



Next Generation Nepal

NGN Newsletter

February 2007

Dear Friends of NGN,

Nepal was all about festivals this month. The Hindu festival of Shiva Ratri brought bonfires and children roping pedestrians to make them pay a few rupees as a “toll.” Losar, the Tibetan New Year, was in full effect here in our neighbourhood, home to one of the holiest Buddhist temples in Nepal. Everywhere were Buddhists wearing gorgeous silk robes and sounds of Tibetan horns pouring out of the monasteries.

Holi, the colorful Hindu festival, famous for its crazy water balloon fights and thrown red and yellow powder, helped release the tension in a month marked by six hours of power cuts per day and continuing violent political protests in the south of Nepal.

Here at NGN and our children’s home, all is well. This month we took in two rescued children in need of a safe home. And we’ve found an innovative way of reuniting a mother with her three children.

If this strikes you as a decent cause, please consider making a donation to help the kids. And as always, thank you so much for your continued support!

Sincerely,

Conor Grennan
Executive Director
Next Generation Nepal



Conor and the kids, drenched celebrating the festival of Holi.

NGN reunites a mother with her three children

This month we took an unusual step to reunite a mother with her children: we gave her a job at Dhaulagiri, the NGN children’s home.

We did not have a budget for the position, nor even a position open. We already have two “didi’s” – women who cook and clean for the children. But we arranged for Krishna Maya to sleep in Dhaulagiri to provide extra care for our ten little girls at night, thus saving her the \$12 monthly rent she is now paying – a huge amount of money for a woman in her position – as well as taking meals at our house.



Krishna Maya, mother of three, reunited with her children

Most importantly, for the first time in years, she will be able to see her three boys on a regular basis. The boys, Kamal, Amita, and Bimal, live just next door at the Umbrella Foundation’s Gauri Shankar House.

Krishna Maya’s story begins several years ago. She lost her house and property in a family dispute. In Nepal, your house and land is often all you have in the world – and men will almost always prevail in such disputes. She was forced to travel the long road to Kathmandu to seek any kind of employment to support her three children.



Some of the little girls of Dhaulagiri House that Krishna Maya will take care of during nights.

As is too often the case, this uneducated mother was conned by a child trafficker, a woman who collected a large sum from her by promising to put her children in a good home and send them to a top boarding school. This woman collected the money, the equivalent of two year’s salary, and promptly

disappeared, dumping the children in an illegal, destitute orphanage where the children did not go to school, receive medical attention, or were even properly fed. The mother, now completely destitute herself, could not even afford to take them back.

Thankfully, one year ago the children were rescued by the Umbrella Foundation. But Krishna Maya never saw her children: it was a two hour walk across the city – she could not afford the 12 rupee bus fare (about 15 cents) – and she had only a few days free per year from her house cleaning job.

Enter Next Generation Nepal. We met Krishna Maya during one of our interviews with family members, and we were determined to give her a better life with her children. We decided to stretch the extremely tight budget of Dhaulagiri to accommodate her, offer her a place to stay, meals, and even a small salary.

The evening she arrived, her three children waited outside for her, eager to welcome her. It is a new life for the family, reunited after years of separation.



NGN provides refuge for two more rescued children

Two weeks ago, we received news that has become frighteningly commonplace: fourteen children were living in dangerous conditions in an illegal orphanage in Kathmandu, run by abusive drunken woman. Worse, she was the sister-in-law of one of the infamous child traffickers from whom the Umbrella Foundation, our partner organization, rescued many children the previous year.



The two rescued boys, Yo Lama and his older brother Bhim, going to school with the other children the day after they arrived.

Just days ago, we got the call – the police and Child Welfare Board were heading to the orphanage to rescue the children. Because Umbrella had not yet opened its new home, we had to find a way to

care for the kids in the meantime. Dhaulagiri is full, but we had one free bed. So of course we gave a warm welcome to two brothers, Bhim and Yo Lama, 11 and 7 years old. Like so many of our young children, they had been through so much that children this age should never have to go through.



Celebrating Holi with Bhim, Biraj and Bhanu, all rescued in the last two months.

They are sweet kids. I introduced myself to Yo Lama, the seven year-old younger brother, on the first morning (they spoke no English) and shook his hand. He didn't let go for the next two hours. Later I put my arm around Bhim, and he simply threw his arms around me and hugged me, unwilling to let go.

