

**Speech of MRS Jaya Rajbhandari Pradhan – S.E.O. Society of Each Other –
Kathmandu**

During 15th anniversary of ProNepal on September 12th, 2019

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Namaste !

I am honored to be here to participate in this grand celebration of 15th Anniversary of ProNepal . I always feel very happy to be here but this time I am here with different feelings and different responsibility, this time I have brought a lot of thanks, gratitude and good wishes of women, children and people of Nepal who have benefited from your support and our works. DHERAI DHERAI DHANYABAD, AAVAR TATHA SHUVAKAMANA, Its word from Nepal.

Let me introduce myself, I am Jaya, associated with Society For Each Other (SEO), a social organization working for destitute women, underprivileged children and people in need.

Let me brief the situation of Nepalese women through my personal experience. When I was young, it was rare for a woman or girl to work outside. They were mostly kept in home for household works. My parents provided me equal opportunity to study as my brothers. But when I intended to join job my parents didn't allow me to do so. They told me I may work after marriage if permitted by my husband's family. It means girls' are not free and they are under control of either own parents or unknown future family. During that time working outside for daughters made parents ashamed, particularly for the middle class family.

I got married when I was university student. I am lucky to have a nice and liberal family who kindly permitted me to complete my study and also let me do whatever I want for my career. After marriage a girl belongs to new family and need to bear the responsibilities according to new family's systems and beliefs. After marriage, I completed my masters' degree and by then I had a child. I became very busy with my child and family. My dream of working outside was shattered. Then again I got one more child. When both of my children started school my preference for work was changed. I didn't want to work as full timer but wanted to do something for the society. But I did not know how? I live in a city but I had seen village life of the country during my childhood.

My father was in government service and had to go different places on his career. During school vacation I used to go to visit my parents. I remember that my mother used to keep general medicines when she went to villages along with my father and used to distribute those medicines among sick villagers. Most of villagers were not used to allopathic medicines hence the medicine my mother gave them was very effective for simple health problems like fever, headache, diarrhoea. One day we were sitting in the balcony of my father's office quarter we saw some people carrying a very sick person in a bamboo carrier and came to us and asked my mother for checkup and treatment. We were shocked. My mother had no choice because the hospital was two days walk away and villagers were not ready to take the patient to the hospital. My mother was not a medical person. This was the situation of my villages. So I was very much inspired for social work for needy people since those days. One does not need much money and perfect skill to help the people.

As I live in city, the capital of the country, Kathmandu, it was not like the villages I had experienced. But there was also a lot to do. The place where I live in, has a temple where I used to see children collecting money offered to God. One day I asked them whether they go to school, they said no. Then immediately I got an idea to do something for those children. I shared my idea with my friends who were staying at home taking care of their children and doing house hold chores after obtaining master degree. They liked my idea and we planned to start a non-formal education program for those children.

For this program we rented a big room which cost less than 40 euro a month which we could bear ourselves. Then we collected used furniture, carpet, spare exercise books, pens and colors what so ever useful for us. We enrolled some children from temple and some other children who had never ever stepped in to school. We taught these children for a year. We didn't have separate room to run different classes, nor we had source to admit them in mainstream schools. So we started to teach them different grade education in one single room. We encouraged our friends and relatives to donate for snacks for these children as some of children used to come with empty stomach.

We had no idea how to continue their education in mainstream school. In the meantime Mrs. Helene offered a ten year sponsorship for a needy child. Mrs. Helene's this step showed us a path, to start the sponsorship program. Then we started sponsorship program which created an opportunity to a child to go to mainstream school. Thank you Mrs. Helene for not only being the first sponsor but also for opening the door for sponsorship program of SEO as well. In this

way the sponsorship program started. At this moment we have 117 children under Sponsorship Program for academic year 2019 and among them 32 children are sponsored by ProNepal.

Though Nepal government has declared free school education but students still have to pay fees under different headings which are not affordable yet for poor families. Every year four hundred thousand girl child drop out of school before they complete primary school. There are so many reasons behind this dropout but the main reason is poverty. If parents have to choose between children to send to school they definitely choose boy child rather than girl child.

