



AWASUKA
आवासुका - आवास सुधार कार्यक्रम

2024
SMOKELESS KITCHENS
& HERITAGE PROJECT



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Awasuka, after the Nepali words: Aawaas Sudhar Karyakram, means Habitat Improvement Program. It promotes safe and healthy homes in the rural remote areas of Nepal.

2024 SMOKELESS KITCHENS & HERITAGE PROJECT

The year 2024 has been marked by significant **scientific dissemination** activities, which will support advocacy efforts and be established as a **strategic priority** for the program moving forward, but also by a major setback in terms of funding. In April, the \$30,000 Rotary grant—an initiative we had been developing and pursuing for over two years—was ultimately denied. Nevertheless, efforts have been made to sustain the program, and thanks to the support of **alternative grants**, we have been able to regain some momentum.



The upper part of our CHS (Chimney-Hood-Stove) systems: the chimney.

1. ADMINISTRATION

Working in rural and remote areas continues to pose significant challenges. Additionally, this year, operations in Nepal have also become increasingly complex. Recent changes to the country's laws, rules, and regulations—prompted by efforts to curb money laundering—have resulted in a stricter regulatory environment. As a result, the funds received in Barcelona in November have not yet been transferred, as the new regulatory framework now requires numerous additional procedures and authorizations. This represents a significant departure from the processes followed in previous years.

1. Financial Statements

Financial oversight has continued to be managed by Raquel Masferrer, who has been volunteering with the program for four years and remains responsible for accounting in Nepal. In parallel, Ruping Yuan, who has been collaborating with us for the past three years, has continued to oversee the accounting activities based in Barcelona.

Barcelona balance

Donations 2024	16.944,01 €
Remaining from 2023	9.196,60 €
Total funds for 2024	26.140,61 €
Transferred to Nepal	- €
Expenses in BCN	- 451,58 €
Remaining in BCN at the end of 2024	25.689,03 €

Nepal balance

(Exchange Rate: 143 – 2024 Average)

Transfers from Barcelona	0 NPR	0 €
Interests' Income	5.652 NPR	39,52 €
Donations from Nepal	0 NPR	0 €
Remaining from 2023	863.961 NPR	6.041,69 €
Total funds for 2024	869.613 NPR	6.081,21 €
Local Manager & Office Expenses	379.983 NPR	2.657,22 €
CHS paid in 2024 (*)	100.000 NPR	699,30 €
Deducted from Nepal (**)	452.700 NPR	3.165,73 €
Total Expenses in Nepal	932.683 NPR	6.522,25 €
Remaining in Nepal at the end of 2024	-63.070 NPR	-441,04 €

(*) Corresponding to the 10 CHS units installed for the scientific research involving air quality sensors. No additional CHS units were installed in 2024 due to new government regulations, which restricted transfers of funds to Nepal.

(**) Fundraisers in Nepal sent this extra amount by mistake for the 2023 Charity Party and it has been returned back in 2024.

2. Yearly Forecast

Based on the financial calculations for 2024 and the corresponding fieldwork analysis, we reaffirm the conclusions drawn over the past two years regarding the program's operational capacity. The initiative is capable of supporting an average of **360 CHS** installations per year. This translates to an annual implementation cost of €36,000 for the CHS units, in addition to €5,000 allocated for local management and office operations. Therefore, the total annual cost of the smokeless kitchen project in Nepal amounts to **€41,000**. It is important to note that this figure does not include program overheads, such as the Program Director's salary and monitoring-related travel expenses to Nepal.

3. Conclusion

As mentioned at the outset of the report, the program's application for the Rotary International Global Grant was denied, which hindered our ability to complete the installation of the additional 250 CHS in rural areas of Nepal. However, alternative funding sources have enabled us to install an additional 150 CHS units. Due to recent regulatory changes in Nepal, as stated at the introduction of this section, these funds are currently on standby, waiting to be transferred to Nepal, that's why year in 2024 ends in the negative. Once the funds are transferred, the negative figure will be removed.



