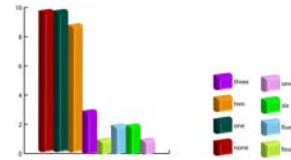


NCEF GYAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEPALESE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

What's Inside:



Students Have Been Selected
(process, rules and criteria, figures and numbers)



Interview with Mr. Uttam Sharma

(an outside member of selection committee)



gyan: *n.* knowledge acquired
by direct perception

Students have been selected for 2006-2007 academic year

After hours of deliberation, the selection

committee has finally made its decision. A total of 38 students from five different regions have been selected to be NCEF students. All 25 NCEF students from last year have been selected for continued assistance and 13 new children have been selected to be a part of the NCEF family. Applications of 1-4 post S.L.C. students are still under evaluation.

The board appointed Basu Gnawali, Omprakash Gnawali, Maheshwor Kafle, Steven Lustig, Christine Mcleavey, Uttam Sharma and Jay Shrestha to the selection committee. Uttam Sharma, Jay Shrestha and Christine Mcleavey have no prior affiliation with NCEF and were welcomed to the selection committee to bring in new ideas to the organization and its selection process as well as to make the process more transparent.

Most of the work was done by email and applications were viewed on a limited-access NCEF website location. There was one telephone call for people to discuss their concerns, questions and priorities.

Before the applications arrived in front of the committee, area coordinators and area volunteers in Nepal completed and collected applications and NCEF volunteers translated these applications from Nepali to English. The selection committee reviewed these applications and assessed the content and completeness of each application and determined whether each of them met NCEF guidelines. Then the committee ranked the applicants for sponsorship. The number of new students NCEF could sponsor in each area was voted on by the NCEF executive committee - not by the selection committee.

Rules and criteria for selection

The committee used the following criteria to determine applicants' eligibility:

- In rural areas, family income must be less than or equal to US \$20, 23, 26 and 29 per month for a family with 1, 2, 3, and more than 3 children respectively. In urban areas, family income must be less than or equal to US 33, 37, 41 and 45 per month for a family with 1, 2, 3 and more than 3 children respectively.
- Parents must be willing and available to meet with our social workers at least once a month.
- Academic cost for the sponsored child should be no more than US \$100. Academic costs include admissions fee, monthly tuition, exam fee, book costs, and costs of supplies.
- The child is not a relative of any board members or persons in the selection committee.

Likewise, the following criteria were considered in prioritizing the selection of students:

- Applicant's family has a single parent.
- Applicant never attended a school in the past.
- Applicant is a girl.
- Applicant is from marginalized groups (untouchable/dalit caste or otherwise; not in the social mainstream).
- Applicant's father did not have formal education.
- Applicant's mother did not have formal education.

Results

Out of 65 applicants, 38 students have been selected for NCEF assistance for the 2006-07 academic year. The selected students are from five different regions: Kathmandu, Kavre, Nepalgunj, Palpa and Patan. Palpa, which is a newly added region, and Nepalgunj each received 22 applications. All students from last year were approved for continued assistance and 13 new students have been added.

Some Numbers -

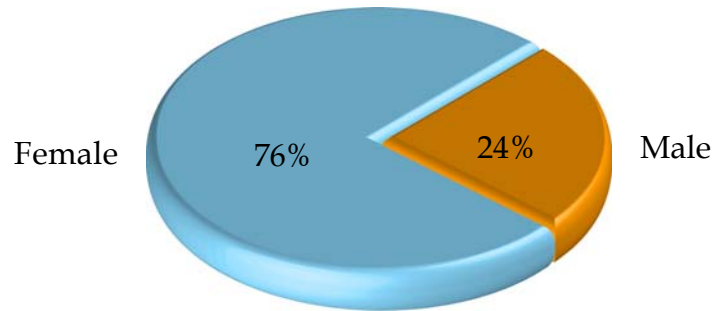
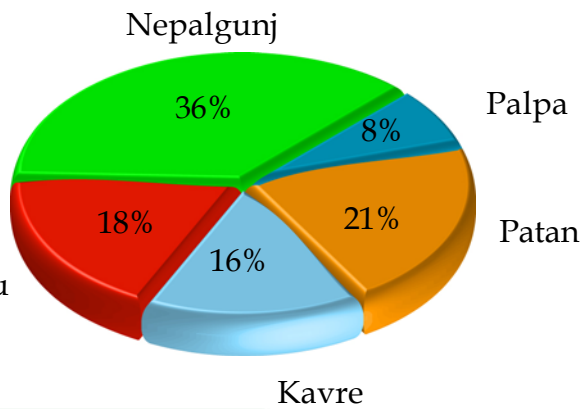
Figure 1. Distribution of number of students in each area.

