



'A library is an arsenal of liberty' anon.

The Nepal Library Foundation is registered as a charity with the Canadian Government GST#884108705 RR0001

Consider becoming a supporter of the NLF

- By becoming a supporter of the NLF and making a regular annual tax deductible donation of \$50 or more you can help generate an income stream to provide consistent support to library projects
- We support sustainable libraries with sound management—you will be able to visit your adopted libraries whenever you are in Nepal and be sure of a warm welcome
- We will keep you informed with our newsletter and regular updates of how we are spending your donations
- Please either e-mail info@nepallibrary.com or one of the board officers listed on P4, phone Paul at (01) 604 879 9096 or fill out the supporter form on P4 and mail it to us

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Why Libraries?

The minimum hourly wage in Nepal (2006) is \$0.11 with an equivalent purchasing power of \$0.53. Under these conditions 40% of the population live under the locally defined poverty level. This fact, and the resulting inequality, has in itself helped fuel the insurgency which has only recently and tentatively been put on hold. Eighty percent of the work force engages in subsistence farming. Literacy rates are amongst the lowest in the world. Not surprisingly, as a result of which, Nepal suffers from an acute shortage of skilled labour.

The Nepal Library Foundation was

founded to address this problem. We believe that the future prosperity and peaceful development of Nepal is predicated, in part, on the ability of its people to access and use information for their benefit.

We know that by supporting existing libraries and assisting in their establishment we are fulfilling a basic need that exists in Nepal.

Many of our founding members grew up in Nepal. They know from first hand experience the paucity of libraries in Nepal. The NLF's existence is due to their commitment to change this.

The Nepali Non Residents Association and the NLF

The Non Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) is a central body of the Nepali diaspora represented local chapters in 24 countries world wide. It aims to bring together Nepalis living outside Nepal to work on furthering development in Nepal by coordinating their efforts.

In 2005 the NRNA passed a resolution to work towards library development in Nepal

and designated the NLF as the agent by which the NRNA's library mandate could be fulfilled.

The NRNA members' donations have contributed a significant portion of the money we have raised this year, funds that we are putting to very good use in Tikapur and Kathmandu.

READ Nepal and NLF to Collaborate on Rural Library Development

With the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the NLF and READ Nepal the NLF can now fulfill its mandate to support library development in both rural and urban settings.

READ Nepal has an excellent track record,

established over the last 15 years, of supporting locally initiated community libraries throughout rural Nepal. It has developed a unique model of library sustainability involving an associated business that provides ongoing funding for the library itself.

Assistance to Libraries Fund contributes C\$2500 to Tikapur Community Library by Shirley Giggey, Libraries Across Borders

The Assistance to Libraries Fund is a special part of the Libraries Across Borders (LAB) Interest Group of the British Columbia Library Association. The Fund is pleased to announce that we are able to assist the Vancouver based Nepal Library Foundation to work with READ Nepal in setting up a community library in Tikapur, Nepal. We made our contribution because we were very impressed with the sustainability model used by READ Nepal. A community wishing to set up a library through READ Nepal has to, as part of its contribution,

set up a small business whose profits go to running the library. The Assistance to Libraries Fund hopes that we will be able to encourage other communities to study this model and adapt it for their own communities.

The Applications Committee of the Fund is made up of librarians and information workers, all of whom have experience in developing countries. The Fund supports community-based library and literacy development projects and we are very honoured to be able to assist inter-

esting and important innovations around the world, including the Nepal Library Foundation initiative. Over the past 2 years, since our inception, the Assistance to Libraries Fund has also contributed to several other community library projects in Ghana, Honduras, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Uganda.

We are able to do so through a very generous grant from Dr. Yosef Wosk. We are however, always in fundraising mode and contributions on a one time or monthly basis can be made on the BCLA site. www.bcla.bc.ca



Readers make use of the SKVPL library in Kathmandu (see story inside)

NLF Awards C\$5000 to the Society for Kathmandu Public Library for e-Learning Centre

Early on in its existence the NLF entered into a partnership agreement with the Society for Kathmandu Valley Public Library (SKVPL) to help it develop a public library system for the Kathmandu Valley. The SKVPL was formed by a group of local Kathmandu residents who are committed to library development in the city and its environs.

Its first branch was opened about 18 months ago and is already overcrowded. There is a huge demand for its services which shows how much need there is for such resources.

The Society has ambitious plans to create a central city library that can support satellite branches in Kathmandu as well as in communities in the Valley. The NLF is committed to support the SKVPL and will direct resources as they become available to assist the SKVPL in achieving its goals. The Society has been assured of a land

grant by the Nepali government and is in the planning stage of a project to build its first custom built library.

Up to now our support has been confined to supplying books to the library. We are now very pleased to be able to allocate a grant of C\$5000 to the Society to help set up an e-learning centre.

This will consist of 6 internet ready computers with relevant software and furniture. By installing these resources the library is aiming to meet the needs of the students of the many colleges and schools in the immediate vicinity of the library.

This evolution in the function of libraries reflects the reality of the internet as an increasingly valuable source of information and literature. A visit to a typical Vancouver area high school library will illustrate the fact that the majority of information

sourced in such libraries comes from the internet. This brings into question the very nature of how libraries function and the relative importance that we place in providing conventional and e-media resources for libraries.

However e-media can only exist in the presence of functioning equipment, a dependable power source and connection in one form or another to the internet. These are obtainable only in urban settings in Nepal and confirms the need to explore the development and provision of these resources to libraries in rural areas.

