

**SKI First Quarterly Report
December-April 2010**



**Skill, Knowledge and Innovation (SKI) Exchange Task Force
NRN International Coordination Council (NRN ICC)**
<http://www.nrn.org.np>

May 2010

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Executive Summary

In the last 4 months since the inception of the SKI Task Force on December 22nd 2009, SKI conducted several meetings and embarked on various project activities. These activities are summarised here in the first quarterly report of the SKI task force.

The SKI Terms of Reference (ToR) is approved by ICC and is thus implemented. SKI activities have been launched in four theme areas 1) Access to Education through an Open University 2) Professional Skills Inventory and Mentoring 3) S&T investment and Technology transfer and 4) Medical and Health Initiatives.

The above themes are Flagship programs and will be executed by a 4 subtask force team. The following projects a) Skills directory b) Professional mentoring program c) Remote education through E-Library initiatives d) Access to higher education for remote areas and disadvantaged people e) Short term skills education f) Science for the people g) Biotechnology growth partnership h) Health initiatives, have been identified in the above subtask force. The concept project proposal has been prepared and dialogues with the potential partners / collaborators are in progress. These projects will have short term and long term goals, prioritized and resourced accordingly.

The theme leader, project champions and team members in above projects have been established and further team formation is currently in progress. A letter of expression of interest and invitation along with project documents has been sent to all NCC and RC to bring upon global participation. The SKI has also approved to form a high level advisory body comprising of the stakeholders in Nepal and overseas to advise SKI task force on the future policies, direction and fund management issues. A letter of invitation has also been sent to concerned organisations and individuals and an advisory body is expected to be formed soon. Establishment of an NRN Science foundation has also been approved to raise and manage necessary funds for the SKI activities.

The report includes the summary of the subtasks projects separately. A list of the documents (ToR, Project outlines, copy of key correspondences and meeting minutes have been provided in the Annexe as a reference.

The SKI team would like to take this opportunity to invite NRN professionals globally to join and help the task force through their knowledge experience and innovative ideas to find solution to country's challenges and help in the swift transformation of Nepal to a knowledge based nation and economy. SKI team is thankful to NRN ICC in forming this task force and providing full support.

Dr Raju Adhikari
Chair, Skill, Knowledge Innovation (SKI) Exchange Task Force

1. Education Theme

Theme Leader- Parmod Dhakal

Team member: Parmod Dhakal, Drona Rasali, Ambika Adhikari, Raju Adhikari, Roshendra Khadka, Dhurbha Basnet, Goba Katwal, Govinda Dahal, Ghana S Rajbhandari, Madan Man, Anil Anal, Hom Raj Acharya, Krishna C Prasad, Raj Gaire, Indra ban

In the education theme, establishment of an Open University (OU) has been identified as the Flagship projects and all projects identified till to-date in the education realm a) E-Library b) Access to higher education for remote areas and disadvantaged people c) Short term skills education and d) Distance education will be carried out under the umbrella of OU.

Progress

- A concept proposal of the Open University has been developed, is being presented in NRN ICC 4th Regional Conference, Houston, and May 2010 and is being published in the conference souvenir.
- A short proposal for the Open and Distance Education initiative was prepared and presented to NRNA ICC based on the report of a NRN Fact Finding Mission jointly carried out by representatives of NRNA North Americas, NRN-Canada, CFFN, and NECASE. The Open University of Nepal concept embedded in that proposal received special attention and initiative gathered momentum. See report's link below.
- An Open University of Nepal brochure was released in the collaborative effort of NRNA and CFFN.
- Pramod Dhakal and Ambika Adhikari presented Open University of Nepal concept in Annual General Meeting of NRN-USA in February 20, 2010 and the project got further attention in North America. NRN-Canada and NRN-USA started promoting the initiative actively after the conference.
- One day Regional workshop on "Distance Education" is being organised in Houston, Texas in May 28th prior to the NRN ICC Regional Conference. The workshop is expected to deal and deliver various aspects of the Open University by invited Nepalese and International experts (see detail workshop program, list of speakers in Annex 1)
- Passing of the Open University Bill is important for opening the university and so a letter of invitation and expression of interest about the flagship project was sent through Dev Man Hirachan, president NRN to the Prime Minister, GON. Correspondence with Ministry of Education is established and invitation of the workshop was sent. NRN wish to engage the government in the preparatory work as a stakeholder along with other stakeholder.
- A draft of MoU also submitted to NRN ICC president for submission to GoN for consideration
- A meeting was held with HE Dr. Bhoj Raj Ghimire, Ambassador of Nepal to Canada, Dr. Frits Pannekoek, President of Athabasca University, the largest open and Distance University in Canada, and SKI education lead person

Pramod Dhakal on May 09, 2010 to explore avenues for collaboration and also to build understandings on trends and possibilities in open and distance education.

- A meeting between Pramod Dhakal and Pamela Walsh, Director at the Office of the President of Athabasca University was held on April 12, 2010 surrounding the possibility of launching a pilot project to prove the viability, effectiveness, and quality of distance education through a pilot project.
- Troy Tait, an experienced professional in government relations in Canada, and Pramod Dhakal held a meeting on April 14, 2010, to explore the engagement of the Government of Canada in Open University initiative.
- Norway has an enduring interest in education when it comes to aid in developing countries. The International Development Minister is responsible for aid from Norway, and to harness goodwill from Norway, NRN is planning to approach Nepal's political leaders to explore this point of contact to receive financial support to the flagship project.
- The resolution from the workshop will be submitted to the NRN ICC for approval and future course of action will be outlined. The TF will submit a full report after Houston conference.
- The education subtask force includes many projects a) E-library b) Science for the people, c) Distance education e) Short skill courses. The progress of these projects is discussed below and relevant documents are provided in the Annexe.

a) E-Library Education: Project Lead- Roshendra Khadka

The project aim is to provide computer access in all primary and secondary schools, to provide access to an electronic library and support science education.

