



Nepali Village Initiatives Association Inc.

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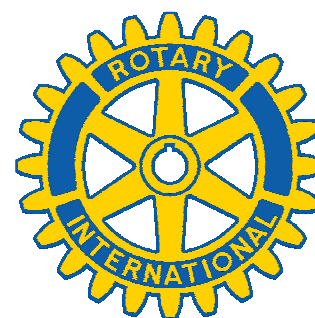
Hi! So much has been happening with our project, it is time for us to issue our first Newsletter.

The Nepali Village Initiatives Project in a Nutshell

- The project began with a group of Australian trekkers visiting Nepal in 1993
- Over the years assistance has been provided in numerous ways - provision of library books and second hand computers, construction of classrooms, etc.
- The project was registered with Rotary Australia World Community Service in 2009 as Nepali Village Initiatives Project (no. 43/2009-10)
- Since 2011 the project has focused on providing teacher training.
- Originally sponsored by the Rotary Club of Woodend, Victoria, the project has received support from a number of other clubs including RC Kyneton, RC Daylesford and RC Portland Bay.

Quality Education Nepal

To give increased emphasis to our stronger focus on education, we are adopting the title **Quality Education Nepal**. The first opportunity to promote our activities under this banner will occur at the annual **Rotary International Convention** which will this year be held in Sydney in early June. Around 20,000 Rotarians from around the world are expected to attend. Our project has been granted a booth in the House of Friendship.



If you are a Rotarian attending the Convention, please come and help promote the project with an hour or two at the booth.

Completion of Shikha 3 Year Program; Preparation for Ghara VDC

Teacher training remains at the forefront of our activities. Our strategy is to provide comprehensive training programs for teachers from groups of schools of neighbouring villages in rural Nepal each year for three years. Thereafter those teachers will receive in-school support and annual refresher training while the program moves on to take in new teachers.



In 2013 we completed the program for around 40 teachers from Shikha VDC (Village Development Committee) in Myagdi District. Our photo above shows trainees with their trainers on completion of the 10 day intensive training program in June 2013.

We are now ready to begin a program for teachers from schools of neighbouring Ghara VDC. A Baseline Survey has been undertaken and the initial 10 days training program will be delivered in April.

We also plan, this year, to begin training of teachers from schools of Rima Resource Centre - another two VDCs to the south of Shikha and Ghara (see under "Budget" below). This will bring the total number of teachers in training up to 160!



This is what it's all about - Happy children in attractive classrooms!

Formation of LEARN

Our training to date has been provided by REED Nepal (Rural Education and Environment Development). As a consequence of REED's primary sponsor, the Australian Himalayan Foundation, receiving AusAid accreditation, their funding for teacher training in the Solo Khumbu District (north-eastern Nepal) has increased greatly. REED is hard-pressed to meet this demand, and accordingly will not be able to provide teacher training for Myagdi District into the future.

Accordingly, we have taken the initiative to set up LEARN as a new Nepalese Teacher Training NGO - "Lifting Education, Advancing Rural Nepal".

We have staff of two. Krishna Pun, who has served as Paudwar Village Development Coordinator for the past three years, will continue in that role while also taking on the role of CEO of LEARN. Kailash Tamang, who joined REED to lead the Myagdi training, has transferred to LEARN as Chief Training Officer.



We have an office at Maharajgunj 3, Kathmandu, near the corner of the Maharajgunj Road (the main road north out of Kathmandu) and the Ring Road - quite close to the Australian Embassy.

A Board of nine (including Krishna and Kailash) has been appointed to direct LEARN. Dr. Umed Pun, President, is Technical Director, Little Angels College of Higher Studies (a school with 4,500 students in Kathmandu), and serves on a committee chaired by the First Secretary of Nepal addressing educational issues for the Government.

Also on the Board is Rabi Baral, Principal of Gandaki Higher Secondary Boarding School. The school was formally assessed by the Government to be the best school in the country in 2012/13 (not the first time it achieved this).

Both of these men are Rotarians - Umed a member of RC Kasthamandap, and Rabi Charter President of RC Pokhara New Road. We are privileged to have such respected people leading our new organisation.



Our office is best described as “cosy”.

Project Endorsements

To achieve registration of LEARN as an NGO we were required to obtain a number of formal endorsements. Written in Nepalese, these came from:

- Ministry of Education, Kathmandu;
- Department of Education;
- National Council of Education Development;
- Council for Technical Education & Vocational Training;
- Social Welfare Council Nepal;

In addition we have received a number of informal endorsements as depicted here and on the following page.



