

COMMUNITY HOURS PROGRAM, 2078

Ashraya Banskota & Shruti Pokhrel



School

Shree Bhringeshwor Secondary School

Likhu Tamakoshi Rural Municipality, Dharapani-8, Bijulikot, Ramechhap

From Nursery to 12

Number of Students: approx. 300

Principal name: Bikram Timalina

Contact Person: Nabaraj Mahat

Shree Bhringeshwor Secondary School was established in 2034 B.S. Currently there are 12+ teachers including one school helper. The school is in temporary setting and has limited number of desktops available for students but they lack internet connection.

The Experience

- **Teaching**

Since the school had very few faculty members, there were many leisure periods for the students. So, in order to manage the chaos, we were given the responsibility to teach the students of grades 1 to 9 covering the classes from first to last period. We spent 20 days teaching the students on the subjects we were assigned to.

During that time, we focused on making the class more interesting by making the students actively participate in the classroom.

Besides the classroom, we also took students of grades 6,7, and 8 to the computer lab. Since there were only three working computers, it was difficult for us to assign the students with tasks. However, we tried our best to explain and teach them practical knowledge of computers by focusing on the basic skills of MS Word, MS Excel, and MS Powerpoint. We also helped teachers with document formatting and putting records in MS Excel.

- **Flipped Classes**

Flipped classroom videos were shown to grade 5 and grade 9 students. Students seemed to be very fascinated with the videos and constantly asked us to show them every other day. It turned out appealing and engaging for them as well as for us to cover the chapters through the

visual version. However, due to lack of facilities within the school, we could only show 5-6 videos to them and couldn't conduct flipped sessions for other classes.

- **Extra activities**

Besides academics, we also conducted fun sessions for students. On Fridays, we would allow students to play volleyball, football, kabaddi and sing songs. We also introduced students to dictation that encouraged them to use spellings they'd already learned as well as improved their comprehension skills.

The Learning

Both of us had never been away from Kathmandu until this program came up. We had never thought that we would suffer from homesickness. We must say our first week in Ramechhap was full of difficulties and that separation from family was really horrible. At that point, we were missing that buzz of Kathmandu, food, and that crowd; we were habituated to seeing in our daily life. But now when we think about our days in Ramechhap, it brings a smile to our faces. There were some struggles as well as some cheerful and joyous moments.

Ramechhap has taught us some major life lessons. We were completely new to the place and the environment but we received much love and support from the family we stayed with, the staffs of the school as well as students.

On our very first day at the school, we were assigned tasks by the school headmaster. We were mentally prepared to assist students in the curriculum with some additional assistance such as flipped classes but turned out the school did not have enough faculty members and most of the classes would go leisurely. The school was within a walking distance of 5 minutes away from the

place we stayed. The school was in a temporary setting as the new building was in the making. So, the school lacked basic facilities like pure drinking water, waste management, and a properly managed toilet system. Since there were only 3 working desktops the students had to wait for their turn and were very difficult to handle in terms of discipline. As the students did not have enough practical classes as they should have, we made sure we take as many practical classes as we could. Due to lack of internet connection, we couldn't teach them everything we were planning to. While talking to the students about their lifestyle and all, we came to know that right after going from school they had to get the livestock from the forest and do household chores due to which most of them would not complete the assigned tasks on time. But there were few exceptions, some of them were really good in their studies and would complete the tasks, ask questions and interact with teachers. During our tenure in the school, we couldn't see the school organizing any sort of extracurriculars and that may be because of the setting of the school but every Friday we would organize some fun sessions for the students so that they get a break from the hectic schedule. We tried to conduct some talk sessions but the students seemed shy and lacked confidence in speaking in front of the audience. The teachers of the school were supportive and had an interest in learning computers and technology. We are glad that we could of some support for them.

From the place we stayed in, we could barely see 1-2 other houses. We got to meet some of the villagers during the social functions such as marriage and puja. Those functions and interactions helped us understand the lifestyle of people in remote Nepal in the best way possible. The major problem we found there was the lack of manpower. At least one member of the family was working in Kathmandu or in abroad, so mostly elderly people were in the village. Everything they consumed was organic and grown in their own fields. People of varied caste and

ethnicity were living together as an extended family with mutual respect and understanding. The family we stayed with showered us with much love and treated us like their own daughters. They encouraged us to meet new people and attend social events along with them.

