



Himalayan Project

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Bhakanje PONA School Empowerment Program

(Bhakanje-PONA-SEP)

by PONA FOUNDATION

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Himalayan Project has for years launched a Bhakanje School Empowerment Program (Bhakanje-SEP) and especially in the period 2010 to 2014, there has been enhanced efforts running through Bhakanje Women Empowerment Project (Bhakanje-WEP) running in this period. In 2014 PONA Foundation decided to launch a 10 years School Empowerment Program (PONA-SEP) in Upper Solu initially focusing on Bhakanje VDC in Solukhumbu District (Bhakanje-PONA-SEP), and here focusing on the only secondary school in Bhakanje, but also giving access to teachers and students from other local schools when they feel a personal urge to join. The program will run in two phases, where the first 5 years phase will put special emphasis on the educational level and gradually pay more attention towards individual students, while the second 5 years phase will concentrate on individual students. Originally, the design of the program was supporting individual students with long-term scholarship, but as it is very difficult to identify the right student from the very beginning, we have decided to let the scholarship program develop gradually, and spend the surplus of money on general educational development at the school.

The administration of the project will be supervised and monitored by HIPRON (Himalayan Project Nepal) on daily basis from the office in Kathmandu and quarterly by field visit in the project area. Yearly, or even twice yearly, Kurt Lomborg from HP (Himalayan Project) will join the field visits, and on daily basis, he will supervise HIPRON. Once every second year, Ulla Laier and/or Nanna Marie Kristensen will supervise, monitor, revise and adjust the program.

The development of the program as mentioned below was in July 2014, with the first phase running together with the Nepali Fiscal year from 16. July 2014 to 15. July 2015. The first revision of the program is done with this present revised project description.

PONA Foundation transfers the financial support for the program by transferring the decided amount for HP on HPs normal bank account. HP operate a separate detailed account on the economic transactions concerning the program. After receiving the support, HP will withdraw the organizational project expenses, but hereafter the account will solely operate projects under this program. Any surplus of project amount will not be reduced in the next year support, but remain on the account for further project development. The earthquakes of spring 2015 have delayed the program in considerable extend until autumn 2016 where it will resume in full extend.

The Objectives of Bhakanje-PONA-SEP shall be:

- Developing Bhakanje VDC through education of the local students.
- Increase focus on the education of talented students, which will also benefit all students.

- Increase the ability among students to develop creativity and independence.
- Raise the demands among students and parents towards the school for a higher educational level.
- Raising the teachers educational skills by giving training to the teachers with special focus on the pedagogical methods and interactive education

The Bhakanje-PONA-SEP consists of several projects, which shall seek to meet the objectives.

PROJECT A): STUDENT and TEACHER AWARENESS.

1) Baseline survey: HP performed the base survey in autumn 2014 and the report can be found on HPs Homepage www.nepalhelp.dk (141208_PONA Baseline Survey Report). This survey can be repeated whenever we wish to evaluate the development of the program, so therefore the questions tried to view into the future to anticipate the development of the students, so the same questions, which were relevant in 2014, shall also be relevant after years. The questionnaire was designed classwise and was replied by all students in class 6 to 10 at one time like an examination paper. It was divided into 2 papers giving 30 minutes for each paper, where first paper was qualitative about personal vision and equal for all classes. Second paper is quantitative curriculum related subject different for each class level.

It can be considered making a similar baseline survey with teachers.

2) Interaction with Students: External mediators shall create a forum for debate about the education at Bhakanje School. There shall be debate about the occupational situation in Bhakanje and surroundings. The students shall express their aims and wishes for their personal future and opportunities. How many interaction sessions to perform will depend on the results experienced. How far teachers shall attend or not, will depend on the situation and the impressions achieved during the sessions. Until now, this program has not been set in action.

3) Interaction with Teachers: Can be done in the same period with similar objectives as the above. Number of sessions and choice of teacher groups will depend on cooperation from teachers and the mediator.