Region	Total number of students	Number of continuing students	Number of new students	Total number of new applicants
Kathmandu	7	6	1	3
Kavre	6	3	3	7
Nepalgunj	14	9	5	13
Palpa	3	0	3	22 *
Patan	8	7	1	2

* Palpa is a new region. Twenty-two applications were evaluated from this region. Only three were selected.

Figure 2. Percent of students in different regions

Figure 3. Distribution of students by gender



The board has decided to discontinue assistance in Mustang. Mustang was started with great enthusiasm and energy. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to communicate with the volunteers and the headmasters of the school. When asked for monthly reports, the headmasters simply refused, pointing that the other NGOs, which also provided financial assistance, never asked for reports. After not receiving any reports for six months, the board made the decision to terminate operation in Mustang.

Figure 4. Distribution of students by grade level.

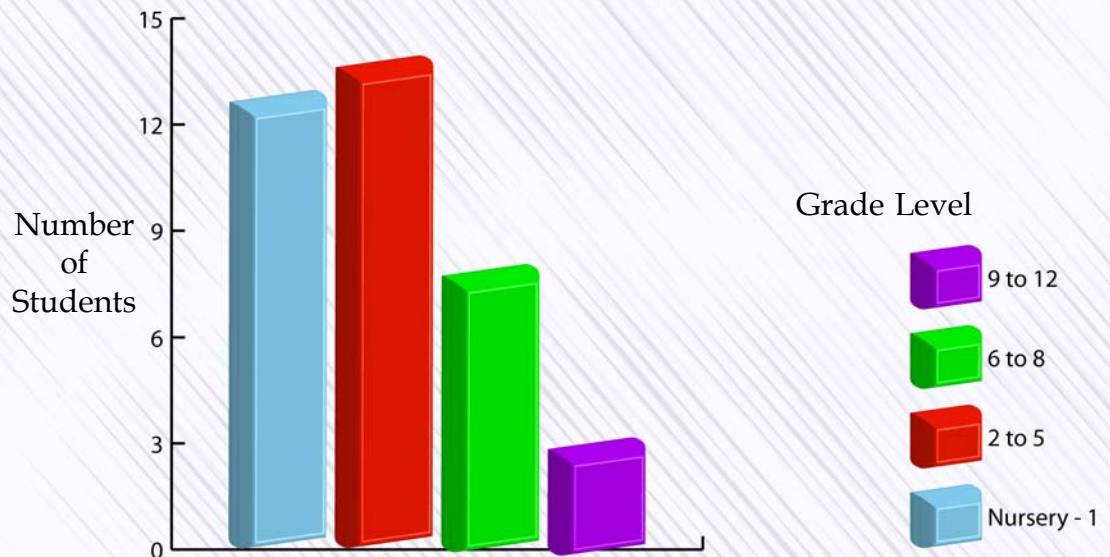


Figure 5. Family information.

