

PSD Connect

A Quarterly Newsletter

The PSD Connect is a quarterly e-newsletter published by the Partnership for Sustainable Development (PSD) Nepal to inform all their partners, ex-volunteers and supporters, about our activities and news. PSD Nepal is a non-profit social development organization dedicated to the alleviation of poverty of Children and youth of rural Nepal. For more information please visit www.psdnepal.org.

MESSAGE FROM the EDITOR

Namaste Friends!

We would like to thank everybody for your kind responses to our June newsletter! It is wonderful to hear from you. Here is our latest quarterly newsletter keeping you up to date with some of our work and accomplishments over the last three months. Please feel free to contact us if you have any announcements, articles, or messages that you want to promote through our newsletter. We heartily welcome your views, comments, and queries regarding the work of PSD-Nepal and/or regarding the improvement of the newsletter! You can send us an email to psdnepal@mail.com.np or call us at (9771)-4780369, fax 4780631.

Bishnu H. Bhatta

LATEST PSD NEWS

- The majority of the summer volunteer projects have been completed. Only the ODA project remains to be completed, and it will be completed on September 11th. This summer there were 10 projects sponsored by university volunteer groups. Edinburgh Global Partnership and Glasgow University groups worked in Chitwan in three different schools, Bristol University group worked in Ilam in two different schools, Intervol worked in Gorkha, Imperial College of London students and one Oxford group worked in Lamjung, and two groups from Oxford University worked in Baglung.
- Bishnu Bhatta had the chance to take part in the South Asia Regional Conference on "Early Childhood Care and Education Policies and Practices: Towards 2015 And Beyond". The conference took place in New Delhi and many experts in the field were present to discuss the topic of early childhood education. It was a very good opportunity for PSD to take part in the conference.

Quote from Volunteers:

"Builders worked well with us after they found out we have fund raised money to build the school" Gemma Suith

"Don't frustrate with things if it is slow at the start. Be patient, learn cultural dancing and singing" Nicola webber

"Beneficial and enjoyable experience although challenges will be face through out in cultural aspect. You must be open and willing to try. Difficulties can be experience being away from home" Linsey Pritchard

"Amazing experience, completely go for it because it is rewarding experience and will benefit you so much. People are very friendly and welcoming. You will be so luck to stay with family". Neena Chauhan

"Be flexible and go with flow (plan change) it will be different to what you know but try to embrace it. There will be loves but high points make it worth" Francesca Yates

"Don't be afraid to make a fool yourself, throw yourself in the playing and engaging with the children" Edward Joyce

"Throw yourself into the project you will get more out of it" Elezabeth Hosier

"Volunteering in Nepal is one of the nicest experiences. People are kind and loving, very open and happy to learn share their knowledge and wisdom" Kasia Musur

"Nepali people are extremely friendly and community are very welcoming. Locals treat you as you are their family, calling you brother, sister, uncle such. The diverse of culture and religion fascinating. It definitely feels very strong binds with not just with the host family, but with the wider community. The only negative thing can say about my volunteer experience is that it was heart breaking to say good bye with the village which on the bright side reflect how close you got with the people and enjoyed this experience" Mai Ebine

Extracurricular Programs with Children

As part of its efforts to promote early childhood education and enrich the lives of poor Nepali children, PSD has been running different extracurricular programs with orphan children. The programs focused on providing orphans and youth with after-school enrichment programs and extracurricular activities to increase their general knowledge, provide them with a safe environment to express them, and to build their confidence. In Nepal, these types of extracurricular activities are not common due to very limited or non-existent support from the government. Therefore, most youth do not have access to enrichment opportunities. Some of the activities that PSD has sponsored include field trips, music lessons, pottery lessons, Mud Day, and excursions which teach shopping skills. Over the last year, PSD directly served approximately 4,500 children through its programs and activities. The goal of these programs was to develop the self-esteem, confidence, knowledge, and life skills of children through practical exposure to different settings and experiences. Below are more detailed descriptions of the programs and activities. Overall, it was clear that these programs greatly benefited the confidence and well-being of the children participating.

Shopping experience: This visit to a Bhatbhateni supermarket (one of the biggest supermarkets in Nepal) took place on June 30, 2012. Eight girls and seven boys participated in the visit. Going on a shopping trip to a big mall is a unique experience for orphan children, who usually do not have access to taking these kinds of trips with their parents like non-orphan children do. Each child was given a small budget of 1000 Nepali rupees (7 British Pounds) to buy something of their choosing. It was an exciting event for them, since they could use their imagination to choose anything they wanted. Most of the children bought toys to play with it. The purpose of this excursion was to raise awareness of their own interest and build confidence by allowing them to make choices on their own. The children were



themselves.

amazed by the quantity and diversity of items in the store, many of which they hadn't imagined existed. For instance, they had never seen many of the toys before, and many of them had never tasted ice cream and they were thrilled to try it. They also learned valuable lessons about budgets and shopping when they had to find out if they had enough money to actually buy the different items they wanted. Overall, the shopping trip increased their knowledge of daily life skills, and increased their confidence in their own ability to purchase things they picked out

Pottery Class trip: PSD took a small group of children from Bal Mandir orphanage to a town called Thimi for an excursion to learn about the art of pottery. Thimi is known as a place where traditional pottery is made in the Kathmandu Valley. The pottery workshop where the kids visited represented a mixture of modern technique and the traditional Nepali pottery system. The



master himself is the son of a traditional pottery master, however he has incorporated modern skill into his technique as well. The children learned about pottery and got to use clay, clay wheel, and kiln to make their own pottery (oil lamps). The children greatly enjoyed themselves and learned a new skill. After spending more than three hours in the workshop, they went to a nearby cafe for a good meal. 12 boys & girls participated in this event.