4) Interaction with Parents: Can be done after the two above sessions, picking up the knowledge gained from those sessions. How far students or teachers shall participate will be up to the mediator to decide.

5) Creative expression: In Solu very few students are able to or dare to express wishes and hopes, nor used to express by creativity. But given the right ideas and tools they, in 2014, did show unexpected ability to create results. Nanna performed a class wise interaction program in class 6 to 10. Groups of students were given a digital camera asked to demonstrate specified tasks, which later was shown on the wall by projector. Groups of students were asked to make a poster drawing on how they want Bhakanje to be in future. The students was very enthusiastic about those creative performances, but the teachers behaved strikingly passive and uninterested. This kind of activity program can be mediated by any external visitor to Bhakanje, and in future also by internal mediators or teachers. Those interested in working with this subject should apply PONA for support to purchase necessary materials to implement such a program.

6) Educational Counselling for Students: The students of Bhakanje are almost completely unaware about their occupational opportunities after completed education. No one have competent

knowledge about the society, and where and how the society can develop. Teachers are as unaware as everybody else is. Only unqualified rumors reach the families from those who had success abroad or in Kathmandu. Those who didn't have success never pass on rumors. A qualified social scholar can interact with the classes, for general information, and with individual students, for intensive counselling, about their dreams and aims and put it into perspective with the employment situation locally and nationally, and even to initiate development dreams.

Janaki Khadka from HIPRON has performed this counselling twice in class 9 and 10, where students was very enthusiastic and inquisitive on gaining knowledge. This program shall have high emphasis in future, and it shall start already from class 6.

Project B): TEACHER TRAINING

1) Educational Methods: Regular teacher trainings are ongoing held by DEO (District Educational Office) or by NGO's like Himalayan Trust or REED Nepal. However, even several teachers attend, not much happens in the schools. Nevertheless, many of the local teachers actually have a pride and a wish to be professional, but do not know how and what to do, and do not know how to progress alone or how to cooperate with other teachers or students to achieve progress. History shows that they cannot benefit from lengthy trainings with many subjects and series of new methods introduced within few days and without follow-up.

In this program, it is proposed that the qualified teacher's trainer shall prepare a one-week program three to four times a year. A description of the training program and expected results shall be given to PONA for approval before the training can be started. As teachers in Bhakanje are not well disciplined, it can be difficult to give the training in the periods where teachers shall be at school even there are no education, because they regard this as vacation and leave for home. This has to be well arranged between school and trainer. We can propose the training sessions to run in the beginning of the school year in May, end of first half-year in July, on October-November coordinated with Dashain-Tihar holidays and the visit of HP and finally close to the end of school year in March. This PONA training shall be ongoing for some years, with evaluation in between.

In each session the teachers shall be given only few new ideas and tools to work with, but it shall be expected by next session, that the teachers are using in full what they have learned. It will be revealed by next follow-up how far it is done or not, and it shall be praised and emphasized if done, or it shall be repeated if it is not done. Those who really try to use the new ideas, can expect to be qualified for receiving a Teachers Reward as mentioned in next. Besides being given those few tools to work with, the teachers shall also receive other theoretical knowledge about education, and they shall, by practical in class, show that they understand and can utilize the knowledge received.

Each session should not be lengthy, as some of the local teachers tend to be boring after few days. The theoretical part should not be longer than 3-4 days, where a substantial part should be interactive between teachers and trainer or between teacher and students. In total 6-8 days program. Within and after the training, the evaluation will be ongoing.

The training will be most efficient if we could use the same trainer in all sessions. But if this can't be guaranteed the trainer shall see to that a substitute can be arranged, who will understand the program. After each session a periodic report shall be prepared as well as a yearly report shall be prepared and shall be submitted to DEO, PONA and HIPRON-HP.

The trainer Mr. Puskar Joshi performed one successful session in autumn 2014 before he left for USA. A new session was under preparation when the earthquake stopped everything completely. The program will be resumed in autumn 2016 with Mr. Parshuram S. Niraula from National Teachers Training Centre in Lagankhel, Lalitpur.

