

NCEF GYAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEPALESE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

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Promises and Challenges

by Dr. Maheshwor Kafle
New Area Team Management



gyan: *n.* knowledge acquired
by direct perception

Preparation for Student Selection

This year we have completed preparation for student selection from five areas in Nepal: Kathmandu, Patan, Kavre, Palpa, and Nepalgunj. The applications are available in English and Nepali and were sent to Kathmandu during the third week of March. In Kathmandu, photocopies were made and mailed to Palpa and Nepalgunj through courier service. Area coordinators in Kathmandu, Patan, and Kavre have decided to use the electronic application. Applications can be viewed online at -

www.nepalchildren.org/documents/2007_NCEF_app.doc (English)

www.nepalchildren.org/documents/2007_NCEF_app_nepali.doc (Nepali)

We plan to increase the number of students in Nepalgunj and Palpa by five students each and keep the number of students in rest of the areas the same as last year. The increase in number of students in Nepalgunj and Palpa was a response to their excellent reporting performance throughout the year.

A significant number of applications are expected to be filled in Nepali. Therefore, those applications need to be translated into English before the selection committee members can read through them. We are recruiting volunteers who can translate applications from Nepali to English. Please contact us if you are able to help with translation or other aspects of the organization.

Next month's *Gyan* newsletter will feature details on the application collection and student selection: how different parts of the organization prepares for this process, the teamwork in various areas throughout Nepal, coordination by the team in Kathmandu and the US, and the selection decisions.

ABOUT NCEF

NCEF is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop the potential of disadvantaged Nepalese children through education. Need-based scholarships are provided to deserving students who would otherwise be unable to attend school. Our social workers in Nepal meet regularly with the selected children and their parents to assist in each child's development. We dedicate our resources to each NCEF child until they complete high school (twelfth grade).

GETTING INVOLVED

Why?

- To make a lasting difference in the lives of children.
- To be a part of an exciting team of interesting and dedicated volunteers.
- To put your spare time, no matter how little, to good use.

How?

- **Join** our announcements list!
- Help fundraise money for NCEF scholarships.
- Help with the administrative aspects of NCEF.
- Take part in discussions to ensure NCEF is increasingly effective.
- Help expand NCEF to new areas in Nepal
- Become a field volunteer in Nepal.
- Help lead NCEF by running for a position on the Board or Executive Committee.

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NCEF PAMPHLET

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Establishing and Maintaining New Areas: Promises and Challenges

By Dr. Maheshwor Kafle,
New Area Management Team

Establishing new sites has always been a major focus in NCEF. This article summarizes expansion attempts in 2006 and 2007. I have been involved with NCEF for quite some time now, and after an unsuccessful venture in 2005 I had a new idea, which is now being translated into practice.

We start with a story. We tried to establish operations in Mustang, a remote Himalayan district. In the beginning, it seemed easy to start new NCEF sites because we received promising responses from individuals, ranging from teachers to senators. However, when we gave away the financial aid, the coordinators and schoolteachers became less cooperative. Finally, we had to stop operations, though the site would have greatly benefited from our assistance. From this experience, we decided that all sites would go through a pilot phase, where they would be screened on the basis of their performance. The site that showed the most promising results would be given the status of an official NCEF area.

In April 2006, I met with a few people in Nepal to form a team that would work with new areas under evaluation. Thus, the "New Area Support Team" was formed. Presently

Mr. Rameshwor Kafle, who is new to the organization, and I are heading the team. Rameshwor has been very helpful because he lives in Nepal and can travel frequently to hard to reach remote areas.

The initial areas that were considered were Bengashivapur (in Dhanusa), Gamauli (in Dailekh) and Maneswara (in Sindhupalchowk) because we could stay in contact with the potential area coordinators of these areas.

The coordinator from Dhanusa, Bengashivapur, is a schoolteacher, who seems very active and was in constant email correspondence with us. We spent a lot of time explaining to him the mission and objectives of NCEF, even before New Area Support Team began its work.