Last but not the least, this program has boosted our confidence and improved our interpersonal skills. It has been a gratifying experience for us to explore the educational system in rural Nepal which is technologically backward where we could share the best of our knowledge for its betterment. What we think about community hours is that it's a lifelong experience where we could explore the side of ourselves, we never knew existed. Community hours as we feel now is a great program to share knowledge and contribute to the community as an individual. It has taught us the importance of little things that we have been taking for granted and how challenging it is to step out of our comfort zone.

So, we would like to recommend our juniors to not let go of this program. It could be a major life-changing experience. It is that kind of enduring experience that you would never get to experience later in your life.

Shritika Pokhrel & Sophi Shrestha



School

Baiteshwor Secondary School,

Baiteshwor Rural Municipality-6, Namdu, Dolakha

Grade: 1 to 12

Number of Students: around 250

Principal Name: Dilram Giri

Contact Person: Shakti Upreti

Baiteshwor Secondary School was established in 2010B.S. The school is well-facilitated with proper infrastructures and a computer lab.

The Experience

- **Teaching**

We had taken the classes from grade 1 to 12 and worked as volunteer teachers. During this time, we had the opportunity to deal with every kind of student and every age group. Being a high school student, it was not easy for us to teach the students of our same age group.

Despite all the circumstances, we managed to take classes effectively. Students of grade 8 to 12 were given email orientation and we tried to teach them the art of speaking by giving topics related to their society.

- **Flipped Classes**

Although it was hard to manage one laptop for each student, as each class had more than 25 students and only 2 laptops were available. We managed to make 4-4 student groups and tried our best to provide them with an E-learning mechanism in available leisure periods from grade 8 to 12. They were so glad to find their course details in the visual version. Each student watched the video very attentively and gave a positive response. They found it very useful.

- **Email orientation**

Many students had email accounts but they didn't know the proper use for it. So, we made some notes detailing what email is and its uses. We taught them to write an email. Some students wrote an email and presented it in front of everyone the next day.

- **Powerpointnt orientation**

We gave them a proper detailing of the features and uses of PowerPoint. We also taught them how to make simple slides and present them to a mass of people.

- **Extra Activities**

Other than teaching the coursebook, we also did some the extra activities which included public speaking and singing in their class. It helps them to be more cooperative and engaged in class in some way.

The Learning

We were lucky to witness the school the very first day we arrived at Namdu. Though the school was a government school, the infrastructure, and the building were almost like that of a private school. We got a chance to talk to some of the teachers and discuss our visions in the school. After some time, we went to the village where we had to live, with some of the students. They helped us carry our bags and that was the time we started sharing bonds with them. The village named “Ghimiretar” was quite far from the school and it almost took 35 minutes to reach.

The first couple of days were quite strange and troublesome for us because we were not able to cope with the environment and the constant homesickness was on another level. But as the days passed, we started to enjoy living there and teaching students in the school. The village has landscapes, trees, and small waterfalls and we used to witness it every day while going and returning to school. Fortunately, the village where we used to live was a safe place. Everyone used to ask us about our families and the purpose of being there and used to invite us for tea. Everyone was so selfless and caring. The people of the house where we lived were the humblest. After living there for some time, we had the bond of families. After coming from school, we used to sit around the fire in the kitchen and eat food. Both “buwa” and “aama” used to talk about their past life and we sometimes used to tease them. It was indeed the best experience of our life. They used to take care of us as if we were their blood relatives. We were

so lucky to find such a great family.

Talking about the school, it was fantastic and well resourced. The teachers were friendly and interactive and they used to encourage us in every way possible. We had amazing moments with the students most in grades 1, 2, and 3. Every day, we used to take leisure periods, sometimes in different classes and sometimes in the same one. The students were interactive and eager to know more which made us more encouraged to teach them. That was the moment when we realized that being a teacher is fascinating and hectic at the same time. Fascinating because all the students used to respect us and address us as a teacher and hectic because we constantly had to shout at the students in the classroom.

The community hours program was a lifetime experience for both of us. Although we had to face some obstacles during that period, it was all worth it in the end. It always makes us happy and brings a smile to our faces whenever we think about those moments. We would like to thank Deerwalk for providing us with such an opportunity to explore a life different from what we were living. It was indeed a ravishing experience with beautiful memories.

At last, we would like to encourage our juniors to not let go of such opportunities from your hand because it is all worth it and will give you a lifetime experience that you would be proud of later.