



We hope you enjoy this edition of *OLE Nepal Newsletter*, a bi-monthly email newsletter from Open Learning Exchange (OLE) Nepal. It provides current news and information about the organization and its activities and will keep you up to date with OLE Nepal's work to provide high quality education for children in Nepal.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year 2012!
from OLE Nepal family

Please visit our updated website at www.olenepal.org

Year-end Review

Before we embark on the new year, we would like to take a moment to look back and reflect on our activities and accomplishments of 2011. The One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project crossed a major milestone in 2011 when it was introduced in fifth grade in all program schools at the beginning of the current academic year in April. The program now covers all the grades from two to six. The project was launched by OLE Nepal and Nepal Government's Department of Education (DoE) in April 2008 in grades two and six in two test schools, and was expanded to more grades and schools in additional districts in subsequent years, incorporating lessons learned from implementations and feedback received from schools. Each year, OLE Nepal's digital content development team continued to design and develop interactive learning materials for more grades and subjects. The team was led by curriculum experts who were assisted by subject experts from the Curriculum Development Center (CDC). The following table shows the number of activities that have been developed so far.

The project has also trained over 200 teachers on integrating digital materials in

classroom teaching-learning process. The training program went through numerous revisions over the years to accommodate the needs of teachers and the inputs from trainers. The development of the training package and the delivery of trainings in districts would not have been possible without enthusiastic participation from the National Center for Educational Development (NCED) and its Educational Training Centers (ETC), as well as the District Education Offices (DEO) of the respective districts. These institutions under the Ministry of Education provided both technical and logistical support needed in the training and monitoring of the program. The project is currently benefiting over 4000 students in 34 schools spread in ten districts. Many schools have reported improved attendance, and teachers and parents have noticed an increased interest in learning amongst students.

The Danish Government's support to the OLPC project through its Local Grant Authority program also ended last April. The support that started in March 2008, and further renewed in June 2009 and March 2010, covered activities such as digital content development, teacher training,

	English	Mathematics	Science	Nepali
Grade 2	36	27	15*	18
Grade 3	36	24	15*	21
Grade 4	39	39	20*	20
Grade 5	39	39	30	-
Grade 6	22	38	30*	-

* Under development: Will be completed by June 2012

Latest Developments

- » Year-end Review
- » Refresher Trainings and Support Visits
- » Orientation in Tandrang
- » Internet connection in Doti
- » *E-Pustakalaya* Update

Open Learning Exchange Nepal
 Tel: +977-1-554-4441, 552-0075
 PO Box 8975, EPC 2394
 Kathmandu, Nepal
info@olenepal.org

www.olenepal.org
blog.olenepal.org
www.pustakalaya.org

school implementation and networking, monitoring and support, and various capacity development programs.

The OLPC program was expanded to two more schools in Dadeldhura and three schools in Doti with support from the UN World Food Program last April. The schools located in these remote districts are beneficiaries of Food for Education (FFE) program run by WFP in partnership with the Government of Nepal. In addition to supporting the implementation of the project in these two Far Western districts, WFP has been supporting the development of interactive digital content in science for grades two to six, with focus on agriculture, food security, nutrition, gender and the environment.

OLE Nepal also formed partnerships with the Nepal Library Foundation (NLF), a Canadian organization affiliated with the Non-Resident Nepalese Association, to implement OLPC program in a school in

Janakpur that had received 50 laptops from the POA Education Foundation. Similar program was implemented in Belbas, Tanahun in partnership with a Dutch Foundation Aleven BV. OLE Nepal also worked in partnership with Himalayan Health and Environment Services Solukhumbu (HHESS) to continue the OLPC program in a community school in Phaplu.

With further support from NLF, our digital library continued to add more materials over the past year, culminating into a resource-rich collection of nearly 3000 titles. This library can be accessed online at www.pustakalaya.org, or installed in a low-power, low-cost servers and deployed in schools and community libraries that do not have Internet connection. These offline implementations have been widely popular amongst students and teachers who otherwise would have had no access to learning materials other than their text books. The online *E-Pustakalaya* site alone averages 20 thousand visits and 10 thousand downloads each month. Following up on the suggestion of our advisors, OLE Nepal started an ambitious project last year to create content relevant to young adults in Nepali literature. Recognizing the dearth of materials in Nepali literature

that is suitable for young adults between the ages of eleven and eighteen, we started the content creation process with a seminar to discuss the issues, problems and challenges faced by Nepali youth, followed by content creation workshop. The outcomes of the initiative will soon be uploaded in the *E-Pustakalaya*.