Department of Education

Left to right:
 Nahari Acharya, Head, Organisation Coordination Section;
 Jaya Acharya, Deputy Director, Planning and Budget Section;
 Peter Hall; Krishna Pun;
 Meg Nath Sharma, Secretary of REED;
 Kailash Tamang



Rabi Baral

LEARN Board member and Principal, Gandaki Higher Secondary Boarding School

Left to right: Ronda Hall; Peter Hall; Rabi Baral; Deb Lewis; Pat Baines (2012 photo).

A photo similar to this was published in "The Gandaki" school magazine entitled "A Group of Visitors from Australia",

Rabi Baral has said:

"It is my pleasure to be the part of LEARN, a great education project/campaign which is going to help and promote the standard of education in Nepal".



Australian Ambassador

Left to right:

Salma Limbu, LEARN Board member;

Peter Hall;

Ambassador Glen White with his wife;

Krishna Pun; Kailash Tamang



Heemal Handoo

Heemal is a highly experienced English teacher in New Delhi, India. She found our website a couple of years ago, and offered to assist our program. We are discussing with Heemal the possibility of her visiting Kathmandu in July to help "train the trainers".

Budget for 2013

Krishna, Kailash and Peter Hall have worked hard on a budget for LEARN for 2013. For the past two years our delivered training costs have averaged \$24 per trainee day. Our calculations showed that, despite additional costs involved in establishing LEARN, we should be able to deliver basic training to 50 teachers of Ghara VDC plus refresher training for 40 from Shikha - a total of 90 teachers in training – for \$27 per trainee day.

To do this we would need to finance a budget of \$36,000. This is achievable. Fortunately we have a good start towards funding it in the form of grants from the Andrew Jack Foundation (the estate of a deceased Portland Rotarian). However, it does mean that we must pursue further fundraising – hence our appeal for funding which follows.

If we can raise more than this we can be even more successful. Our calculations show that we have the capacity to deliver base level training this year to teachers of schools of Rima Resource Centre which encompasses two further VDCs to the south of Shikha and Ghara. By doing this we would reduce our delivered training costs to just \$17.50 per trainee day! The number of teachers in training would increase from 40 of the past three years to 160.

Accepting this challenge means that we must meet a budget of \$48,000! This includes not only the teacher training but also continuing to remunerate English medium teachers at Paudwar Secondary and Gibang Primary schools and Krishna Pun in his role as Paudwar Village Development Coordinator, a role that he will henceforth combine with that of CEO of LEARN.

Appeal for Funding

To support all this, and to ensure our ability to carry it forward into the future, we need to increase our funding. We are pursuing this in many ways, but one must be to ask our supporters directly. We have not been so forthright with requests in the past, but if we are to achieve our goals, we must do so now.

Contributions can be made directly to the Association by cheque to the address at the top of this newsletter, or by direct credit to an Association Bank account, giving your surname as reference:

Nepali Village Initiatives Association, BSB 633000, a/c 149716235

if you are happy for your contribution to be directed to our project activities generally (though these are predominantly educational at the present time), or

Quality Education Nepal, BSB 633000, a/c 149716276

if you want it to be directed exclusively to our educational activities.

Please send a confirmatory email to the address above in respect of any direct credit payments.

Should you want a tax deductible receipt, your contribution should be made payable to:

Rotary Australia Overseas Aid Fund either by cheque to the above address or by direct credit to BSB 033 688, Account Number 102902 giving 43/2009-10 (our project number) as reference.

A confirmatory email with name and address for issue of receipt should be sent to

admin@nepalaid.org.au.

Become a Committed Benefactor

As our activities progress it becomes ever more important for us to ensure an ongoing stream of income. To this end we are introducing the concept of Committed Benefactors, being people prepared to commit to making donations on a regular basis. Of course it will be possible to withdraw from such commitments at any time. However, this system will give us a better idea of likely future income, and we will be able to issue reminder notices as commitments fall due.

Available for individuals, corporate donors, Rotary clubs and others, there will be four classes of Committed Benefactors, with public recognition on our website if you wish it (but not if you don't):

Platinum benefactor:	10 teacher units = \$3,500 per year
Gold benefactor:	5 teacher units = \$1,750 per year
Silver benefactor:	1 teacher unit = \$350 per year / \$30 per month / \$1 per day
Supporting benefactor:	1/5th teacher unit = \$75 per year

A "teacher unit" is the approximate cost of a year's training for one teacher. Payments can be made by cheque or bank deposit as above (with the option of a tax deductible receipt if paid via the Rotary Australia Overseas Aid Fund).

To become a Committed Benefactor please email admin@nepalaid.org.au giving:

- Name, address and phone no.
- Proposed frequency of contributions (e.g. monthly, quarterly or annually)
- Proposed contribution amount (one of the above or any other amount)
- How you'll contribute (cheque / direct credit; direct or via Rotary Overseas Aid Fund)
- How often you would like a receipt (each payment, annually or not required)
- Whether you would like your contributions acknowledged on the website (they will be unless you prefer not).

