
PSD Connect

A quarterly E-Newsletter

Year 3 - No. 2
June 2008

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 good wishers, about our activities and news. PSD Nepal is a not-for-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 EDITORIAL

Dear Friends!

We would like to thank you for your warm responses to our newsletter as usual! Since the first edition of our newsletter has been such a great success, we enthusiastically present our next issue. This issue focuses on our volunteers and their experiences including reports on completed projects and new initiatives. In addition, this newsletter will provide a brief update of the projects that have been finalized, the current political situation in Nepal, PSD-Nepal's envisions of the future, and of course, how you can support us. Please feel free to write to us if you have any announcement, messages, and articles that you would want to spread through our newsletter. We heartily welcome your views and your comments, queries regarding the work of PSD-Nepal and/or how we can improve our newsletter! You can send us an email to psdnepal@mail.com.np or call us at (9771)-4780369, fax 4780631.

Namaste,
Bishnu H. Bhatta

LATEST PSD NEWS

The constituent assemble election has been completed peacefully. The Maoist is the largest democratically elected party by winning 120 out of 240 seats. We are confident that the newly elected political party will promote peace throughout Nepal as we have already seen so far. June 28th is Nepal's historic day as Nepal's monarchy will no longer exist making Nepal a People's Republic. This will provide stability in Nepal allowing PSD to conduct projects with less hassle and interruptions. We are relieved and delighted to see such peaceful political outcomes and to be part of this new history.

In April, 21 Aberdeen medical students have completed their three week placement at end of April in different community and city hospitals and organized two health camps in rural villages. Also, there were two elective medical students from Oxford who worked with the Kanti Children Hospital and Primary Health Care Center in Chapagaun, which is in the Katmandu Valley.

The following month, Ms. Michelle, a guest from Canada, arrived in Katmandu and has visited PSD's office in Katmandu and its project sites in the Terai region to monitor its programmes in Chitwan with Mr. Bishnu Bhatta. They have visited several school and community projects which were funded by PSD. During this same trip, PSD has signed four Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with four schools to construct numerous school buildings, which will commence in July with the help of overseas summer volunteers from different universities from the United Kingdom (UK), and one MoU with the Aama's (mother's) group to construct a one level community hall. Furthermore, Tirtha Poudle, one of PSD's Project Managers, has visited Baglung to sort out some projects for Oxford Development Abroad (ODA) and has also signed

an MoU with the Baglung community and schools while Mohan, PSD's Chairman, visited Ilam and signed the MoU with Ilam's community and schools for Bristol Volunteer Development Abroad (BVDA).

VOLUNTEER STORIES

In late March 21 medical students from the University of Aberdeen arrived in Kathmandu excited by the prospect of a fun filled 6 weeks ahead of them. We quickly moved to Duhulikel where we were introduced to Nepalese culture through a comprehensive programme organised by PSD. Our days were an exciting blend of language classes, educational and informative talks alongside group bonding exercises in the beautiful surroundings of the Duhulikel lodge.

We then moved into the exploratory phase of the programme spending an exhilarating 2 days rafting now the Trishuli River followed by a more relaxing 3 day stay in Royal Chitwan National Park where we were lucky enough to see some of the local rhino herd and a new born elephant. Then there was yet another change of pace as we headed to Pokhara in preparation for the start of our 6 day trek in Annapurna. We were lucky enough to benefit from the ever-changing weather giving us the rare opportunity to see the mountains bathed in sunshine and shrouded mist and snow on consecutive days. After a couple of days relaxation in Pokhara allowing us to visit the Peace Pagoda and enjoy the lakeside we were off to Placement.



We were based at Maleku Highway Hospital, a 15 bed community hospital some 70 km outside Kathmandu specializing in both the care of the local community and immediate management of the significant number of RTA's occurring on the highway. As medical students we found the diversity of the patients interesting and were able to get involved and assist in the majority of cases. We were warmly welcomed by both the families who we were staying with and the staff within the hospital, which helped make our stay both enjoyable and educational. There were also groups based in the Primary health care posts in Primary Health Care Center, Lele, Baluwa Sub Health Post, Gokarna and Primary Health Care Center, Chapagaun.



During our stay within the group we took part in 2 health camps, which were supported by the funds we had raised in the UK before departing. We were welcomed into the local community's where over 300 people made use of the resources on offer. The health camps ran so successfully in large part due to the significant logistical operation by PSD and the work effort by the Nepalese doctors involved.

Throughout the programme PSD were unfaltering in their commitment both to the Project and to ensuring that we got the most out of our time in Nepal. Their enthusiasm for their work rubbed off on us all and we feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to contribute to the continued development of this beautiful country.

Janice and Nicky - HELP, Aberdeen University

Some cots from Medical students 2008:

"Amazing experience overall – don't heisted to sign up".

"If you don't like rice, learn to like it".