Mr. Min Shahi from Gamalui is a doctoral student and a teacher by profession who has worked in the education sector for more than 20 years. He understood the deficiencies in the Nepalese

education system, especially in rural areas. I met him personally and was impressed by his wealth of knowledge.

Mr. Ramesh Paudyal from Maneshwor is a social worker involved in fieldwork for over ten years. He has been in regular contact with NCEF since early 2005. He has been running several other organizations working for children's education.



On August 2006, Bengashivapur (in Dhanusa) was approved as an area under evaluation. Bengashivapur planned to start with one student this year. Our team started its work by helping Bengashivapur. Then, for unknown reasons the coordinator stopped communicating with NCEF and we lost contact with him

Gradually, few other areas were approved. Gamauli in Dailekh was approved a week later, with Mr. Bhupendra Pariyar as the area coordinator and Mr. Min Bahadur Shahi as the facilitator.

The same day Maneswara in Sindhupalchowk was approved as a new area under evaluation, with Mr. Achyut Aryal as the area coordinator and Mr. Ramesh Paudyal as the facilitator.

However, we did face some problems keeping in touch with some of the volunteers and areas. Though Gamauli was approved in August, we could not maintain good communication with the new area. As a result, we were unable to get any applications from the region. We lost Gamauli.

Fortunately, the performance of Mr. Ramesh Paudyal, the coordinator of Maneshwara (Sindhupalchowk) has been quite satisfactory. He sent an application early September. After that he sent a few more applications. He has stayed in regular contact with

us via email. I have had much experience in looking at different types of applications, and I rank his applications as some of the best ones we have ever received.

In early November, the New Area Support Team reviewed four applications from Sindupalchowk area. After careful evaluation, the Team decided to select Kabita Nepal as the recipient of a NCEF scholarship. The student is now in school. Hence, NCEF officially started its first pilot project. At the present, we have also received a monitoring report for Kabita. Given this success, we wish to start Sindupalchowk as an official area next year.

The costs:

Rameshwor made a lot of phone calls to the potential areas. We spent about thirty hours in Nepal and about the same number of hours in the US to start one new area, not including the time spent doing preliminary research with potential area coordinators.

Lessons Learnt:

There are many possible reasons for loss of communication with the other two teams. One of the reasons is NCEF's long and difficult process to get applications approved. Selecting applicants who would qualify given very specific criteria for NCEF is indeed a difficult task. Although, such difficulties were explained to the coordinators, some of them still stopped communicating. We learnt lessons — we could not just believe seemingly experienced persons immediately or move on the basis of the area being in need of NCEF support—potential coordinators can change their mind any time. We always thought that providing a monthly salary could be an option. We can have a discussion, but in any case, what we have experienced so far shows that we need to find genuinely interested individuals. Again, since only one out of three areas are currently in good communication with us, we need to understand that we have to have a large number of potential areas in any year to start a few new areas. So the difficult task is to find a group of people who would be genuinely interested in working on NCEF's behalf. We would appreciate suggestions from everyone to make this project a success.

The Future

The statistics that we got from Dhanusa and Dailekh indicate that there is a severe need. Our past experiences suggest that we not only need volunteers who have seen the problem in Nepal's education sector, but who are also eager to fight to solve the problem. We request everyone to help us find those brave ones.



MAKING DONATIONS

□ Online:

www.nepalchildren.org/donation.html

□ Checks:

Make checks payable to:

Nepalese Children Education Fund or NCEF

Mailing address:

Nepalese Children's Education Fund

P.O. Box 380061

Cambridge, MA 02238-0061

Questions?

Website: www.nepalchildren.org

Email: contact@nepalchildren.org

THANK YOU!

WHAT ARE CHILDREN DOING?

Sujal in Nepalgunj was happy when he scored the highest in the class on an exam

Kalpna in Nepalgunj was happy when she could answer the teacher's question in front of all of her friends

Sushila in Nepalgunj enjoyed playing a game of hiding the handkerchief

Pabitra in Nepalgunj had fun playing musical chairs

When Dhanamaya in Nepalgunj learned A,B,C and 1,2,3 and the teacher said "good job", this made her happy