We also conducted ten-day Progressive Education Skill Development Program to over 80 teachers from schools in Kathmandu last year. The program was designed to help teachers develop the skills necessary to deliver effective teaching through experiential learning methodologies. We also signed partnership agreement with Children of the Mountain, a UK Charity, to conduct Child Centered Learning program for teachers in Tandrang, Gorkha.

We have been inspired by the overwhelming support that we have received from friends, partner and well wishers throughout the year. Many people have given invaluable inputs to help us improve our work. A group of friends in a small town of Goshen, Indiana has organized fund raisers for the past two years to help us introduce quality education to disadvantaged students in Nepal. The network of

OLE Centers around the world and the OLE International office in Cambridge, Massachusetts have given us insights into new ideas and successful approaches used in other countries.

As we look ahead to 2012, we are excited to expand the OLPC project to twelve more schools in three new districts with support from Finnish Government's Fund for Local Cooperation. OLE Nepal will be working in partnership with DoE and DEOs as well as CDC and NCED in the implementation of the project. With serious efforts coming from the Ministry of Education, we are confident that ICT-integrated education can make a significant impact in student learning by improving education quality and expanding to learning tools. OLE Nepal will continue its support to various ICT-based initiatives while developing more content and increasing access to the digital library. On top of our wish list for 2012 are the development of digital learning materials for high school English, science and mathematics that can be accessed freely by all students, and the growth of Nepali Wikipedia both in terms of number of quality articles and the number of users of Nepali Wikipedia.

Partnerships

Embassy of Finland

The Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu has signed an agreement to support OLE Nepal to implement a project on *Quality Basic Education through ICT Integrated Classes* through its Fund for Local Cooperation (FLC). The goal of the project is to improve the quality of education in the public education system through the use of ICT resources, modern pedagogical teaching-learning techniques and integrated teaching methods by utilizing laptops. The project will be implemented from January 2012 to February 2013, and will cover twelve public schools, 2100 students from

grades two to six and 72 teachers in three districts. The project will be implemented in close collaboration with Department of Education, District Education Office and Village Development Committees of Baglung, Banke and Solukhumbu districts. The laptops used in the project were donated to by Swift Bank through OLPC Foundation.

Skoliv i Nepal

OLE Nepal has entered into an agreement with Skoliv i Nepal, a Danish Association, to implement ICT-integrated teaching-learning project at Shree Shanti

Priya School in Singaha in Kerwani VDC in Rupandehi district. The school serves some of Nepal's poorest students from the Mushahar communities in the area.

UNWFP - OLPC Project Extension

The UN World Food Programme has signed an agreement to continue its support in the OLPC program in eight schools in Doti and Dadeldhura through July 2012. This will ensure that the schools are provided with additional training and support needed to ensure smooth running of the program with the beginning of the new academic year in April 2012.

Events

OLE Nepal AGM

The fourth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of OLE Nepal was held on November 13, 2011 at Tukuche Thakali Kitchen, Lazimpat, Kathmandu. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Mohan Das Manadhar. The meeting passed the Annual Progress Report for 2010-2011 and Future Plans for 2011-2012 that were presented by Vice-chair Dr. Sudhindra Sharma. The treasurer's report for 2010-2011 and Future Financial Plans

2011-2012 presented by Mr. Prithivi Bahadur Pandey were also passed during the meeting.

ICT for Development and Education Conference

A two-day annual International Conference on "Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Development and Education" was held in Kathmandu on November 16-17, 2011. The conference was

organized by SM Foundation and was participated by a wide variety of experts and enthusiasts. At the invitation of the organizers, Mr. Rabi Karmacharya, on behalf of OLE Nepal, delivered a presentation on Local Digital Content and its importance in ICT for Education and Development. His demonstration of local digital content developed by OLE Nepal, *E-Paath* and *E-Pustakalaya*, during the course of his presentation generated a lot of interest from the audience.

Refresher Trainings and Support Visits

Solukhumbu

OLE Nepal's trainers conducted a three-day refresher training from December 2 to 4, 2011 on the integration of the digital learning materials in classroom teaching at Zeke O'Connor School in Phaplu, Solukhumbu. The major focus of this training was to help teachers acquire practical skills on using and embedding *E-Pustakalaya* in regular teaching learning in classrooms, and to train new teachers on ICT-integrated teaching methodology.

A total of eight teachers participated in the training program that covered topics such as IT literacy, classroom management and sitting arrangement, lesson plans that include *E-Paati-based* teaching, *E-Paath* and *E-Pustakalaya* usage, and safety and security of laptops.



OLE Nepal trainer with Solu teachers

OLE Nepal in partnership with Himalayan Health and Environment Services Solukhumbu (HHESS) has been implementing ICT-based teaching learning through One Laptop per Child (OLPC) project at the School since 2010. A total of 105 XO laptops have been distributed to the school from grade 2 to 6.

