

Case Study

Golden Vision Society (GVS)

A deep dive into the journey, organisational structure, service model, and population supported by Golden Vision Society, with reflections on its impact and key lessons learnt



GVS

City Kathmandu
District Kathmandu
Country Nepal
Region Asia Pacific



GVS raises mental health awareness among underprivileged communities, particularly in rural Nepal



Organisational profile

Team size Very small (1-10 people)
Age of organisation 1-5 years



Key aspects of our work

Primary contextual issue Poverty affected & economically disadvantaged populations
Life stage All
Gender focus All
Level of intervention Prevention & Promotion + Assessment & Direct Care
Annual Reach 870+ people

Contextual issue

Mental health is highly stigmatised in Nepal, shaped by deep-rooted cultural myths, stigma, and a widespread preference for traditional healers over professional care. **A history of conflict, political unrest, and natural disasters has further increased mental health risks, with 10% of adults reporting mental health issues** (National Mental Health Survey, 2020). As specialist services remain largely concentrated in urban areas, **GVS fills a critical gap by reaching underserved rural communities** like Dhading, Dolkha, Hetauda, Tistung, Janakpur, Rasuwa, and Lalitpur.

Rural women and children in Nepal face a tightly interwoven set of risks that amplify mental-health needs: **geographic isolation** and transport barriers limit access to care; **economic vulnerability** and seasonal male migration increase care giving burdens and stress; and **conservative gender norms**, early marriage and high rates of gender-based violence raise the likelihood of depression, anxiety and trauma. **Effective responses therefore must be community-based, culturally sensitive, and integrated into existing maternal, child-health and livelihood platforms** – for example, training female community health volunteers to deliver brief psychosocial interventions, creating women's peer-support groups that combine mental-health education with livelihood support, and establishing confidential referral pathways. **These measures reduce stigma, increase access, and address the social drivers that underlie poor mental health among rural women and their children.**

Objectives

GVS raises mental health awareness among underprivileged communities, particularly in rural Nepal. By piggybacking on local partnerships with government bodies, police, community healthcare workers, and schools, they destigmatise mental health, offer counselling, and build sustainable support systems. **Led by people with lived experience, they aim to spread awareness, remove barriers to access, and expand telecounselling services**, positioning themselves as trusted advisors in mental health care. The organisation's vision is for Nepal to be a stigma-free country where mental health can be spoken freely about.

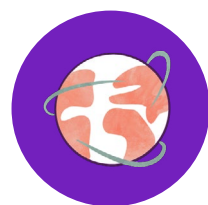
Journey



WHEN?

When was the organisation established?

GVS was established in December 2021.



WHERE?

Where did the organisation start implementing its activities?

GVS launched its first mental health programme in Dhading at Nil Kantha Secondary School, creating peer support groups and mental health education opportunities. Following positive engagement, the initiative expanded to schools in Hetauda and Tistung.



WHY?

Why did the organisation start its activities?

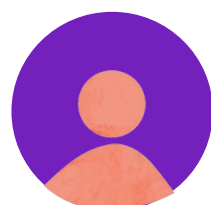
The organisation was founded in response to the lack of awareness and the significant stigma that prevented people from seeking help, particularly in rural areas, where there is a severe shortage of counsellors and limited access to services.



WHAT?

What did the organisation do in its initial stages?

During its first year, GVS implemented 10 projects across Nepal to showcase their work to government organisations and attract further support and funding.



WHO?

Who started the organisation?

Silvi Joshi initiated the organisation inspired by her own experiences with family challenges and her mental health. She wanted to share her vision and the lessons she had learned, creating GVS as a platform for people experiencing mental health challenges.



HOW?

How was the organisation's work started?

The contributions of nine lifetime board members, enabled them to cover transportation and administrative expenses. Through this sustainable approach, they successfully implemented eight projects outside the Kathmandu Valley.

Governance & finance

Organisational structure

GVS operates with a streamlined organisational structure designed to support effective decision-making and community-focused programming. **The organisation is guided by a Board of Directors (9 members), which provides strategic oversight, approves major initiatives, and ensures accountability.**

The Executive Lead oversees day-to-day management and coordinates core functions, including programme implementation, finance, administration, and community engagement.

The core team is now made up of:

- Silvi
- Susan
- Manoranjan
- Goma
- Pawantika
- Shova who is interning with the organisation.

