

# NCEFYAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEPALESE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

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by Omprakash Gnawali, NCEF CEO

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Be part of NCEF team in 2008 - Is that in your resolution?

As little as 3 hours per month of your time will help the children in Nepal greatly!



Building The Future of Future-builders of Nepal...

# Administrative Highlights From 2007

By Omprakash Gnawali, NCEF Chief Executive Officer



While our readers and well-wishers continue to support our work and our volunteers find time out of their busy schedule to give a better future to children, I hope we can take a moment to look back at some of the major institutional and administrative highlights from 2007 in the organization you so generously support. Overall, we grew in numbers and experience in 2007 and are ready for an even more productive year in 2008.

In 2007, NCEF increased the number of students it supports to 55, a 25% increase from 2006. To support the larger number of children, our budget grew by 17% to NRs. 513,000 (US\$ 8274) over the same period. There was a surplus of NRs. 140,000 (US\$ 2258) from last year, which was used towards the budget for 2007-2008. Although our budget estimates were too high, our estimates were intentionally conservative to ensure that the organization accounted for potential costs to safely transfer money to Nepal. Each transaction must be preceded by an approval from the Social Welfare Council (a government body in Nepal). This approval process often takes months. Additionally, all surplus funds are rolled over the budget for the following year.

Our 2007 strategy to increase the number of students reached by NCEF involved expanding the number of areas that NCEF worked with rather than increasing the number of students in the existing areas in which we operate. This strategy was formulated based on the following observation: each volunteer team in Nepal ably manages a small number of students while keeping the coordination overhead low and the quality of volunteer-student interactions high. There is the risk that the effectiveness of volunteer teams will be compromised if the group of students a team is responsible for is expanded. This is especially true in rural and remote areas of Nepal where NCEF aims to do most of its work. Volunteers in such areas simply do not have enough access to resources that are necessary to effectively coordinate a large team. However, the increase in the number of

students was accomplished in 2007 for the most part by increasing the number of students in the organizationally strongest area (Nepalgunj) and the smallest area (Palpa). There were four serious applications for new areas in 2007 and not a single area has met our benchmarks after months of evaluation process. Our decision was based on a desire to not spread our work to areas in which we were not confident we could do our work both effectively and credibly. We remain confident that the right strategy for increasing the number of students is increasing the areas for this volunteer-based organization. We hope to report better results on expansion next year.

We have reorganized the administrative structure of our team in the US. In the past years, we had an executive committee that did the administrative work and a fundraising committee that generated the funds to support our work. The makeup of the volunteers and the type of work done in these two committees were different enough that they worked without much coordination and communication with each other when they each had a sufficient number of volunteers. When we lost a few fundraising volunteers last year, however, it was necessary to bring the few remaining volunteers from the fundraising committee into the executive committee, and have one committee. We have found this new arrangement to work well, and it has fostered increased communication between those who work on the fundraising side and those who provide administrative support.

We also created a new position within the executive committee to look after the student selection process. The "Student Selection Officer" now helps recruit the selection committee each year, discusses and proposes application and selection schedules for the year, and takes care of many administrative work to ensure applications are collected and selection decisions are made on time. Although administrative work related to student selection

is concentrated between January through May each year, given the preparatory and post-selection wrap up work, there is enough work for one person to focus on student selection all year round. This officer ensures that we continue to have the best mechanism to select deserving students for financial assistance.



*NCEF children, parents and volunteers at an interaction event*

One of the serious challenges we faced in 2007 as an organization is related to information management. With more than one hundred applications to evaluate, more than fifty students to support, hundreds of donations to process, a large base of volunteers performing different tasks in two different countries, monthly updates regarding each student, and the range of work that comes with working in the jurisdiction of two very different governments (US and Nepal), there was a lot of information and documents that NCEF had to keep track of. Further, we wanted to make sure that all decisions and documents were archived for future reference, as organizational memory is important and several of these documents

need to be archived for certain number of years by law. By the end of 2007, we concluded that we need to use databases and modern and systematic information management tools to keep track of all relevant information. Improving our information systems is a key area of focus this year. As we make progress on this front during the year, supporters and the public will see a more frequently-updated website with fresh and more up-to-date information on our performance in fundraising, field work, and other work. Volunteers should expect a coherent information system to update and refer to when they need data to do their work.