Belbas, Tanahu

OLE Nepal's trainer and technical support team visited Shree Siddha Beni Lower Secondary School in Belbas, Tanahu from December 12 to 14, 2011 to conduct refresher training and provide support to the teachers. The team also updated *E-Paati* laptops and school server with the latest *E-Paath* activities and *E-Pustakalaya* content respectively. A total of 12 teachers from the school participated in the refresher training. OLE Nepal and Educational Training Center (ETC) Tanahu trainers had conducted the in-school training

at the school on August 23 - 25, 2011.

Rabobank and their clients in cooperation with MeetIn had provided 50 laptops to the school and partnered with OLE Nepal to implement the program including teacher training, equipment and local network installation, monitoring and support.

Dhanusha

A team of trainer and program officer from OLE Nepal visited Sri Saraswati Higher Secondary School in Janakpurdham, Dhanusha from December 20 to 22, 2011 to conduct refresher training, and update laptops and server at the school. A total of 5 teachers participated in the refresher training which mainly revolved around operating *E-Pustakalaya*, use of *E-Pustakalaya* in the classroom, and other functions such as chat, download, copying, creating files, on the laptop.

OLE Nepal had conducted in-school training at the school in May 2011, and teacher training in January 2011 along with then NCED trainer, Mr. Sukadev Sapkota. The program in the school is a shared-model implementation supported by Nepal Library Foundation and POA Education Foundation.

Dadeldhura and Doti

As part of an effort to reinforce the concepts learnt during teacher training and in-school training earlier in the year, OLE Nepal's Sunil Pokharel and Tikaraj Karki set out to OLPC program schools in Far Western districts, Dadeldhura and Doti, from December 21 to 30, 2011. They were later joined by their colleague, Subir Pradhanang, on December 25. The OLE Nepal team was accompanied by WFP's Deputy Head of Dadeldhura Sub-office, Mr. Ramesh Balayar, and OLPC Focal Person in Dadeldhura Sub-office, Mr. Rabinendra Chand, on their visit to the program schools. Also accompanying were Resource Persons, Mr. Prem Singh Ayer and Mr. Krishna Bista, from Dadeldhura District Education Office (DEO).

As per the original plan, the team was divided into two, and each team spent 1-2 days in each school observing laptop-integrated classes conducted by the trained teachers and giving feedback, clarifying

confusions that teachers had about ICT-based teaching-learning practices, and addressing technical and pedagogical issues brought up by them. They also updated school servers with latest *E-Pustakalaya* content, and installed new *E-Paath* packages in the laptops. They also held community interactions in all schools, which saw good participation from members of School Management Committee (SMC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and active parents/guardians. During the interaction program, special emphasis was given to the role of the community in the success of the program and in ensuring the safeguarding as well as the proper use of the laptops.

Similarly, a two-day residential refresher training was held on December 24 and 25 at Dipayal ETC involving Doti program school teachers and new teachers from nearby Dadeldhura school. The schools visited prior to the residential training were Selaling Primary School in Budum, Janjyoti School in Hamtad, Samajji Primary School in Haat and Janta Primary School in Koral. Likewise, Mahadev Primary School in Dukrala, Durga Primary School in Bel, Saraswati Primary School in Chasi and Saraswati Primary School in Kapadi Gaon



Community interaction taking place in Doti program school

were visited after the residential training in Dipayal.

OLE Nepal and UN WFP have been implementing the OLPC program in Dadeldhura since 2009 and in Doti since 2011 with the aim to improve access to quality education in these far flung areas of the country. Needless to say, the OLE Nepal team received strong support and cooperation from WFP Dadeldhura Sub-office prior to and during their stay in Dadeldhura and Doti.

Orientation Program in Tandrang, Gorkha

OLE Nepal has partnered with Children of the Mountain (COTM), a UK registered charity, to provide training and support to teachers from all ten public schools in Tandrang VDC and one in Aarupokhari VDC of Gorkha district. OLE Nepal's team of trainers visited Tandrang on November 7-9, 2011 to give an orientation to stake-

holders, assess the needs of schools and teachers, and collect their feedback on the content of the training program that OLE Nepal has developed with inputs from COTM's resources. They held meetings with School Management Committee Chairs, Parent-Teacher Association Chairs, school principals, teachers, and

community members at Shree Sanskrit Higher Secondary School in Tandrang during the visit. The stakeholders' views and needs would be incorporated in the training program on Child Centered Learning that will be launched in Tandrang in January 2012.