It should be considered to arrange a "Parents Day" inside the training program, where the trainer can mediate a debate between parents and teachers.

2) Educational Materials: To support the teachers training, the trainer need various materials. Simple materials can be purchased prior to the training at any time. More extensive purchase of books and more expensive materials shall be applied to PONA with justification, for approval.

PROJECT C): Strengthening School Management Committee:

1) Supervision of SMC: SMC has already proven efficient and strong, but seem to be facing obstacles from many sides, which can make it difficult to implement their aims and demands. Teachers Trainer should supervise SMC during his stay in the area, and especially he shall see to, that the committee will be in front during the Common SMC-Teachers-Parents Interaction Program. HIPRON shall supervise SMC during Runner Service to solve upcoming problems in the right and powerful way, where they will not lose authority.

2) Common SMC-Teachers-Parents Interaction Program: shall be held during each teachers training program under the chairmanship and control of the teachers trainer, who shall assure that all participants have equal right and length of speaking. Gradually SMC shall take over this control of the meeting under trainers supervision. This meeting shall be performed as an interaction where praise, disagreements, recommendations can be given from one group to the other or individual to individual. The chairman role shall be to control that it all will be held in a civilized and decent way. During the program SMC can also give rewards to teachers, as well as HIPRON at the yearly program in October can give their reward to students. SMC can explain their rules and demands towards the school, teachers and students, and they can give recommendations to parents, as well as listen to the parent's wishes and recommendations towards the school. Students are not supposed to take part of this program. The program should be performed in such a way and with such a content, that parents by own wish have an urge to take part.

PROJECT D): REWARD PROGRAMS:

1) SMC Teachers Reward: The school was previously together with HIPRON and SMC (School Management Committee) running a "Teachers Performance List" where teachers attendance at school, their performance and students results gave basis for a point system. Once a year in April by end of school year the SMC was supposed to give a reward for the teachers according to the list and other criteria. The bonus was taken from the fines, which the teachers' paid for being late or absent in school. This bonus system isn't only targeting on performance, but also on personal and individual issues. Unfortunately the program did not work out in a proper way, as some teachers who did not deserve was given, while others who did deserve, did not receive. We should not interfere too much in this local bonus arrangement, but we should anyhow promote it.

2) PONA Teachers Reward: PONA runs a motivation/incentive/reward program targeting strictly on the performance of the teacher. The monetary reward is an aim for the teachers, but the honor being mentioned might mean even more, so therefore a certificate signed by Nanna and Ulla should be delivered at the same time. It shall be considered how far the Teacher Reward shall only be given for secondary teachers or for all teachers. The same "Teachers Performance List", as above mentioned, can be used, as well as "Teachers Development List", as well as evaluation from teacher's trainer, from students, from parents, from headmaster and from HIPRON/HP. The reward can be given by end of each school year or in autumn when PONA or HP is present. It is PONA who decides who and how much to distribute.

3) Student Reward: This program was previously run by HIPRON/HP but is now taken over by PONA as PONA will take care of the students level of ambitions. The bonus shall be given by end of school year or in autumn for classes 6-7-8-9-10. The evaluation of students shall be found in “Students Performance List” and “Students Profile List” as prepared by Local Program Coordinator Lhakpa Sherpa. The reward was in autumn 2015 (school year of 2072) given on basis of the final result of school year 2071. The reward of 1.000 Rs was given to students having result 60-69%, 2.000 Rs was given to 70-75% and 3.000 Rs was given to students above 75%. Students who receive “PONA One-Year Scholarship” shall not have the reward as well. As the performances at the school is improving year by year, it shall be considered year by year adjusting the criteria and size of reward. Other criteria can be added, like attendance, marks of written and spoken English, giving Inter-Student-Tuition, general behavior as evaluated by teachers or other criteria can be invented. Besides the reward a certificate shall be given, signed by Nanna and Ulla, mentioning the criteria of the reward given.