NCEF got a permanent ruling on its 501(c)(3) status (commonly known as tax-exempt status) from the IRS in 2007. Non-profits file paperwork with the IRS five years after their incorporation to demonstrate that they continue to operate within the laws that regulate the activities of public charitable organizations. NCEF was incorporated in 2002 so we filed the paperwork in the beginning of the year. We got a reply from the IRS in September

with the confirmation of our 501(c)(3) status. Your donations are tax-exempt to the extent allowed by law.

Recruiting and retaining volunteers is always a challenge, especially in Nepal. In Nepal, we had our treasurer and Kathmandu area-coordinator leave the country, Patan area-coordinator relocate to a new city, and our Kavre area-



*US Volunteers visiting children along with Nepal volunteers*

coordinator become less available because he entered his third year in medical school. On the positive side, we recruited volunteers, got help from an NGO when we needed temporary help, recruited a committed treasurer, motivated existing volunteers, recruited one of our NCEF graduate as a volunteer, and in the end, our team has managed to deliver. In the US, we continue to receive offers of volunteer help. The fundraising and publicity team has recruited many volunteers who plan to help with proposal writing, start donation drives in Nepalese restaurants across the country, and bring greater online visibility by using blogs and social networking tools. Three new faces (including the chair) now volunteer in the selection committee. Although volunteer turnover is a concern, at this point we have developed enough internal documentation and processes that we are able to recruit new volunteers and carry on with our work. Volunteers who are no longer active remain loyal supporter of the organization.

A few of our US-based board members, officers, and volunteers traveled to Nepal

during the year. Inku, Atul, Hem, and Uttam traveled to Nepal at different times, but among them at least one US-based volunteer met the volunteers, area coordinators, and the students in all areas in Nepal except Palpa. The visiting and Nepal-based volunteers have found these interactions helpful in understanding each other better. The volunteers in Nepal got to hear about the fundraising work that we do in the US while the volunteers from the US got to hear the first hand accounts of the challenges that come with field work in Nepal.

Before I end, I would like to highlight the dedication our Nepal and US-based volunteers have shown to help the students secure a better future. Our work goes on despite political upheavals throughout Nepal (although with a lot of last minute adjustments in

our schedules and plans). Our volunteers braved the massive floods that submerged Nepalgunj last year and still visited the students to get their updates. Our work goes on despite 11-hour power cuts per day in Nepal. Emails were sent even though it often required volunteers to walk half an hour to the nearest cyber cafe and to wait another half an hour for a computer to free up. Our US-based volunteers worked evenings and weekends to provide advisory, financial, and logistical support to our volunteers in Nepal. The US-based and Nepal-based volunteers together are committed to seeing our work continue despite political developments and uncertainties surrounding the election to the constituent assembly in Nepal, slated for mid-April, the same time the new academic year starts for the "NCEF class of 2008"!

After reading this article, I hope you got a taste of the kind of administrative work we do, the challenges we face, and how we work through those challenges. We welcome feedback and suggestions, and we want to thank you for your generous support and commitment to the future of the children in Nepal and wish you a wonderful year ahead.



