

Project Namaste X

2016

POKHARA, NEPAL



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10 Years of Namaste

Project Namaste X marks a significant milestone for Singapore Management University's (SMU) longest running Overseas Community Service Project (OCSP). It is the tenth installation of what humbly began as one student's vision of impacting the educational landscape in Nepal more than one decade ago. As we come to the close of the project, the team would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to our sponsors whose support and generosity have been invaluable.

Last December, Project Namaste X saw the team returning to Gyan Jyoti Secondary School in Armala Village with the aim of further improving its educational framework. With the unwavering support of the Pokhara Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PCCI) as our long-term partner, the team engaged the students in a two-week long English education programme, donated more books to the school's library, and painted two more wall murals.

As we take a look at what Project Namaste has achieved this time around, we would also like to thank everyone who has been a part of this journey thus far — thank you for making this 10-year legacy possible.



project expenditure

13%

DOCUMENTATION

Funds that were set aside for the documentation of the project from start to finish. Documentation serves not only to paint a clearer picture to our sponsors and supporters of what goes on behind the scenes, but also provides a platform for greater community outreach.

23%

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Funds that were used for the purchase of teaching aids and materials to facilitate our education programme. This includes writing materials, printing of programme booklets and teaching props.

2%

PAINTING & INFRASTRUCTURE

Funds that went to purchasing painting materials to refurbish the school's exterior.

18%

TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

Funds that went to the purchasing and transport of logistics to support the project.

44%

ACCOMMODATION

Funds that were spent on the team's accommodation during the course of the project.

EDUCATION

student's education

Building upon the feedback and evaluation from the team that initiated the educational programme at Gyan Jyoti in 2014, the team was able to refine the programme's framework to cater to the specific needs of the school's students and teachers. One significant change we made was to reduce the difficulty level of our teaching materials as we had previously overestimated the English proficiency of the students there.

The team took on the same batch of students from grades 4 to 6 (8 to 16 years old). Focusing on the various jobs and occupations in their country, the programme involved interactive lessons that aimed not only to improve their conversational English but also expose them to the various job sectors in Nepal.

Each student was given a "Nam Book" which comprised a compilation of all the lessons and worksheets that were taught in class. The two weeks of lessons culminated in a drama play that allowed the students to showcase what they had learnt to their fellow schoolmates and teachers in a fun and exciting manner.

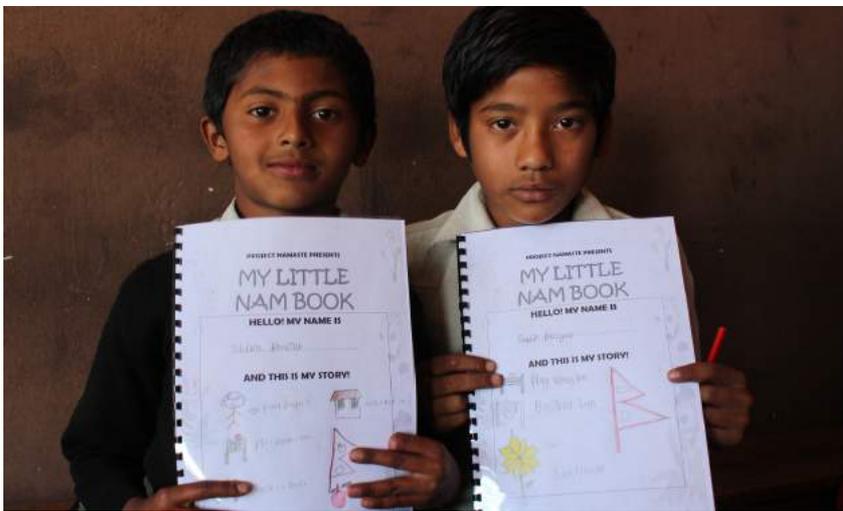


teacher's education

After feedback from the teacher's programme conducted in 2014, the team recognized that there was a need to further understand the school's needs as well as challenges faced in teaching English to the students. Hence, we decided to conduct multiple dialogue sessions with the principal and the teachers of Gyan Jyoti.

During these sessions, members of the Education Team shared their experiences of how they were taught English in Singapore while the teachers opened up about the problems they have encountered while teaching English.

It was through these dialogue sessions where the team realised that certain methods that we thought would work were simply unfeasible or ineffective for the system here. Indeed, the dialogue sessions proved to be exceedingly enlightening and it was a right step forward in making future projects more effective.



