



# NGN Newsletter

January 2007

## Dear Friends of NGN,

This month we fulfilled a promise made one year ago, before NGN even existed: we found and rescued six year old Barke Buddha, the final missing boy of the seven children who disappeared last April.

We had been searching for Barke for a long time. It was a difficult rescue, as you will see in this newsletter, but he is now finally safe in our children's home.

January was my first full month with the adorable bunch of kids here in Dhaulagiri – it can hardly be considered work! But there is a serious side as well: combating child trafficking and reuniting children with their families. On behalf of the kids, we are just so grateful for all of you who have donated to make it happen.

And we at NGN love hearing from you! At the end of this newsletter you will find information on how to contact us, whether you are interested in visiting us in Nepal or would like to make a contribution – we now have even more great kids who could use your help!

As always, thank you so much for your support!

Sincerely,

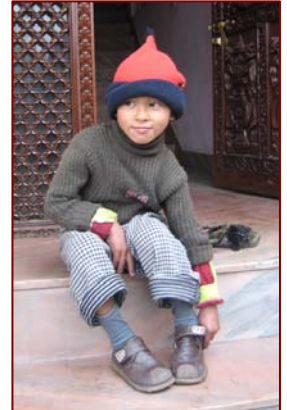
Conor Grennan  
Executive Director  
Next Generation Nepal



Conor showing Barke Buddha to his bed, reserved just for him in Dhaulagiri House.

## Barke Buddha, six years old, rescued after ten month search

It took ten months, the creation of an NGO, relocating to Nepal, searching the back-alley illegal orphanages of Kathmandu, and phoning the Child Welfare Board several times per week, but six year old Barke Buddha is finally safe.



Barke had been working as a domestic slave for much of the last year.

Barke was the last missing child of the group of seven that my colleague, Farid, and I found one year ago living in utter destitution. We fed and cared for them, and the Umbrella Foundation agreed to take them in until we could open our own children's home. But just before they could be rescued, they were moved by the same traffickers who took them from Humla, the remote western district in Nepal. They disappeared.

The plight of these seven children became the inspiration for founding Next Generation Nepal.

On January 30, we received a call from the hard-working and courageous Gyan Bahadur Lama, secretary of the Child Welfare Board (CWB), with whom we work closely. He had amazing news: Barke was in his office, along with the man who had been keeping him. I dropped everything and jumped in a taxi and sped to the government office.



Farid holding Barke's hand on his first day of nursery school with his new friends.

With the laws on child protection in Nepal vague to the point of being unenforceable, we had to rely on this man – who had bought Barke for the equivalent of \$80 – to willingly hand over the boy under threat from CWB. (In reality, bringing such men to justice is a virtual impossibility in Nepal.) The man

ultimately agreed to give us the boy and leave.

But the rescue quickly turned ugly. Once away from the government office and

in our own office (to hand over guardianship), the man suddenly changed his mind, and tried to take Barke back by force to his home outside Kathmandu. The confrontation became physical and we struggled to keep him contained inside the office and away from Barke while children stood just outside the door.

Jacky Buk (country director for our partner Umbrella Foundation) in a quick thinking move, called the Chief District Officer of Kathmandu on his mobile phone, and soon the police (in plain clothes so as not to scare the children) were involved and the situation was resolved.



**Barke (top right), playing with Egaraj, Himal and Keshap – the other boys with whom he was abandoned one year ago.**

Farid and I brought Barke inside his new home, fed him, and reintroduced him to the children with whom he had lived one year before – Anga Debi, Keshap, Himal, Egaraj – and whom we had rescued from similar conditions in the past months.

All the other children in Dhaulagiri

immediately took special care of the young boy, treating him like their own

little brother. And after ten long and frightening months, that is exactly what he was now – part of our family.



## NGN's Dhaulagiri House takes in two more rescued children

In mid-January, NGN took in two boys rescued by the Child Welfare Board: Bhanu (11) and Biraj (8). The boys had been living in a children's home outside Kathmandu. Like so many homes, it was mismanaged and little regard was paid to the welfare of the children.



**Biraj and Bhanu, with Gyan Bahadur (right) of the Child Welfare Board, were brought to Dhaulagiri for safe refuge.**

The house was closed down, and virtually all of the more than one hundred children packed into the house were returned to their families.

But nobody could find the parents of Bhanu and Biraj. Instead they

had been claimed by a baba, a self-described holy man, who kept them in the dark cellar with him where he lived in Pashupati, near the largest Hindu temple in Kathmandu. The CWB discovered them living in terrible conditions and rescued them from there.



**Mati, our cooking didi, feeding Biraj and Bhanu (left to right) the night they arrived in Dhaulagiri.**

We made sure the boys were fed and that they had no urgent health problems, then freed up a bed where they could sleep. They were exhausted – the rescue had happened at night.

As usual, the two boys kept to themselves for the first few days, but soon they were going to school with the other children

and slowly began to open up. In less than a week they were playing as if they had always been there.

Biraj and Bhanu are already like part of the family, but they will not stay in Dhaulagiri. With 29 children, we simply do not have enough space. NGN is committed to *always* rescuing children first and figuring out where they can stay later. Now that the boys are safe, healthy, and going to school, they will soon move to another Umbrella Foundation house that we hope will open soon (only about 200 meters away) where there is more space for them.

