

We hope you enjoy this edition of Open Learning Exchange (OLE) Nepal *Newsletter*, a bi-monthly email newsletter from OLE Nepal. It provides current news and information about the organization and its activities and will keep you up to date with OLE Nepal's work to provide high quality education for children in Nepal.

Local Voice: Reaching beyond school Literacy through laptops

The OLPC program was launched in our school in 2009 with a total of 121 laptops provided for teachers and students in grades two, three and six by OLE Nepal. Grades four and five were subsequently added to the program in 2010 and 2011, and the total number of laptops were increased to 193. Teachers from three schools in Kaplivastu were trained on using laptops in classrooms in 2009, and refresher training was conducted in 2010 by OLE Nepal and Department of Education. Currently our students from grades two to six use the laptops regularly to learn in classrooms.

The program has brought about a number of changes in our school. There has been an increase in student enrolment. With a notable improvement in the classroom environment, we have found students to be more enthusiastic in learning and collaborating with their classmates. Teachers are more motivated and eager, and teaching has become more fun and effective. Teaching methods have changed, and students are able to assess their progress using.

Beyond the school, we have noticed a positive change in the community's attitude towards school and education. Community members are proud that the school has entered the information age with the newly introduced technology. Parents are elated to see their children opening laptops and learning at home. Many parents who make their living crushing stones on the riverside have been heard discussing how their children are using computers to

educate themselves.

Last year a group of mothers approached the school head teacher and asked that they too be taught how to learn using laptops. Encouraged by our head teacher, the mothers collected a larger group of women interested in learning, and over a three month period, teachers from our school conducted literacy classes to 52 women in the evening. This literacy program has had many benefits. It has helped strengthen the relation between the school and the community. It has helped the community to develop a sense of ownership towards the school and its properties, and they seemed to feel that the laptops and other equipment are the collective responsibilities of the community members. These have been great resources for improving literacy among mothers, and have enabled them to learn basic numeracy such as addition and subtraction, as well as reading Nepali. It has created a different level of awareness amongst mothers and girls in the community, and our school has transformed into an open learning place not just for children for but parents as well.

We intend to give continuity to adult literacy program using these laptops and digital materials. Instead of looking to increase the number of computers, our goal is to further improve the management of the current program. We plan to designate a resource room where students from other grades too can access and learn using computers and technology. We hope that relevant organizations and institutions will recognize the work that our school is do-

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ing, and provide suggestions and feedback on a regular basis.

Ms. Sujata Regmi, Nepali teacher of Sri Pancha Lower Secondary School in Baijalpur, Kapilvastu. She shared this experience in an vent of the LTK conference in Kathmandu in March 2012: [Translated to English from original Nepali script]



Ms. Sujata Regmi sharing her experience

Teacher Training and Project Deployment

Kerung, Chimding and Chyangsar

The Chimding Foundation partnered with OLE Nepal to launch laptop-based teaching and learning program in Kerung VDC of Solukhumbu district. OLE Nepal staff Ram Singh and Kayomars Bilimoria Puri deployed laptops and trained teachers of Shree Changesthan High School, Singhakali Lower Secondary School and Setigaiya Primary School from May 3 to 7. A total of 14 teachers from the three schools attended the three-day long training at Changesthan H.S. The main focus of the training was to get the teachers familiar with the new teaching-learning tool and to navigate through educational ac-



Setigaiya Lower Secondary School
Kerung, Solukhumbu

tivities such as the *E-Paath*. Teachers took an immediate liking towards the *E-Paath* and stayed after hours to practice and get their queries resolved, even though some of them had to walk 2 hours to reach home. Ram Singh did a demo math class

to help teachers get a better idea of the new methodology. Teachers later shared that they had never really thought that math could be taught in such an interesting manner. On the final day of the training, Ms. Chhal Kumari Sharma of Changesthan H.S did a demo class on the use of *E-Paatis*. OLE Nepal's team and teachers discussed the efficient placement of the *E-Paati* and on how to solve problems that are commonly encountered while using *E-Paatis* in the classrooms.

Ranabir Janahit High School, Syangja

A teacher training program was held in Ranabir Janahit High School in Waling, Syangja district from June 4 to 12. OLE Nepal team consisting of trainers Kamana Regmi and Tika Raj Karki, and technical staff Ram Singh and Kayomars Bilimoria Puri were part of the teacher training and deployment program. A total of 25 laptops were provided to the school by Mr. Prithvi Bahadur Pande, Chairman & Chief of Nepal Investment Bank, for the implementation of this program.