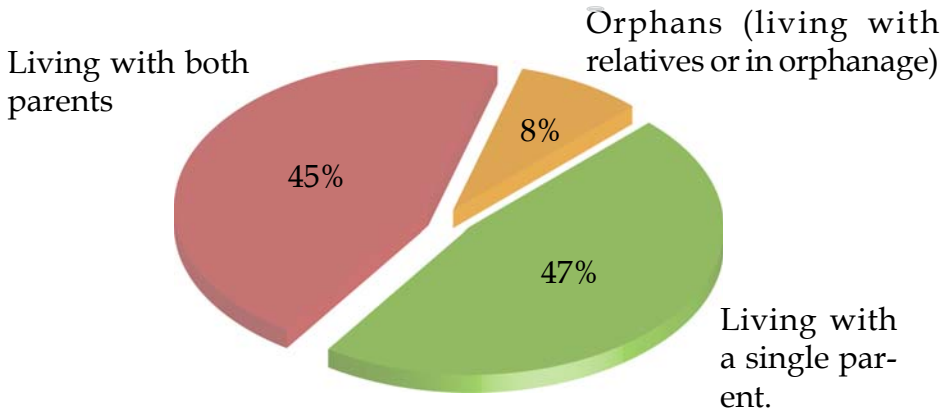


Figure 6. Distribution of students by social status.

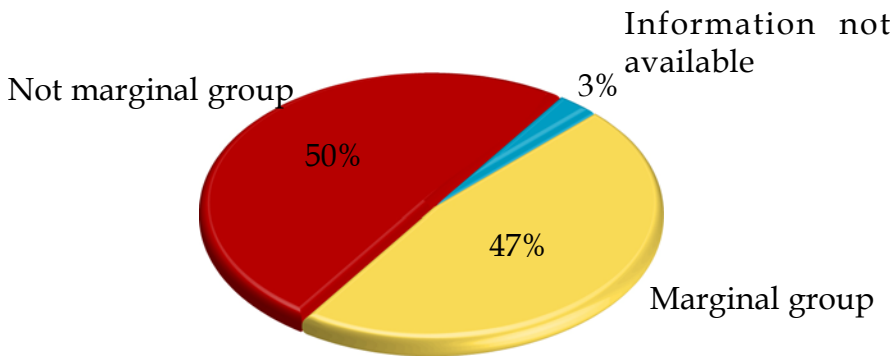
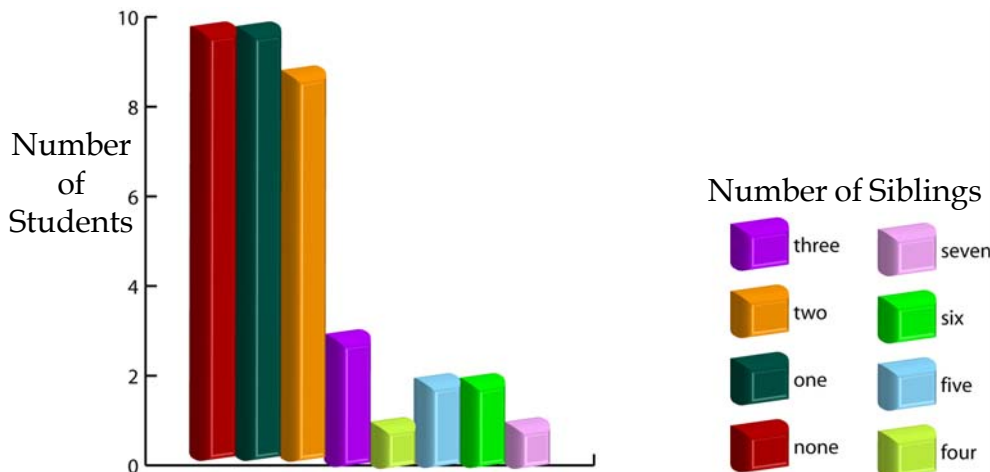
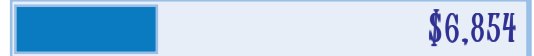


Figure 7. Number of siblings living with student



2006 FUNDRAISING METER



MAKING DONATIONS

Online:

www.nepalchildren.org/donation.html

Checks:

Make checks payable to:

Nepalese Children Education Fund or NCEF

Mailing address:

Nepalese Children's Education Fund

P.O. Box 380061

Cambridge, MA 02238-0061

Questions?

