

NCEF GYAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEPALESE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

What's Inside:

Student Selection Process: Perspectives of our volunteers

By Inku Subedi



gyan: *n.* knowledge acquired
by direct perception

Student selection: Perspectives of our volunteers

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Our volunteers in Nepal, especially area coordinators, play a crucial role in the selection process of NCEF students. They identify potential candidates for the scholarship, assist in filling out application forms by visiting candidates or through coordination with school teachers. Then they either scan and send applications to the US selection committee or mail them to Kathmandu. Once the selection committee makes a decision, area coordinators relay that decision to candidates, and then continue the process of enrolling selected students into schools and providing them with education material.

After talking with our area coordinators about their experience with the selection process, we have compiled their responses for this month's newsletter. Area coordinators include Rajaram Luitel, Dipesh Tamrakar, Iba Raj Ghimire, Suresh Devkota, and Apsara Khanal from Kathmandu, Kavre, Palpa, Patan, and Nepalgunj, respectively. Rajaram, Dipesh, and Suresh have been involved with the selection process for two years, Apsara has worked on the selection process for four years, and Iba Raj has been involved beginning this year.

Area coordinators spend an average of five to ten days finding potential

candidates, filling out, collecting, scanning, and emailing application forms for the selection committee. In most areas, area coordinators have managed to get help from volunteers and school teachers. However, in an area like Patan, which lacks volunteers, the process is quite time-consuming. In Nepalgunj, where the program has become very popular and established, candidates approach the area coordinator herself, so that the coordinator does not have to seek potential candidates.

In spite of all the hard work that the area coordinators put in the selection process, they all feel rewarded when they can announce the acceptance of children into the scholarship program. Their work, however, is not without challenges. A few of these challenges are described below:

Communication:

The area coordinators communicate directly with the US selection committee via email. In areas like Palpa with irregular and slow internet access, this communication process can be very tiring and time-consuming. Another hindrance to smooth communication during the selection process is the language barrier. Although most area coordinators can communicate and clarify any problems or suggestions



about student selection via email written in English, some area coordinators and volunteers find it difficult to do so. This may result in delay in selection decision and misunderstandings.

The area coordinators have suggested that having a central communication point in Kathmandu that overlooks all the areas would be helpful in expediting clear communication with the selection committee. The area coordinators would be able to mail the forms to Kathmandu (from areas with problematic internet connection) for scanning and emailing to the US. In addition, if there is an immediate question from the selection committee, they would be able to contact the central person in Kathmandu to contact the area coordinator by phone and communicate the question. Similarly, if the area coordinators have any questions or suggestions on the application form or selection process, they would be able to

communicate with the US committee through this central person. This communication via centralization would be translated into English and Nepali for the clarity of communication between the area coordinators and selection committee.

Application forms:

Area coordinators have suggested that it would be helpful for them to understand the intent of some of the questions on the form that seem irrelevant. It seems that inclusion of a manual clarifying the purpose of the questions would motivate the area coordinators and volunteers to answer the questions comprehensively.

Area coordinator from Nepalgunj, Apsara Khanal, also suggested that it would be efficient to have separate forms for new and old students such that time can be efficiently utilized in filling out the new students' forms rather than spending a lot of time in filling out repetitive information for the old students. Although it seems better to have information filled out every year for comparison and validation purposes, further discussion on this idea is warranted.

Selection results:

Area coordinators have both the heartwarming job of announcing the receipt of a scholarship to a student, as well as the heartwrenching job of announcing the rejection of a student. Still, area coordinators have

dealt with relaying negative results by making it clear to the students, parents, and teachers beforehand about the uncertainty of their selection and absence of their involvement in the selection process.

All area coordinators are satisfied with the arrangement of selection being finalized by the selection committee in the US. However, few of them suggested and appreciated that US selection committee seek their advice especially when making decision about discontinuation of scholarship of an old student.

Conclusion:

NCEF depends and appreciates area coordinator's dedication and hard work during the selection process. Constructive feedback from the area coordinators is crucial in improving the selection process of the students so that deserving students are selected into the program. We will continue to highlight our area coordinators' experience with NCEF work through subsequent articles.

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THANK YOU!

WHAT ARE CHILDREN DOING?

Santosh in Kavre was proud of a speech he gave in his class.

Ramkumar in Kavre enjoyed creating some artwork in school.

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).