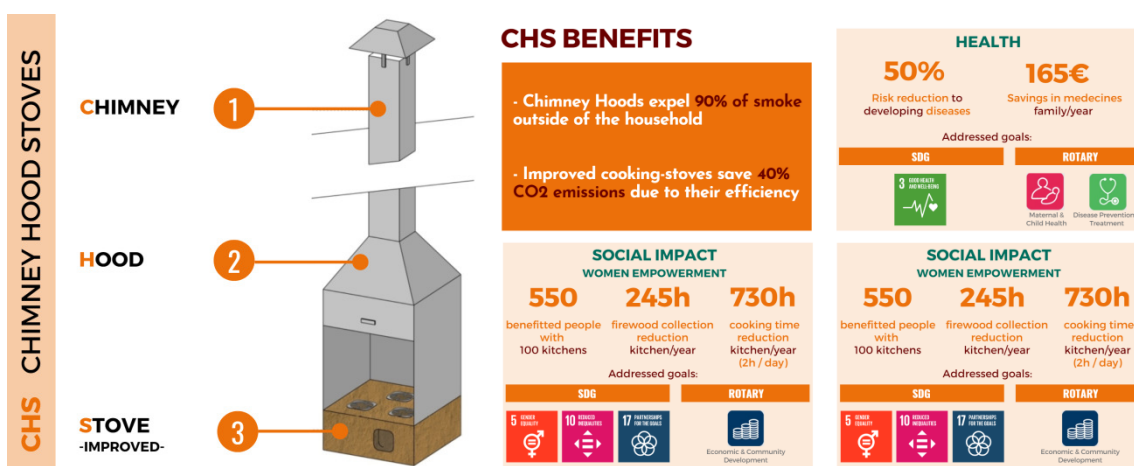
Nepalese woman from rural remote areas with traditional cooking stove

2. FIELD WORK

Field work in rural areas of Nepal is extremely challenging: all sorts of issues come up unexpectedly and have to be micromanaged from the site. Nevertheless, our monitoring process has improved a lot and currently our local manager Hareram Pudassaini and our manufacturer Sunil Gautam are very well coordinated.

1. CHS Explained: Components, Purpose and Benefits

The smokeless kitchens we implement are often misunderstood as merely chimneys, but they are, in fact, comprised of three essential components: the Chimney, an internal Hood, and an improved Stove. It is only the integration of these three elements: **C**, **H** and **S** (CHS) that ensures a smokeless and safe environment within the household.



2. Quality Control within the installation process

The fieldwork process is organized and digitized from beginning to end: from the awareness meetings, then the demand lists, the installations, the location approval, the visual verifications and the phone verifications (satisfaction surveys). Photos of each and every beneficiary are collected before and after the CHS installation, so that the right location of a CHS within the household is ensured for its right operation.

The forms in English and Nepali have been used this year as well, with information regarding the CHS maintenance tasks and the manufacturer's contact number, in case any problems arise.

3. Manufacturer/Installer

We are continuing with the same manufacturer/installer we signed an agreement with in May 2022. Our first agreement to install a batch of 300 CHS units was completed in mid 2023, in two different municipalities: Bakaiya (200+) and Bhimphedi (100+). After that, 50 extra CHS units were installed out of the initial agreement and nowadays 150 extra CHS are underway.

4. CHS Completed in 2024

In 2024, a total of 10 Chimney-Hood-Stoves (CHS) units were completed and verified. These units had been equipped with sensors to monitor indoor air quality, with measurements taken both before and after the installation. The installed units will directly benefit approximately 55 individuals, as the average household in this rural area consists of 5.5 people. The local workforce engaged in this initiative included 4 field workers, 1 metalworker at the workshop, and 1 contractor who managed the entire process.

- **January & February:** sensor monitoring of 10 houses, before and after, and 10 CHS installations.
- **March:** completion of the scientific measurements.
- **April:** denial of the Rotary Global Grant.
- **May-June:** working on new funding alternatives from Barcelona.
- **July:** volunteer Marti Bosch stays in Bhimphedi for a month, contributing to improve communications.

- **August-September:** new area identified for upcoming CHS installations: a remote Chepang community located approximately a 3-hour walk from Majimtar Bazar, situated between Kathmandu and Pokhara.
- **October-November:** Preparation of a new survey to be utilized for beneficiaries' selection, in order to select the most vulnerable ones.
- **December:** local manager's trip to Majimtar to perform new surveys to potential beneficiaries.

5. Website Map

The geolocation data for the installed Chimney-Hood-Stoves (CHS) units is accessible on the Awasuka website. As of the end of 2024, a total of 760 CHS units have been completed since the inception of the smokeless kitchen project in 2019. While the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 saw reduced productivity, the project regained momentum in 2022. Since 2023, the project's geolocation map has been continuously updated by Marc Torres Crespo, a Geoinformation and Geomatics Engineer who previously volunteered with Awasuka in Bhimphedi.