Internet Connection in Doti

As reported in previous newsletters, the OLPC program was launched in three schools in the remote district of Doti as a joint effort by OLE Nepal and UN World Food Programme in April 2011. Just like in neighboring Dadeldhura district, these schools are beneficiaries of Food for Education (FFE) program launched by WFP in partnership with the Government of Nepal to address the acute food scarcity in these remote locations. Altogether 280 OLPC laptops and school bags were deployed at the schools right after the initial eight-day training to all the teachers in April 2011, followed by installation of school network consisting of servers and access points in each classroom to enable students to access digital content in the server.

Out of the three schools in Doti, only one Mahadev Primary School is accessible by motor road. Other two schools, Saraswoti and Durga Primary Schools are 1.5 to 2.5 hours walk from the nearest road.

On this visit, OLE Nepal's network team set out to connect the schools to the Internet -- a daunting task in a remote hilly area where technical infrastructure is non-existent. In spite of the many challenges faced by the team of two engineers, Basanta Shrestha and Ram Singh, they were successful in connecting two out of three schools to the Internet. They battled cold weather and strenuous terrain to set up multiple relay points on hill tops to establish the connection. After the original plan based on an earlier visit did not work due to interference, they had to devise an alternate plan and explore more locations to complete their task. The visit lasted from November 18 to December 4, 2011.

The new plan required the team to negotiate with a local radio station in Saileshwori for permission to use their phone line to subscribe to the ADSL for Internet

link. The link was relayed to a nearby Ncell tower located in a higher altitude in Silghadi using wireless radios. This tower had clear line of sight with Ncell towers in Khatigaun and Mouwa. During the time of deployment in April, the team had done a feasibility study and had planned to link towers in Khatigaun and Mouwa from Silghadi and further link schools from the two towers. But during the execution process, the team's attempt to connect Khatigaun and Mouwa did not work out due to interference between the towers. The team then had to go back to the drawing board and re-design the network plan. The team took a completely different path and relayed the link through a village in Khatiwada. The link had to be relayed to yet another village before finally reaching the schools in Chasi and Bel.

After successfully linking Khatiwada, it also seemed possible to link the third school from there, but since it required adding two more relays in between, the team decided that such a link with too many relays between source and destination is highly unreliable.



Doti school teachers browsing Internet on E-Paatis

Teachers from Saraswoti School were very excited when they first browsed the Internet on their XO laptops. Teachers were then briefed on how information can be

searched and accessed on the Internet.

Teachers from the relay school in Khatiwoda, Shree Devi School, felt extremely fortunate to get access to the Internet right at the school. The school already had two computers, and few teachers had some computer knowledge and could immediately see the benefit of allowing the relay station to be placed at their school premises. This was a win-win situation since the school took responsibility for the security of network equipment used to relay the signals in exchange for the connection.

Climbing high towers, fixing clamps, poles and wireless antennas require both physical ability and mental focus. OLE Nepal engineers sought help from two local college students from Saileshwori to carry out these jobs. The students were trained on how to mount clamps, make adjustments, hook cables and fine tune antennas in order to establish link before being assigned to the tasks.

OLE Nepal would like to express its gratitude to the following organizations and individuals for their support in helping connect schools in these remote areas:

1. Ncell Pvt. Ltd. for generously allowing the use of their towers to install long-range wireless radios and antenna. Special thanks go to Mr. Yagya Raj Bhatta and Mr. Laxman Khatri from Ncell for their help and support at the sites.
2. Saileshwori FM, Silgadi for providing connection to ADSL Internet and the use of their tower.
3. Shree Devi School, Khatiwoda for giving us space to put our antennas at the school premises.
4. All the teachers, especially teachers from Saraswoti School in Doti, for their help and support.
5. Our partner, UN WFP, for all the logistical and financial support in the entire program in Dadeldhura and Doti.

Progressive Education Skill Development Program

The third ten-day long Progressive Education Skill Development Program was conducted at Triyog Higher Secondary School, Dhapasi from November 8 to 21, 2011. Teachers, teacher assistants, and coordinators of grades one to three participated in this program with a lot of energy and enthusiasm and seemed very eager to bring about a change in their teaching methodology.

After the initial Education Philosophy training, participants attended another ten-day long Integrated Grade Teaching Program that was conducted from Decem-

ber 5 to 16, 2011 at the school. The topics that were introduced in the earlier training on multiple intelligences and different learning styles of children were covered in depth with examples during this program. Teachers got an opportunity to experience hands-on activities that they could take back to their classrooms. The emphasis of this program was also on planning daily lessons for integrated grade teaching in which children could be involved in their own learning, with teachers as facilitators

Teachers from grades one to three will be monitored and supported by OLE Nepal

on a regular basis for the coming academic year to ensure proper implementation of this program.