Website: www.nepalchildren.org

Email: contact@nepalchildren.org

THANK YOU!

SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE

To subscribe or unsubscribe the newsletter, please send a request email to subscribe@nepalchildren.org

NCEF PAMPHLET

Share information about NCEF with your friends with this [printable pamphlet](#)

Nepalese Children Education Fund (NCEF) is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. US Taxpayer ID: 51-0424140

ABOUT NCEF

NCEF is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop the potential of disadvantaged Nepalese children through education. Need-based scholarships are provided to deserving students who would otherwise be unable to attend school. Our social workers in Nepal meet regularly with the selected children and their parents to assist in each child's development. We dedicate our resources to each NCEF child until they complete high school (twelfth grade).

Interview with Mr. Uttam Sharma, an outside member of selection committee



Mr. Uttam Sharma served as one of the members of the selection committee as a person who had no prior affiliation with NCEF. Mr. Sharma is a graduate student at the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. He did his bachelors and masters, both in Economics, in Brandeis University and University of Maryland respectively.

Q. Why did you decide to get involved with the selection committee?

Om Gnawali knew that I was interested in education related issues. When he asked me if I would be interested in being in the selected committee, I instantly agreed to his offer. I had heard a lot about NCEF and was impressed with its activities. So, I took it as an opportunity to be involved in this dynamic organization!

Q. What prior experience (education/ profession/desire) helped to make the decisions in the selection process?

While in Nepal, I was a district coordinator in a similar organization. In a way, I had a first hand experience on how difficult it is to select students. I hoped to utilize that experience in the selection process.

Q. After reading applications from Nepal, what common characteristics did you find in majority of the applicants?

Almost all the applicants seemed poor. The financial support would definitely help the families. However, there were some applicants who tried to portray themselves as ultra-poor and as a result, there were some inconsistencies. We tried to fund those who definitely needed our support. It needs to be mentioned here that the volunteers in the district had pre-selected the students so we got applicants who were pretty diverse.

Q. What improvements can be made in procedural level to improve selection process?

Some questions were not answered or even if they were filled, they were answered incorrectly. It made selection slightly difficult. In the years to follow, NCEF could ask districts to send some completed samples so that it would make the necessary correction in the questionnaires beforehand. In hindsight, some questions

which we thought were relatively straightforward apparently were not.

Q. What improvements do you think NCEF should make to provide more efficient help?

NCEF might want to reconsider its model as a totally voluntary organization. NCEF is on its way to become a larger organization. This also means that there will be more responsibilities. Though all its activities have so far been done by volunteers with no pay, some modification on this might be necessary to take NCEF to the next level. It might need a few full time staff to provide some efficient help.

Communication with volunteers has/could become difficult. It might need someone to regularly visit different areas and see how the children are doing. Someone should randomly visit different districts and see how “fair” the selection process has been (how accurately the application forms were filled, etc.). This person could also provide some training to the volunteers. I don’t know whether NCEF will be able to sustain these activities with the existing framework.

The reason why I am raising these issues is because the present structure might limit NCEF to think further beyond which would be a tragedy because NCEF definitely has a great promise.

Q. How was your overall experience working with NCEF?

It was great. I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was interesting to see how the opinions of the members in the selection committee differed. Though everyone had the same goal, our ways of approaching problems were very different. I would say that it was a great learning experience for me. It made me realize that others might be seeing the same thing from a vastly different angle!

Q. General comments:

NCEF should look in funding more post-SLC students. I would argue that this is where a real vacuum is. I would say that passing high school (class 12) opens more opportunities for the students than just SLC. NCEF has taken many steps that are worth emulating by similar institution. It is a very transparent organization. The volunteers are motivated, talented and hard-working. This is why I would want it to further expand its bases. In other words, it should have a bold vision! Undoubtedly, many problems will emerge but it has the necessary human resource to handle the situation.