We give the kids the best care we can, but sometimes it is easy to forget, as you watch them happily running and playing, that these are very young children who have not had so much as a hug from their parents in years. And there are literally thousands more like Bhim and Yo Lama right here in Kathmandu, still suffering. This is exactly why we need your support so badly, why we ask you to consider getting involved. We simply cannot help these children without your help.

As with all our rescues, we found that the best thing is just to get them into a normal routine as quickly as possible. The next morning they were eating daal bhat with the rest of the kids, and even went to school. We introduced them to the principle, who made them feel welcome. The day after was the crazy, colorful festival of Holi – by then they were part of the family!



Our didi Sunita and newly rescued Yo Lama (blue sweater) soaking Farid for Holi.



How NGN reunites trafficked children with their parents

Next Generation Nepal currently runs two major projects: Dhaulagiri House, a home for trafficked children, and the NGN Reunification Project.

Reuniting trafficked children with their parents is a significant challenge. As you saw in the December newsletter, sometimes reunification means physically searching village to village in remote areas to find parents.



Reunification means finding families in remote areas....

Sometimes it means locating the parents who are living in the Kathmandu Valley and seeing how we can help the family to support their child, since many have lost their entire life savings being conned by child traffickers.

And sometimes, as with the Krishna Maya story above, we try to come up with an innovative solution for children to be close to their mother.

Often, reunification means simply allowing parents and children to talk for the first time in years, by delivering letters or informing parents where their child is and giving them a phone number.



...and Keshap speaking to his father for the first time in three years.

Keshap, a nine year old boy in our home, is a good example of this latter type; just days ago, he spoke to his father for the first time in three years. I found his parents in the mountains of Humla, explained that their son was safe, and gave them our phone number. Keshap told his father what class he was in (Nursery), who

his friends were, and that yes, he was being well fed. His father, who had walked for four days just to get to

a phone to call his son, promised to come visit Dhaulagiri House in one year's time, when he had saved enough to make the long trip to Kathmandu.



Each child's case is unique. We examine the economic conditions of the family, whether one parent has remarried (in Nepal, this usually means the spouse's children are rejected by the step-parent), and most importantly, the security of the village:

Sometimes parents are able to visit their children...

Nepal is in a ceasefire, but there remains a looming threat that Maoists could again take up arms if they do not get their way in the elections in June.

The reunification process starts with interviewing the children information as possible. NGN has recently hired a Nepali staff member who will be translating for us with the children.

If and when some parents come to visit, we take full advantage. The Umbrella Foundation has 260 children under their legal guardianship; the NGN team does in depth interviews with them to determine



their situation, the story of how their child ended up with us, and how much money they paid a trafficker, in order to build a case against the trafficker. From these interviews, plus the missions into remote areas, we make our preliminary assessments and discuss our conclusions with our friends at the Umbrella Foundation.

...and sometimes we can only offer a photo of the parent, taken in a remote village. Even this brought so much joy to Unnati!

The Reunification Project is extremely labor intensive – we are engaged with hundreds of children, and we are a small organization trying to do fulfill a large role in this war-torn country. But again, the more resources we have, the more children we can help.



Meet NGN's kids

To balance out the difficulty of our work here in Nepal, we have the joy of spending our lives with the wonderful kids of Dhaulagiri House. Here are just a few of the kids you're supporting with your donations:

Akash. Akash is 6 years old, one of our youngest. He falls asleep on the laps of the bigger boys kids when he gets tired. Akash used to hold his school book up to his face to read, but thanks to your donations he can see for the first time! He now sports a pair of the thickest glasses you can imagine – he proudly calls out to people standing far away, just to prove he can see them.



Mamita. Mamita, 5, arrived at Umbrella with her big sister, Kabita. She never said a word, never cracked so much as a smile. She sat, frighteningly serious, for *five months*, devastated by some trauma. Then one day I pretended her woolen hat was a plunger, and she laughed for the first time. She hasn't stopped giggling since. Or trying to figure out the jump rope.

Raj Kumar. If you walk into Dhaulagiri, Raj Kumar, 14, will want to talk to you. His English is fantastic, he'll shake your hand and ask you your name in very slow Nepali to see if you pick up on it – if you answer back in Nepali, it'll earn you an impressed grin. If you are eating daal bhat a bit later with the bigger children, you will find him working the kitchen with surprising deftness: he learned, sadly, by being forced to cook for all the children in the illegal orphanage run by a child trafficker, from where we rescued him two months ago. He's great with the younger kids, putting on the big boss act before breaking into peals of laughter.



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.

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 to learn more about our organization and sample costs, or contact us directly at nextgenerationnepal@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued support!