Learning from Mother Nature project: At Shree Himalaya Higher Secondary School in Chitwan, PSD has helped them to initiate a “Learning from Mother Nature” project. During school, teachers incorporate lessons about nature into their curriculum in a fun, interactive way. During these walks the children learned about their surrounding environment and gained an appreciation for nature. It also gave them an opportunity to get out of the classrooms and into nature for the day. They learned about the river's animals and inhabitants, and the importance of water conservation. They also observed and learned about the communities that live in the forest and the importance of the river in their daily lives for washing, food, water supply, and survival. This walk gave them an appreciation for water, the conservation of natural resources, and the environment. Examples of some of these different types of nature-based lessons include:

- “Friendship Garden”: The students planted their own garden in the back of the school. They care for the plants themselves, which gives them hands-on learning experiences and a new appreciation for nature.
- Nature Walk: On January 12, 2012 the teachers took the students on a nature walk during school. They walked around the school grounds and village, and past local agriculture fields. They identified different kinds of vegetable plants growing and learned about their roots, leaves, and stems. This taught the students valuable life skills about farming and agriculture.
- Field trip to a livestock farm: This livestock farm had many cows in a cow shed, and students learned about how to care for livestock, what cows eat, and how the livestock farm makes money.
- River Walk: The students visited a stream and learned about the stream ecosystem and the fish, plants, and organisms that live there.
- Forest/Jungle Walk: This activity was a hike through the forest and by several lakes. The teachers taught the students about the plants and animals that live in the forest and lake.

Mud Day 2012

On the 15th of the Nepali month of Ashadh (June 29th on our calendar), children all over Nepal celebrated Mud Day. 15th Ashadh, called Asar Pandhra, is traditionally the day that marks the beginning of the rice planting season, and for generations, this has been a great day of celebration all over the country. Mud Day is an opportunity for Nepalis to celebrate the productivity of the land, appreciate nature, and celebrate with family and friends. Mud Day connects children with nature in a personal, educational, and fun way. In addition to seeing the land as a resource that supplies their livelihood, Mud Day encourages children to see the land as something that they can love and enjoy, just for its own sake.

In preparation for Mud Day, farmers who volunteer their land for the event plow the field over and over in order to make the fields the right consistency for the mud. Then, because of the monsoon rains, a huge field of mud is created for children and the community to play in. This year, PSD hosted its annual Mud Day celebration in two locations – Chitwan and the Panchkhal orphanage.



Panchkhal Orphanage:



Children at the Panchkhal Orphanage had a wonderful time celebrating Mud Day this year. Mud Day has been celebrated at the orphanage every year since 2009. This year, 74 children in total participated in the event. They (as well as their teacher!) got thoroughly dirty and enjoyed every minute of it. The children were given an opportunity to bring out their competitive side, with matches of football, volleyball, wrestling, 3-legged race, and crawling races. At the end of the day, many prizes were given out as well as a good meal to every child. In addition, this year music was incorporated into the Mud Day festivities. The children played the tabala, violin, guitar, flute, and sang. The music gave the children another way to express themselves, and encouraged everyone to dance and play in the mud even more. The

rhythm of the music connected with the rhythm of nature in the mud as everyone played together. All the children had wonderful meal at the end.

Chitwan:



On June 29th, the community of Champanagar, Chitwan celebrated Mud Day. Approximately 5,000 people were involved in this event, including District Education Officer, a Chief District Officer, different organization representative, media, Schools, framers groups, women groups and a group of international university volunteers from the UK. The celebrations started when District Education officer and several local children rode into the mud on the back of a friendly



elephant. In a beautiful explosion of pink and red saris, the women of the community danced with the chief guest in the mud, and began to plant saplings in a neighbouring field. A group of local musicians provided the sound track to the mounting excitement of the day, and created an opportunity for onlookers to begin the celebrations with dancing. The international volunteers attending the event were even pushed into the middle of the circle, and had a chance to test their Nepali-style dancing skills, with varying degrees of success!

Most of the children attending the event were brought by their teachers. Children played many games in the mud like Frisbee, balls, and a football match that lasted for several hours. When the children finally finished their games, there was plenty of soap and water available to clean off all the mud. They were then given a good meal of Dahi Chiura (beaten rice, yogurt and sugar), a traditional meal in Nepal on Asar Pandhra. Many of the children were reluctant to get out of the mud, but when all the competitions were over and the children had washed and eaten, an awards ceremony was held. Prizes of school books, pens and soap were handed out to the winners of the various competitions. At the end of the day walking past the fields, it was clear that some children did not want the day to end. As everyone else headed home to rest after a hard days fun there was still a group of three girls wading around in the mud!



In Nepal, wealthier families generally avoid getting dirty because of its association with low-income work. Mud Day brings all people together regardless of social class. People of all castes and ethnicities can play in the mud together. Children and political leaders alike can play in the mud together. In the eyes of Mother Nature,



every person is the same. At times, the lives of orphans and children living in Nepal can be difficult, and extracurricular activities and organized events are not common. Mud Day gives children the opportunity to enjoy and express themselves, and quite simply to have fun. Mud Day allowed these children, as well as children from all around Nepal to do something outside the ordinary grind of everyday life. It helped the children to understand that nature is for all of us – big or small. Nature does not discriminate, because we all, as human beings, belong to it. We hope to continue to give children the chance to experience the beauty of nature in a new way.

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