Location of the 10 sensor-monitored houses with new CHS installed by Awasuka.

3. FUNDRAISING

1. El Camí de la Solidaritat.

El Camí, a partner since 2020, will conclude their collaboration this year. In 2024 they raised €2,000 for the program. However, the "Breathe Again" t-shirt initiative did not achieve the expected sales, and the remaining t-shirts were ultimately distributed among the volunteers of both NGOs.

2. Individual Donors & Organizations

This year's individual donors are: Illia Vybornow with €100, Ariane Alzola with €100, Montserrat Duran with €500 and Ruping Yuan with €55. The main donor organizations are Caldes Solidària and Fons Català de Cooperació with: €13.585.

3. Awasuka Trips: Tarannà Agency

In the summer of 2024, Taranna Travel Agency brought two groups of travelers to Bhimphedi, during which our volunteer Martí Bosch was present on-site. Approximately 20 individuals visited Bhimphedi, where they toured the Heritage Project and the Smokeless Kitchens. As a result of this trip, Taranna made a €600 donation to support the smokeless kitchens project.

4. Mentorship: Nick Jesset, January-December 2024.

Ruping Yuan and Nick Jesset have continued to meet with Monica on a weekly basis, to explore new funding alternatives and marketing strategies.

4. IMPACT MEASUREMENT & MONITORING

1. Monitoring trips to Bhimphedi, Nepal. July 2024.

Due to the funding setback and the program's current status of being on hold, the Program Director did not travel to Nepal this year. However, volunteer Martí Bosch visited Nepal during the summer with the aim of strengthening the program's communication capacities in coordination with the local manager. During his stay, he contributed to the development of two program presentations designed to welcome the visiting Taranna travel groups and assisted in the preparation of weekly reports. A summary of his experience is presented below:

My name is Martí Bosch, and I spent two months in Nepal—an experience that deeply transformed me. Immersed in a society full of contrasts, I found spiritual richness and human depth that challenged my assumptions as a “developed” individual. In the rural village of Suping, Bhimphedi, I lived with a local family, teaching English and sharing daily life, which taught me a powerful lesson in humanism—not as a theory, but as a way of being. Despite the warmth and generosity of the people, I witnessed serious health issues caused by smoke inhalation from traditional kitchens. The work Awasuka does in improving these conditions is invaluable, and I am grateful to have contributed to this meaningful project.



Martí Bosch and Hareram Pudassain working at the office and welcoming Taranna travellers.

2. Scientific Research on Indoor Air Quality and Health. During the whole of 2024.

This research, titled: *Evaluation of improvements in children's and women's health in rural Nepal associated with the use of optimized kitchens*, involves the following organizations: Awasuka Program <https://awasuka.org>, Pediatric Environmental Health Unit <https://www.pehsu.cat/>, B2SLab at UPC - Bioinformatics and Biomedical Signals Laboratory <http://b2slab.upc.edu/>, BIOCOM-SC-Computational Biology and Complex Systems at UPC <http://biocomsc.upc.edu/> and iLIKA – Keizo Asami Institute (Pernambuco, Brazil) <https://www.likainstitute.org/>

The team members are: PhD. Daniel Lopez Codina, PhD Clara Prats and Mario Bravo (BIOCOM-SC), PhD. Jordi Fonollosa (B2SLab), PhD. Ferran Campillo (PEHSU), PhD. Jones Albuquerque (iLIKA), PhD. David Ferrandiz, Carles Turró and Monica Sans (Awasuka).

At the beginning of 2024, data collection from the air quality sensors was completed. Mario Bravo, a biostatistician specialized in data analysis, conducted the analysis of both sensor data and survey results. With the support of the team, Mario prepared a scientific communication that was presented at several scientific conferences, as detailed later in the report at the *Awarenes Raising* section.

The primary **objective of the scientific research** is to conduct an evidence-based assessment of improvements in air quality and related health outcomes, with particular focus on women and children. This evaluation will serve to **strengthen political advocacy** efforts aimed at promoting the widespread adoption of improved smokeless kitchens in rural areas of Nepal. Awasuka's Smokeless Kitchens reduce firewood consumption and enhance indoor air quality.

