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This summer, I will be working through the Advocacy Project for the Centre of Agro-Ecology Development (CAED) in Kathmandu, Nepal. Founded by a group of development professionals, CAED was established to prepare marginalized communities for agricultural and ecological crises. In the fifteen years since its inception, CAED has expanded into other areas in response to the needs of communities it serves, one of which being the prevention and treatment of uterine prolapse through its Women's Reproductive Rights Program (WRRP).

Uterine prolapse, the descent of the uterus from its normal position, is a widespread chronic condition has various causes, many of which are pervasive within the socioeconomic infrastructure of Nepal. Accounting for 40% of the GDP, agriculture serves as the backbone of Nepal's economy while 60% of this agricultural workforce is female. The strenuous nature of the work, often performed during pregnancy or within six weeks of childbirth, combined with poor nutrition increases the susceptibility for prolapse. In some areas, the percentage of women suffering from this condition can be as high as 20%. However, the social stigma associated with women's reproductive health in addition to the lack of resources prevent women from seeking appropriate care.

CAED seeks to combat this issue by increasing the visibility of uterine prolapse at the governmental and social levels and mobilizing additional medical and educational resources to women in need. CAED also capacity builds other NGOs at multiple districts in Nepal, thereby creating a national voice in the fight for greater attention to uterine prolapse.

Though CAED and partner NGOs have made significant progress over the years, uterine prolapse continues to be a low priority public health agenda. At CAED, I will be documenting the testimonies of women suffering from uterine prolapse throughout Nepal, creating multimedia internet applications that would increase public interest on the topic, assist in local and international fundraising, and designing a website that appeals to target donor agencies. By the end of my twelve-week stay, I hope to play a part in boosting CAED's virtual and public reach worldwide, and improve the availability of services to women as a result.

More information on my work this summer will be documented at my blog at <http://www.advocacynet.org/page/patel>