

The Adventure Travel Issue



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DREAM IT. PLAN IT. DO IT.

• THE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: PHILANTHROPY



Antonia Neubauer

FOUNDER of nonprofit Rural
Education and Development
Inc. (READ)

Soon after founding outlitter Myths and Mountains in 1988, Antonia Neubauer, 63, asked a Nepalese guide how she could best help his village. He suggested a community library. That library became the first of 39 built throughout Nepal since Neubauer launched READ in 1991. Each library sustains itself through an associated enterprise—an ambulance, a medical clinic, a factory, “whatever the village wants, as long as it will support the library.” In August READ Nepal received a one-million-dollar Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation award; the nonprofit will soon go global.

“READ is based on people working toward something that they want. Villagers come to us; we don’t go to them. They have to write a proposal and contribute 15 to 20 percent [of the project’s cost] plus the land for the library. If you don’t care enough to write a proposal, you’re not going to care enough to take care of what comes from it. We’ve tried to create a model where everyone has dignity, where you’re not creating dependence, and where money is going to the people who need it the most—so that they can eventually take care of themselves.” —K.L.