Twenty four teachers from the school participated in the seven-day-training that focused on equipping teachers with the skills necessary to integrate ICT in the regular classroom teaching and learning process. The training prepared teachers on using computers and digital resources

effectively to teach various subjects such as English, Nepali, mathematics and science. The training program was developed by OLE Nepal in collaboration with the Department of Education (DoE), National Center of Education Development (NCED), curriculum experts and teachers. Teachers were also provided with a standard teacher manual detailing the usage of the laptops (*E-Paati*), the curriculum-based digital learning activities developed by OLE Nepal (*E-Paath*), other educational tools in the laptops, and OLE Nepal's digital library (*E-Pustakalaya*).

OLE Nepal's technical team also connected the existing desktop computers to the school server, thus enabling them to access the *E-Pustakalaya*. OLE Nepal's trainers were specially pleased to find the Chairman of School Management Committee, Mr. Surya Prasad Regmi taking special interest in the program and participating actively in the training program.



Teacher training at Ranabir High School
Waling, Syangja

Community Interactions & Support Visit

Dadeldhura and Doti

Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi from Nepal Government's Curriculum Development Center (CDC) and OLE Nepal's Sunil Pokhrel visited eight program schools of Dadeldhura and Doti to assess the ICT-integrated teaching and learning program from May



Community interaction program in Chasi,
Doti.

2 to 7. During the visit to the schools, they held discussions with head-masters, teachers and community members to evaluate the current status of the project, and reflect on its strengths and benefits as well as areas that can be further strengthened with community involvement. The team observed teachers conducting ICT-integrated classes and held feedback sessions with the teachers.

During community interactions, the benefits of the digital learning materials for children as well as the community were highlighted. Each school management committee came up with a plan for local communities to use digital learning materials, especially the *E-Pustakalya* consist-

ing of a large number of resources useful for farmers, small entrepreneurs and health workers. All eight school teachers were happy to see strong participation and increased interest shown by community members at the interaction program and hoped that they will continue to receive similar support in the coming days.

Phaplu Community School

On May 10, OLE Nepal's technical team visited Phaplu Community School (aka Zeke O'Conner School) to update the school server with latest digital content and held a short discussion with teachers regarding issues that they have faced while implementing ICT-integrated classes.

Completion of Science Digital Learning Activities

OLE Nepal recently completed the development of digital learning activities for science from grades two to six. The content focuses on promoting nutrition, efficient agriculture practices, and health and hygiene with special emphasis on the need for gender-balanced approach in the above areas. The activities are prepared in both the Nepali and English languages, and are aligned with the 'Science, Health and Physical Education' curriculum prescribed by the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) under the Ministry of Education. The English language version was

prepared for use in schools where science is taught in the English medium and in countries outside Nepal. There are a total of 110 science activities that have been added to the existing set of *E-Paath* activities from grades two to six.

A CDC science expert was involved in designing the activities and ensuring that the concepts were in accord with the national curriculum objectives. OLE Nepal has also ensured that the activities are engaging, child-centered and relevant to the local context. Agriculture, nutrition and education experts were consulted on a regular

basis to ensure the inclusion of grade-appropriate content in the activities.

All *E-Paath* activities are accompanied by teachers' notes detailing how to integrate digital activities with the curriculum and to promote gender roles in agriculture, food and nutrition.

These activities were prepared with support from the UN World Food Programme.



E-Pustakalaya News

OLE Nepal has been constantly working towards updating the contents in *E-pustakalaya*. As per the statistics, the past two months have been a success in terms

of digitizing more books and ensuring the utilization of the wide range of resources that are available to users.

Likewise, Sisnupani Nepal publication

agreed to let their books to be included in *E-Pustakalaya*. In addition, Basudev Luitel's collection including of Kauwa publication, agreed to digitize his books for *E-Pustakalaya*.

*Titles that have caught our online users attention during the month of June**

Title	Author	File Downloads
Bhimsen Thapa (Aitihāsik Khandakavya)	Siddhicharan Shrestha	296
Sumnima (Novel)	Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala	242
English Series 6 : Reading IV [SLC Support Materials 2068]	National Center for Educational Development	187
Nepali Brihad Shabdakosh (Seventh Edition)	Nepal Academy	181

**This does not include the downloads from the offline servers in our program schools*

Last month we added Mother Tongue Pipal Pustak (MTPP) series developed by the non-formal education support office of the United Mission to Nepal to support literacy by easing the transition from oral communication to the conventions of print. MTPP provides a structured framework for people to write narratives in their mother tongues rather than simply translating stories from Nepali.

Young Adult Book Launch

One of the participants of our Young Adult literature workshop and a member of the advisory panel of *E-Pustakalaya*, Geeta Keshary, wrote "Fakranda kopila" as part of OLE Nepal's effort to increase literary works for young adults. This 125 page novel was made public amidst a function held in Kathmandu on 7th July 2012. Critic Rajani Dhakal also commented on the novel.

