

UNIT 5 BUILDING COMMUNITIES



READING

Read the text “Barefoot College” in lesson 5C on page 68 and complete the following exercises:

The Greek philosopher Aristotle once said, “For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.” This method of “learning by doing” has allowed Barefoot College to successfully train and educate millions of underprivileged people. Barefoot College was founded by Sanjit “Bunker” Roy. Shortly after graduating from Delhi University, Roy did some volunteer work in a poor region of India. The experience changed his life, and in 1972 he set up Barefoot College. His aim was to help rural [\[1\]](#) communities overcome their difficulties and become more independent.

Barefoot College is unlike any other college. All of its students around the world are from poor, rural communities. They don’t have to be able to read or write—indeed, many can’t. People of any age can attend—the school has a wide range of students, from children to grandmothers. The college is owned and managed by everyone who works and learns there. These “Barefoot Professionals” are trained to perform all sorts of duties in the school, from providing dental [\[2\]](#) care services to cooking meals for staff and students. No degrees or certificates are given out. But graduates return to their villages with their new skills and work to make their communities self-sufficient [\[3\]](#) by training other villagers. Being able to use their skills to serve their communities is **proof** of success.

The solar engineering program at Barefoot College has a **significant** role. Every year, the college **recruits** middle-aged women from rural villages that don’t have electricity. For six months, the women learn how to build, install,

use, and maintain solar lamps. The lack of a common language isn't a problem; they communicate through sign language and work with color-coded equipment. Through hands-on training, the women transform into solar engineers by the end of the program. The self-confidence they gain allows them to go on and inspire positive change in their villages. Since 2008, the women have managed to provide electricity to over 1,000 villages, bringing light to more than 40,000 households.

Neema Gurung is one of the solar engineers at Barefoot College. With some financial help from the Indian government, she left her village in Nepal to take part in the program. As her village has no electricity, Gurung always had to finish her chores by sunset. For her, learning how to build solar lamps and bring light to her village will help greatly in **ensuring** the safety of her home. "Tigers often wander around our villages and have attacked locals in the past," Gurung explains. "It's like we are locked in our own house after darkness."

Barefoot College has demonstrated how education can empower rural people and help them live better lives. After its success in India, Barefoot College decided to expand its programs overseas. Today, it has a number of regional training centers in countries such as Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Senegal. Through their hard work and **dedication**, thousands of Barefoot College graduates and teachers have transformed their communities into better places to live.

[1] rural: *adj.* of the countryside and not the city

[2] dental: *adj.* related to the teeth

[3] self-sufficient: *adj.* not requiring any form of help for survival

UNDERSTANDING MAIN IDEAS

Complete the profile of Barefoot College:

Barefoot College / Founder: Sanjit "Bunker" Roy

Why was the college created?

While doing some _____ in a poor region of India, Roy was motivated to do something to help underprivileged communities.

Aim

The college was set up to help rural communities find solutions to their difficulties and become more _____.

How is it different from most other colleges?

Students don't need to be able to _____.

There is no _____ limit.

No _____ are given out after students complete their training.

UNDERSTANDING DETAILS

Complete the sentences about the solar engineering program. Highlight the correct words:

1. The solar engineering program mainly trains **(young women / middle-aged women)**.
2. To overcome the language differences among students, the college uses **(sign language / illustrations)** and color-coded equipment in its training.
3. After the training, the women **(educate people in their village / receive a job recommendation letter)**.
4. Neema Gurung hopes to improve the **(accessibility / safety)** of her village after training at Barefoot College.

BUILDING VOCABULARY

Complete the sentences with the words from the box.

Significant

dedication

ensuring

recruit

proof

1. The expansion of Barefoot College is _____ that education can greatly improve the lives of rural people.
2. We need laws _____ that the rights of the underprivileged are protected.
3. The _____ of volunteers often inspires others to get involved.
4. Unlike most colleges, Barefoot College doesn't _____ students based on academic grades.
5. Barefoot College makes a(n) _____ difference to the lives of rural people by teaching them useful skills.