

Religious Youth Service Project Helps Rebuild Nepal

Santosh Paudel
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Kathmandu, Nepal—More than 30 young people from around the world participated in a Religious Youth Service project, “Leadership through Service,” in Pokhara, Nepal from June 10 to 16, 2015.

The project was originally scheduled for an earlier date, but was changed to June because of the devastating April 2015 earthquake in the country—in which more than 9,000 people died and which impacted more than 8 million people—and the many tremors that occurred after it. While more than 70 people applied to participate in the project, less than half attended due to many parents not wanting their children and governments not allowing their citizens to travel to Nepal in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Over the five-day project, volunteers painted the Parde Higher Secondary Community, one of the oldest schools in Pokhara that has 670 students. Educational presentations were also given, including one on the universal principles formulated by UPF founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon, which were attended by many scholars and Ambassadors for Peace. The participants also distributed stationery items and chocolate to the children.

An important part of the project was the relief program in Bungamati, a village in Lalitpur District in central Nepal, where thousands of homes were destroyed during the earthquake. Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, chairman of UPF-Nepal and a member of Nepal’s parliament, and Rev. Santosh Paudel, vice chairman of UPF-Nepal, participated in the program, which served more than 200 families in the village. Hearing about the relief distribution program, many more families asked for help, and listed their names for aid. After the project, UPF-Nepal and the International Relief Friendship Foundation distributed relief to 300 more families, reaching a total of 500 families in the village.

The project inspired hope in the re-building of Nepal and in many of the participants. Mr. Roger Chia, a volunteer from Singapore, said, “RYS provided [a] platform [for] realizing myself...I never will forget this...experience, and will pass [it on] to my family, children and community. [I met the] most beautiful people on [this] RYS project. Thanks to RYS and UPF [for] organizing this event; [I] hope [to be] back in future.”