Progressive Education Skill Development program in Triyog School

E-Pustakalaya Update

The third full year of the project (2011) has been very fruitful in terms of expanding the number of interactive modules for children and broadening our contact list. Through partnerships with both The British Council and *e-Learning for Kids*, we have managed to increase our flash-based interactive learning modules available for our users. Since these modules are not restricted to a curriculum like OLE Nepal's *E-Paath*, they have attracted a broader audience. Our partnership with Practical Action Nepal has helped us increase our video content dramatically. The continual improvement in the quality of our collection, the growth in the number of titles available and an increase in the subjects

and genres covered by our uploaded titles have meant that visitors to the site and number of titles downloaded have increased dramatically. In December 2010 we were averaging 5,000 views and 5,000 downloads per month. Currently we are averaging over 20,000 views and 10,000 downloads per month. To better track our data, we have also started using google analytics tool.

The *e-Learning for Kids* (not-for-profit global organization) learning modules were uploaded in November. We had to create an HTML index and merge two CDs worth of content sent to us by *e-Learning for Kids* before uploading the materials. The interactive, flash based modules were

also added to our feature section. These modules cover a broad variety of subjects, and unlike *E-Paath* and *LE Kids*, contain modules that will help students of grade eight and higher as well. We have received a third CD from *e-Learning for Kids* and we will be adding these modules before the end of January.

During November and December, we added over 35 videos on Algebra from Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org). Next we will be uploading videos related to History. For Nepali students limited to text books, the lectures on history and sociology which focus on the western world will broaden their understanding of how the wider world is shaped. During the month of December, we managed to upload all the videos provided to us by Practical Action. As mentioned earlier this has increased the amount of videos available in *E-Pustakalaya* to around 100 clips.

We have also started uploading *Nepal Rajpatra*. We believe that providing access to law amendments published in these national gazettes will help people be aware of their rights and allow them to make better informed decisions in the future.

*Titles that have caught our online users attention during the whole of December**

Title	Author	File Downloads
Muna Madan (Nepali)	Laxmi Prasad Devkota	179
Das Avatar (Nepali)	Bhairav Aryal	169
Teen Na Tera (Nepali)	Laxman Gamnage	126
Byawaharik Sanskritam -Pratham Pustakam (Sanskrit)	Promodavardana and Shivaraj Acharya	117

**Does not include the downloads from the offline servers in our program schools*

E-Pustakalaya in Nuwakot

OLE Nepal network team visited Bhairabi Higher Secondary School in Nuwakot from November 11 to 14, 2011 to setup a computer lab consisting of *E-Pustakalaya*, and to train teachers on how to access, download and use the digital educational materials. Although the school already had eight desktop computers, most of them were not functioning. The team was able to bring five of them to a working condition and installed Ubuntu system on all of them. The team then set up the school network and connected the desktops to a school server that was pre-installed with

offline version of *E-Pustakalaya*.

The team also routed the existing Internet link through the school server. Thus, the server now has dual purpose of acting as a network gateway filtering web content and as offline *E-Pustakalaya* server providing fast access to digital content to users. Finally, teachers and few students from the school were given a day-long orientation on the newly installed network and *E-Pustakalaya* systems. An introduction on Ubuntu and Nepali Unicode were also covered during the training program.

The installation of *E-Pustakalaya* and the training program at the school was supported by Nepal Library Foundation (NLF).



OLE Nepal engineers with teachers during Nuwakot visit



E-Pustakalaya Advisor Geeta Keshary Awarded

Swarnima Sahitya Prathistan gave the first ever Swarnima Vishista Nari Samaan Tatha Puraskar to Geeta Keshary for her lifelong contribution to the field of Nepali Literature.

The award was handed out by Chancellor of Nepal Academy Bairagi Kaila. Ms. Keshary, has been on OLE Nepal's *E-Pustakalaya* Advisory Panel since March 2010. Currently, eight of her works including five of her novels can be found on the *E-Pustakalaya*. All eleven of her novels will be made available for on *E-Pustkalaya* by

the end of this year.

We were fortunate to have Ms. Keshary on our Advisory Panel, and to work with her during our Young Adult literature workshop. Her newest novel catered towards Young Adults will be available soon on *E-Pustakalaya*.

E-Paath is a set of curriculum-based interactive digital learning materials developed by OLE Nepal

E-Pustakalaya is OLE Nepal's education-centered digital library consisting of books, reference materials, school wikipedia, etc.

E-Paati is the Nepali name for the XO laptops used in OLPC program schools