## 2008 Volunteer Opportunities with NCEF

*How does NCEF run without a single paid person?*

*NCEF is made up of a group of extremely dedicated VOLUNTEERS who share a common vision that despite our busy schedules, if we work cohesively we can put books in the hands of children in Nepal, who lack the opportunities and privilege that we have here. Although we helped change so many lives of disadvantaged children in Nepal in 2007, we are eager to extend these opportunities to more that are very deserving. We would, therefore, like to open our arms and welcome new volunteers to join the NCEF team. Even by contributing as little as 3-4 hours per month, you can help **build the future of future-builders of Nepal**. Please see the available opportunities below and contact the designated volunteer.*

### Fundraising

#### 1. Donation Box in Restaurant Project

NCEF is starting a new project that involves installing donation boxes in local Nepali Restaurants around the US. The pilot project was very successful and the project has a great potential for raising funds for children. If you live in a city which has a Nepali restaurant(s) or similar businesses, please consider coordinating a very low time commitment project in your area. Once a donation box is installed in the restaurant, your only responsibilities will be to collect donation and transfer to NCEF. We are also looking for a Main Coordinator, whose responsibility is to communicate with regional volunteers and help new regional volunteers get started with this awesome project.

##### A. Regional Coordinators

**Duties:** Volunteers will identify restaurant in his/her city, then install a donation box at the restaurant working closely with the restaurant owner. Once the box is installed, volunteers will visit the restaurant every month and collect donation and transfer to NCEF via Paypal or check.

**Commitment:** 5-6hrs/month (for each participating restaurant)

**Comments:** If you are a busy person, but would still like to help children in Nepal, this is a great opportunity for you. All you have to do is visit the restaurant (whether if you are already going there for a nice dinner, or the restaurant is on your way) only ONCE A MONTH for a few hours. Your few hours of contribution that month alone will send a Nepali kid to school for a whole year.

**Contact:** [chhitij@nepalchildren.org](mailto:chhitij@nepalchildren.org)

##### B. National Coordinator

**Duties:** Volunteer will have the opportunity to expand this amazing project and will be involved with communicating with Regional Coordinators, keeping track of donations and making a report of these donations. You will work with website manager to update website for new regions. This National Coordinator will be the main project manager of the project.

**Commitment:** 5-10hrs/month

**Comments:** This opportunity fits well for people who are interested in not only learning to manage a national level project, but also in planning, evaluating and making the most out of it for the good of children in Nepal. No prior experience is necessary since you will be trained and informed about your duties and will be working very closely with the Executive Committee.

**Contact:** [chhitij@nepalchildren.org](mailto:chhitij@nepalchildren.org)

#### 2. Grants Management Team

NCEF plans to expand its work and assist more needy children in Nepal, the goal that requires large donations. One particular avenue we would like to explore is to seek for Foundation grants. If you have some experience with grant writing or would like to assist someone with grant writing and thus improving these skills which are essential in both academia and NGOs, this is a great way to do so.

### Quick List

#### Fundraising

- Donation box in restaurant project
  - National Coordinator
  - Regional Coordinators
- Grant Management

#### Publicity

- Website development group
- NCEF Blog/Facebook administrator
- Newsletter team
- NCEF Video Design Team

#### Public Relation

- Donation database management team
- Gift donation management team

#### Administrative

- Translator
- Monthly report reviewer

## MAKING DONATIONS

#### Online:

[www.nepalchildren.org/donation.html](http://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?

[contact@nepalchildren.org](mailto:contact@nepalchildren.org)

## Do you GoodShop?

NCEF will receive donation from your online shopping at no cost to you!

When you shop online through **GoodShop**, the retailers will make a donation to NCEF at no cost to you.

Many retailers, including WalMart, Target, Best Buy, Amazon are participating in this program. Click here to start:

[www.goodsearch.com/?charityid=860619](http://www.goodsearch.com/?charityid=860619)

ALSO, Now every time you search the Internet using **GoodSearch**, a penny will be donated to NCEF. Please check out the link above. You can help change the lives of needy children with a click of a mouse.

**Duties:** Identifying Foundations; Grant writing; Coordinating and corresponding to manage grant proposals.

**Commitment:** depending on your availability

**Comments:** Any kind of help is appreciated. We already have some members with grant-writing experience willing to work in the project. So this will be a project that you can initiate and develop on your own and can be a good experience to be included in your resume.