Financial management

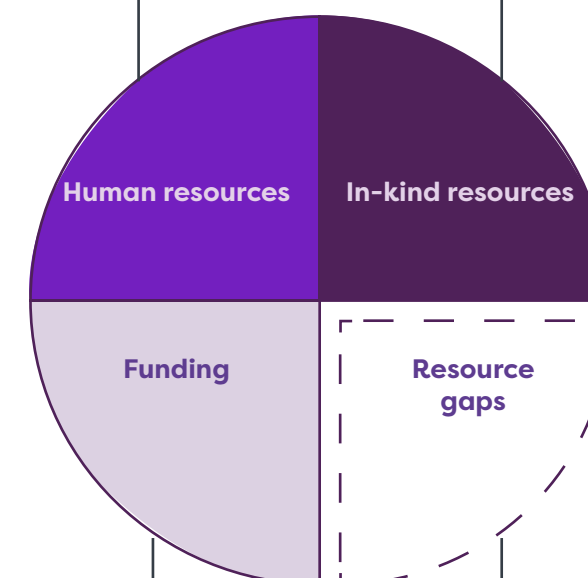
GVS manages its resources through a transparent and accountable system that prioritises cost-effectiveness and alignment with the organisation's mission. Financial resources are planned through an annual budget approved by the Board, ensuring that every expenditure directly supports programme goals.

Membership contributions, donor support, and project-based funding are allocated carefully to cover essential needs such as training materials, community mobilisation, transportation, and administrative operations.

Resources

GVS has a team of 7 core staff (4 psychologist & 3 operations) and 5 paid volunteers.

None.



The organisation received \$7,000.00 USD, however they had a target of \$20,000.00 USD.

A key organisational challenge is the limited availability of staff with strong technical proposal-writing and grant development skills, which can constrain access to funding opportunities.

Model & activities

Target population

GVS works with a range of vulnerable and underserved populations, including children, youth, **housewife-women groups**, and elderly individuals. GVS primarily works with marginalized communities, including the **Chepang community**, where families live in harsh climatic conditions and depend mainly on seasonal tomato farming through leased land for their livelihoods.

In addition, GVS supports students from economically disadvantaged families, including children whose parents are **living with disabilities and are unable to earn sufficient income for daily living expenses**. To address educational inequality, the organization has been providing annual scholarships to students studying in government schools who are deprived of access to quality education and essential learning opportunities.

Services or interventions



GVS provides psychosocial counseling, awareness programs, and capacity-building trainings to strengthen community mental health and resilience. The organisation has conducted trainings such as QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention and Mental Health First Aid to equip community members with practical skills to identify and respond to psychosocial issues.

Their approach focuses on increasing awareness of mental health, psychosocial wellbeing, and resilience-building through counseling services and community engagement activities. Following the support received from EMBER for singing bowl training, GVS is also planning to introduce sound healing and therapeutic practices as part of its mental health services to promote emotional wellbeing and stress reduction among clients.

Recognizing that social structures and understanding of mental health remain limited in many communities, **GVS conducts psychosocial awareness campaigns across diverse groups and localities.** These trainings combine basic psychosocial skills, including Psychological First Aid and active listening, with context-specific understanding of how social, economic, and environmental stressors affect mental wellbeing.

By strengthening local capacity, the organization ensures that support services remain accessible, culturally appropriate, and sustainable within communities over time.

Activities often integrate local cultural practices, storytelling, drawing therapy, drama, peer-sharing circles, and nature-based healing approaches to reinforce identity, belonging, and collective resilience. **These group-based interventions aim not only to reduce psychological distress but also to foster mutual support systems and stronger community connections.**

Furthermore, **GVS works to integrate mental health and psychosocial wellbeing into broader community development, environmental, and livelihood initiatives** through collaboration with local governments, schools, and corporate partners.



Impact

Key desired outcomes



Identifying psychosocial and mental health issues within communities.



Promoting the wellbeing of participants through “Sharing is Caring” support circles and community dialogue.



Strengthening peer support systems through awareness materials and creative engagement methods such as pamphlets, PowerPoint sessions, drawing therapy, card activities, drama, and storytelling.

Methods

GVS uses both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and program monitoring. Within each “Share to Care” support group, representatives are assigned to help collect community-level information and monitor participant progress.

- **Quantitative data is collected through pre- and post-intervention assessments** to measure the impact of psychosocial support activities. GVS also collaborates with local government bodies to share findings and contribute to broader national-level mental health data and advocacy efforts.
- Community and school-based support groups are regularly formed and monitored, with **data updates conducted on a half-yearly basis to assess changes in wellbeing, participation, and community resilience outcomes.**

Reflections on impact so far

One of the most significant reflections from GVS programs is the gradual **reduction of stigma surrounding mental health discussions within communities.** The “Sharing is Caring” circles have evolved into community-led support spaces that continue functioning even without the direct presence of GVS facilitators.

Communities are increasingly becoming more open to discussing emotional wellbeing, identifying psychosocial challenges, and seeking support for mental health concerns.

Positive feedback has also been received from children with disabilities, families of persons with disabilities, bankers, and professionals who participated in GVS programs, demonstrating that the organization’s outreach has successfully expanded across multiple sectors of society.