3. Scientific Research on the thermal behavior of thatched roof houses - PhD Sergio Coll, URV et altri.

Following the measurements conducted last year - as requested by Sergio Coll - the data was analyzed, and an article was subsequently written. Currently the article is undergoing the approval process for publication in a scientific journal. This study, written by Sergio Coll, Sandra Mesa, Sergio H. Cáceres, Sergio A. Cáceres and Mónica Sans (Awasuka), compares vernacular architecture in Spain, Colombia, and Nepal by analyzing their thermal performance using temperature and humidity data. While cane-based

buildings in Spain and Colombia show strong climate adaptation, Nepal's stone-and-thatch rural homes present more thermal instability. The research advocates for the recognition and preservation of these sustainable architectural systems as cultural heritage.

4. New Survey for Beneficiaries' Selection. July-August 2024.

Mario Bravo and Monica Sans elaborated and developed a new survey to identify socio-economic vulnerability of the interviewed beneficiaries. This tool was specifically designed to identify and prioritize the most vulnerable households among those assessed.

5. AWARENESS RAISING

BARCELONA

1. Article at La Vanguardia newspaper about Awasuka's Scientific Research. January 2024

The newspaper "La Vanguardia" published an article about the collaboration between two research teams from the UPC (BIOCOM-SC and B2SLAB) and Awasuka. This scientific study on Nepalese kitchens before and after the implementation of improved cooking-stoves will provide with many useful data to help promote this project of smokeless kitchens at an international level.

2. Lecture at "Resilience in Design" by Amaia Celaya, ELISAVA School, Barcelona. February 13th 2024

The Seminar *Resilience in Design* directed by Amaia Celaya (Architect and MD in Humanitarian Studies, consultant for IOM, UNM UN Habitat) was held in Barcelona, at ELISAVA School of Design from 12th to 16th February. Monica Sans Duran (Awasuka Program Director) was invited to present their case-study on day 02 (Feb 13), along with Marta Leboeiro Núñez (OIM - ONU Migration) and Johanna Z. Granados Alcalá.

3. Lecture at ETSAV Architecture School, Sant Cugat. April 4th 2024

Mònica Alarcón, one of Awasuka's volunteers, organized the "Cooperation Day" at ETSAV, featuring a series of invited lecturers. **Mònica Sans**, Director of the Awasuka Program, was invited to present the Smokeless Kitchens Project and the **Heritage Project**. Her presentation was followed by virtual interventions from Nepalese architects **Jharna Joshi** and **Subina Tuladhar**, who spoke respectively about the preservation of Nepalese heritage and the Bhimphedi Heritage Project, the latter presented as part of a Master's thesis.

4. Exhibit: "The Silent Killer" at ETSAV . April 2nd to 15th, 2024.

This is the fourth time Awasuka Program's Exhibit (8 roll-ups) is displayed in an education center to raise awareness amongst the students, professors and staff about the smoke in the kitchens: the silent killer.



Left: poster of the Awasuka Exhibit at ETSAV. Right: Poster of the "Resilience in Design" Seminar at ELISAVA.

5. Invitation to the Parliament of Catalonia as Awasuka Director. Barcelona. April 24th, 2024.

Oriol Brutau, President of the NEEC Association (Nous Empresarís i Emprenedors de Catalunya – New Businessmen and Entrepreneurs of Catalonia), invited Mònica Sans to the Association's Annual Meeting in recognition of her work, and in her capacity as Director of the Awasuka Program. The event aimed to promote networking within the entrepreneurial sector and to increase the visibility of its various projects before the Government of Catalonia.



Several images of Awasuka Program Director at the Parliament of Catalonia, with the NEEC group of Catalan Entrepreneurs.

6. Lecture at Rotary Club of Cambrils, Tarragona. June 6th, 2024.

The Rotary Club of Cambrils, a former collaborator, invited the Awasuka Program to deliver a presentation at their regular meeting. The presentation was conducted during their weekly dinner and was followed by a lively round of questions and debate. The members expressed strong interest and support for the program and encouraged Program Director Mònica Sans to continue efforts related to the Global Grant application and the future development of the project.

7. Presentation of Scientific Research at BIOCOM-SC, Barcelona, by Mario Bravo. June 18th, 2024.

The research group holds weekly informal meetings to share updates on the various projects being developed by its members. On this occasion, Mario Bravo, one of the members, presented the scientific research he conducted in Nepal and announced that he would be presenting it at the upcoming Epidemiology Congress in Cádiz, scheduled for September. This presentation contributed to the dissemination of the project among BIOCOM-SC members and the broader research community at the university.

