



Sailung TriNetra Newsletter No 6
April - June 2008

This is the news that we have all been waiting for - our five Early Childhood Centres are now built!

It has taken a mammoth effort from the villagers, the building committees, the facilitators and of course Nir - but we are now ready to open our doors to our first pupils.

At the beginning of April, Nir and I rummaged around in the markets of Kathmandu to find musical instruments, educational materials (such as wooden toys, blocks, jigsaws, word and number puzzles), office supplies, kitchen equipment, art and craft materials, bedding, carpets, etc. At the same time, we sourced materials required for the construction of the centres including water pipes, exterior and interior paint, aluminium roofing materials, water tanks, toilet pans, taps and cement. When we had got everything together, we hired a BIG truck and drove from Kathmandu to the closest accessible village. We then divided all of the materials between each of the centres.

Over the next 3 days, nearly 200 people walked from the villages and helped to unload and carry all of the materials and equipment to the sites. This meant a nine hour round trip walk from their homes! It was quite a sight, seeing a steady stream of people walking up and down the hills, with water tanks and toys on their backs. Look on the website in the photo gallery for pictures of their efforts.

Our five facilitators completed their basic training at the end of March and returned to the villages to take up their positions. Once there, they started to impart their knowledge to the parents of the under 5's, who will be attending the centres. This is the first time that

a programme of this type has occurred in this area, so the villagers needed reassurance and support to help them understand the processes and benefits of Early Childhood Development. Our facilitators are equivalent to nursery teachers and are supported by iyas - classroom assistants. Staff for both roles have been recruited from the local villages and this is the first time that women have had paid employment in this region. We hope that the iyas will learn from the facilitators and develop the skills and experience allowing them to step up to the full teaching role in due course.

Once the necessary building materials were delivered to the villages, the actual construction started. As the women continued to carry stones and rocks to the sites, the men began to dig the foundations and slowly, slowly the walls went up. By mid April, one of the centres in Rambosti was completed and over the next month the others were completed. At the larger sites, on some days, up to fifty people were all working together to get the centres built.

Meanwhile other villagers have been making shelving, racks, tables and chairs, weaving mats and making wooden toys and other education materials such as bamboo sticks for music play.

On the first day of the Nepali year, April 13th, the villagers in Rambosti held a ceremony to celebrate all of the work done, to bless and welcome the children to their new Centre. Over 60 people came along to the celebrations and the facilitator demonstrated some of the activities the children will enjoy when the Centre opens properly. Eating and dancing continued into the night.

It should be pointed out, this is the first time the villagers have undertaken a project like this. Never before have they had to organise themselves to plan and construct a building which will be used by the community.

Building continued into May at the other Centres, and most of the main work was completed by the end of the month. Painting and internal set up continued into June. Seto Guarans began the in-situ training programme during this time at each of the Centres in turn. Further instruction has been given to the facilitators, including assistance with set up and registration. Seto Guarans have spent over a month in the

villages working alongside the facilitators, ECD management committees and parents to ensure that everyone is on-board with the project.

By the beginning of July, we hope that all the children will be registered and attending the Centres. That's 110 children now and in the coming months another 30 will be admitted.

Our fundraising activities need to continue to support the on-going expenditure including the all of the facilitators and iyas salaries. I would like to appeal for more people to set up a standing order on a monthly basis to support our on-going costs. If anyone is interested in doing this please get in touch with me (Claire@sailungtrinetra.org or clmartin69@hotmail.com).

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has supported Sailung TriNetra so far - we have achieved some great things and I hope you continue to support us into the future.

Love Claire