Forthcoming Volunteer Trip

A small team has been assembled for a visit to Nepal in April, to observe / facilitate the teacher training in Ghara and to deliver a holiday program for children in Paudwar village.

Members of the team are:

- Peter Hall, Team Leader
- Pat Baines, who similarly volunteered in 2012
- Rotarian Gordon Nightingale, who travelled in Nepal by motorbike more than 30 years ago
- Susan Carew, Rotary Peace Fellow and World Peace Clown.

Susan uses clowning in schools to promote REAL HOPES (Responsibility, Empathy, Awareness, Love; Honesty, Oneness, Peace, Enjoyment and Service). She is expected to make a significant contribution to the teacher training program and the children's holiday program, as well as maybe some street clowning in Kathmandu!

There is, however, a problem. As Susan does most of her clowning as a volunteer, she has no regular income. So unlike others who join us as volunteers, she is not in a position to cover her travel costs.

We have therefore decided to resort to "crowd funding" to cover her expenses – asking many people to make small donations – maybe only \$10. Please visit the website www.chuffed.org/project/send-an-education-clown-to-nepal.

Any donations will be appreciated, but equally important is for people to pass the message on to others. Do you have

people in your email address book who would be happy to hear about the project, and maybe contribute? Please forward them the email which brought you this newsletter, modified as you wish.

There is still time to join the travel group. We're leaving Melbourne April 14, returning May 13, though it would be possible to return earlier. This will be a great opportunity to see our work in progress, and to communicate with the local children. We're happy to have children in the party, as they'll get on well with the local children.



Susan

Huma Charity Challenge

Huma Charity Challenge is a division of World Expeditions adventure travel company. They offer World Expeditions adventures with a twist – participants accept a challenge to contribute a donation of at least a nominated sum (generally in the range \$1,000 to \$4,000) to a sponsoring charity. They can do so personally, but many do so by undertaking their own crowd funding campaign.

Huma have agreed to run a Quality Education Nepal Annapurna Trek for us in April 2015. This will be based on World Expeditions' "Best of Annapurna Dhaulagiri" trek with our variations, including visiting Paudwar. Publicity material is in course of preparation and will be available in time for distribution at the Rotary Convention in June.



The mountain scenery will be spectacular, and wildflowers prolific, including hillsides of rhododendrons. High point of the trek, snowline permitting, will; be the Khayer holy lake at 4,800m.

But the special feature of this trek will be the contacts with the people including cultural dancing at Paudwar village and the opportunity to observe our training courses in action.

Should you know anyone who might be interested in such a challenge, please let us know.



Computers Needed – Have you one to spare?

It was back in 2001 that we first started taking computers to Nepal for Paudwar Secondary and other schools in the area. Along with Billanook College, Mooroolbark, Vic., our initial objective was to equip Paudwar school in order to allow the introduction of IT as a curriculum subject. Headmaster Gyan Pun believed that this would hold students in the village, rather than moving into the cities for their studies. It did more than that – it led to increased enrolments at Paudwar as the only school in the area offering IT studies.

Getting computers into Nepal is not easy. Dispatching them as freight incurs not only substantial freight costs but also prohibitive duty charges. So the answer has been, every time we visit, to take them in as carry-on or checked baggage, utilizing the maximum possible baggage allowance (40kg with Air Asia). That way, we've never had to pay duty.

More computers are always needed. Some of those we took in 2001 are still in operation, but truly need replacement. Desktops and notebooks are both acceptable, and have their pros and cons. Notebooks are lighter, which is important both in the air and for the porters carrying them up the mountain. Desktops are more easily maintained – Paudwar is fortunate that one of their teachers, Gam Pun, can strip any computer down to its essentials to replace parts. But they also need monitors, etc., so low weight is important.

If you have any computers you can donate, or can get hold of any, please let us know.

Project Footnote -Yak Festival

Whatever fundraising means we adopt in Australia, they will not include a Yak blood drinking festival, the brainchild of Mahabir Pun. Several years ago the people of his village of Nagi worked with the people of Paudwar to establish a yak herd at Khopra Ridge, high above Paudwar. Now Krishna takes a leading role in the organization of these biannual festivals.

An article in the Republica daily newspaper in Kathmandu in February described the festival and how it raises funds for Paudwar Secondary School and Himanchal Higher Secondary School, It was accompanied by the photo below.

Blood is drawn off the live yaks and consumed by visitors from near and far. Fresh yak blood is believed to cure many ailments such as gastritis and constipation, besides having aphrodisiac qualities as the yaks feed on herbs found high in the hills.

