



Dear NGN Friends and Supporters,

Spring is here and all the hardships that the winter months brought are behind us now. The days are getting longer and the spring planting of rice is turning the terraces of Nepal an iridescent green. Spring also brings hope for a better year to come.

It has now been nearly a year since two massive earthquakes struck and devastated Nepal. In that time, NGN's Community Anti-Trafficking project (CAT) has evolved into a powerful tool in the fight to prevent child trafficking. Hundreds of communities have been reached through the NGN Anti-Trafficking campaign informing families of the dangers of child trafficking. Thousands of children have also been provided safety and care through NGN's efforts during the recovery period after the earthquakes a year ago April and May.

A five-month blockade at the Nepal-Indian borders caused a massive fuel and supply crisis that crippled Nepal for months and was only recently resolved. Unwavering, NGN teams continued to work to protect the children of Nepal.

This year was filled with challenges for our teams, and NGN continued to rescue and reunify children who were victims of trafficking. The shortage of gasoline, which limited all forms of transportation, didn't stop our reintegration teams from reunifying a total of 35 children from different areas of Nepal with their families.

Since Next Generation Nepal was founded, we have been able to reconnect over 500 children with their families! Help us bring another 500 families back together again.

You make our work possible. We look forward to your continued support in bringing home the lost children of Nepal.

Sincerely,

Conor Grennan
President
Next Generation Nepal



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New Year, New Hope



Sixteen children smile in the sunshine in the safety of NGN's transit home in Kathmandu.

The new year was just around the corner, but for 16 children in a dirty and overcrowded building on the outskirts of Kathmandu, 2016 wasn't holding much promise. They were cold, hungry and living in a dirty, unkempt children's home far away from their families.

Just days before Christmas, NGN along with the Nepal Government, child protection officials and the police entered the premises that was holding these 16 young children to rescue them, and in time, bring them home.

Although the conditions where they were being kept were terrible, the kids were frightened to move to another place that could potentially be worse than where they were. Once they entered the NGN transit home, they were no longer afraid. The transit home was

warm and dry, and they had plenty of healthy food to eat and new clean clothes to wear. They were soon laughing and exploring their new surroundings, and for the first time since they had been trafficked from their village, they felt safe.

The children began treatment right away for a myriad of health issues caused by the conditions they'd faced. They also started receiving tutoring so they could catch up with their schoolwork. Our staff counselors were available to help them begin to work through their emotional trauma. While our transit home staff and the kind professionals we contract were working hard to rehabilitate these children, the NGN reintegration teams began to search for their families. On New Year's Day, less than two weeks after being rescued, all 16 children were brought together to meet with their families. The pure joy of being together again was felt by everyone, filling the air with laughter.

In the past 12 months, NGN has reunified 35 kids who are now once again back in their communities with their families.

The Blockade: A Second Humanitarian Crisis

While the people of Nepal were still struggling to rebuild after the devastating earthquakes in April and May last year, the country was struck by a second humanitarian crisis in the latter half of 2015. Unlike the earthquake, however, this new crisis has been very much man-made. When the Nepal Government ratified a new constitution on September 20, violent protests erupted in the southern plains of Nepal, the Terai. The civil unrest escalated rapidly, and nearly 50 people were killed in the protests. The borders between India and Nepal were blockaded, cutting off essential supplies of gasoline, propane, medicines, food, building materials and other goods.

While the politicians argued, the situation for Nepalis became dire. The blockade lasted nearly five months. Many schools, hospitals and businesses were closed in the border towns between India and Nepal. In the hills and mountains where Kathmandu is located, and NGN is based, there were severe shortages of fuel for everything from cars to generators to propane heaters and cooking gas. People were literally chopping down trees along the city streets to use as firewood to cook meager meals. There is no doubt that those who suffered the greatest from this closure of the borders were the earthquake survivors who no longer had access to essential building materials. As winter drew near, reconstruction came to a halt and tens of thousands of people were left without even temporary shelter and very limited supplies of food and medicine.



Busses in Kathmandu are overloaded with passengers during the fuel crisis as less gas leads to less public transportation.

Throughout this crisis NGN has continued to operate. We have walked for miles to get to work. We have hung off the top of over-crowded buses to visit children in rural villages. And we have done what we can to get a few scarce gallons of gasoline to allow us to access the earthquake-hit areas. NGN will continue to do whatever it takes to ensure that the innocent children of Nepal do not become victims of this political conflict.

Back Together at Last

Life didn't start out easily for Susma and Madhav. Susma never knew their mother, and Madhav had only a year with her before she passed away from complications during childbirth. Their father struggled to care for them in their mother's absence, and their older siblings were not in a position to take responsibility for the pair at the time. Unfortunately, Madhav and Susma ended up spending nearly half their lives in an unsafe children's home before being rescued by NGN in March of 2015.



Madhav, Anushka, and Susma together at last

After being brought to the NGN transit home, the children started the long rehabilitation process, which included many trips to the doctor at a hospital in Kathmandu. It was during one of these trips that an unlikely event helped bring them closer to home.