INFRASTRUCTURE + OTHERS



wall murals

This year, the team continued painting murals on the exterior walls of the school building, focusing on the second level that was unfinished from the last project. The murals revolved around the theme of "Science" and included paintings of experimental set-ups as well as various planets of the the solar system.

In addition, in light of the school's recent decision to shift the location of the library, the team painted a new library entrance mural as well as a "Library Rules" section on the library's interior wall.

library

With the support and generosity of the National Library Board of Singapore, the team managed to donate over 70 books to the school's new library, ranging from children's fiction to reference books. With a newly furnished library with new murals and more books, we hope to inculcate a culture of reading among the students in the school.

monetary contribution

Our team managed to raise a total of 1000 USD for the school through our fundraiser that took place a few months prior to our departure. The money will be used for the purchase of reference materials as well as the maintenance of the Internet connection that will be set up in the near future.



CULTURE

homestay experience

For most members, the homestay experience was the highlight of the project. The one-night stay at a village host's own house left a lasting impression of way of life in Nepal. It provided the team members the invaluable opportunity of experiencing first-hand what it's like living in a rural area where many farm for a living. But beyond just that, it served as a stark reminder to be grateful for the life we have here in Singapore we so often take for granted.



cultural exchange day

Villagers from the homestay experience, students and teachers from the school all gathered on our last day at Gyan Jyoti to celebrate Cultural Exchange Day. Our members practised diligently and put up a performance where we danced to the favourite local tune of "Singapore Town". In exchange, we were treated with an engaging folk dance performance. At the end of the programme, the team also prepared a uniquely Singaporean meal for our audience which included local-favourites such as fried rice and red bean soup.



Photo Journal



Headmaster Padam Sir receiving the USD1000 raised through our pre-trip fundraising from team leader Nicholas Ng



The Education Team members at the teachers' meeting

Photo Journal



Having a Nepali breakfast with our homestay hosts up on the mountains



The Project Namaste X team

Reflections



KIMBERLY GWEE

sponsorship team

This journey with Namaste X taught me to appreciate the conveniences we have back home – sanitation, transportation, electricity, water. Things we take for granted day in day out. Additionally, seeing the children so content with whatever little they had was a wake-up call, reminding me that happiness is immaterial and that material contentment can only give you so much. They managed to find joy in the simplest of things. It dawned on me that there is so much more in the world that I have yet to experience or discover, being tied down by the mundanity of a material life. Being in the mountains brought out a different side of me – it made me realise that I appreciated nature and its beauty, it made me more grounded, saner and more introspective and that's what I carried forward with me to 2017. Namaste helped me achieve inner balance and personal Nirvana.

Project Namaste has been nothing less than perfect. We started from squatting in dirty toilets, to braving freezing nights, to eventually finding this mindset of appreciation; and it is the people that made this experience one I would never trade away for anything.

We may have been selfish in our own ways here and there, or lazy, or stubborn, or annoying, but every night, we do not retreat back to the confines of our rooms to be engrossed in our own activities. Instead, we go back to each other and forgive ourselves for our shortcomings. We huddle by the fire, we gaze at the stars, we share about our lives, and we let our hearts connect. And it is really because of these little heartfelt moments that we share up on the mountains, that we find ourselves so candid and bare and vulnerable with each other, that we fully let each other in our hearts and keep the Namaste family in there for good.

So it may be biased, but I hold this thought close to me - takeaways from every oscp are pretty much the same; but Nam is gonna be the only OCSP experience you wished you had.



ALSTON YEONG

education team

Reflections



ANDY TAN

logistics team

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Project Namaste really changed my views on living and caring for the people around me. It's funny because I joked about this with my friends before the trip but never really believed that a short service trip would have such a profound impact on my mind-set. I feel that Project Namaste has taught me lessons on humility and how to be a humbler, more hardworking person. This change came about from both my interactions with my team and with the locals. I also surprised myself as I realised early on that I really cared for some of the children that I was conducting lessons for in Grade Four and I found myself getting disappointed when one of them underperformed on a mini-test that the Education team had sat for them.

The unbridled enthusiasm from the kids and the incredible warmth from the locals showed me a side of human nature that I feel is often neglected in modern society. The Nepali people were often eager to provide gifts and shower us with hospitality when we visited their homes and school. It really showed me that there are no limits to hospitality and generosity. The only limits to sharing are those that you set upon yourself.

Project Namaste is in essence a service trip that teaches you as much as you teach others in Nepal. A life lesson and adventure all in one.



EUGENE YUEN

marketing team