CMC) has already met with the Jhuwani leadership to do a joint training in aquaculture, and has begun digging a pond.

Program Highlights

The Madi READ Center has been open for only a month, but its library is already very active. On average, 250-300 villagers, including over a hundred children, visit the Center every day to take advantage of its books, multimedia resources, and trainings. The Center's Management Committee has hired a social mobilizer, who is currently developing programs in literacy, women's empowerment, and livelihood skills training based on the community's needs.

The Center has partnered with Practical Answers, which supports rural villagers by answering their questions on important issues such as farming techniques and health. So far, 310 questions from villagers have been responded to by Practical Answers. At the request of the community, the Center has also developed an interactive women's empowerment program to tackle issues specific to marginalized women in the area. The program will use a theatre program to raise awareness on issues such as human trafficking, domestic violence and rape, single parenting, and women's health. Madi lies close to a national park and its villagers regularly encounter wildlife, so the Center has created an educational program on wildlife protection and safety.



Clockwise from left: the Madi READ Center; women from Madi; the Center Management Committee; villagers celebrating the inauguration of the Center.



Inauguration of the Madi READ Center, Nepal



Dar e Tanya

On August 10th, I had the privilege of attending the inauguration of the Madi READ Center. This is one of the community centers that your generous donation to 'Sarah's Race for Nepal' funded. It was an awesome day and such a truly special experience that I wanted to share the news with you. Your contribution helped make a dream come true for a small community, and I can tell you: they are very grateful.

There was dancing, singing as well as speeches, ribbon-cutting and plaque-unveiling activities! I got to meet lots of the women and children who will now have access to not only a library but to various programs in literacy, women's empowerment, computer training, health education and livelihood skills training that are being established. There was a huge turnout from the village and adjacent communities. The level of excitement about the center was amazing. When I quietly left the formal celebrations to take photos of the center, I found the place full of kids already with their noses buried in books or playing in the children's room. There was a real buzz, and that was within 30 minutes of opening! I've enclosed a progress report from READ, which is very encouraging about the high levels of participation the center is enjoying. The real success will take time to see, but we are off to a really good start. And remember, a second center is being built because your generosity helped raise double my goal.

The whole experience—from running the 1/2 marathon to helping two communities in Nepal—has been so tremendously rewarding for me, I am truly grateful for your support and encouragement in this venture. It feels really good. THANK YOU!

Big hug — Sarah