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Students to Open Library in Poverty-Ridden Village



In June, first-year master students Prakash Pathak, Taylor Clayton and Vivian Marcelino Santos Lima will travel to Nepal to create a library and multi-media learning center at the Shree Saraswati Higher Secondary School in the village of Udiyachaur.

Located 160 miles west of Kathmandu, most people in remote Udiyachaur live in extreme poverty, struggling to fulfill basic needs. The sole local school lacks a facility for students to develop their capabilities outside the classroom and more than 1200 students are deprived of educational materials beyond core-curriculum.



The school in Udiyachaur

Despite local support for the creation of a library and a multimedia-learning center, the school does not have sufficient funds to supply educational materials. By providing books, periodicals and computers, Pathak, Clayton and Marcelino hope the new facility will serve as a life raft to students engulfed in a multitude of challenges.

"We plan to set up a sustainable business model for the library and learning center by giving community members access to the facility during non-school hours and creating employment for a librarian," says Clayton.

"We envision our project to have long-term impact and hope it will be sustainable," adds Marcelino.

Pathak, a [Master in International Economics](#) student who grew up in Udiyachaur, has aspired to make this dream a reality for many years now. After meeting Marcelino and Clayton at the Graduate Institute, he was encouraged to develop a proposal and to apply for funding in partnership with the two.

Pathak, Marcelino and Clayton were awarded the prestigious [Christophe Pralong Prize](#) on April 5th at the University of Lausanne HEC Ball in Montreux. The grant is intended to help students studying at a Swiss university carry out a social, entrepreneurial or academic project in an emerging country.

"Had it not been for the quality education I received in Kathmandu and the United States, I would not be who I am today. It's really special to me to be able to give back what my village has given to me. I believe education is the catalyst for positive change, and what better way to do this than by creating a library and a multimedia-learning center. In the end I want to empower my fellow villagers to bring about autonomous change," said Pathak.

Clayton and Marcelino, both **Master in Development Studies** students, look forward to traveling to Nepal for the first time and applying the theoretical knowledge gained while attending the Graduate Institute in a challenging, hands-on setting.

To raise awareness about the project, Pathak, Clayton and Marcelino will host an apèro and a short-film screening at the Graduate Institute on May 15th at 18:00. To learn more about their project and find out how you can get involved, visit their website [here](#).

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