Information systems

GVS currently uses **a manual data collection and survey system to document community needs, psychosocial concerns, and program outcomes.** Information gathered through surveys and field visits is compiled and shared with local government bodies and police headquarters to support coordination, reporting, and accessibility of community-level mental health and social data.

This system helps strengthen collaboration among stakeholders and contributes to local-level understanding of psychosocial and community wellbeing issues.

Learnings

✦ Strengths or drivers

The organization continues to strengthen its national and international networks, gaining trust, recognition, and engagement. GVS has established impactful initiatives, including scholarship support for children from families with disabilities and financial assistance programs for economically vulnerable Chepang communities who lack stable housing and land ownership.

The organization’s team is gradually expanding with a broader vision that goes beyond awareness programs to include corporate mental health training, psychosocial counseling, and sound healing therapy. By diversifying its approaches and therapeutic interventions, GVS aims to provide emotional, psychological, and holistic wellbeing support to individuals and communities.

✦ Limitations

One of the major limitations faced by GVS is the lack of sustainable donor support and long-term financial resources to manage organizational operations and maintain program continuity. The organization is still working toward generating stable income through its own initiatives and services.

✦ Challenges

A key challenge for GVS is establishing sustainable income-generating programs while continuing community-based mental health services. The organization is currently developing pilot initiatives such as sound healing therapy sessions and short-term training courses as potential revenue-generating activities to support organizational sustainability and future growth.

✦ Opportunities

GVS has strong opportunities for future growth as its network and outreach continue expanding from community-based initiatives to collaborations with corporate houses and professional sectors. Increasing awareness of mental health and psychosocial wellbeing has created opportunities for partnerships, professional trainings, and integrated wellbeing programs across diverse sectors of society.



Partnership Journey with Ember

Initial assessment

From the beginning of the partnership, GVS has stood out for their grassroots model, rooted in strong local partnerships with police, government & schools—which are key to their sustainability. As a young organisation in a resource-scarce setting, they’ve become a trusted support system for local authorities, with a clear focus on rural areas that are often doubly disadvantaged.

- The organisation plans to expand to more rural areas by onboarding additional counsellors and volunteers. They aim to establish a sustainable financial model to support fair salaries, fees, and incentives. Strengthening their network is also a priority, to foster learning and access wider funding opportunities.
- At Ember, we identified an opportunity to work alongside GVS as a thinking partner, helping to articulate their model and communicate their vision more clearly. We also aimed to collaborate on strategic storytelling initiatives to support their growth and expansion goals.

Key achievements

Over the course of the partnership, the mentorship package helped GVS to strengthen its vision, wellbeing practices, and future sustainability plans.

- A key achievement was the progress made in clarifying the organisation’s vision, which continues to guide its work and growth. Together, we refined its positioning as a mental health service provider for every generation in Nepal, moving beyond its existing focus to consider how it can serve communities across different age groups. GVS has already begun putting this vision into practice by expanding its work with young people, particularly Gen Z, and by launching a new programme supporting children with disabilities.
- The partnership also focused on strengthening organisational sustainability. Through discussions around fundraising, financial sustainability, and income generation, GVS built greater confidence in pursuing new opportunities and successfully began exploring earned-income activities, including delivering workshops for a local bank. The team also introduced an internship programme to increase operational capacity and support future growth.
- The team also reflected on the impact of their work, noting that participants often feel lighter after sessions. Ember supported GVS’s visibility and external profile through design and branding support. Another achievement from the partnership was supporting GVS to explore different ways of telling their story, and different platforms to share their story through, which culminated in GVS’s feature on the Mental Health Innovation Network (MHIN) website.
- Team wellbeing emerged as a significant area of growth throughout the partnership. Historically, GVS had placed limited emphasis on its own wellbeing; however, through wellbeing funding and related support, the team participated in wellbeing programmes, organised its first team away days, and completed a singing bowls training course. These experiences helped strengthen team cohesion, highlighted the importance of caring for those who provide support to others, and equipped staff with additional healing practices that can be integrated into their community work.
- Areas of opportunity identified through the healthcheck include continuing to strengthen the organisational model, particularly around how to engage people in mental health care beyond awareness sessions. Storytelling and visibility were also identified as areas for further development, including improving social media engagement and growing Facebook followers. While GVS captures stories from participants, opportunities remain to share learning and impact more widely while maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. Building partnerships and networks was identified as an important next step, particularly as demand for the programme continues to increase. Financial sustainability remains a priority, as GVS does not yet have permanent, sustainable resources. The team is actively exploring income generation through new courses and is building a funding pipeline for 2026–2027.
- Overall, the partnership helped strengthen GVS’s strategic direction, visibility, team wellbeing, and confidence to pursue future growth.