8. Performance at Roca Gallery, talking about Nepal projects, Barcelona. June 18th, 2024.

"Architecture Music · Musicians Architects" is a series curated by Felix Arranz (Architect and Editor), organized by Roca and Figueras Seating. It alternates sessions between the Roca Galleries at Barcelona and Madrid. Bringing together prominent figures from the fields of music and architecture to foster dialogue and critical reflection between the two disciplines. The speakers for this session were: Fenwick Iribarren Architects, L35 Architects, b720 Fermín Vázquez Architects and Mònica Sans Duran Awasuka Program. The session concluded with Mònica's vocal performance, an architect and musician that created scenarios for emotion while talking about her projects in Nepal.

9. Epidemiology International Congress, Cadiz, by Mario Bravo. September 2024.

Following a request from the research team referenced earlier in this report, Mario Bravo registered to participate in the Epidemiology Congress, where he presented a scientific communication on Awasuka's research concerning indoor air pollution and its impact on health. His presentation sparked significant interest, as many fellow researchers were previously unaware of the severity of indoor air pollution in developing countries. The experience was particularly meaningful for Mario, marking his first participation in a professional scientific congress as a researcher. His presentation can be viewed in the congress's summary, pages 178 and 179. Later on the communication was published at **Research Gate**.

<https://www.reunionanualsee.org/documentos/Congreso%20SEE%202024.pdf>

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384011179> Improved kitchens with chimney impact in indoor air quality and household health

10. 1st Science and Technology Conference for Human Development, by Mario Bravo. October 2024.

The Interdisciplinary Group of Health Professionals (GIPS), in collaboration with the Solidarity Clinical Campus and the University of Barcelona, organized the 1st Science and Technology Conference for Human Development. Held at the Faculty of Medicine's Auditorium, the event was a great success, laying the groundwork for future discussions focused on development cooperation in the health sector. Mario Bravo spoke about improved stoves with chimneys, a project to measure the improvement in air quality by installing sensors for carbon dioxide, suspended particles, temperature and humidity, in Bhimphedi, Nepal, to fight against premature death due to pollution. His presentation can be viewed in the Day's summary document: <https://www.comb.cat/Upload/Documents/1/0/10681.PD>

11. University for Development Congress (CUD), Madrid, by Jordi Fonollosa. November 2024.

At the request of the research team director, Daniel López Codina, Jordi Fonollosa was invited to present a communication on cooperation at the University, focusing on the scientific research being conducted in Nepal. Specializing in sensor technology, Jordi delivered an excellent presentation on the Awasuka Program, covering all aspects related to smokeless kitchens and the conclusions drawn from the scientific research. His presentation can be seen at the Congress's summary document in the following link: https://congresosalcala.fgua.es/descargas/files/cud2024/l4_salud_global_29_nov.pdf



Top left and right: Mario Bravo at Cadiz Congress and GIPS Conference. Bottom Center: Jordi Fonollosa at CUD Congress.

NEPAL

12. New Survey for Beneficiaries' Selection, by Mario Bravo & Monica Sans. Fall-Winter 2024.

Awasuka's social mobilizer has conducted fieldwork across several remote and highly vulnerable rural areas, including the Majimtar Bazar region in Dhading District, home to a Chepang community. This area exhibits an exceptionally high level of socio-economic vulnerability—among the highest ever recorded by the program. In collaboration with Dhading Gaupalika, over 170 individuals were visited and interviewed using a newly developed survey tool, specifically designed to identify and prioritize the most vulnerable households among those assessed.

13. “AwasukA, a Decade of Memories”, article for Rotary Club of Kantipur Magazine (August 2024)

At the request of the program’s local counterpart, Rotary Club of Kantipur, Mònica Sans, Director of the AwasukA Program, authored an article commemorating their anniversary of collaborative work. The piece was published in the Club’s annual magazine and emphasized the significance of the Smokeless Kitchens initiative, alongside other key cooperation projects implemented in Nepal. Link to article: https://www.rotarykantipur.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=177:awasuka-a-decade-of-memories&catid=94&Itemid=1260

6. HERITAGE PROJECT

1. Background

The main objective of the heritage project is to raise awareness about Bhimphedi’s traditional architecture, monumental buildings, and its historical role as a commercial hub along the Silk Road. The initiative began in 2016, when **Monica Sans**, the AwasukA Program Director, witnessed the demolition of a heritage building. In response, she contacted various Nepalese heritage organizations and, by 2019, succeeded in preventing the demolition of another historic structure.