4) Parents Reward: Also parents should be involved. It can be given for those parents who have students attending regularly, are well prepared and always clean and neat in dress and appearance. But it is difficult to know how far this is due to parent’s contribution or to the student personally. Some families have to fight harder than others to reach the criteria. Some even cannot reach the criteria though they are trying and fighting harder than others. But if those social conditions are understood, this reward can give a very high meaning for the receivers. It can be SMC and teachers who recommend the family. The amount should be small but the certificate is a must. It is Nanna and Ulla who decides for whom it shall be given, and it should be given in October. Until now this reward has not been given.

Project E): SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:

1) HIPRON/HP Scholarship: This project has been running for many years having more than 80 scholarship recipients in Bhakanje. The limiting criteria for this program is: “one scholarship per poorest family”. Each scholarship has one donor. This program will continue as it is.

2) PONA One-Year-Scholarship: This scholarship program shall be run under the criteria as an Elite Program, giving scholarship to the most promising students of Bhakanje irrespective they are already receiving HP scholarship. It can be given to students in class 6-7-8-9-10 for a year at the time. The students receiving must a) show the final result of the previous school year of more than 70%, and b) attention more than 90%, c) Teacher evaluation 4-5 in “Student Profile List”, d) having neat and clean appearance and e) pass an interview test understood and replied in English language in an interview with PONA or HP. In this interview they shall show a level of maturity and express an attitude towards their future situation. This One-Year-Scholarship can be repeated year after year as long as the student shows a proper progress, but it shall also be a criteria for repeating, that the student is giving regular tuition for free for fellow students, who are not their family. The students shall also be obliged to be active in school matters addressing teachers and fellow students for improving of the school standard. Generally a repetition also demands that the student can show improvements in the criteria, but this demand shall less strict than others.

The scholarship shall be 1.000 NRS monthly, delivered in the student personal account in Bhakanje Women Saving and Credit Cooperative at least every 3 months. This money can primarily be regarded as a saving for further education, but secondly it can be spent for extra tuition, proper clothes and educational materials but finally it can be spend as the student likes, but we expect that it isn’t spent for fun, useless and unjustifiable things. The One-Year-Scholarship will run from 12 months October to October, also for class 10 even the students has left the school. If the student

fails the SLC, the remaining scholarship will not be paid. The program will be administered by HIPRON together with the HIPRON/HP Scholarship.

3) PONA Basis Scholarship: Students receiving the One-Year-Scholarship several times can be transferred to this continuous scholarship, which can run up to completing class 12 in local schools. It can also be given to any very promising student already from class 4 in all the schools of Bhakanje VDC. And it can even be students from all over the area of Upper Solu which HIPRON is already covering. But it shall be considered before PONA decides to support the student, that PONA can carry the scholarship through until the end, as the student otherwise will be lost somewhere in the educational course, not being able to complete the education. The student also shall be obliged to support fellow students by giving tuition for free. And the student shall be obliged to choose an education, which can be useful for his/her local community, and the student shall be obliged to return back to Upper Solu after completed education to pay back the scholarship by supporting his/her local area. The scholarship shall be 1.000 NRS monthly (750 Dkr/year) in class 4-6, and 1.500 NRS monthly (1.000 Dkr/year) in class 7-10 and 2.000 to 3.500 NRS monthly (1.400 to 2.500 Dkr/year) in class 11-12. The scholarship will not be given for high school level in Kathmandu, but only locally in Solukhumbu or adjacent districts, unless a special approval is given by PONA.

4) PONA Further Scholarship: This scholarship shall be given for further education after completing SLC or Intermediate Level (after class 12). It can be Bachelor of Education or Engineering, or it could be some technical education like Agriculturalist locally in Salleri or Bhandar. It could also be further education in Technical School in Jiri or Chaurikot, but only in special cases and where useful education is not available locally, also College or University in Kathmandu. The same criteria shall be current here as above. The scholarship shall be given according to a filled in "HIPRON Scholarship Application" and "HIPRON Budget Format". For higher level the students shall write a personal application with full justification. It shall be given for one level at the time, and the result to be evaluated before next level is submitted. But again PONA shall assure that they can complete the expected course of education before they go into the support. The level can be anything between 24.000 NRS (1.400 Dkr) per year and 170.000 NRS (10.000 Dkr) per year at high level Masters. For Doctor etc it could even be much higher.

