

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 March 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 year and give you an outlook what you can expect from PSD. 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

- On June 29, PSD will celebrate the International Mud Day at the orphanage of Panchkhal, Kavre, with many international and local guests. Especially the children are already very excited about the upcoming event. Careful and detailed planning have been taken place so that the event will be a success for all participants. We are also celebrating Mud Day with Elephant in Chitwan where more than 10 schools students take part as they did in the past.
- Bishnu Bhatta, Director of PSD Nepal, attended two conferences in the US and Canada in April this year: In Vancouver, he participated in an ACEI conference where he gave a presentation about PSD. He also attended an International Outreach Committee meeting. A few weeks later, Mr. Bhatta, presented a paper in the World Forum Foundation in Puerto Rico, USA and attended a meeting of the Nature Action Collaborative for Children working group. During his stay abroad, Bishnu met many people from different organizations and different professional backgrounds which created new partnership opportunities with PSD. As he actively presented PSD and its various programs, he was able to establish promising contacts with people from all over the world who would like to support PSD's important work in various ways. Two contacts Mr. Bhatta made seem particularly beneficial for PSD: After talking with people in charge of the Simon Fraser University and of the Waterloo University in Toronto, both universities have agreed to send students to Nepal in order to volunteer with PSD in one of its programs. Hence, PSD is actively increasing its student exchange programs and global partnerships.
- With Inga from Germany and Eric from the USA, currently two interns are working in PSD's office. After their departure in the end of June, a new intern from Switzerland will come to work in the office for two months.

- PSD held a one-day workshop in Dhulikel about the organization's profile, its current mission and its future plans. Together with Tirtha Poudel and Rajendra Mulmi, Bishnu, Mohan and the two interns evaluated and re-wrote PSD's vision, mission and objectives in order to create a clearer overall picture of the organization. The workshop was very successful and effective as the participants discussed many different topics and as they examined both PSD's strengths and weaknesses or areas of improvement. Within the upcoming weeks and months, the new ideas will be put into practice.
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- In the last week of May, seven local Nepali girls received a certain training in the office: As some of them will function as a counterpart and a teacher in one of PSD's volunteer programs, they learned about how to teach Nepali to foreign volunteers and about general communication skills .
 - A new cooperation has been set up with the City University Hongkong: 23 students and two teachers will come to Nepal in the end of June to do some service work in four different villages: One group will work at a local school in the Kathmandu Valley for two weeks and three groups will work in schools in the Kavre District for four weeks. All groups will be provided with a Nepali counterpart. The Hong Kong volunteers will teach at the schools, paint the buildings, renovate facilities and do extracurricular activities with the local children. PSD is very happy about this new partnership and is looking forward to an enriching cultural exchange and a good cooperation with the City University.
 - For this year's summer program, student groups from two British universities will come to Nepal and work in the countryside for some weeks: In total, 12 volunteers from the University of Bristol (BVDA) and 10 from the University of Oxford (ODA) will join the program. All four groups will be working in the Ilam District in the very East of Nepal: BVDA will work on projects in Godak, Jahubari and Tinghare for six weeks, while ODA will work and live in Chamaita and Sangrumba for five weeks. All four project sites have been visited by PSD in April in order to ensure the projects' feasibility and also to meet the localsuch as the host families and the responsible chair people. Sungava Development Organization, which is based in Ilam Bazar, will support and monitor the four projects and will function as a communication faciliator between the volunteers and PSD. Each group will also be provided with a Nepali counterpart who will work and live together with the volunteers throughout the whole project.
 - In the end of May, three girls from Scotland, sent by SID (Strathclyde International Development), came to Nepal: For five weeks, they are working with INSEC, an NGO that focuses on Human Rights. The girls will mostly work in the office in Kathmandu, but will also spend one week in the office in Pokhara. PSD functions as a mediator between the organization and the girls and tries to integrate them into the Nepali society and the Nepali working life.

PSD's interns tell their stories

My life and work in Kathmandu

Eric White

In my "real job", I am an engineering manager for a U.S.-based software company. However, this spring and summer I have been taking a sabbatical from my job to travel and do service work in South and Southeast Asia. As part of my sabbatical, I spent three months living in a Nepali home and working in the PSD office. I had three main goals for my trip to Nepal: to spend a significant period of time immersed in a different culture, to do something that would benefit others, and to learn about development work.

My time at PSD has been a great learning experience. I spent the first couple of months writing presentations and program proposals to help support Bishnu's recent North American conference/university tour. That process helped me better understand PSD's mission and all of the

different types of work we do, as well as how a program evolves from a conversation at a conference to a committed plan of action. During the latter part of my stay, I helped with some IT projects and developed recommendations for PSD's web and social media activities. The breadth of knowledge that I gained during my first two months proved useful during this phase. Finally, I was lucky enough to participate in a long-term planning retreat in Dhulikel, facilitated by Rajendra Mulmi. It was very rewarding to contribute to discussions that will help shape our mission and goals for the coming years.

