



Quality Education Nepal

Incorporated

Improving education – the pathway out of poverty



29 Blue Mount Road, Trentham, Victoria 3458, Australia

Association No.: A0054301J ABN: 79 892 132 355

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Administrator of Rotary Australia World Community Service Project 43 / 2009-10

Board: Peter Hall
Michael Dillon AM
Gordon Nightingale

Ronda Hall
George Hillary

Simon Cowen
Luigi Soccio

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Newsletter No. 8 – September 2019

It has been over two years since we wrote a Newsletter to inform our friends and contacts of the progress of teacher training in Nepal. We've simply been too busy making things happen! Now its time to make amends.

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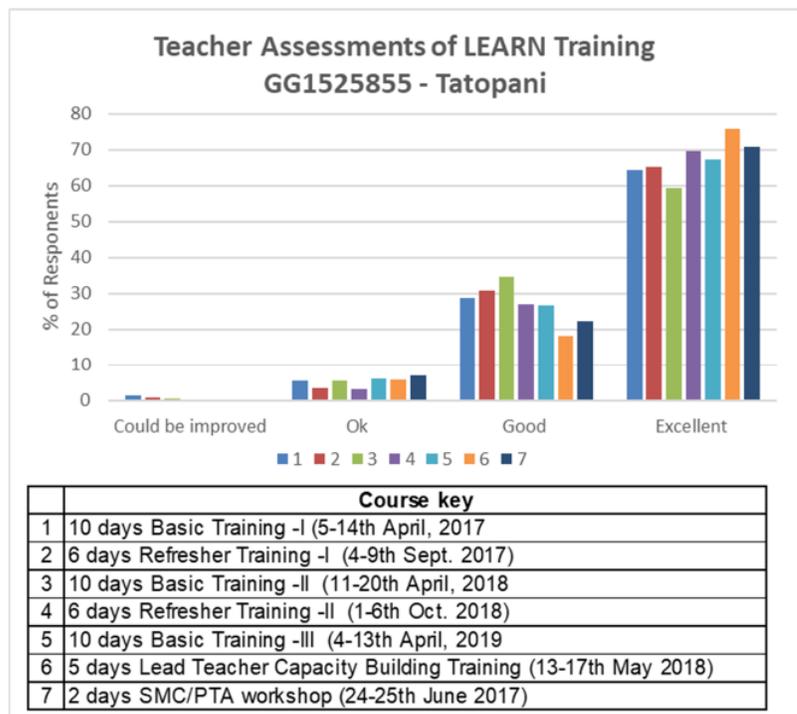
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1 Customer satisfaction

Let's start with what the teachers think of our training courses. Here's a graph of their ratings of courses delivered to the Tatopani cluster of schools, funded by Rotary Foundation Global Grant project 1525855.

The program is giving 75 teachers from fifteen schools 50 days training over three years. The project is sponsored by eight Clubs from three Districts in Australia and six clubs in Nepal.

Could teacher satisfaction be any higher than this?



It is not only the teachers who are pleased. All of our programs are planned in conjunction with the Department of Education and approved in advance by the Social Welfare Council and the relevant local Municipal Council. All have expressed their strong support.

2 Program delivery by LEARN

LEARN is the NGO we established in 2014 to deliver training, with the tagline “**Lifting Education, Advancing Rural Nepal**”.

It has most certainly been doing just that. Initiated by **Krishna Pun** as **CEO**, he has been joined by **Meen Shahi** as **Program Manager**, **Gopal Dupal** as **Chief Training Officer** and **Urmila Shreesh** as **Finance and Administration Officer**.

Here they are in December 2018 with **Peter and Ronda Hall**, dining with **Nilmani Baral**, **Vice-Chair of the Social Welfare Council** together with **Deputy Director Ram Raja Bhattarai**.



Gopal, Ronda, Krishna, Peter; Urmila, Nimani, Ram, Meen

Our training programs began in 2011. Teachers of the Shikha, Ghara and Rima clusters have completed their three-years basic training and are now in receipt of annual in-school support and refresher training. Those of Tatopani and Pakhapani clusters are progressing towards the end of their three-year programs.

We currently have 350 teachers in on-going training, but this could quickly grow to more than 500 with approval of Rotary Foundation Global Grant projects.

Parbati Magar introduces a reader to a class, watched by Ula Shreether of the Rotary Club of Bairnsdale



3 Board Changes

There have been some changes to the Boards of both QEN and LEARN.

