

Dear NGN Friends and Supporters,

The year of 2012 is off to a busy start for our teams in Nepal, the U.S. and France - we hardly know where to begin! In this newsletter, we bring you a story about one of the sweetest girls at our Karnali Home in Kathmandu who we recently reconnected to her family. Also, we're happy to announce that we've hired an amazing new Country Director, Martin Punaks, to lead our team in Nepal.

Because of supporters like you, NGN is growing faster than ever before, thanks to your generous donations, large and small, and a growing number of you helping to spread the word about the realities of child-trafficking in Nepal.

One of our initiatives this year is to raise more awareness about how volunteering in children's homes and orphanages by well-intentioned people actually contributes to the industry of child-trafficking in Nepal. We encourage any of you who are considering volunteer stints abroad (or know someone who is) to read our article on orphanage voluntourism on page 5.

Thanks for all you do to help support NGN and our work in Nepal!



Photo: Erik B. Wilson

All our best,

The NGN Team

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“Why Becoming NGN’s Nepal Country Director is the ‘Perfect Job’”

By Martin Punaks

U.K. native Martin Punaks has recently been appointed NGN's new Nepal Country Director. Here, he tells us why he is taking on the role and NGN's future plans.



Martin Punaks, our new Nepal Country Director
Photo: Ryna Sherazi

They say there is no such thing as the 'perfect job', but becoming the new Country Director for NGN is, in my view, not far off! This is a job that brings together some of my core passions.

First, I have a long-term love-affair with South Asia. I have taught in a refugee school in India, worked on a sanitation project in Pakistan, marched across Nepal for better education rights for children, and helped rescue child laborers in Delhi. Each of these projects have helped me better understand the challenges people in South Asia face, and the incredible optimism the people in this region share for a brighter future.

Second, I believe in the power that NGOs have to fill service gaps between the market and the state to help disadvantaged people.

In fitting with NGN's philosophy, I also believe that NGOs have the power to help change the market and the state, so that their intervention is no longer needed. Nepal is a place which desperately needs this change now.

Third, I have always been driven by the needs of children, from my days of advocating for the rights of socially-excluded children in urban East London, to my work on child rights activism in India. Becoming a father myself a couple of years ago, I felt I could begin to imagine the incredible pain that parents must feel when they lose their child to a trafficker. Child trafficking remains something which I simply cannot ignore and must take action against.

NGN's team of in-country staff and professional volunteers is incredible. I have never met such an intelligent, skilled and principled group of individuals. As together we continue our work in Nepal and find innovative ways to tackle child trafficking, I can't help but look at my copy of "Little Princes" and think of the legacy I am about to take on. What Conor and Farid began in a small children's home in Kathmandu in 2006 is about to enter an exciting new era. I'm honored to play a small part in making this happen.

Next Generation Nepal Highlights

While we are excited for all the new initiatives on the horizon in 2012, we'd like to take a moment to reflect on some of our major accomplishments so far. Check out our highlights as of March 31!

472

*children reconnected
to their families*



72

*children reunited
with their families*



100

field missions



A Miraculous Reunion: One Girl Reconnected Against All Odds

By Sarah Andrews



Shruti, with one of her many climbing partners, off to conquer a hill in Kathmandu.
Photo: Nancy Wong

Names have been changed in the story to protect the privacy of those involved.

Shruti set her face in determination and pulled herself up over the steep ridge. "Let's go!" she said to her climbing partner, pointing to the top of the hill. Climbing mountains is a fitting hobby for a girl like Shruti. Having lived for seven long years in an abusive children's home in Kathmandu, Shruti has learned to repeatedly overcome obstacles throughout her life.

Shruti was rescued from an abusive children's home by Government of Nepal officials in March 2011 and came into NGN's care. She adapted easily to life at Karnali Home and quickly became known for her "laughing attacks" and generosity toward others, sharing her

belongings and friendship freely. She also became known for her fierce self-reliance. Having never known her family, Shruti was accustomed to counting only on herself.

Recently, though, Shruti received a visit from a man who hopes to change that. After several challenging months searching remote mountain areas with very few clues about Shruti's family, NGN's reintegration managers finally succeeded in finding members of her family. It took them three separate trips before they located Shruti's village in November 2011. Going mainly on word of mouth and facial recognition, the odds stacked against NGN's reintegration managers would have aptly been described as "one in a billion."

But their perseverance paid off, and a few weeks ago Shruti's uncle traveled for three days from her native village to Kathmandu to visit Shruti and deliver the good news that she has a family who is alive and wants to be a part of her life.



Shruti with her uncle on her left and NGN Reintegration Manager Sandup Lama on her right.
Photo: Farid Ait-Mansour

A miraculous reunion, it was the first time in her life that Shruti can remember meeting a member of her family. None of the NGN staff members present for this joyous meeting will ever forget how pure Shruti's laughter was that day.

For now, Shruti is looking forward to the next school holiday, when NGN's reintegration managers will accompany her on a trip to her village where she will meet other family members and spend time getting to know them. We look forward to bringing you more on this story in the future!

Think Twice Before Volunteering at an Orphanage

It's almost summertime, and we know that many of our friends across the globe are thinking about ways they can fill their vacation time by giving back abroad. Volunteering is a great way to create change in the world, but we want to encourage anyone interested in volunteering in Nepal to think twice before committing to a placement at a children's home or orphanage.

As these institutions are not regulated effectively, most orphanages in Nepal are really run as businesses, set up to profit from the volunteer fees and donations derived from sympathetic, well-meaning tourists. To keep their businesses profitable, sham orphanage operators traffic children away from their families to keep their homes full and often abuse the children living there, most commonly through starvation, to keep up the appearance that they are in dire financial need. What this means is that volunteers, instead of making the positive difference they intend, inadvertently become the driving force behind child trafficking, abuse, and exploitation.