Back in Barcelona, she continued her efforts by engaging PhD. Architect **Montserrat Bosch**, a UPC professor specializing in Heritage Conservation. Montse Bosch later traveled to Nepal to support the project, leading to four architecture Bachelor’s theses in collaboration with AwasukA - two of them were tutored by her and focused on Bhimphedi Architectural Heritage, both of them can be consulted here: <https://upcommons.upc.edu/handle/2117/394548> & <https://upcommons.upc.edu/handle/2117/428784>

During the trip with Montserrat Bosch, Monica Sans established contact with Nepalese PhD Architect **Jharna Joshi**, a specialist in heritage conservation and the leading force behind the Bandipur Conservation Project. Bandipur is recognized as a national model for heritage preservation, being the first rural destination outside Kathmandu to successfully leverage cultural conservation for tourism development. Together, **Montse, Jharna, and Monica** developed a framework document for the conservation of Bhimphedi’s heritage, which was formally submitted to Bhimphedi Municipality. This initiative was accompanied by a heritage-focused presentation delivered by Jharna Joshi.

2. Progress in 2024

Building on this collaboration, **Monica Sans** was later contacted by **Sergio Coll** from the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV) in Tarragona, who proposed developing a European exchange program between URV and a Nepalese university. In response, Monica reached out to **Jharna Joshi** from Kathmandu University (KU) to explore the possibility of a joint initiative. The three began working together on the proposal in late 2024, and the program is expected to take shape during 2025. If successful, it will mark the **first university-level exchange of students and professors** organized by the **AwasukA Program**—an important step toward deepening heritage knowledge among Nepalese students and enhancing the visibility of Nepal’s cultural legacy within European academic circles, particularly in Tarragona.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although the CHS installation process has faced significant operational challenges this year, as outlined earlier in the report, the program has continued to gain momentum in the areas of **awareness raising** and **scientific dissemination**. For the second consecutive year, these activities have expanded the program’s visibility and impact, and they will increasingly support advocacy efforts while becoming a strategic priority moving forward. In parallel, efforts to secure alternative sources of funding remain active and ongoing.

Regarding the Heritage Project, it has successfully achieved its objective of raising **heritage awareness** in Bhimphedi, Kathmandu, and Barcelona. This impact has extended to academic institutions, including the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV), and Kathmandu University (KU).



Awasuka Program thanks profoundly all the individuals and organizations listed below.

AWASUKA TEAM 2024

EUROPE

Program Director: Mònica Sans, Architect-Musician

Accountancy: Raquel Masferrer, Accountant-Yoga Trainer & Ruping Yuan, Stockholm School of Economics student

Barcelona Funds Management by *Petit Món*: Núria Carbó & Vanessa Pérez, & Montse Morón in Nepal.

Fundraising by *El Camí de la Solidaritat*: Roger Solà (President & team leader)

CHS Map: Marc Crespo Torres, Geographic Data surveyor

CHS Houses Drawings: Beatriz Cubells, Architect

Social Media: Mònica Alarcón & Maribel Castillo

UPC Scientific Research Team Leader: PhD. Daniel López-Codina

UPC Scientific Research Team members: PhD. Clara Prats and Mario Bravo (BIOCOM-SC), PhD. Jordi Fonollosa (B2SLab), PhD. Ferran Campillo (PEHSU), PhD. Jones Albuquerque (iLIKA), PhD. David Ferrandiz.

IT Advisor & Sensors' installation: Carles Turró, Computer Scientist- Former Athlete

Multi Sensors System Manufacturer: Sens Solutions, Barcelona

UPC Advisor: PhD. Montse Bosch

NEPAL

Social Mobilizer & Local Manager: Hareram Pudassaini

CHS Manufacturer & Installer: Sunil & Sujana Gautam, Guru Muktinath Construction

Nepal Funds Management by *Rotary Club Kantipur*: Ishwor Shrestha (President), Dhruva Thapa (Service Project Director), Dilip Adikhari (Treasurer), Prabhat Yonzon (Secretary)

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Heritage Advisor Professor: PhD. Jharna Joshi (KU)

Lecturer on Bhimphedi Heritage: Subina Tuladhar (Kwopa Engineering College)

External Advisor: Min Malla (Practical Action – Kathmandu)

English teacher: Martí Bosch, for Hareram Pudassaini

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Montserrat Duran | Illia Vybornow | Arianne Alzola | Ruping Yuan



Thank you!
धन्यवाद