

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 September 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

- PSD is in the process of preparing project proposals for summer 2013. We have already confirmed 10 groups of volunteers from different universities who will come to Nepal to work on these projects. Once the proposals are completed, we will send them to the groups so that they can choose which projects they want to work on.
- We have received a second grant from the Global Fund for Children, with funding to provide another year of enrichment programs for disadvantaged children.

Reflection from 2012 Summer Volunteers

By Jodie Moore (University of Bristol)

This summer, I travelled as part of a group of 6 volunteers from the University of Bristol to the village of Laxmipur in the remote district of Ilam to participate in one of PSD's summer volunteer programmes. During our stay we were hosted by a local family and became totally immersed into the rural Nepali lifestyle! We truly felt like members of both the family and local community! PSD were really helpful in preparing us for our time on project! Before we began travelling to the village they provided us with a week of training. This involved a combination of language lessons; detailed information on important aspects of Nepal culture and Hindu traditions; and information on teaching English



The project which PSD had set up for us was at one of the village's primary schools teaching English and helping alongside local labour to construct a new classroom. The school had suffered badly from the

Earthquake last year. It was really exciting watching the classroom take shape and seeing the whole community pull together to make the project a reality! Something that I feel incredibly privileged to have been able to play a part.

A personal highlight of the project was teaching and playing games with the local children. Not only was it rewarding to document the improvements in their English over the period of our stay but comforting to see that games can transcend any language barrier! I am confident English school yard games such as 'What's the Time Mr Wolf' will be played for a number of years to come in the community!

By Charlie Coleman (University of Bristol)

The aim of our project was to complete the construction of a new classroom and teach English in the local school. We stayed with a local family, who welcomed us into their family and introduced us to the Nepali way of life. As a whole we all loved living with our host family and it was very important part of our experience. Although it was very different to what we were used to, their house started to feel like home. We all got on well with the children and spent some of our free time playing and interacting with them. It was definitely a good experience to be able to observe and join in with their way of life. We particularly enjoyed doing the rice planting with them.



We managed to complete the construction with enough time to paint the outside walls. We arrived to find the construction materials present and the foundations already complete. The volunteers' tasks were that of an unskilled labourer, mainly moving rocks and cement bags, levelling ground, carrying water, breaking rocks etc. There were many skilled workers who did the vital building element i.e. moulding the rocks to brick shapes, while

many villagers and a few teachers performed the same tasks as the volunteers. Villager participation was especially high at the beginning but wavered towards the end due to it being rice planting season. The weather proved to be a problem for a few days so construction was briefly paused, but then the workers erected a giant canopy so work resumed even in the heaviest rains. The progress was slow and steady without any major setbacks. The construction finished nearly a week before the end of the project, giving us sufficient time to decorate the front of the building with the traditional BVDA style tree of hands. All in all, the construction of the new classroom was a complete success. Along with the vital BVDA funding the key elements to the success of this project was the brilliant preparation before we arrived and the enthusiasm of the locals providing thorough support. We can all say that we are extremely proud of this project. The first 5 weeks that we were in the village were supposed to be the school holidays so in order to make the most out of teaching, there was a different year group come into school each day. We arranged it so that 2 of us taught a year group for the day, from 10am-4pm, whilst the others helped with construction or painted the classrooms. We stayed with the same year group throughout our six weeks which meant that we built up a good relationship with our students. In the final week all the year groups came back to school so we taught the English lessons that were in their timetable. After school we would play games with the children which they really enjoyed (and so did the volunteers!). We used a wide range of teaching methods trying to engage



the children so that they could learn a lot in a short time period. We sang a lot of educational songs, a favourite being 'head, shoulders knees and toes' which they picked up very quickly. We also played games such as 'hang man' and 'pictionary' which kept the classes active. We took them on nature walks when teaching about the environment which the younger students really enjoyed. This was a completely different way of learning for them- we observed classes at the beginning of our 6 weeks and saw that the Nepali style of teaching was to dictate and copy so it took some time for the children to feel confident enough to speak up with their own ideas in class. We also offered early morning (7am-9am) adult English classes. Our first few classes were very popular with a lot of the farmers coming before work but when rice planting season began they were just too busy. However we still ran the classes, they were mostly attended by older teenagers, some of whom went to the higher secondary school so had very good English skills and others who just wanted to build on what they had learnt at school. These classes were very rewarding as they picked things up quickly and seemed very grateful.

