



साझा शिक्षा ई-पाटी
OLE NEPAL

OLE Nepal Newsletter

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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 organisation and its activities and will keep you up to date with OLE Nepal's work to provide high quality education for children in Nepal.

Message From Executive Director

With the beginning of the new academic cycle in April 2011, the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project has entered its fourth year in Nepal. What started out as a small test project in two schools in Lalitpur three years ago has now expanded to 32 schools in eight districts covering over 3300 students from grades two to six. The program has trained over 180 teachers – most of whom had never used computers before – on integrating technology in classroom teaching-learning process. OLE Nepal has completed the preparation of curriculum-based interactive digital learning materials for grades two to six English and mathematics, and grades two to four Nepali. These learning materials, along with the training program, have been key to the success of the program at the schools.



We started out on this project with a conviction that technology has the power to change the landscape of education in Nepal. But we realized right from the begin-

ning that technology alone could not solve all the problems that plague our education system. We honed in on two very important issues in education that technology can address, namely quality and access, and we developed the project to use technology to improve the quality of education and access to educational materials. We recognized that laptops and technology were just the means, and that any technological intervention is as good as the educational content it brings to the fingertips of the users. Furthermore, technology cannot unleash its full potential unless there are skilled teachers who understand how to integrate it effectively in pedagogical practices. Through careful planning, and with dedicated group of educators and trainers working in close collaboration with government experts, trainers, and implementers, the project was successful in breaking new grounds in preparing curriculum-based digital educational activities and training teachers in some of the most remote areas of the country.

However, the greatest achievement of the project is not the number of students and schools that have benefited from the program, nor the innovative teaching-learning approach being practiced in the classrooms, nor the free and open access to interactive digital materials that were prepared during the past three years. More than anything, this project has started a new direction in education that most had previously thought was not possible in Nepal. The project

Latest Developments

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has demonstrated that technology-based education can be successfully introduced in rural schools, and that we can do it by preparing the available local resources in our education system. OLE Nepal has worked closely with line agencies of the Ministry of Education to build the content, train the teachers, and implement the project in the districts. We have lobbied relentlessly with government bodies to introduce policy measures to mainstream this novel approach in education. Over the past three years, we have seen a significant increase in awareness about the merits of technology-based education. The experiences from the OLPC implementation across Nepal will be instrumental in preparing national plans and policies to in-

tegrate ICT in education. Government trainers and curriculum experts who have worked with OLE Nepal over these years will bring insights and experiences that will prove invaluable to the Ministry as it plans and implements ICT based education in the country.

In addition to the dedicated team of educators, implementers, technical staff, and volunteers, OLE Nepal owes much of its success to the many partners who have supported us in our programs. The Department of Education (DoE) has been instrumental in the planning, designing, and implementing stages of the program. As per the agreement with OLE Nepal, the DoE also played a key role in coordinating participation from other line agencies, raising awareness in various government agencies, and monitoring the project with the help of the District Education Offices. The DoE was also successful in persuading the government to allocate funds in the national budget for the project, and provide funds necessary to implement the program in two districts in 2009-10. The Local Grant Authority funds made available by the Danish Government through its Embassy in Kathmandu has been the main source of funds necessary to develop educational content, train teachers, build local

capacity, set up network infrastructure, and support the program at the schools. Similarly, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been a crucial partner in the Far Western district of Dadeldhura where three schools that are part of its Food for Education program have been benefiting from the OLPC project. In addition to funding the implementation, training, network infrastructure at these schools, WFP has also been active in helping monitor and support the program at the schools through its Sub Office in Dadeldhura.

The Dansk IT Society provided the first batch of laptops that were used in the test phase in 2008, while the second batch of laptops came as donation from Swift Banking group through the OLPC Foundation. We continue to work closely with the OLPC organization based in Cambridge, USA on adapting the laptops to fit the needs of learners in Nepal. OLE International also based in Cambridge, has helped design our projects in the past, and continues to support our endeavours. The Nepal Library Foundation (NLF), based in Canada, has been the main partner in the digital library project (E-Pustakalaya) that boasts a collection of over 2100 books and reference materials enjoyed by students and families at

the 32 schools as well as Internet users both in Nepal and abroad.



OLE Nepal will continue to work alongside the government and other partners in various areas to promote ICT-based education in public schools, including the implementation of the OLPC program in additional schools. Our experiences over the past three years have reinforced our initial belief that there needs to be a strong national and local support structure to successfully leverage technology to improve student learning. And it is encouraging that the Ministry of Education is close to completing the ICT in Education Master Plan that will provide guidelines to all line agencies towards this common goal.