Don Cullen, who was awarded an OAM in January 2018, had joined the QEN Board in 2015, bringing his considerable experience in working with under-developed countries, having led his Tibetan Village Project over many years. In 2018 Don experienced harassment by the Chinese authorities, necessitating curtailment of his activities with TVA and leading to his resignation from the Board of QEN. We are most grateful for the contributions that Don made to QEN, and wish him well.



In August this year, **Luigi Soccio** was appointed to the Board. Luigi, a member of the Rotary Club of Daylesford, has worked as a teacher, builder and a public servant for the Immigration Department and AusAID. He brings a strong interest in helping people in poverty, including projects in Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal and Myanmar.

We take this opportunity to **wish QEN Director George Hillary well** when, with his brother Alex, he maintains family tradition by tackling Mount Everest in April next year. He will be supported by his father Peter, who has summited twice, as far as Base Camp.

Dr. Umed Pun, founding Chair of LEARN, now spends most of his time abroad and accordingly has resigned from that role, to be replaced by **Um Bahadur Pajja Pun**. We thank Umed for his guidance over four years, and welcome the continuing support and leadership of Um.

Another to depart from the LEARN Board is **Rabi Prasad Baral**, recently retired from his role as Principal of Gandaki Higher Secondary Boarding School and Gandaki College of Engineering and Science. We wish Rabi well in his retirement.

4 Visits to Nepal

When Peter and Ronda Hall last visited Nepal in November/December 2018 they were able to host a contingent from Braemar College, Mount Macedon, Victoria at Paudwar Village. Principal Russell Deer was accompanied by Science Teacher Adam Gehling, School Board Member Bronwyn Meadows-Smith and sixteen students.



Activities for the day included pairing with local students to explore the village; donning dokos (headband baskets) to carry firewood (lighter loads for the girls; sore necks for the boys!); volleyball competition (the Nepalis won); and an afternoon of presentations and dancing. Altogether a great cultural exchange.



More recently QEN Director Gordon Nightingale and his friend Lindsay Clark visited Nepal.

Like Peter and Ronda last November they were able to reach Paudwar village by four-wheel-drive, but paths to more remote villages were more challenging as the photo shows,

Gordon and Lindsay have since donated school equipment and funded electricity connections to schools.

5 Rotary Foundation Global Grants

The Rotary Foundation supports a program of Global Grants for projects valued at US\$30,000 and more. They must be directed to one of six focus areas, of which Basic Education and Literacy is one. Their duration can be up to three years. Each project must be for new beneficiaries. These criteria suit us well for extending the scope of our training programs to new groups of teachers.

We do this in consultation with the Department of Education and local Municipal Councils, selecting a cluster of schools comprising one or two high schools and their feeder primary schools – typically 16 to 20 schools. All teachers of primary classes are invited to attend. Although most courses are run during their holidays to avoid interruptions to classes, attendances are generally in the range 80-90%. This yields around 80 teachers per course, typically broken into four groups for training purposes.

We have adopted Global Grant projects as our main strategy for extending our programs. Funds are derived from Club contributions which are typically matched by District Designated Funds (Foundation funds under the control of Rotary Districts) at rates typically ranging from 50c to \$1 per \$ of club funding. These contributions are then matched by Foundation Global Funds (Club funds at 50c per \$, DDF at \$1 per \$). The first such project, for the Tatopani Cluster, commenced in 2017.

In late 2018 we began emailing Presidents of Rotary Clubs in Australia and New Zealand, Europe and North America, seeking sponsors for further projects. Responses were very positive, with 50 clubs from eight countries offering financial support.

Thirteen of these Clubs were Canadian, offering US\$20,000 and attracting \$17,000 DDF. These amounts were matched \$ / \$ by the Canadian Government before the addition of Global funds, yielding the total budget amount of US\$122,000. Sponsorship commitments from the remaining 37 Clubs and their Districts yielded \$128,000, sufficient to cover a second project.

The application for the first project, under the sponsorship of the Rotary Clubs of Woodstock-Oxford, Ontario, Canada and Kathmandu Metro, was submitted at the end of June. After five weeks it was rejected by The Rotary Foundation. Three reasons were given, none of which we accept. We have therefore initiated action for a review. Ian Riseley, Rotary International President 2017-18 and now Rotary

International Trustee, has agreed to look into the issue. As he is a member of the Rotary Club of Sandringham I am hoping we will be able to meet in October.