Seo's sponsorship program has drastically changed the life of many children. They have successfully completed their education and are working in different fields of the society.

Let me present some of the cases :

Sabita Raut, a girl completed grade nine and her family didn't let her continue the school again, saying they couldn't afford anymore. SEO supported this girl to continue her education. Later she completed under graduate and is a teacher in the same school where she studied.

Shraddha Shrestha who's father was alcoholic and died due to liver cancer. Her mother struggled hard to bring Shraddha and her sister up. SEO supported them. She completed grade ten and got scholarships to study Nursing. She joined the Nepalese army and got opportunity to serve abroad with UN Peace Mission through Nepalese Army Unit. Her sister Shreya also completed B.Sc Nursing and now she is teacher in a nursing college.

Gangasagar Shrestha belonging to a large family and father without regular work was also sponsored. After completing school, he started teaching in the same school where he used to study and studies engineering. He completed his engineering and now he has joined a Japanese solar company in Tokyo as an engineer from last June. This was a proud moment not only for Gangasagar and his family but of course SEO and ProNepal too.

After the earthquake of 2015 ProNepal supported tremendously in our relief work for the earthquake victims. One hundred tents and two hundred blankets were distributed to the people who had completely lost their house as immediate relief. Like wise rice and other fooding items were distributed to more than two hundred families. SEO is able to distribute roofing materials for 375 households, among them 200 supports were provided by Pro Nepal alone.

Apart from this, Pro Nepal has supported drinking water project in Tipchowk where the pipe line of drinking water was displaced by the earthquake.

ProNepal also supported furniture for multipurpose hall in Bhumimata school where it has supported to construct the school building .

Recently 17 deaf children were supported to install the hearing aid with support of ProNepal.

Another project ProNepal is supporting is the Machine Knitting Training project for 20 women which is going to start from December.

To make a woman capable to use her rights she must be empowered by providing opportunities for her overall development. Realizing this fact SEO has been organizing different skill training programs for women with the financial support of Pro Nepal and other associations.

These skill training programs have changed not only the life of women but the whole family. Ultimately these changes impact the community and the country.

One of our participant lady Yasoda who used to work as a domestic help participated in our sewing training program. She was illiterate. Through this program she learned reading and writing as well as sewing skill. Today she is working in a tailor shop and she is very happy that her new skill has given her better life.

One of our trainee, Madhu Lama, who use to work in cabin restaurant also participated in our sewing training program was so motivated. After receiving this training she encouraged others girls to take skill training. Later she also started Sewing training programs for girls working in cabin restaurant with support of a donor. Now she is running an organization to support women working in cabin restaurants and their children.

Like wise, our professional cooking training also armed many women with a new skill and helped them to become independent entrepreneurs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Honorable Presidents Mr. Durnwalder and Honorable president Mr. Kompatscher for providing us an opportunity to welcome you in Nepal and show our works. Your visits have empowered us to work more.

I would like to thank all the members of ProNepal for continuous support, suggestions, guidance, encouragement and patience during from writing the project to execution of the projects. Some time it takes too long to start the project due to various problems, sometime the project starts but the progress is very slow. We feel very ashamed to have nothing to share. Sometime just writing the problem not the progress. But you are always there with patience and understanding.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the families and friends for your outstanding support and trust. Your unconditional support and love toward Nepal and Nepalese people in need encourage us to work more. Without you all, we won't be able to achieve our goal, you made us capable to support so many children and women in need.

At last but not the least, I on behalf of SEO, children we enrolled in sponsorship, women associated with our programs and people connected with our projects would like to express sincere thanks to Mrs. Helene for providing us an opportunity to start sponsorship program and getting in touch with Pro Nepal, Mr. Prayer for his regular visit to experience our problems and solve the problems through projects, Mr. Ruffini for his leadership, Mrs. Rita for taking care of new projects, Mrs. Ruffini for managing the fund in time, Mrs. Margherita for taking care of sponsorship program and Ms. Prakriti for visiting Nepal and our project sites ,meeting with people, facilitating our communication for better understanding. And before I conclude I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Foundation of Savings Bank of South Tyrol for giving us an opportunity to participate in the fifteen anniversary of ProNepal. Dhanyabad! Thank you very much!