Deployment & Teacher Training 2011

OLE Nepal has recently completed the deployment of laptops in OLPC program schools, and conducted teacher training workshops at the districts. With the addition of grade five in the program this year, the project has now passed a major milestone in saturating all grades from two to six. This year, the program has also been introduced to three schools in a new district, Doti, and two new schools in Dadeldhura. All of the new schools have been added in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), which has been assisting Nepal Government in implementing the Food for Education program in these schools located in remote food-insecure areas. As of now,

the project has deployed a total of 3311 laptops in 32 schools across eight districts. OLE Nepal's network and technical team visited all the schools to install network con-



Teacher Training in progress in Kavre

nection and power infrastructure in the new classrooms (for grade five). They also updated the school

server with new materials and loaded all the existing laptops with the latest E-Paath bundles. They also carried out network and equipment maintenance work at the schools.

At the newly added schools, the team installed the entire school network and connected new servers and access points. They also carried out a feasibility study to provide Internet connectivity at the new schools.

The schools also received bags for incoming students in grade two. These bags were designed to carry laptops as well as books and notebooks. The schools were also handed laptop charging racks designed by OLE Nepal. Laptops are placed on the racks and charged while not in use by students each classroom.

Training programs were held in var-

ious districts ahead of the deployment of additional laptops at the schools. While the full eight-day training was conducted for teachers from new schools in Dadeldhura and Doti, a shorter four-day training was conducted for teachers from current program schools who are using laptops to teach their respective subjects, but had not received any prior training. Since the program has been running in these schools for at least two years, even teachers without prior training had time to learn the basics from their colleagues who had received training the previous years. Hence, the full eight days were not needed to prepare these teachers. With the completion of this round of training, all teachers teaching English and mathematics in grades two to six, and teaching Nepali in grades two to four in the current program schools are trained in integrating laptops and the digital learning materials (E-Paath) and digital library (E-Pustakalaya). The training programs were conducted jointly by trainers from OLE Nepal and the National Center for Educational Development (NCED).

Focal teachers from each program schools also participated in the training programs. Focal teachers have a critical role in the smooth running of the program at the schools. In addition to supporting other teachers in using the laptops and digital resources, focal teachers are also responsible for preparing new teachers who many join the school later in the middle of the academic year. In this training program, the focal teachers assisted the trainers in many of the sessions. In future, these teachers can be valuable resources in the expansion of ICT-based education in schools all over Nepal.

One key point that was emphasized during the training was communication and coordination between program schools, especially those in the same districts. Many of the participants felt that there was a lot to benefit by such cooperation, especially in exchanges of best practices and in tackling problems faced by the schools.

The following is a summary of the reports from each of the districts:

Kavre and Lalitpur Districts:

The training for teachers from five program schools in Lalitpur and three in Kavre was held jointly in Malpi International School in Kavre. The residential training program was attended by 22 teachers, out of which eight were focal teachers. Four teachers from nearby public schools in Malpi and one staff from Malpi International School also attended the program as observers. A five member team from OLE Nepal were involved in the training including Ms. Kamana Regmi, Ms. Achala Pokhrel, Mr. Rabi Karmacharya, Mr. Abhishek Singh and Mr. Aayoush Mulmi (Intern).



Makwanpur teachers assisted by a focal teacher

The focal teachers were used extensively in facilitating and, at times, conducting the sessions. They did an excellent job in the introductory session on laptops and E-Paath, as well as on the demonstration class on integrating laptops in classroom teaching. They brought great insights in discussions on the challenges and issues surrounding the use of laptops into classrooms and on the proper student management.

Although the trainees were familiar with the laptops, most of them had not accessed E-Pustakalaya on the school server. The teachers were thrilled to discover the many books and reference materials found in the digital library.

On the second and third days of the training, Abhishek Singh from OLE Nepal gave an overview on School-Tool to the focal teachers. The sessions were held in the evening after the completion of regular training sessions. Most of the teachers were very enthusiastic about the tool that will help them manage

students, record grades and attendance, and prepare school calendar. OLE Nepal is planning to test the tool in two schools after another round of training in June.

Makwanpur District: A four member team was involved in the training in Makwanpur, including a master trainer from NCED Mr. Sukadev Sapkota, along with Mr. Rajeev Adhikari, Mr. Subir Pradhanang, and Mr. Ayoush Raj Onta (Intern) from OLE Nepal. The four-day training was conducted in the Lead Resource Centre in Hetauda. The District Education Office (DEO) and its staff helped arrange the venue as well as other logistics. Altogether 19 teachers from five program schools participated in the training.

Although the training was conducted by the trainers, the focal teachers from four schools also conducted some of the sessions. The idea behind involving focal teachers in the training was to build their capacity and to establish them as “go to person in schools” in front of their peers. The sessions conducted by the school focal persons were effective and they demonstrated that they were good resource person in the district for the program.