Other Past Rotary International Presidents who have responded to my plea for support include: Kalyan Banerjee (RI President 2011-12): "*Dear Peter, Thank you for your mail. I have gone through your Nepal project. I have often found it to be a reality that staff in the US not always familiar with customs, conditions, constraints and traditions that exist in different cultures, are often unwilling to veer from strait-jacketed ways of thinking. I am optimistic that the trustees who have had varied experience and exposures will share your thoughts. Regards, Kalyan Banerjee*"

Barry Rassin (RI President 2018-19): "*As I am not a Trustee I would urge you to get advice from a Trustee who can easily assist with the process. Thank you. Barry*"

We are confident of a positive outcome. Once that project has been approved, others should soon follow. We hope thus to raise the number of teachers in training to over 500 before the end of the current financial year.

Our Rotary programs are delivered at a cost of just US\$19 per trainee day, to which around 30% is added to cover the supply of teaching materials for use after the teachers return to their schools.

6 Australian Friendship Grants

In 2018, the Australian Government offered Australian Friendship Grants for aid projects in developing countries – sums ranging from \$30-\$60,000. We applied along with more than 200 others, seeking funding of “hardware” for schools – science equipment, musical instruments, etc. In doing so we were responding to pressure from the Social Welfare Council to spend more on hardware, which we had been resisting on the grounds that our funds had been raised specifically for teacher training.

Alas, we were not among the 46 successful applicants. Undaunted, we have submitted another application this year. This time we’re seeking funding for **readers to assist students learning English** (a key subject in Nepal, as it is the basis of so many income opportunities).

We became aware of these readers when contacted by the Rotary Clubs of Benalla and Bairnsdale. The clubs had, for around a decade, been supporting the **Awake and Shine School** which serves an expatriate Nepalese community in northern India. Margot Sherwill, Benalla Rotarian, school principal and highly experienced literacy teacher, saw the opportunity for readers to improve the teaching of English literacy in the school. Over two years she developed a set of 144 readers conforming to the education system of Victoria but illustrated with vivid photos of village life in Northern India. The readers were designed for progressive use over four years from Prep to Grade 3. They could be printed in two formats – A3 for classroom use, and smaller for children.



Cover of one of the 144 Reader titles

In April 2018 LEARN trainers attended a training course in India, delivered by Margot and her colleague Ula Sheather of the Rotary Club of Bairnsdale, in the use of the readers. They were very impressed with their suitability for use in Nepal and were given two complete sets (2 x 144 titles) for trial adoption. These have since been in use in two schools which Ula Sheather visited Nepal in February 2019 to assess progress.



We concluded that the readers are ideal for inclusion in LEARN training programs. Accordingly we have applied for a Friendship Grant for the supply of 90 sets of readers, to allow distribution of a set to each school that has participated in our programs to date. A decision by DFAT is not expected until early next year.

Peter and Ronda Hall present a reader to Santa Bahadur Nepali, Head Teacher, Gyan Prakash Secondary School, watched by Ram Kumar Shrestha, District Education Officer, Myagdi District and Jayaram Subedi, Resource Person, Tatopani Cluster

7 Private Donations

Our overall project is heavily dependent upon private donations. These fall into two categories. First there are the donations that come from our many friends and supporters, which we can direct to any aspect of the project. These are particularly important for supporting those activities that fall outside the scope of Rotary Foundation projects. They include the support and development of LEARN as an educational institution in Nepal, and the ongoing in-school support and annual refresher training for teachers who have completed their three-years basic training.

In 2014 we were fortunate to receive a grant of \$800,000 from the estate of the late Portland Rotarian Andrew Jack. This was put to a capital fund with the goal of providing secure income while maintaining real value over time. That was important to us, as without it we could not assure the Board of our Nepalese NGO of the income needed for them to enter into staff employment contracts.

We recently received a further grant of \$588,000 from another deceased estate, With that and accrued capital growth, our capital fund now exceeds \$1.5 million.

We wish to acknowledge all our donors, and to assure any who might contemplate contributions that this is one of the most efficient charities they could choose. The only administrative costs incurred in Australia are those for professional services, such as the management of our capital fund and the auditing of accounts.