At the end of the project it became truly apparent how much of a difference our presence had made in the community. The school organised a farewell event, with local dances, songs, and gifts given to us by the pupils and teachers. The school gave the girls gifts of saris, and our male volunteer, a Nepali waistcoat and hat to wear at the leaving ceremony. We developed close relationships with our family, the teachers and the pupils. It was a fond farewell (with lots of tears). Although we were not always able to communicate fully, our presence, perseverance, the games and songs we sang transcended the language barrier, and we were able to build friendships.

Oxford University – ODA Summer Project

ODA is a charity based in Oxford University (England) which sends volunteers to developing countries for short projects to do development work. Volunteers raise money for the projects and then come to the country to see how the money is used. We helped with construction work in the school, did some teaching and ran an environmental project. The construction work was with local skilled workers. They were very efficient and friendly and we enjoyed helping them. They showed us how to mix cement for the classroom floors. We refurbished the floors of three classrooms, and then painted them. The school children helped us with painting. The skilled workers also made 10 soakpits and repaired a toilet for the school. We helped a bit for this by carrying stones.



The school children were very enthusiastic and a pleasure to teach. We helped by teaching classes when the teacher was absent and also ran extra classes in English conversation for the older children. At first they were quite shy and weren't able to talk much, but with encouragement they were soon able to have long conversations. We were very proud to see them improve so much. We also played games with them – they were very good at volleyball, and we taught them some new games.

We had noticed that there was a lot of rubbish on the ground in the village. This is very bad for the environment as it contaminates the water supply and can lead to ill health problems. We ran an environment day for the school and for the adults in the village. With the children in the younger classes we did a litter collection, and then all the children took turns to help us paint the bins. We taught them the importance of recycling. With the parents we ran an

education workshop about the dangers of plastic and how recycling and waste disposal can be done. We were really pleased with how seriously they took our message and think that it will have a big impact.

We really enjoyed our time in Nepal – it was really interesting to experience another culture, especially when living with a local family. All of us had an amazing time, and were very sad to leave. We hope we will be able to come back one day and see the great work that PSDNepal does in the future.

Neena Chauhan, Elizabeth Waind, Lawrence Murphy and Richard Harvey (University of Birmingham)

This July-August four students from the University of Birmingham in the UK embarked on the trip of a lifetime; living with a Nepalese host family for five weeks in the tiny rural village of Archale in Nepal whilst volunteering at Shree Jyoti Primary School with PSD Nepal.



Nepal was new to all of us – none of us had ever visited before and we were all looking forward to experiencing a new country and meeting new people. But we could never have imagined how much of an impact our time volunteering would have upon both ourselves and upon the inhabitants of the village. By the end of our five weeks we had all fallen in love with the school and the village, and it is a place that will remain in our hearts.



The main aims of our volunteering project were to complete the building of a new fresh water tap for the school, and to renovate three of the existing classrooms. In the five weeks we successfully managed to complete the tap and to newly cement, plaster and redecorate the



classrooms, adding some of our own paintings as a fun and colourful touch to the classrooms too.

We also had the chance to teach the kids in the mornings, which was great fun for both us and them and very rewarding – it was wonderful to see the children learning something from us. Despite the language barrier, we really feel like we achieved something with the teaching and also became great friends with the kids, who we will never forget.



Living with the host family was also a fantastic experience, and through it we believe we were truly able to experience Nepalese culture. We were fully immersed in traditional Nepalese family life, and were really treated as part of the family by our wonderful hosts.

Our volunteering project was a great success and an unforgettable experience, and we would like to thank PSD Nepal, as without them it could not have happened – so thank you.

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