**Contact:** chhitij@nepalchildren.org

## Publicity

### 1. Website Development Group

**Duties:** Adding and updating content and new links

**Commitment:** 1-2 hrs/wk

**Comments:** This is a high priority job with very low time commitment. We are actively seeking volunteers for this group. You can work on various aspects of the website - regular updates on the website of documents, donors or occasional special projects such as special fundraising project publicity.

**Contact:** om\_p@nepalchildren.org

### 2. NCEF Blog/Facebook Administrators

**Duties:** The group will be involved with maintaining and updating NCEF's social networks such as NCEF Blog, Facebook, Goodsearch. The group will also work to increase the activity and number of participants in these networks

**Commitment:** 3-4hrs/mnth

**Comments:** You will be involved with updating NCEF blog (starting discussion topics), Facebook Cause and other social networks with very little time commitment per week.

**Contact:** chhitij@nepalchildren.org

### 3. Newsletter Team

**Duties:** Writing short articles about children, NCEF volunteers and other relevant topics; editing articles; publishing newsletter

**Commitment:** 2-3hrs/mnth depending on task

**Comments:** You will have an opportunity to read fresh student reports, to interview volunteers about their work, NCEF students about their progress and donors and others about their thoughts. Team will discuss via email in the beginning of each month and team members will write articles, edit and publish newsletter. This is also a low-time commitment task recurring every month depending on the length of newsletter. **Contact:** chhitij@nepalchildren.org

### 4. NCEF Video Design team

Are you creative? Have experience with cameras, videos and video editing? Then you can help create publicity material and documentary about NCEF and Nepali children. Our volunteers have already taken videos and photographs of our children, parents, and area coordinators. If you would like to put them together into a nice, short description of NCEF, please let us know. This is a great avenue to experiment with your skills in video production.

**Contact:** chhitij@nepalchildren.org

## Public Relations

### 1. Donation database management team

**Duties:** Adding and updating donation information; sending updates to donors at the end of the year

**Commitment:** 1-2 hrs/w k (more towards end of the year)

**Comments:** This is a priority job and will be done regularly but is not time-consuming. You will have the opportunity to learn excel and access which are good database to learn for anyone interested in development in NGOs. You can also help out with correspondence with donors which will be useful in correspondence/public relations in any kind of official work.

**Contact:** inku@nepalchildren.org

### 2. Gift donation management team

Often times NCEF receives gifts from generous donors from a wedding ceremony or funeral service or other social gatherings. NCEF publishes a web page dedicated to such donations. If a gift is given to NCEF by individual donors separately, NCEF works to keep track of donors and donations and if necessary contact them. The gift donation management team will be involved with overseeing this very important project. In 2006 alone a memorial donation contributed more than \$13,000 to children's education in Nepal!

**Duties:** When a gift is given to NCEF (such as memorial donation, wedding donation), you will be involved with managing the donors list and getting in touch with donors if needed.

**Commitment:** 3-4 hrs when gifts are received

**Comments:** Example: [www.nepalchildren.org/memorial.html](http://www.nepalchildren.org/memorial.html).

This job is occasional but is quite rewarding since this kind of fundraising is quite efficient and effective.

**Contact:** inku@nepalchildren.org

## Administrative

### 1. Translator

**Duties:** Translate documents (student applications, letters, other documents) from Nepali to English and occasionally from English to Nepali

**Commitment:** You will be notified when such documents need to be translated. 2-3hrs 1-2 times a month

**Comments:** If you are proficient in Nepali and have a few hours to spare to read student applications first hand (with comments from volunteers, parents, teachers and students) and translate them to English, this is a great opportunity. This task requires very little time commitment and only a few times a year.

**Contact:** steven@nepalchildren.org

### 2. Monthly Report Reviewer

**Duties:** Review monthly student visit reports prepared by volunteers in Nepal and archive

**Commitment:** 3-4hrs hrs/month

**Comments:** Proficiency in Nepali NOT required

**Contact:** steven@nepalchildren.org