Headteachers from all of the participating schools were invited to the last day of the training to discuss how to maximize use of laptops by the students, and on the roles of various school level stakeholders in the program. Officials from the Makawanpur DEO also attended the training program during the course of the four days. Opening session of the program was chaired by Makawanpur DEO, Mr. Bishnu Adhikari, and attended by Under Secretary, Mr. Him Sharma Poudel and OLPC focal person Mr. Bishnu Sapkota.

Kapilvastu District: A four member team was involved in the training in Kapilvastu, including a master trainer from Educational Training Center Damauli Mr. Govinda Poudel, and OLE Nepal’s teacher training coordinator Mr. Tika Raj Karki, and interns/technical resources Mr. Sandesh Pathak and Mr. Prakash Chitrakar. The four-day training was conducted in one

of the program schools, Shree Pancha Lower Secondary School, in Baijalpur, Kapilvastu.

Training in Kapilvastu was held with the objective of facilitating teachers who had not previously received training; establish school focal teachers as responsible resource for schools, and to discuss option of shared model in Kapilvastu schools. As in Makawanpur schools, focal teachers here were also heavily involved in the training as facilitators and trainers only gave their inputs where and when required.

Most of the training sessions were conducted as practice classes on usage of laptops, E-Pustakalaya and lesson plan preparation. Headteachers from all of the participating schools also joined the training

Network team visit to Doti and Dadeldhura

OLE Nepal's network team visited Dadeldhura and Doti districts from April 14 to 30 with the aim to check the school networks, connect more schools to the Internet, and survey the new schools for Internet connectivity. The team was also assigned additional task of deploying OLPC program in two new schools in Dadeldhura and three schools in the new district, Doti. Network Engineers Ram Krishna Singh and Basanta Shrestha were accompanied by two interns Prakash Chitrakar and Shaswot Kharel on the visit. During deployment at the schools in Doti, the team also explored different sites and locations to establish Internet connectivity.

The team visited the existing program schools at Haat, Koral and Hamtad in Dadeldhura to update the operating system (NEXO) and load new set of learning activities (E-Paath) in old laptops. Similarly, servers in all three schools were updated with the latest build of the digital library (E-Pustakalaya). Furthermore, the team installed wireless access points in grade 5 classrooms in all the schools and connected them to the school servers. The team also visited the two additional schools in Dadeldhura located in Kaipalmandu and Bu-

session on the last day to discuss how to maximize the laptop usage in school by students, and on the roles of various school level stakeholders in the program. Officials from the Kapilvastu DEO also attended the training program during the course of the four days. Closing session of the program was chaired by Kapilvastu DEO Mr. Shankar Bahadur Gautam, and attended by School Supervisor, Mr. Ram Prasad Pandey and Computer Operator Mr. Buddha Bahadur Thapa.

Dadeldhura and Doti Districts:

Since two new schools in Dadeldhura and three in Doti were added to the program this year, a full eight day residential training was conducted in Dadeldhura. The training held at the District Education Office hall in Dadeldhura was attend-

dum, Alital and three new schools in Doti to set up the entire school network.

Two schools in Dadeldhura -- Samaiji Pra Vi. Haat and Selaling Pra Vi. Budum -- have been connected to OLE Nepal's network and have Internet connection at the schools. The connection to Samaiji Pra Vi was quite stable from the tower at



Network team setting up antenna on NCell tower in Rupesh Kanda, Doti

WFP Sub Office via a relay point located at a house in the village up near the school. Due to the distance and hilly terrain, the connection to Selaling Pra Vi required two relay points placed in Nepal Telecom tower in Kafali and NCell tower in Rupesh Kanda, Doti. The antenna that was previously mounted on a tree top at Rupesh Kanda was moved to NCell tower after its completion. This has ensured

ed by ten teachers from schools in Doti, eight from new schools and six from existing three schools in Dadeldhura. The training was held from April 11 to 18, and trainers Mr. Ram Chandra Poudel from NCED and Mr. Sunil Pokhrel from OLE Nepal were supported by intern Shaswot Kharel.

The residential training will be followed up by in-school training in the new schools in June.

Mustang District The deployment in Mustang took place in February 2011 and was reported in the last newsletter. Mustang being a mountainous district has long and hard winters, hence schools there follow a different academic cycle that begins in February and ends in November.

a stable connection between WFP Sub Office in Dadeldhura and the school in Budum. NCell and Nepal Telecom have been very generous in allowing OLE Nepal to use its towers to bring Internet connectivity to schools located in remote locations in far flung districts.