Meanwhile, we continue to search for their parents.

**The rescued boys were soon happily going to school with the other children.**



This is a good example of the difficulty of working in Nepal – we simply cannot provide a home for every child. We will never turn children away – even if they have to sleep on blankets on the floor – but we continue to look for the best long term solutions for them.



## Children from Humla given photos and letters from long lost parents

In early January, just one week after returning from Humla, I had the unforgettable experience of sitting

down with the children from Humla living under our care and giving them photos and letters from their parents, most of whom they have not seen in years. Many of them were trafficked so young that they



**The children in Godawari seeing the first photos of their families and homes since they were taken from their villages years before.**

remembered very little of their parents – until I showed them the photograph. Then it all came flooding back to them. Better still, reading the letters made those photos suddenly come to life; they received beautiful and encouraging words from their real mothers and fathers, long since lost to them.

Farid and I worked together in the Little Princes Children’s Home in the village of Godawari – all twenty children there are from Humla. They knew I was coming with photos from their villages; they waited impatiently all day for me to arrive, and gave me a

hero’s welcome when they saw me coming. It was an absolute joy to present them with a whole slideshow from Humla. They did not stop talking and commenting throughout the whole slideshow. When it was



**Showing a young boy a photo of his mother in his village. He had not seen her for three years.**

finished, I gave each of them photos and letters from their parents. For the first time all day they sat completely still and read their letters. Then they erupted again, talking and exchanging letters and pictures.



**Keshap holding photos of his mother, uncle, and baby sister. They are the first photos he has ever had of his family in Humla.**

It was a quieter experience for the children in the different houses of the Umbrella Foundation whose parents I found. Those meetings were just between me, the house parent, and the child. They were similarly wonderful, and the huge smile that spread across the child’s face

proved that there are different kinds of reunification between child and parent, and this was one of them.



## **Parents found by NGN visit their children for the first time**

If you saw our December newsletter, you know that the NGN team went into the remote mountains of Humla in western Nepal to find the families of trafficked children and inform them of the exact whereabouts of their children.



Thanks to the information we handed out in the villages, some of those parents are making the long trip to see their lost children, often for the first time in years.

The reunification process will be a long and difficult process, but one to which we are committed.

To this end, NGN has instituted a

**The mother of Sangita was overcome with emotion when she found her daughter, thanks to NGN.**

new policy of carrying out in-depth interviews of all parents who manage to visit their children, not just in Dhaulagiri, but for the

240 trafficked and conflict-displaced children under the care of the Umbrella Foundation. We are also in the process of hiring our first local staff member dedicated to gathering accurate information on all the children and serving as translator for visiting parents.



## **NGN and the Umbrella Foundation team up to rescue trafficked children**

You will here us often speak about The Umbrella Foundation – let me explain a bit about who they are, since they are a vital partner in everything we do.

The Umbrella Foundation cares for more trafficked and conflict-displaced children than any other private organization in Kathmandu. They have 240 children under their care. The children, though spread among six

houses, all know each other, and I've known them for months even before opening Dhaulagiri.

We at NGN found Umbrella to be an ideal partner in opening a children's home: Umbrella, in addition to being a foundation based in Ireland, is also a local Nepali NGO, which legally you must partner with before opening a children's home in Nepal. Thus we operate under their legal cover, though we run our house independently.

But our relationship with them goes much deeper. The Umbrella Foundation, which is a relatively new organization having really started operating two years ago, does a great deal with little staff. They have asked NGN to spearhead the reunification effort for the children under their care, which includes our children in Dhaulagiri.

It is a perfect fit for NGN – we call upon their administrative resources, expertise in child rescue, local staff, and legal cover to implement our projects.

On a more personal level, The Umbrella Foundation was the only organization who agreed to take in the seven children when nobody else could. Throughout the search, they offered us invaluable support in locating and rescuing those children.

We could not do what we do without them.



**The Umbrella Community:** Dhaulagiri House (*yellow house on left*), Machapucchare House (*bright blue house on right*) and Sagarmatha House (*cream colored house on far right*). Just off to the right on the hill is the magnificent Swoyambu Temple. Two other Umbrella houses are a couple hundred meters away. The children regularly play all together, and all staff live within a two minute walk of the houses.

## How you can help the kids...

**NGN relies solely on donations from the public to support our operations**

We operate on a **shoestring budget**, but we hope you have seen that a little can go a long way!

### Some sample costs:

- Basic **food** for one child for one month: *\$20*
- Basic **medicine** and hospital check-ups for one month for ten children: *\$150*
- The **full yearly cost** of supporting a child (including all food, school fees, school books, clothes, medicine, local staff, etc): *\$1000*
- A **four-week mission to find parents** of trafficked children, including airfare to remote regions and local staffing costs: *\$2500*

There is no minimum or maximum donation – every dollar helps!

### **Donating is easy and tax-deductible:**

**Online:** Donate securely using your credit card via Paypal by visiting [www.nextgenerationnepal.org](http://www.nextgenerationnepal.org).

**By check:** Please make your check payable to “Next Generation Nepal” and mail to:  
1 Wing Road  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Please visit [www.nextgenerationnepal.org](http://www.nextgenerationnepal.org) to learn more about our organization and sample costs, or contact us directly at [info@nextgenerationnepal.org](mailto:info@nextgenerationnepal.org).

**Thank you for your continued support!**