"the volunteering was fantastic and I would recommend it to anyone who is interested. PSD organizing everything very well"

"Expect the unexpected"

"Do it!! An Amazing experience definitely worth while"

"It is definitely worth while visiting Nepal and seeing how medicine practice here"

"Don't expect things to be like at home or judge them by your British standards"

Canada to Nepal: How I ended up in Chitwan

I first heard about PSD Nepal when I was in Vancouver, Canada through a family friend who had funded some projects in Nepal through this organization. Trevor, our family friend, came to know Bishnu through a mutual friend when Bishnu was in Vancouver attending the Canadian Conference of Dialogue and Deliberation last November 2007 through the sponsorship of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He was very much thankful to C2D2 and CIDA for their support to make it happen. Without C2D2 invitation and CIDA funding he wouldn't be able to connect with them. I immediately became interested in the kind of work this NGO was involved in and so I agreed to head over to Nepal to do some work after my stay in India not knowing what kind of work this would entail. I finally made my way to Katmandu and immediately set off for Chitwan the next morning after meeting with Bishnu, the founder of PSD Nepal, to visit some project sites in the Terai region, which is in the southern region of Nepal. Having spent about a week in Chitwan, visiting more than 25 project sites, I realized the positive impact PSD Nepal funded projects had on these communities. All projects were of course of equal importance from an economic, social, environmental, health, and educational stand point; however, there are three specific projects that I would like to share from my site visits: cemented irrigation canals, clean drinking water facilities, and bio-fueled gas stoves.

Upon arriving in Chitwan, miles and miles of rice fields can't go unnoticed. If there is one thing I have learned about Nepalis is how important rice is to their diet and Nepali's high consumption (and I mean lots!) of rice for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. As an important staple in the Nepali diet, rice is not only an important food source but an economic means of life. Most of the people in Chitwan are farmers and are involved with one way or the other with the production of rice for both consumption and for sale, and for this reason alone, cementing the irrigation canals is important in order maximize water flow to the rice fields to produce a maximum of two full harvests compared to one small harvest per year.



The rice fields provide employment to disadvantaged and marginalized ethnic groups and to lower cast people who are usually landless, meaning that they have no land to themselves and thus have no land to farm. By allowing maximum flow of water to these rice fields provides employment and also housing as a piece of land can be rented to live and farm on with the rent paid in rice to the landlord.



Coming from Canada, drinking water is not a major concern as our water is clean, safe, and abundant; however, in Nepal, more specifically to the Terai region, this is not the case. Many children become ill due to drinking unhygienic water thus missing days, even weeks of school including adults missing days of work and thus losing income. Many schools

in the Terai region do not have access to clean drinking water or proper drinking water facilities. Illnesses associated with unhygienic water are easily treatable and preventable by for example accessing underground water resources. So within

the past two years, PSD has provided over 40 hygienic drinking water facilities to numerous communities and schools improving the overall health and life of these people.

Every day, it is very common to see women carrying kilos of wood on their backs supported by their foreheads walking through the forest back to their homes each day, and when there is about 13,000 people within the community and each household needing kilos of wood to sustain their

daily life, a lot of wood is needed. Bio-fuel gas is truly a self sustainable eco-friendly, environmentally friendly, and a healthier alternative to burning wood for fire: buffalo (which there are no shortages of in Nepal) and human fecal matter is used to produce bio-gas and the remnant is used as fertilizer, less pollution is released into the atmosphere, no logging (especially illegal logging) is required, and ash and carbon-dioxide is no longer inhaled on a daily bases by the family thus lessening the chance of lung infections. Bio-gas fueled gas stoves are a great example of how we can produce environmentally sound, low and cost effective, self sustainable energy.



When visiting the projects sites in various communities in Chitwan, at least one community member was present at each site to explain the project and express their outmost gratitude for the donations and volunteer workers. The community is in every way involved with each project as a sense of ownership through providing free labour for example is just as important as working in partnership with PSD. Most projects were completed within six months and the communities were always involved. There is no sense of the "other" coming into "our" community telling what facilities are needed; the community presents a project proposal to PSD and funding is allocated according to budget and need.

PSD Nepal is an impressive organization. When I asked Bishnu why he started PSD Nepal as there seems to be no shortages of NGOs in Nepal, he expressed that his organization wanted to get things done: allocate money without huge administrative cuts, be financially transparent to its donors, stress community involvement, lessen bureaucratic procedures, and have shorter projects completion time lines—get things done! And I agree. In the end, donors want to see immediate results, want to know where the money went, and that people are benefiting from the funded projects.

Please contact PSD for more information on its current and future projects and on how to become a supporter.

Michelle M. Kim
Vancouver, Canada

FUTURE PLANS:

- PSD-Nepal will organize in house training on "Capacity Building" for different organizations in the coming month.
- PSD Nepal's summer volunteers will conduct a one week cultural orientation course followed by a five to six week placement in different schools and communities in Nepal participating in the construction of school and community buildings as well as teaching English at these schools.
 - Edinburgh University group will be working in Panchakanya (L. S. School, Sudal, Bhaktapur),
 - Dundee University group will be working in Sidhartha (L. S. School, Chitwan),
 - Oxford University groups will be working in Baglung (Bhakunde Aama Group and Durga Devi Primary School),
 - Glasgow University groups will be working in Chitwan (Shiva Parvati Aamaa Samuha and Laxmi Secondary School),
 - Birmingham University group will be working in Batulipokhari (Batulipokhari Community Forest Group)
 - and Bristol University groups will be working in Ilam (Kumvitar Primary School and Puwamai primary school).
- Numerous elective medical students from the UK will be working in different city hospitals and rural health clinics through the facilitation of PSD Nepal.
- One intern from the UK will be working with PSD- Nepal and its partner organizations starting in June for four months conducting research on various PSD projects.

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