



# Welcome to a special edition of CWS News

## Spring 2010



We hope you have enjoyed reading about our projects and progress over the past few newsletters, but we feel it is time for something a little different. We want the beneficiaries to tell you about the impact our projects are having on their lives, in their own words wherever possible. Here is a collection of stories from a few of the thousands of children and families we help each year, showing the very real difference your contributions make to the lives of those who need it most in Nepal.

We are committed to protecting the children we support, therefore all beneficiary names have been changed, and while the photos show our projects,

they do not necessarily depict the beneficiaries described in the stories.

We hope you feel inspired to help more children like this, as we reach out to a growing number of children each year and need your support now more than ever. Please consider getting involved with CWS this year. There are lots of options: you could make a regular gift to CWS, take part in the challenge of a lifetime, or simply give us some feedback about this newsletter and our work. For more information on how you can help, please contact Anna using the details below, or go to our website: [www.cwsuk.org](http://www.cwsuk.org). We look forward to hearing from you soon.



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## Child Labour Elimination Project In partnership with Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)

This project aims to improve conditions for working children and ensure they can access their basic rights to education and healthcare. We also offer support for their futures, through vocational training, employment opportunities, and helping them reunite with their families.

To date, 5 daytime PCCI Centres have been established in the areas of Pokhara where most children work.

### Kriti, 14 years old

“My mother and I used to live with my stepfather and his two daughters in a village called Dhading. I was never happy there as I felt deeply discriminated in the comfort of my own home. While my stepsisters went to school, my stepfather made me walk more than an hour into the woods each day to collect fodder for the cattle and cook meals for everyone. There were countless numbers of times when I wanted to put on my old school uniform and go back to school, but I never had the courage to ask my stepfather to let me attend school and neither did my mother.

I was eleven when me and my mother left my stepfather and

came to Pokhara. Luckily, my mother found work as a housemaid in a very nice family. I lived in the same house where my mother was employed and

I helped her with the work whenever I got the chance. Working in the house wasn't very difficult and I was quite happy there. The only thing that I wished for was to continue my education. Ever since I had to drop out of school at Grade 3\* and do domestic chores, I felt that it was a huge mistake giving up education.

When someone from PCCI approached my employers almost two years ago with a request to send me to one of their Non-Formal Education Centre, I couldn't believe my luck. I felt like I was being offered much more than I ever thought I deserved. The Centre seemed to bring me back to life. There were more than thirty other girls working as domestic workers who came to the centre every day for a couple of hours. We would spend those hours drawing pictures, learning English through images, reading stories to each other and sometimes even playing musical instruments for fun. After completing nine months at the centre, PCCI



was generous enough to consider my strong interest to attend school, and therefore made arrangements with a local state school to enrol me in Grade 4.

Today, I'm in Grade 5 and rank in the top 10% of my class. I consider myself immensely fortunate to have been able to attain Non-Formal Education which led me to continue my education. I know that I'm on the right path to a brighter future which wouldn't have been possible had I not been contacted by PCCI. My experiences have made me more confident and focused towards my goal. I want to become a doctor when I'm grown up. I know that with the education that I've been provided, I can establish myself as a well-respected and a successful woman in the society.”

\* Primary school education in Nepal begins with Grade 1 (usually age 6) and ends with Grade 6 (usually age 12) however, many of the children we support have fallen behind in their education and are therefore in lower grades than they would normally be for their age

## A New Home for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS

### In Partnership with Star Children

**Star Children is the only organisation in the Western region with a specific focus on the suffering of children affected by HIV/AIDS. Our aim is to provide these children with a family environment, where the living situation is as normal as possible. To date, 10 children have been adopted by Star Children's family unit, the Alexander Home, where they receive medical treatment, education and care in a loving environment.**

### Kamal, 10 years old

This is the story of Kamal, who after many years of being moved around finally found a suitable and caring home through Star Children's efforts.

Kamal's parents both died due to HIV-related infections. He initially lived with his grandparents but was taken to a children's home in Kathmandu when his grandparents were unable to care for him any longer. After a year at the children's home, Kamal became sick and was taken to various clinics in Kathmandu for treatment, but



his physical condition didn't improve. Finally he was taken to a large hospital where he was diagnosed with HIV. Following the diagnosis, the children's home no longer wanted to keep Kamal, so he was brought to an adult care centre for HIV.

The adult centre was very inappropriate for Kamal, as it didn't have provisions for children and even adults were only allowed to stay for a maximum of six months. In addition, the majority of the clients in the centre were severely affected by AIDS and in terminal situations. So after one year, Kamal was referred to an organisation in Pokhara where he stayed for three months, before finally being referred to the Alexander Home.

Kamal is only ten years old, but has spent most of his young life being pushed from one place to the other. Not one of his previous centres was able to understand and adequately address his needs, as an HIV-positive individual or as a child.

In addition to his disease he had significant absences from education, and since his diagnosis he hadn't been able to attend school.

On first arriving in the Alexander Home, Kamal found it difficult to adjust to the environment. Understandably, he couldn't believe that this would be his real home and remained withdrawn. But Star Children did its best to make Kamal feel welcome, and began treating the symptoms of his disease. He received HIV treatment, as well as medication for tuberculosis which he had contracted in one of the previous centres.

It has been four months since Kamal came to the Alexander home, and although he remains quiet and shy he is adapting slowly to his new environment. His health is now improving, and his lab tests reveal a low viral load count. Thanks to Star Children, Kamal has now been enrolled in Grade 2 in a local school and is attending regularly.

# JYOTI Vocational Training Centre

## In Partnership with CWSN

Our JYOTI Vocational Training Centre aims to give the most disadvantaged young people a second chance in life, by giving them the skills and confidence to find a job and live independently.