The author Geeta Keshary quoted "In our country's context, several novels have been written for the children and aged readers. However, not many books are available for the youth adults in the population"

Considering the lack of youth related contents in Nepali literature, OLE Nepal had conducted a seminar and two-day workshop in February 2011. This book is one of the outcomes of that initiative.

E-Pustakalaya Deployment and Orientation in Nuwakot

OLE Nepal's network team, comprising of Basanta Shrestha and Ram Krishna Singh, visited Shree Gyanjyoti School at Satdobato, Nuwakot to set up the *E-Pustakalaya* (E-library) and school networking from June 15 to 17. The team, accompanied by Principal Mr. Dangol, observed the school infrastructure and met with the teachers regarding *E-Pustakalaya*, its usage and the pre-requisite for its setup.



E-Pustakalaya in Shree Gyanjyoti School Satdobato, Nuwakot.

The team checked, assembled and set up the computers that the school had acquired for *E-pustakalaya* and installed required software in the computers. With the help of local computer technician, the team set up *E-pustakalaya* server. School already had battery backup system in place which was used for backing up *E-Pustakalaya* server and network equipments.

On the final day, teachers, members of SMC and local community attended *E-Pustakalaya* orientation session. Basanta Shrestha briefed the 20 participants on how the pustakalaya network is set up and how the system works. He explained all the major section of the *E-pustakalaya* and how it can be used efficiently to benefit children, teachers and the community. The participants also discussed on roles and responsibility of the all the stakeholder in making the *E-pustakalaya* a success.

Other News

Talk Program at ADB, Manila

OLE Nepal's Executive Director, Mr. Rabi Karmacharya, was invited to deliver a talk on the prospects for strategic use of ICT to transform education and training in Nepal at the South Asia Seminar Series in the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines on 28 May 2012. The program was chaired by Mr. Sungsup Ra, Director, South Asia Human and Social De-

velopment Division, and was attended by experts on education, ICT, energy, agriculture and human capacity development.

NGO Workshop

A two-day NGO workshop organized by the Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu on May 17-18 was attended by OLE Nepal's Program Manager Mr. Subir Pradhanang and Accountant Ms. Rabita Dangol. The

objectives of the workshop were to increase sharing and learning of good practices, enhancing better understanding on the financial management challenges, and initiating networking among NGOs working with the Embassy of Finland. The new Finnish International Development Policy, the draft foreign aid policy of Nepal and country programming of Finland to Nepal were also shared during the workshop.

Office News

New face at OLE Nepal



Sarina Piya

Sarina Piya has been appointed as the Monitoring and Outreach Manager at OLE Nepal. She brings along experience in national and international development ranging from conceptualization and design to implementation and monitoring of development projects. She holds an M.A. in International Development and Social Change from Clark University in Massachusetts, USA, and a B.A. in Economics from Poona University, India.

New Interns

OLE Nepal welcomed four new interns this June who are working in writing, compiling resources and updating software in *Epaatis*. All the interns invested time to-

wards *E-Paath* testing which involves reviewing each activity that are present in the digital content.

Pratistha Bhattarai, a student at Smith College, Massachusetts intending to major in Mathematics and Computer-science, is working towards modifying her skills in the programming department this summer. She is currently working on translating the digital learning content from Nepali to English and vice versa, and also on developing 'typing turtle' in Nepali.



Pratistha Bhattarai

Niraj Paudel, a National Integrated College graduate, plans to spend his gap year learning about the various technical



Niraj Paudel

and nontechnical aspects of OLE Nepal. He is currently working on compiling resources for *E-Pustakalaya*.

Sahara Pradhan, a student at Vassar College New York with her major as international studies and education, is interested in familiarizing herself with the educational curriculum of Nepal and is currently working on creating photo essays for *E-Pustakalaya*.



Sahara Pradhan

Anisha Shrestha, also a student at Smith College Massachusetts intending to major in Economics, is currently involved in writing newsletters and reports at OLE Nepal.



Anisha Shrestha

Farewell

OLE Nepal bid farewell to two of technical team members, Abhishek Singh and Raj Kumar Ranabhat in June. Abhishek had been involved in OLE Nepal as system engineer since August 2009, and was instrumental in



Abhishek Singh

enhancing and maintaining the *E-Pustakalaya*. An avid supporter of open source technology, Abhishek played a major role in promoting wide scale use of open source system in OLE Nepal.

Raj Kumar Ranabhat had been engaged as software developer since September 2011, and contributed

in developing the contents for *E-Paath*.

Both Abhishek and Raj are going abroad for further studies. We will them all the best in their future endeavors.



Raj K. Ranabhat



E-Paath is a set of curriculum-based interactive digital learning materials developed by OLE Nepal

E-Pustakalaya is OLE Nepal's education-centered digital library consisting of books, reference materials, school wikipedia, etc.

E-Paati is the Nepali name for the XO laptops used in OLPC program schools