



Nepal: 'School On-Air' Radio Teaching and Counseling Program for SLC Students.

'Friends of Literacy and Mass Education' and 'The Mountain Trust.'



Wednesday 22nd November 2006.

Proposal: School On-Air Radio Teaching and Counseling Program for SLC Students. Nepal.

Why should FLAME consider supporting this initiative?

- By teaming with The Mountain Trust and branching out into a new area of South Asia this will aid FLAME's initial target of reaching out to those most in need across south Asia and will diversify and broaden the work and image of FLAME.
- This will also have ramifications in terms of grant applications and so on because it will remove the emphasis on FLAME simply working in Pakistan, besides its two nurseries in India. As we all know there is a frustrating element of wariness in terms of willingness to donate to Pakistani NGO's, regarding the media attention drawn to examples of misuse of development funds in Pakistan and western misperceptions and attitudes surrounding Islam. Supporting efforts outside Pakistan would add a new direction to the image projected on the website and in promotional materials to emphasize a broader approach to supporting literacy.
- By teaming with the Mountain Trust, monitoring problems are removed, they have both local field co-coordinators and a team of British ex-pats based in the locality, and can also be contacted and met within the UK. The Mountain Trust is a registered NGO, with full transparency and experienced in running such projects.
- Nepal is in a state of crisis, the war and the poverty have impacted literacy rates and only 27% of those lucky enough to attend school actually pass their exams. Rural areas have been greatly affected. These children need support in order to pass exams and learn.
- This model is very cost-effective and has the potential to reach up to 45,000 children.

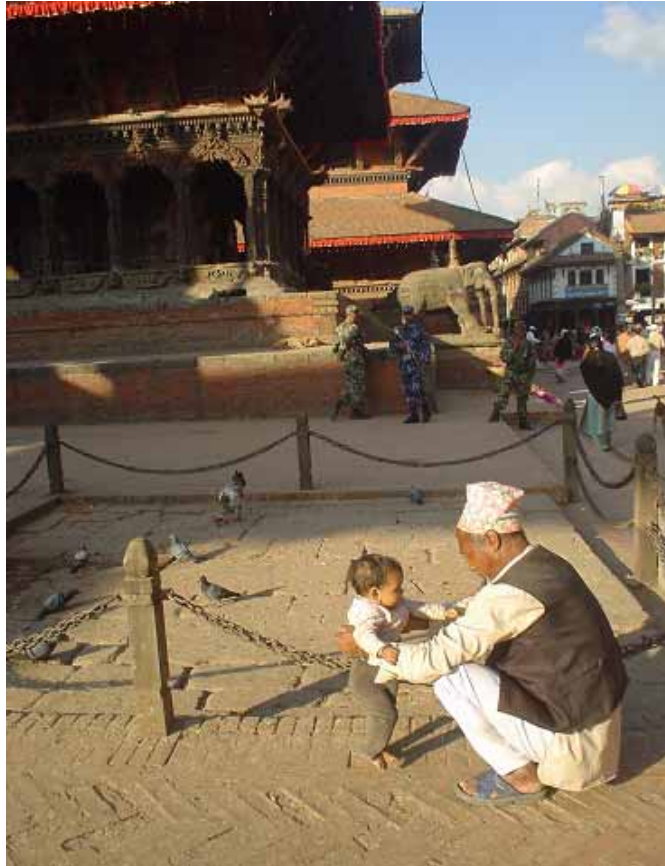
Background: Nepal and educational constraints

Children in Nepal formally start school in grade 1 (5 yrs old.) Primary school education extends from grade 1 to grade 5, lower secondary from grade 6 to grade 8 and higher secondary from grade 9 to 10. After completing ten years of formal education students take their SLC (School leaving certificate.) This is the qualifying test to transit to a decent job or tertiary education.



Over 81% of Nepali's work on farms and within the agricultural industry. The terrain of Nepal, covered with mountain ranges, leaves only 17% of the land 'Terai' (Flat Land.) Many children have to walk through difficult terrain for four or five hours to attend school. This is just one issue in terms of access to education. It is normal for children to attend school for around ten days each month, and around 23% of school aged children never attend. 50% of the total population lives below the poverty line, another restraint in terms of education is that very few can now afford to send all their children to school. Every year drop out rates have increased since 1999. 35% of women are literate and 31% of children are involved in child labour. (UNICEF 2005).