As well, provision must be made in the overall cost of equipment for repair and maintenance over the equipment's life cycle. We have undertaken to cover these costs for a period of three years.

'By installing these resources the library is aiming to meet the needs of the students of the many colleges and schools in the immediate vicinity of the library.'



Books are still the key component to any library. Here children make use of the Kathmandu Public Library children's reading room.



The site of the new Tikapur public library February 2007

The Tikapur Community Library Project

The Tikapur Community Library is the first library to benefit from the collaboration between the NLF and READ Nepal.

Tikapur is a municipality with a population of 45000 situated in the far western Terai district. There is a student population of about 15000.

The project involves an income generating component of retail stores and a meeting hall which can be rented for functions.

Management of the project is provided by a committee involving a cross section of the com-

munity. This committee has worked with READ Nepal to develop a project management plan to ensure that the library can be built and put into service within a calculated time frame.

The NLF's contribution of C\$2500 along with the grant of C\$2500 from Libraries Across Borders will provide for library equipment, books and other supplies.

The community is expected to provide anywhere from 10-20% of the total cost and demonstrate that it can support the library with an affiliated busi-

ness.

The building design work has been completed and a construction firm hired for the first component of the building program which should be completed in late November.

The community of Tikapur has suffered greatly from the insurgency and is host to many displaced people. Many agencies withdrew support from the area due to unsafe conditions. The library is the first aid project to be initiated for six or more years.

Nepali society is predominantly patriarchal, it has an inbuilt bias against girl children'

Women in Nepal by Chandrika Parajulee

For a developing country like Nepal, education for women is the key to its socioeconomic development. Yet the level of education for women is far worse compared to the numbers for their male counterparts. For example, a recent Global Gender Gap Report for Nepal shows that almost two-thirds of women (65%) were found to be illiterate whereas a little over one-third of men (37%) were illiterate in 2006.

This gender gap in education has persisted in Nepal for several decades. Nepali culture contributes to this continuing gap in the educational sector. As Nepali society is predominantly patriarchal, it has an inbuilt bias against girl children.

Girls are generally considered as "unwanted temporary guests" and treated unfairly in many households. Consequently, girls do not often get an equal opportunity to attend schools as they are expected to stay home to look after their younger siblings while their parents work, or are expected to help their parents with household or farming chores.

In addition, parents prefer to send their sons to school because they stay with parents and bring income to the family, whereas they are disinclined to send their daughters to school because they leave their parents' house to be with their husbands when they grow up.

How can such in-built bias in Nepali culture be altered? The attitude of parents must change for this to happen. Open more schools and libraries across Nepal and encourage parents, yes parents, to visit them. Once they see the benefit of schools and libraries, they will know the value of education to their children and will be motivated to send their children, both girls and boys, to schools and libraries.

Unless more schools and libraries are opened in Nepal the gender-bias of Nepali society will remain intact and girls will have a bleak future. Girls can enjoy real hope and freedom only when Nepali society treats the girl child with respect and makes her education a priority.

Karma Coffee and the NLF— Building Libraries with Coffee

Micheal Clark, the founder of Karma Coffee, a Vancouver Island coffee roaster is one of our earliest supporters.

Micheal has visited Nepal several times over the last few years taking his three daughters with him. A desire to make a difference to the people of Nepal led him to set up a regular coffee donation which mem-

bers were able to sell to friends and co-workers. He has now created two blends, a medium and a dark roast, for the NLF.

These carry our own label and are much sought after by connoisseurs of a good brew.

Supporters of the NLF can raise money and provide excellent coffee to friends and family.

A bag of NLF Blend makes an excellent present and by buying in bulk one can deal instantaneously with perennial birthday, festival or Christmas present buying problems as well as being seen to be socially conscious.

To fill your order please contact Micheal at karmacoffee@shaw.ca.



Michael and his daughter Quinne on the trail in the Khumbu October 2006



Nepal Library Foundation

The Nepal Library Foundation is a registered Canadian charity:
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President's Message



NLF president Naresh Koirala (centre) making the first NLF book donation (provided by Micheal Clark) to SKVPL President, Narayan Khagda.

The past two years have seen the NLF grow from a concept to an actuality. We now have the means by which funds can be deployed to help build, stock and equip libraries in both rural and urban settings. We have built strategic partnerships, received our first grant and raised funds from donors. The current state of literacy in Nepal requires that we lobby to have library development made a top priority both in Nepal and amongst international aid donors as a means of rapidly raising the literacy rate in Nepal.

We look forward to your continuing support in making a tangible difference to people across Nepal.

Supporter information

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Please make cheques out to **Nepal Library Foundation** and mail to

NLF

1426 Chamberlain Drive

North Vancouver, BC

V7K 1P6

A tax receipt will be issued for amounts over \$50. Paypal facilities are available on our website www.nepallibrary.com.

READ Nepal (continued from P 1)

We feel that there is no need to reinvent wheels or try and better the model that READ has developed. By joining with READ we can be assured of financial stewardship, sound project management and the expectation that any library we choose to support will have an excellent probability of continued existence on a self sustaining basis.

As funds become available we will work with READ to identify libraries that we can support. We have agreed that the NLF will provide funding for the library component of the identified projects.

A typical READ library project budget will cost in the order

of US\$45000 . This provides for the provision of an associated business, buildings, training, books and library resources. Many libraries act as community centres and each library is provided with a children's room, computers and access to the Internet where available.

The overall budget also provides for a three year support period during which READ gradually withdraws from involvement.

READ's success has been recognized recently with an award from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.