We categorise our donors according to the adjoining table. We wish to acknowledge all of our donors in the table (next page), together with the more than 70 donors who fall below the \$1,000 cut-off.

Donor Categories	
Donations exceeding AU\$	
20,000	Platinum
5,000	Gold
2,000	Silver
1,000	Bronze

8 Can I help?

There are a number of ways people can support our project. The first and most obvious is financially – personal donations, Rotary Club sponsorships and so on. Maybe someone can help connect us with philanthropists or benevolent institutions that share our goals. There are many funds out there with distribution obligations to funds like ours (a registered Public Benevolent Institution), but making connections is not easy.

Donors by Category

QEN/LEARN Receipts	Rotary Project Receipts		Rotary Commitments (if higher)	
Platinum Anonymous Estate of Andrew Jack Kym & Karen Stock Peter & Ronda Hall Roger & Maxeme Tall Simon Cowen	Platinum The Rotary Foundation	The Rotary Foundation	Platinum Canada	Government of Canada
Gold Chris Roe & Heather Mitchell John & Helen Findlay Michael & Robyn Dillon	Gold Australia 9780 Australia 9780 Australia 9780	Highton Portland Portland Bay	Gold Australia 9675	Corrimal
Silver Basil & Pat Baines Garth & Marg Perkin Geoffrey & Joan Brunt Gordon & Maggie Nightingale Phil & Ruth Scherer Raudee Parry RC Bendigo Sandhurst RC Kyneton RC Portland Bay Warwick & Marg Hutchins	Silver Australia 9675 Australia 9600 Australia 9600 Australia 9600 Australia 9800 Australia 9800 Australia 9465 Australia 9710	Campsie Cooroy Gympie Gympie Cooloolo Kyneton Woodend Mill Point Belconnen Jackson Township	Silver Australia 9600 Austria 1920 Canada 5360 Canada 7040 Canada 7080 Canada 7080 Canada 7080 Canada 7080 Canada 7080 Germany 1860 Norway 2250 Norway 2305 NZ 9970 UK 1090 UK 1150 USA 7360 USA 7600	Gympie Innsbruck-Goldenes Dachl Calgary West Ottawa Burlington Central Guelph Palgrave Woodstock Woodstock-Oxford Heidelberg-Neckar Stavanger International Molde Riccarton Ascot Abergavenny Waynesboro The Historic Triangle-Williamsburg
Bronze Abaran Deep Ben & Rowena Hutchins Chris Lee Hans Eisen Harshal Nandurkar Marg Millard Peter & Adele Allard Richard & Angela Kirsner Tasmanians	Bronze Australia 9800 Australia 9630 Australia 9650	Keilor East Redland Sunrise Tamworth-First Light	Bronze Australia 9465 Australia 9600 Australia 9600 Australia 9630 Australia 9675 Australia 9710 Australia 9790 Australia 9800 Austria 2090 Canada 7080 Canada 7080 Canada 7820 NZ 9980 UK 1040 USA 5670 USA 5710 USA 5950 USA 5960 USA 7930	Mill Point Cooroy Gympie Cooloolo Redland Sunrise Campsie Belconnen Mount Beauty Kyneton Ancona 25-35 Mississauga City Centre Mississauga West Montague Fiordland Howden McPherson Leawood Shakopee Prior Lake Alex Falk, P. RC Marblehead

Perhaps you can help us by establishing an active presence on social media – something that has eluded us to date. Our staff in Nepal will be pleased to provide activity updates, photos, etc. The website is useful, but could be effectively complemented with a presence on Facebook, etc..

Finally, we would like to achieve accreditation as an aid agency with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (with its pre-requisite of accreditation with the Australian Council for International Development), as this would yield \$150,000 per annum over five years for Base Accreditation (with a potential \$500,000 p.a. with Full Accreditation). However, the accreditation process is extremely burdensome, taking at least a year, so we will need help. If you have the time and interest, please let me know.

9 Membership and the AGM

Donors of AU\$20 or more during the current calendar year qualify as members of the Association, entitled to attend and vote at our Annual General Meeting. This will be held at 4:00pm on Sunday, 3 November 2019, at 29 Blue Mount Rd, Trentham, Victoria. Provision will be made for attendance by telephone conference call – details to be advised with Notice of Meeting.

Accounts for the financial year to 30 June 2019 may be found at <http://nepalaid.org.au/quality-education-nepal-inc.php> (currently subject to audit).