The strikes and the Maoists who often recruit very young soldiers prevent access through districts and regularly demand money/food and board from rural communities, the exploitation of education and rioting threaten the education system and many Nepali's have fled to the Gulf to work illegally and send back what they can to their families. Another problem is that rural areas do not yet have proper educational rights. Experienced and trained teachers simply don't work in these areas, books, stationary and resources get lost on poor roads and through corruption. As the city areas focus on English-medium teaching, local areas continue to teach in Nepali, further dividing the system. Only the children who can afford to take extra tuition, or live in the city pass their exams.



The conflict has had a significant impact on the education of children in Nepal. Displacement has caused many children to suspend their studies only 39% of displaced children manage to join a school in their new area due to poverty and often not having the correct documents to register. 61% remain at home and work or are forced to earn money. (UNICEF) Frequent national and local 'bandhs' or strikes are called by students parties and Maoists these significantly disturb the pace and quality of education. INSEC reports that in 2005 on average schools opened for 120 of the 180 mandatory days due to 'bandhs.'

Quality of education is considered the major limitation to further development. Nepal currently has 24,700 primary schools and 4 million students. Dalits/janjati make up 57% of the country's population and represent only 30% of the children attending primary school. (UNICEF)



Radio Teaching:

Radio broadcasting has added a totally new dimension to modern communication by bringing the outside world into the individual home. Radio can play a structured role in literacy programmes.

Gandhi famously used broadcasting in the most remote of Indian villages to campaign and spread news and for rural areas of Nepal, this is the most cost effective medium for spreading a source of learning and to support students in their study. The potential is not only there to support students, but also teachers, giving them a model to follow for their own teaching.

Other Working examples, Afghanistan:

USAID: radio-based teacher training, higher education programs and literacy training for workforce development initiatives. Despite high illiteracy rates in most of rural Afghanistan, Afghan families are now keeping abreast of the news through the country's most popular medium: radio. Surveys show that in some rural provinces, 75% to 90% of all households are listening, spurring public health officials to take a creative approach to communicating messages about health care and many NGO's to promote literacy and education initiatives.

Over the past two years, the Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-based Health Care (REACH) program has been holding script-writing and broadcasting workshops for staff from Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health and from

Radio/TV Afghanistan to develop radio spots and dramas that focus on key health issues. The most recent session has produced 24 spots, 15 focusing on immunization and nine on birth spacing. REACH has delivered 73 health care messages for broadcast to homes throughout Afghanistan. Recorded in both Dari and Pushto, complete with music and sound effects, the health-focused dramas are designed to entertain as well as inform. The REACH program is funded by USAID and implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH).

BBC Afghan Education Drama Project. As the name suggests, through the medium of drama it sought to inform and educate people in the war-torn country of Afghanistan on themes which were essential for the rebuilding of their country. Actually, not as education per se, but more as enter-education, that is education by means of entertainment. Just as education is a big priority as Afghanistan grapples with the crippling effects of two decades of civil war, so entertainment is also essential to ameliorate the grind and struggle of everyday life in the country.

The BBC Afghan Education Drama Project sought to combine the two - entertainment and education - in the storylines of its flagship operation; radio soap opera broadcast in Pashto and Persian, and called "New Home, New Life". Its aim has been to develop storylines which are convincing and gripping as well as informative and educational. Some of the themes deal with child vaccination, mine awareness, conflict resolution, struggle for economic livelihood, and relations with aid agencies. One of the themes it has dealt with in a series of storylines has been adult literacy.

Motivation for literacy: The program sought to actually impart adult literacy in our soap opera through supporting materials.

The 'School on Air' Project: Nepal.

The radio teaching program has been running for one year and is distinctly popular. Promotional ads are run for the program on the radio throughout the day. Notices have gone out to all schools requesting them to form listeners clubs, a work book is set to be printed and distributed through the listeners clubs which would be supplemented by commissions for administrative expenses. This year the fourth episode of each month is new and the others repeated. Highly qualified teachers with good exam results from their pupils have been approached, their expenses paid (taxi fare and transport costs) and their lessons recorded. The entire year prior to the SLC exams, following the government curriculum has now been recorded. Students are given the opportunity to be inter-active and engage with the program through letters and calls and give their feedback. They exchange difficulties and curiosity from other students. 7.30 pm was decided as an appropriate time to run the show and further funds will extend the show until 8.30pm.

Objectives:

1. To lift educational standards and transcend restraints in terms of access to decent education.
2. To provide the Kaski region of Nepal with experienced teachers' lessons.
3. To provide continuous information despite political riots and disruption to formal schooling.
4. To exchange difficulties in learning and feedback via letter and call to the station.
5. To provide teachers in rural areas with technique, style, presentation, sources, material and content to improve their teaching in the classroom.