Outside the hospital, Susma looked up and saw a man sitting in the driver's seat of a taxi who looked very familiar to her. That someone turned out to be their older brother! He was a taxi driver who happened to be picking up a passenger at just the right time for their paths to cross. Their surprise quickly turned to joy, and through this encounter, NGN reintegration officers were given the contact information for their eldest sister, Anushka.

In the years that these two young kids spent in the children's home, they had lost contact with their family. Thankfully, this serendipitous meeting at the hospital set in motion a plan for Anushka to come and finally be able to see her young siblings again.

The day for meeting Anushka again was getting closer and both Susma and Madhav were counting the days. That day was April 25, and the joyous meeting was replaced by the massive earthquake that devastated Nepal, forcing the anticipated visit to be postponed. Finally, in June, an emotional reunion took place, filled with hugs and tears and smiles.

They had another opportunity to spend quality time with their siblings and relatives this fall when they went to stay at their sister's house during the festival season. For the first time in a long time, they had much to celebrate.

Madhav and Susma have had their fair share of obstacles in life already, and for a long time they had to face them alone. The road home has been bumpy, but it shouldn't be long now until they are back with their family for good with all of the support and love they need to take on the world.

Empowerment Project Update

Since 2013, NGN has supported 29 youths in their education, including SLC completion and higher education in colleges and universities. Many of the youths have aged-out and now are on their own, making their lives with all the tools NGN provided such as education in specific fields and mentorship.



The Nepal Government honors NGN youth Nishal for getting such

Today NGN is still supporting 20 youths in technical schools, universities, +2 and through SLC.

NGN takes great pride in the accomplishments of our youths and their commitment to their studies.

- Six youths completed the 11th grade, most of them passing in the first division.
- An association of 31 private schools in Kathmandu held their pre-SLC exams and one of our students placed second among all the other students.
- We had one student honored by the Central Child Welfare Board for receiving very high marks on his SLC exam.

With the guidance, counseling and mentorship that NGN provides, these youths have the tools to enter adulthood, and are prepared to choose the vocation that most interests them.

NGN Joins a Global Movement to Promote Ethical Volunteering

Ever since the launch of NGN's report, *The Paradox of Orphanage Volunteering*, we have found ourselves at the center of groundbreaking international work on ways to promote ethical volunteering, and thus prevent trafficking and other forms of harm to children. NGN's Country Director, Martin Punaks, is a Steering Group member of the Better Volunteering Better Care initiative, which oversees this work.

Through this initiative, Martin and Program Director Samjyor were invited to Bangkok in November for a workshop on moving this agenda forward. It was attended by well-known professionals who have been spearheading the concept that non-ethical volunteering can result in child trafficking. NGN came to this meeting not only having the research to support this, but 10 years of first-hand experience in the field confronting traffickers and their victims.

NGN recognized early on the links between volunteering and trafficking, as have many other organizations. It appears in all forms, such as the way service-learning is presented to American students in universities and schools across the U.S., the ethics of placements offered by volunteering companies and how "orphanages" are understood by Christian churches that engage in mission work.

In Nepal, NGN leads a small working group of like-minded organizations that share our vision to prevent orphanage volunteering. As well as our old friends The Umbrella Foundation and Forget Me Not, the group also includes diplomatic missions such as the United States Embassy and the European Union, who want to do their part in ensuring that American and European citizens are not "scammed" by exploitative children's homes. It is with these partners that NGN is now leading our "Wisdom Wednesdays" initiative in Kathmandu to spread awareness among foreign tourists and volunteers. For more information about ethical volunteering see here: www.nextgenerationnepal.org/Ethical_Volunteering

Next Generation Nepal Highlights

NGN is committed and proud of the work we do to bring home the lost children of Nepal. We hope that you, too, share our dream of protecting Nepal's children and continue to support our work.

Below are NGN's highlights as of Feb 29, 2016:

- 539 children reconnected to their families
- 167 children reunited with their families

In addition, through the Empowerment Project:

- 18 youths have passed the SLC
- 19 youths are enrolled in +2 or Diploma
- 5 youths have passed +2 or Diploma
- 3 youths are enrolled in Bachelor Degree Program



Thousands of People Reached Through NGN's Community Anti-Trafficking Project!



A young boy plays a traditional Nepali drum at one of NGN's child friendly spaces.

NGN's CAT (Community Anti-Trafficking) Project was established days after the catastrophic earthquakes in April and May 2015. It has since grown into an important tool in the fight to prevent the displacement of children from their families.

Despite the challenges that have come our way as a result of the earthquakes and then the border blockade, NGN has remained committed to preventing child trafficking to exploitative children's homes through family preservation and by bringing awareness to communities and individuals warning them of the dangers of trafficking.