Throughout my time at PSD, the folks at the office have been extremely helpful. Bishnu and Mohan were tremendously supportive, in everything from picking me up from the airport, to facilitating personal travel, to providing advice and insight into Nepal and Nepalis. At the office, they created a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, and were always willing to answer my questions, no matter whether those questions were relevant to my work, or simply based on my own curiosity. They made me feel like part of the team, and gave me the sense that no topic was off limits for asking questions or contributing ideas. I am also grateful to my fellow intern, Inga, for supporting me in my work, introducing me to Kathmandu, and being great company at lunch and on outings.

Given my office role, the impact of my work on PSD's target communities was obviously indirect. I haven't yet had the opportunity to spend time in the field doing "hands-on" development work. Nevertheless, it was still quite rewarding when, for example, a proposal was accepted by a university, because that meant that volunteers would eventually go to work on real projects. I was also able to see PSD's work in action during a 1-day "health camp" in a rural village near the Tibetan border. We drove to the village early in the morning, picking up a couple of doctors—and changing a tire—along the way. By mid-afternoon, 150 villagers had received free medical care: everything from tooth extractions to treating respiratory ailments. One day I would love to return to the countryside to work for a longer period of time—and do more than take pictures. (I may stop short of pulling teeth, though!)

Work was of course only part of my life in Nepal, and it was arguably life outside of work that left the deepest impression. During my three months here, I stayed with a Kathmandu family in a quiet neighborhood about twenty minutes' walking distance from the office. That first night I remember thinking "What am I doing? I'm too old to live like an exchange student in someone else's house! My 'host parents' are not much older than I am!" But these reservations quickly evaporated in the face of my host family's good cheer and their excitement for having me there.

When I look back at the experience, I believe that living with a family is undoubtedly the best way to get to know Nepal—or potentially any new culture. My host family was amazing. They made me feel at home and included me in everything they did: weddings, parties, festivals, visits to relatives' houses, etc. We shared lots of laughter and many good times, and they helped get me through some challenging times, as my stomach and lungs adapted to life in Kathmandu. Through their extended family, I have also made many wonderful new friends. In Hindu cultures there is a saying that the "guest is god"—if I have learned nothing else in Nepal, I have surely learned what it means to open one's home and heart to a guest. During my time in Kathmandu, I truly feel that I have gained a Nepali family.

On that note, if I had to choose one word to sum up my time in Nepal, that word would be "family". Both at home and at the office, I felt like a member of the family, and for that I am extremely grateful.

My internship with PSD

Inga Voßeler, University of Twente

Challenge: Living in a Developing Country for four months

Mission: Doing an internship with PSD-Nepal

Vision: Broadening my personal horizon, learning new things, meeting new people and having lots of fun

Reality: A loud, crowded and dusty city – a very nice host family – an interesting organization with a comfortable working atmosphere – and a fascinating country with regard to both its people and its nature



When I came to Nepal at the end of February, I didn't really know what to expect from my stay. I had never been in Asia before and, therefore, entered a completely new world filled with new impressions. After arriving with a delay of four hours, everything else went smoothly –thanks to Bishnu being both my boss and my host dad.



Throughout my stay, I gained so many experiences, met many people, made friends and went on adventurous trips. One of my personal highlights was a one-week field trip to Ilam in the very East of Nepal: Together with Salina, a volunteer from the office, I visited four project sites on which UK volunteers will stay and work during this year's summer. It was a great experience to see this part of the country with all its green tea gardens. During our stay, we met very nice and friendly people and stayed with lovely host families at some of the remotest places I have ever been. At one place we even got the typical white scarf (khada), the orange flower chain (mala garland) and a red tika as a welcoming gift. Besides the visits, I was also able to conduct interviews for my own university research. Salina was a very helpful translator during the week which I highly appreciate! The interviews provided me with an extra opportunity to get to know the local people, especially women, and learn about their daily lives, their habits and their living conditions.

Ilam was only one of many places in Nepal I visited throughout my stay: Whenever I had time, either alone or with a friend, I went to all the "must see"-places in the country such as Pokhara (where I did paragliding), Gorkha, Chitwan (with a jungle safari) and Bhaktapur. I enjoyed each trip as it provided me with an interesting picture of the Nepali people in the different areas. Besides the sightseeing, one of my favourite activities was rafting on the Trisuli River, passing beautiful nature, small villages and more or less secure looking suspension bridges.

During the weeks, when I wasn't travelling, I worked in PSD's office in Buddhanagar, Kathmandu. My tasks were mainly computer-based ones such as to write reports, to prepare proposals, and to create and update databases on the previous volunteers and the projects they have implemented. I mostly enjoyed the work in the office as it is a small place with a comfortable working atmosphere and nice colleagues. Whenever I had a problem or a question, I could easily address Bishnu or Mohan who both were very helpful and tried as much as possible to integrate me into PSD. For me, it was also very nice to have Eric as a colleague for two months as I had somebody else to talk to and to go for lunch with. Above the personal contacts, my internship also made me learn a lot about 'development' in practice as I could experience every day how challenging the daily work for development organizations is.

Together with my research on gender equality in Nepal, I think the internship with PSD helped me to better understand how life in a Developing Country works and which problems and challenges the people there face every day. I am happy and thankful that I was given the opportunity to come to this wonderful country and learn about its people, culture and about the Nepali way of life!



I much appreciate that I could do my internship with PSD and I will follow its important and various work and maybe come back to Nepal one day!

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