Target Group:

- Approximately 90,000 Nepali's are in government schools or schools following the government curriculum and around 70% of these can listen to the radio.
- All students in the Kaski region of Nepal of class 9 and 10, studying in government, formal and non-formal or NGO / charity sponsored schools and schools teaching students with special needs.
- Subject teachers of Higher Secondary School and NF schools.
- Concerned parents / guardians / interested parties.

Program:

Each program will run for 30 minutes each day. The program gives preference to children in grades nine and ten, as the crucial school leaver's examinations are approaching for them. These students are examined in seven subjects: Nepali, English, Math's, and Science, Social Studies and extra optional Math's and Accountancy examinations. Sponsors play short ads and jingles to currently contribute to the costs of the show.

Monitoring System:

A Radio Teaching Fund is established through the Mountain Trust to support the continuation and betterment of the show and possibly begin to provide radios to communities currently without access. Teachers will monitor the quality of the show and provide feedback and suggestions. The Mountain Trust also has its own staff living in the same town, to monitor, gain feedback from local children and listen in to the station.

Medium:

This program is targeting rural areas so 70% is in Nepali and 30% in English. The first ten episodes are devoted to class nine courses; the next twenty-five episodes are for class ten courses. Suggestions, questions and feedback are welcomed at the interactive session at the end of each program. Each program contains a mixture of recorded sessions from the teachers and interactive sessions with listeners.

Organiser:

Radio Annapurna 98.4 MHz is a commercial station. It has faced difficulties in terms of censorship, these issues have been resolved. Any amendments in the program, production and quality enhancement will be done through consultation with the teachers and ultimately are the sole right of the radio stations, and not affiliated with any government or non-government political party.

Program Schedule: Teachers used.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nepali	English	Comp.Maths	Science	Social Study	Account	Opt Maths.
Shiva Lal Dhital	Khadanada Sharma	Brihaspati Sapkota	Mukunda Osti	Nabaraj Poudel	Bheshraj Baral	Prem Narayan Pokhrel.
Gandaki B. Sch	Gandaki B. Sch	Janapriya H.S. Sch	Gandaki B. Sch.	Amar Singh H.S Sch.	Fishtail/Srijana B. Sch.	Motherland B Sch.



Local businessman Mr Biplab Paudel (left) contributes 7% of his annual income to The Mountain Trust and lives within walking distance of the radio station. He is pictured above at the station with Mr Dipendra Shrestha (right), Annapurna F.M station Manager, and Project Manager of 'School on Air'.

Additional Information:

- The results of the programs that have run last year were especially popular at a small school for the blind, with ten pupils in Pokhara city (Amer Singh Secondary School). Since the students enjoyed listening so much, and began engaging with the show via letters and the telephone, that year the results of students passing their SLC went from 40% to 100%.
- There is also an opportunity to replicate this model in terms of healthcare advice and basic sanitation tips with a short show, using doctors and so on.
- One advantage is that with a fickle government and differing policies in terms of education, the radio literacy program provides an opportunity to respond to changes in the system very quickly.
- The main aim is to implement this show across the entire country by 2007.



The Mountain Trust

Any funds from FLAME would be channeled through The Mountain Trust, who would be responsible for overseeing the Radio Learning Project via their co-coordinators in the area. The Mountain Trust is registered in the UK by the Charity Commission (Reg. Charity 1112841.) It has established a sister organization in Nepal registered as an NGO with the Government of Nepal (No.

859/060/061) It is also affiliated with the Social Welfare Council of Nepal (No. 15796.)



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Trustee and Honorary Members

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Secretary: Karen Bell
Trustee: Naomi Lockwood

Trustee: Biplab Paudel
Treasurer: Melanie Malcolm-Brown
Trustee: Christopher Minett
Trustee: Ghopal Bhusal
Trustee: Andrew Ahmad-Cooke
Honorary Member: Anne Connelly
Honorary Member: Belsing Thapa
Honorary Member: Hari Pathik

The primary purpose of the Mountain Trust is to relieve hardship, poverty, inequalities and exploitation of the people of Nepal.

Projects include:

Primary, secondary, tertiary and 'independent' education.
Healthcare, family planning and maternity services.
Provision of clean water supplies.
Adult literacy, numeracy and computeracy.
Support for civil society capacity building programs.
Environmental awareness.
Support for people rescued from bonded labour and other forms of human rights abuse.
Assistance for the victims of natural disasters.

The Mountain Trust receives applications for support from various communities in Nepal. All projects are inspected personally by members of the Mountain Trust in the UK. Financial and organizational supervision are carried out rigorously. Detailed accounts together with receipts etc. are maintained, as are press, photographic and video records of all Trust activities.