Janata Pra Vi. Koral and Sri Saraswoti Pra Vi., Kaipalmandu will be connected in future visit through a planned relay point at Sunkeswor Pra Vi, Belapur, once this school gets electricity. Trying to connect Janajyoti, Hamtad located near the Selaling Pra Vi proved to be the most daunting task. Despite trying many different options, the team was not able to establish connection at the school. The team will make further investigation to find a solution before the next visit.

The team explored different sites from where the new program schools in Doti can be linked to the Internet. The team will work on connecting the schools on their next visit. Two NCell towers located at Khatigaun near Dipayal and Mouwa could potentially be used as relay points to connect the schools. The towers are both work in progress and are in the last phase of completion. The source of Internet will be ADSL at Silgadi. This link will be shared by all three schools.

Open Source Software presentation at Prime Minister's Office

OLE Nepal and Language Technology Kendra (LTK) was invited to the Prime Minister's office on March 24, 2011 to present on open source software to bureaucrats and staff members. The event was chaired by Chief Secretary Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire and attended by Secretary Mr. Lilamani Poudel along with nearly forty staff and officials from the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers



Rabi Karmacharya presenting as Chief Secretary and Secretary listens

Mr. Rabi Karmacharya and Mr. Subir Pradhanang from OLE Nepal gave an introduction about what open source software is and how it works. (Subir is also the president of FOSS Nepal). The audience were informed that benefits of open source software include financial

savings, better security, increased reliability and stability, and ability to customize and localize as per user requirements. Mr. Bal Krishna Bal and Mr Vijay Kumar Shrestha from LTK further shed light on the benefits of localized applications based on open source software



Presentation in progress

and also gave a demonstration of Ubuntu, an entirely open source operating system based on Linux kernel. As there have been numerous recent campaigns to introduce computer technology to facilitate and enhance services in various sector, it is important for the government, organizations and institutions to make a serious effort to adopt open source software. This step needs to be taken not only to realize significant savings that would otherwise have been spent on purchasing proprietary software, but also to curb the prevalent use of pirated software across

all sectors. In his closing remarks, the Chief Secretary reiterated that the government offices should lead the way in putting an end to the use of pirated software, and set an example by installing and using open source software.

OLE Nepal and LTK will assist the Prime Minister's Office to introduce open source software in the computers used by officials and staff members.

Workshop to develop ICT in Education proposal

As ongoing support to the Ministry of Education, OLE Nepal supported the ministry for a one day workshop to finalize its proposal on ICT based education and to develop a monitoring tool on March 24, 2011. The workshop was organized at Yala Maya Kendra in Patan whereas the Ministry organized the second part of the workshop at SAP Phalcha in Babarmahal. OLE's support for the first day of the workshop was in form of logistical as well as technical support whereas second day's support was technical in nature. The workshop was attended by various officials from different central level agencies from the MoE system and the outcome was a final proposal and monitoring tool that MoE can use in ICT based education projects.

Upcoming Events

Laptop distribution in Kavre: Director of Planning and Monitoring at the Department of Education, Mr. Khaga Raj Baral is scheduled to visit Bainayak Bal Lower Secondary School in Badal Gaon, Kavre in the first week of May to distribute laptops and bags to the incoming students.

In-School training: As a follow up of the training that was recently completed in most districts, trainers will be visiting schools in May and June to observe how well the newly trained teachers are able to integrate E-Paati and E-Paath in real classroom teaching. The trainers will provide feedback to individual teachers on their performance, clarify confusions that they may have had and discuss ways to deliver effective teaching using the new methodology. The trainers will also encourage collaboration amongst teachers to make the

program stronger at each school.

Belbas School program: OLE Nepal, in partnership with Aleven BV from the Netherlands, will be implementing the OLPC 'shared model' in Sri Siddha Beni Shree Siddha Beni Lower Secondary School, Pokhari Bhanjyang-1, Belbas, Tanahun beginning in May, 2011. Aleven BV has provided 50 laptops for the school, along with server and other equipment and support for teacher training.

Janakpur School support visit: OLE Nepal's trainer and technical support staff will be visiting Sri Saraswati Higher Secondary School in Janakpur in May to conduct in-school training and update laptops and server at the school. OLE Nepal and NCED trainers had conducted training at the school from January 30 to February 5. The laptops for the school were donated by Mr. Aditya Jha of POA

Foundation and the implementation is being supported by Nepal Library Foundation.

Grade 5 science content: OLE Nepal's content development team will soon be completing the development of interactive content for grade 5 science, with major focus on promoting good practices in agriculture, food and nutrition. The many topics that will be covered include environment, energy, soil, hygiene, nutrition, balanced diet, school gardening. The content developed with support from the World Food Programme will be included in the E-Paath package, and will be prepared in both Nepali and English languages.

In addition to the new schools in Dadeldhura and Doti, trainers will also visit existing schools where they feel that there is a need of in-school training.