79 trainees are currently receiving On-the-Job training to make their way into employment.

### Ram, 24 years old

"My father abandoned us when I was twelve years old. My mother worked as a porter in the village to support me and my siblings and I remember that there were times when she would feed us, but would sleep on an empty stomach herself because there wasn't enough food for all of us. I was aware of the financial hardships at home so I made a choice to drop out of school when I was 12 and started to work.

I did every kind of work that came my way. I would carry loads of rice and biscuits on my back through the steep hills of my village for five hours just to earn 75 Rupees (63 pence). I also worked in a shabby little furniture shop which was half an hour's walk from my home. The hours were really long and I never got holidays, but I never complained because each month I could give my mother 500 Rupees (£4.17) for our family expenses.

Things have changed drastically for me since I joined the JYOTI Centre. I had never dreamt of coming to a big city like Pokhara. I thought that I would spend all my life in my small village doing menial jobs like I did as a teenager. So I count myself very fortunate that a local NGO working nearby my village chose to send me to the Centre. Looking back at my life here, I realise



that not only did I obtain a life-sustaining skill as a trained plumber, but the experience has also opened me up to possibilities that I never would have explored otherwise.

I work as a plumber in the city now, fitting pipes and tiles in newly built bathrooms. It doesn't sound like much to be proud of but I have to say that I'm doing quite well. Sometimes I have to pinch myself to believe that I can actually afford to rent a place for myself in a city like this and send a good sum of money back home. But the best thing about my job is that there is a lot of room for growth - that is what motivates me. I aspire to become a contractor one day. I understand that it will take a lot of hard work, more training and patience, but I also know that it isn't out of my reach.

I owe both my skills and my confidence to the JYOTI Centre. Had I not come here, I would probably still be carrying loads of rice up and down rocky hills of my village on bare feet even now!"



# A Vocation for Deaf Children

## In partnership with School for the Deaf

This partnership was created to turn education into employment, and help deaf children become confident, independent and capable citizens. Each year, 8 to 10 children who have completed their schooling at the School for the Deaf have the opportunity to attend IT training and become skilled computer operators.

### Suresh, 20 years old

"I come from a big family. Unfortunately, me and my siblings are deaf. My family live from farming and I had no idea

of what would become of me. The only idea I had of a future job for deaf people was that of a teacher for other deaf children, the other option being a day labourer. But thanks to the School for the Deaf I now know that there are other opportunities! I'm very lucky that I get the support from the School in form of a scholarship to study here.

I'm currently receiving IT training. Before it started I didn't have any ideas of computers and how to work with them. But this training gave me the opportunity to gain knowledge



of computer applications which I didn't have before.

I'm so happy, because now I can do any work in the computer field. All my teachers are so nice to me and they always support me. I have developed my learning attitudes and my confidence. And I have finally figured out what I want to do with my future - I now know that I want to work as a computer operator in a government office."



# Increasing Access to Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Services

## In Partnership with Namuna Integrated Development Council

This project aims to reduce maternal and child mortality through improved knowledge about safe motherhood, new born and child health, and increased use of health services. 63 Women's Groups have been formed to raise awareness of good practice in maternal and child health and to encourage mothers to seek healthcare for themselves and their children.

### Rita, 25 years old

"We have six members in the family and agriculture is the sole means of livelihood. I'm one of the members of the Subhakamana Women's Group formed under the Namuna project. When I joined the group, I was pregnant.

Since being in the group I came to know various things that are important during pregnancy and that I wasn't aware about, such as having antenatal check-ups up to four times, immunisation, the right diet and the importance of cleanliness to stay healthy. All the other pregnant women in my Group are equally happy after finding out various facts about pregnancy and safe delivery.



Since joining the Group, I started talking about my experience to other neighbouring women in my village. I told them that I feel happy being a part of the Namuna project and hope to learn many new things in the future about pregnancy and motherhood."



# Protecting the Next Generation - Innovative and Low Cost Approaches to Essential Maternal and Newborn Care

## In Partnership with PHASE Nepal

This project aims to reduce maternal and newborn vulnerability to common health threats, by creating access to primary health care and health information, for communities that are far away from primary health care services.

### Chhoti, 36 years old

"I live in one of the remotest villages in Gorkha. The footpath is very difficult to access so not many people come to our village - it virtually lies between two stiff cliffs. It's a very small village with only six to seven households. There aren't any modern services and facilities available. Our means of income is subsistence farming and animal husbandry. I have a husband, one daughter and four sons. I gave birth to all these children feeling that children are gifts from a god. I was living my life and I never knew that there is a possibility to control child birth.

One day two women came to my village and I later found out that they were health workers from PHASE Nepal. They asked us to come for a health education session and we reluctantly gathered ourselves

since we're always busy in our daily works one or the other way. The people from PHASE explained us many things and one of them was about controlling child birth. I was really surprised that such things exist and I listened to everything very carefully. Since I was tired of giving birth to children, I mentioned my interest of using it to my husband. He didn't like it at the beginning, but after some discussion he finally agreed that I take a set of birth control injections.



I went to the Health Post and talked to the staff about it and



they tested whether I was already pregnant or not - then they gave the injection. Due to language problems I thought that the duration of treatment is three years but they said three months. Luckily when they realised that I didn't come for the next injection they came to my house in Gorkha and reminded me. I had a big laugh that I thought it was for three years. It hasn't been three months yet since I had the second injection but this time I will remember to go in time!

I have been to the clinic with my other family members several times for other reasons and we always received appropriate treatment and medicine for free. Those of us who can't even speak Nepali properly had never seen any medicine and never received any health services, so receiving this service on our own door step means a lot. We're finding out about opportunities which we didn't even know existed - so we're very happy to have PHASE here!"



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