Over the past six months we've had some significant milestones:

- We continue to run child-friendly spaces, providing a safe haven for vulnerable children in the villages hardest hit by the earthquake. These child-friendly spaces have free access to structured play, recreation, learning activities and locally prepared nutritious food. With 10 child-friendly spaces placed throughout the Sindhupalchowk District, hundreds, sometimes as many as a thousand, kids are free from the threat of trafficking every day under NGN's care.
- NGN developed a radio message warning of the dangers of orphanage trafficking and for six months it was broadcast six times a day in two languages. The radio station airing our notice has a wide listenership and our message is being picked up in 11 out of the 14 districts worst affected by the earthquake.
- We've reached at least 7,000 people through the anti-trafficking street performance NGN developed. The show has been performed 19 times in local communities across the district of Sindhupalchowk since September. In addition, NGN has made a documentary of the street drama so that we can continue to spread our message far and wide.
- For National Children's Day, NGN organized two rallies in which students, teachers, child and youth clubs marched through towns and villages chanting and holding signs with slogans such as "Stop Child Trafficking" and "Children are not for Sale!" We estimate that over 1,000 people participated in these two rallies.
- During the Hindu holiday of Tihar (Festival of Lights) there is a celebration in which groups of children, adults and the elderly go door-to-door singing songs and telling tales. NGN used this opportunity to bring our message out to hundreds of households by telling stories and singing songs with a message to stop child trafficking and displacement.



A crowd gathers around community actors performing NGN's anti child-trafficking street drama.



NGN youth take to the streets on National Children's Day.



NGN printed and posted 7,000 leaflets, 200 posters and 10 banners on child-trafficking

In under a year we have been able to reach thousands of people through our child-friendly spaces, check-posts and awareness-raising activities. People are more aware of the dangers of trafficking. The debate on orphanage trafficking is getting louder, and with the help of local communities, we're making sure our voice is heard!

17 Rescued Children Back Home with their Families

In our Autumn newsletter, we told you about 17 children who were rescued from a home where they were told to lie about being orphans. The youngest child wasn't even a year and a half old. In October, the NGN team was able to bring all 17 children home to their families. In the months since they were reunified the team has continued to monitor the children, and we are happy to report that they are all doing well! They've adjusted back into village life with ease, they are enrolled in school, they're healthy and growing and they love being home with their families.



Five of the 17 children NGN rescued last summer on their way to school at home in their village.

Wisdom Wednesdays

Why is there a connection between child trafficking and children's homes?

Why are more than 16,000 children living in children's homes in Nepal?

How do you know if volunteering is helping or hindering children?

Why are most children living in orphanages not orphans?

What does "giving back" really mean? What is ethical tourism?

These are the questions NGN is using to attract tour companies who are promoting volunteering, foreign tourists and individual volunteers who just want to "give back." NGN is inviting everyone to attend our new program of talks to raise awareness of the harm caused by orphanage volunteering, as well as to promote more ethical ways of "giving back." "Wisdom Wednesdays" began in September 2015 with a series of five talks by Next Generation Nepal, the United States Embassy, Learning Service, the Umbrella Foundation and Forget Me Not.

"We wanted the talks to be interesting and entertaining but with a serious message", said NGN Country Director, Martin Punaks, "this is why we held them in an Irish pub where I believe [NGN Founder] Conor may have had a drink at one time when he himself was a volunteer in Nepal!"

The talks are an opportunity for tourists in Nepal to meet with child rights' activists face-to-face to hear more about their work, as well as to learn about how they can meaningfully make a positive contribution. For a schedule of NGN's new series of Wisdom Wednesdays talks in 2016, see here: www.nextgenerationnepal.org/Wisdom_Wednesdays



Wisdom Wednesdays are held at Paddy Foley's Irish Pub in Kathmandu every Wednesday, excluding holidays.

Stay Informed

Want to know what we've been up to at NGN? Please follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/nextgenerationnepal) and check out our website regularly to find out about our latest work. Both are updated often with inspiring stories and up-to-date information on all of the work we're doing. If you like what you see, please help us spread the word about NGN by sharing with your friends and family!

Help Us Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal

NGN rescues, rehabilitates and reunites children who have been trafficked and displaced to abusive children's homes, separated from their families. Sadly, there remain thousands more children who are facing exploitation and abuse in illegal "orphanages." NGN will continue to work to bring these children home, but we need your help. Please support our work, and together we can make a difference in the lives of hundreds of Nepal's lost children.

Here are some examples of how your donations are helping:

\$50 covers the monthly cost of searching for and reunifying a child.

\$80 provides all the post-rescue care for a child for a month.

\$600 covers the costs of searching for and reunifying a child for a year.

\$960 provides all of the post-rescue care for a child for an entire year.

Please make a donation today. www.nextgenerationnepal.org/Donate_Online

THANK YOU SUPPORTERS!

We've had to overcome many challenges during these last 11 months since the first earthquake — continuing aftershocks, shortages of essential goods and political turmoil. Your support has been critical to our success during these difficult times. It is because of you that the obstacles we've faced have been hills to climb instead of insurmountable mountains. Our impact is bigger than ever, and you have made that possible. Your support is making the difference in the lives of thousands of children and families in Nepal. From all of us at NGN, we want to give a huge thank you to you, all of our supporters!



Next Generation Nepal

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