

NCEF GYAN

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What's Inside:

Establishing NCEF's Legal Legitimacy in Nepal: Overcoming a Series of
Bureaucratic Obstacles

By Dr. Maheswor Kafle



gyan: *n.* knowledge acquired
by direct perception

Establishing NCEF's Legal Legitimacy in Nepal: Overcoming a Series of Bureaucratic Obstacles

By Dr. Maheswor Kafle

In this article, we describe the tasks that our volunteers do to maintain our legal legitimacy in Nepal and the difficulties they encounter while navigating the bureaucratic system.

In order to have a non-governmental organization (NGO) be registered, it must first register with the District Administration Office (DAO), in the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu. Registration is a long process, which starts off with answering the question - why does Nepal need another NGO when there are approximately 16,000 of them already present? For our organization, we explained about NCEF offers financial transparency and a unique style of functioning that work to benefit disadvantaged children in Nepal. The DAO would not listen. After the fifth meeting, we had to further explain that we had already raised funds in the USA, and if the registration paperwork were not processed by the following week, the money would be lost. The Chief District Officer (CDO) finally listened to us and asked us to submit the paper work, and assured us that the organization would be registered the following day.

The next step was to get an approval from the Social Welfare Council (SWC). The notice posted in the office had listed the types of documents that an organization must submit for SWC approval. It also mentioned that once all the necessary forms were submitted, the decision would be made in ten days.

We followed the guidelines and submitted all the required documents along with our report. They accepted the application and asked us to come to the office in ten days time.

Technical details required by the SWC office concerning the formatting of the application delayed the approval process significantly. When we went back after ten days, the application was still pending. We were told the reason for the delay was that the subheadings in the report had to be marked in numerical form (1 2 3 4...) rather than in alphabetical form (A B C D...), which we had in our submitted report. Because of this small discrepancy, the office denied to process the application. We revised the report making the required formatting changes in the next hour and resubmitted our application. Although we were asked to come again in ten days after submitting the modified version of the application, we called the office after 4 days just to check on its status. Again we were told that there was an error with the order in which the subheadings were presented - the section on "Monitoring" was under subheading number 4 instead of number 3.

We re-ordered the subheadings in accordance with SWC's recommendations and resubmitted the application. Before the ten day processing period passed, the SWC called to inform us about, yet another technical mistake. The mistake was that we had only included the names of the students, their grade-level, and their schools' names. We were told that approval of the application required addresses of the students and the addresses of their schools. Although we were reluctant to disclose the students' private information in the application, the information had to be provided in order to ensure the legal legitimacy of the NCEF sister organization and its activities in Nepal. However, we were assured that this information would not be publicly disclosed.

WHAT ARE CHILDREN DOING?

Hina in Nepalgunj was proud to go to school with her new dress and school bag provided by NCEF

Sujal in Nepalgunj enjoyed playing cricket in his school

Rabisha in Nepalgunj is delighted to learn to use her school's new computer

Pabitra in Nepalgunj had fun playing the "hiding handkerchief" game

Ganga in Nepalgunj was proud to be able to answer the teacher's question and happy to make some new friends

MAKING DONATIONS

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www.nepalchildren.org/donation.html

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Mailing address:

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P.O. Box 380061

Cambridge, MA 02238-0061

Questions?

Website: www.nepalchildren.org

Email: contact@nepalchildren.org

THANK YOU!

The office called the following day asking for clarification regarding the procedure involved in starting a new area of operation in Nepal. In our report, we had described that in order to start an area, the person wishing to be the coordinator of that region needs to answer certain questions (such as inquiries regarding availability, ability to recruit volunteers and means of communication), which are also mentioned on the NCEF website. We were asked to explain the types of answers we receive from potential applicants. Although we mentioned that area coordinators' answers would depend on the geographical area and their motivation, we had to fill out a separate form with potential answers that we have and could receive from area coordinators to satisfy the administrators' requirements.

Then, just as we thought there was nothing left in our report where they could point as mistake, SWC found another mistake. The timeline for student selection was described in a paragraph form rather than in the required table format. Hence, we created the table as they have suggested quickly thereafter.

After a few days we called the office only to discover that the application was still not accepted. What could have possibly happened this time? We were told that we had forgotten to put a border around the table. Thus, we made yet another version of the report and re-submitted it.

Unfortunately, the application still failed to get approval within the specified ten days. But this time, the delay was not because of technical "flaws" in our report, but because the director was away attending a meeting for a week. After three months of hard work and many revisions, our report was finally accepted, and we were relieved to get the SWC approval letter.

The next step in legally establishing NCEF as an NGO in Nepal was the procurement of a tax exemption letter. When we contacted the tax office to obtain a tax exemption letter we had difficulty convincing the officer that the funds collected in the US were also tax-exempted. We had to go through an informal process of convincing the officer about the tax-exemption status of our organization.

As we look forward, the kind of time and energy that was needed to register the organization will be continuously necessary in the future. Future volunteers have to spend time and energy every year to get approval to renew the organization's registration in Nepal.

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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