In addition to these awful realities, NGN strongly believes that volunteering, even in the most legitimate of orphanages, is not in the best interests of the children living there. These are kids who are already struggling with issues of abandonment and loss and really need care and love from people who can be a stable and consistent presence in their life.

For more information about the realities of volunteering in children's homes in Nepal, please [contact us](#)!



Photo: Sarah Andrews

Holi Feature Photos



Photo: Sarah Andrews

On March 8, 2012, people in Nepal, including the kids at Karnali Home, celebrated Holi, a holiday otherwise known as "The Festival of Colors." A vibrant festival, many people commemorate the holiday by throwing water and colored powder, or tikka, on one another. It's messy, but a lot of fun! The kids staged a giant water fight that started in the morning and ran into the afternoon. Dry clothes were difficult to find at Karnali Home that day!

The Humla Campaign Raises \$80K for Trafficked Children in Nepal

The numbers from our holiday Humla Campaign are in, and, frankly, we are just blown away by the generosity of our supporters. Thanks to the many people who donated, we raised \$79,953.33 to help reunite trafficked children in Nepal with their families.

What's even more incredible? Every penny of this amount will be matched by our amazing friends Elsa and David Brule and Grace Farms Foundation!

From the bottom of our hearts, and on behalf of all the trafficked kids in Nepal, we say thank you to everyone who helped make this campaign a wonderful success. And we send a special thank you to Elsa Brule and Sharon Prince from Grace Farms Foundation for pushing this campaign to new heights through their matching gifts!



Last year, several dedicated supporters traveled to Humla, Nepal to support Next Generation Nepal. Pictured from left to right are: Elsa Brule, Jackson Prince, Nancy Wong, Sharon Prince (of Grace Farms Foundation), Conor Grennan, Priya, Farid Ait-Mansour, Jackson Freed, Amy Freed and Ellette Nyman. Photo: Sharon Prince

An International Adoption Clouded in Deception

By Leonard Noel

Names have been changed in the story to protect the privacy of those involved.

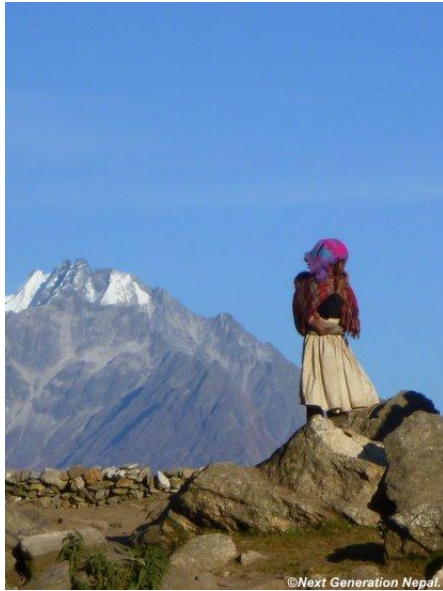


Photo: Nancy Wong

Imagine a complete stranger telling you that your adopted daughter, whom you always believed was an orphan, was actually not. "Surreal and heart wrenching" is how Ana would describe it.

In early 2004, Ana, a Spanish woman, heard that many children in Nepal were losing their parents to the armed conflict then going on. She wanted to adopt a child and was put in contact with an orphanage in Kathmandu by the Consulate of Nepal in Spain.

Through the orphanage, Ana arranged to adopt a 6-year-old girl named Sunitha, but she always wanted to ensure Sunitha stayed connected to her culture.

"Sunitha was becoming a Spaniard, but I also wanted her to be aware of her Nepalese heritage. I did not want Sunitha to forget her origins," said Ana.

Last year, though, NGN received some information indicating that Sunitha was indeed not an orphan and that the orphanage she was adopted from was part of a child-trafficking racket that forged documents declaring children as orphans so they could profit from adoption fees. Our staff obtained Ana's information and contacted her to deliver the shocking news that Sunitha was not an orphan. In fact, Sunitha had a living biological mother, sister and brother. While understandably shocked at first, Ana and Sunitha recently made the brave decision to reconnect with Sunitha's family and are planning to visit Nepal this summer.

"This is a very difficult story to describe," stated Ana. "Caring for Sunitha as she continues to develop despite so much emotional trauma has been very inspirational and difficult for me. She has demonstrated so much strength to be willing to reconnect with her biological family. I think that reconnecting will be a very positive step for us ... I believe that reconnection is healthy and important."

The Industry of Adoption

Unfortunately, in the realm of international adoptions from Nepal, Ana and Sunitha's

story is not unique. Many children in Nepal's orphanages have been trafficked there by traffickers who deceive impoverished parents in remote areas into letting them to take their kids to "elite educational facilities" that are actually centers for child exploitation. Sometimes impoverished Nepalese parents turn to these centers in desperation under the unknowing assumption that their children will at least have a chance at an education and a successful life. Never do they think that the people running these homes would send their child overseas for adoption in order to make a profit.

The U.S. State Department strongly recommends against adoptions from Nepal, due to the unreliability of the country's adoption system. To read more about the U.S. State Department's guidelines on adoptions from Nepal [click here](#).

Our New Program Officer, Samjyor Lama!

We are excited to announce that Samjyor Lama has recently been named NGN's new Program Officer in Nepal. Hailing from the Humla District, Samjyor has a long history with NGN, having worked as an NGN Reintegration Manager for over two years. Congratulations, Samjyor!



Photo: Gyala Lama