Project F: LOCAL EDUCATIONAL APPLICATION:

1) Local projects by application from SMC, Parents, Students and/or Teachers: Students, Parents and Teachers of Bhakanje VDC can apply for economic support to implement minor projects related to the school and to the education in Bhakanje VDC. The application shall be written in English by the applicants (not interpreted by others), preferably written on computer and distributed by printout and electronic file. If a group is applying, the application shall be formulated as the result of a group discussion and not by one person on behalf of the group. This program can give focus on cooperation as a group. To come into consideration by the donor the application must contain justifications as mentioned in the Form: "Educational Application" given by PONA and HP. If the application is rejected it will always be replied with explanation, so that applicant can consider a re-application.

Project G: PROJECT EXPENSES:

1) Local Program Coordinator: This program cannot run efficiently without a local based program coordinator, to take care of filling in lists, updating formats, making reports, and to keep an eye with the performances of all the program activities, which shall be regularly reported to HIPRON Office in Kathmandu. The person shall be employed by HIPRON to be responsible only towards HIPRON and not to the local society or school. Employed is Primary teacher Mr. Lhakpa Sherpa, who was a

scholarship receiver of HP up to Master of Education. He has achieved permanent teacher position at Bhakanje School. He is slightly disabled having difficulties to walk. He is at the same time the librarian and computer teacher at the school and he has his own private computer institute at home. He is receiving 3.000 Rs per month as a salary with one month extra salary as a festival allowance in October each year. His tasks are for the time being limited and more obligations could be added without adding to the salary.

2) Temporary employments: Especially when Ulla and Nanna visit the project area, they will need an interpreter, to support them in understanding the activities at school and to explain their ideas to parents, students and teachers. An active and well speaking interpreter will demand 2.500 Rs per day plus food and lodge 600 Rs per day and transportation costs.

Also temporary employment of persons to transport educational equipment from Kathmandu to Bhakanje can come in consideration.

3) HIPRON Project Expenses: HIPRON will administer all the project transfers and payments in Nepal and keep a strict account with it all in a specified PONA account. HIPRON will employ necessary manpower and make sure that they understand their undertaking and are well prepared. HIPRON will quarterly visit the project area and assure that all projects and programs are run according to the agreements. Each and every involved student will be interviewed and supervised while handing over their support, and the support will be restricted if the student doesn't meet the demands. HIPRON will report back to PONA and to HP quarterly after the visit in the project area.

The Office running and salaries of HIPRON are around 20-23% of the whole organizational turnover. But when HIPRON is serving external donors beyond HP, they have until now charged 15% of the whole project amount, and this shall also be taken from PONAs contribution. There will be no extra administrative payments beyond this amount. The expected transfer to HP by autumn 2014 and until 2018 will be 16.000 US\$ from which 15% will be charged and withdrawn immediately, to support the running costs of HIPRON Office.

H: NON-BUDGETED PROGRAM SUPPORT:

After the earthquake of spring 2015 PONA transferred an amount from this program for reestablishing the damaged school buildings in Bhakanje VDC.

PONA has from beginning of school year Baisakh 2072 (April 2015) supported the two teachers Nuru Jangbu Sherpa and Dharma Prasad Niraula with supplementary salary. The first because his salary as private teacher employed by HP, has not been subject to raise since 2069, and the last because he is private employed by the school itself, but now the sources of the school has dried out. Both teachers are the most sincere and dedicated teachers of the school, so therefore, the support shall be considered to continue in 2073.

In autumn 2016 the two Danish teachers, Bodil and Leif Kristensen, has received support for purchase of educational materials, especially textbooks, and their transportation to the school. There might also come up new ideas and opportunities, which PONA could approve for immediate support, with reference to PONAs internal restrictions.