Progress

- The concept proposal is discussed and approved (see Annex 1) and discussion with potential partners is ongoing.
- Roshendra Khadka is working with Mr Paul Bird, Founder of the Open Library in Nepal, Mrs Carol Prisley, Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation's director, Rabindra Mishra and Arun Basnet, President HeNN to develop a project plan.
- A final project plan will be made available within the next 3 months and submitted to UNDP (OLPC program) and other potential collaborator for grants.
- A concept proposal on e-Library initiative will be presented in the NRN ICC 4th Regional Conference, Houston, US, May 2010.
- Dhurba Subedi, president, NRN Australia is coordinating fund raising campaign for 3 projects this year.

b) Science For The People: Project Lead - Gokul Pokhrel

The project aim is to provide support to science education and its benefits to the rural community's health and education

Progress

- A project proposal is prepared and approved by the SKI team.
- The proposal is submitted to NAST for discussion.
- A joint workshop with NAST is proposed to develop the road-map plan.
- A science reporting journalism fellowship is recommended to report on the contemporary issues affecting the community.

c) Short Skill Course: Project Lead - Kamal Adhikari

The project aim is to provide short courses and skills through web networking to the undergraduate students studying in Nepal and link them to the latest development in specific subjects, forge a strong linkage between the institutions in Nepal and overseas.

Progress

- Kamal Adhikari and the team have prepared a project proposal plan and discussion with Pulchowk engineering campus, TU is in progress to launch a trial project in May. He will share the progress in the SKI workshop during NRN ICC 4th Regional conference in Houston in May 2010.

d) Distance Education: Project Lead - Parmod Dhakal

Progress

- This stream work has produced the most amount of work. The highlights of the progress of Education Theme stems from the progress made by this stream of work.

2. Skill Inventory and Professional Mentoring Theme

Theme Leader: Drona Rasali

Team Members: Drona Rasali, Pujan Rai, Shree Napit, Krishna P Sharma, Tribhuwan Shrestha, Madan Man

a) Global Skills Inventory: Project Lead - Shree Napit

The objective of this program is to prepare a global inventory of skills and professional expertise among NRNs and make available the exchange of skills and professional expertises between Nepali people and those abroad, online.

Progress

- The current Skill database is text based and analytical work is difficult to carry. The new one will be made user friendly and for quantitative analysis.
- The team has now prepared a concept proposal which was approved at NRN SKI meeting.
- The team is working to prepare the prototype demo on the Skill registry in the near future and will share the progress in the NRN ICC 4th Regional conference in Houston in May 2010.

b) Professional Mentoring: Project Lead - Pujan Rai

The objective of the project is to provide mentoring for Nepali professionals arriving in a country to get into the professional jobs of their expertise. A global network of professional mentors among NRNs will be created to support this program.

Progress

- An expression of interest invited from the NRN community to join the team
- Drona Rasali and his team have prepared the concept proposal which was approved at NRN SKIT meeting and the project will be launched during the NRN ICC 4th Regional Conference, Houston, US.
- A global networking with interested organisations initiated and a pilot trial project plan to commence in Canada this year.

A concept proposal on the theme covering both above aspects will be presented in the 4th Regional Conference, Houston and is being published in the conference souvenir.

3. Medical and Health Theme

Theme Leader- Hari Dhakal

Team Member: Hari Dhakal, Suraj Thapa, Pujan Rai, Kush Raj Shrestha, Damodar Paudel
Sirjana Gautum

The objective of this project is to coordinate the health related activities of NRNA ICC / NCC by establishing a network of NRNs globally, Health institutions and Ministry of Health in Nepal to provide support in key areas in preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitative health care services/education/ research.

Progress

- Feasible work begun and contact established with Norway hospital, Bharatpur cancer hospital and community hospital in West Nepal.
- Team formation in progress.
- An article "Shortfall in Health Services in Nepal and NRNs' initiatives is being published in the conference souvenir and will be presented in the NRN ICC 4th Regional Conference, Houston, US.

- The team and Pujan Rai is preparing a proposal titled "Good Health for all", it is under construction.
- Another project on cancer prevention awareness campaign is in the conception phase and is soon to enter into construction phase.
- Deukhuri Life Care Hospital, Bhalubang Dang's request has reached to a correspondance stage.
- The Open University of Nepal initiative and this initiative will complement one another because of their inherent nature.
- Dr. Bijay Acharya <bijayacharya@gmail.com>, 917-204-4978, of nyayahealth.org is working on initiatives that aim to provide free medical service in deprived regions.

4. S&T Investment and Transfer Theme

Theme Leader- Raju Adhikari

Team Member: Benu Adhikari, Dinesh Bhuju, Buddhi Khadka, Anil Anal, Saroj Ghimire, Suraj Thapa, Dipesh Dhakal, Parmod Dhakal, Ambika Adhikari, Drona Rasali

The objective of the flagship project is

To promote biotechnology growth ; establish partnership between Nepalese and Overseas companies and institutions for commercial exploitation of high altitude medicinal native flora such as Yarsha Gumba, Yak cheese Mushroom etc and other indigenous flora in cosmetic/ pharmaceutical and food industries; and promote the conservation of endangered flora and fauna of Nepal.

Establish a centre of Biotechnology Excellence in Nepal and lobby for a separate Biotechnology Department for sustainable growth of Biotechnology research in Nepal

Progress

- Contacts with NARC, NAST, and Institute of Forestry in Pokhara (via Dean Agasti) have been established and discussion in progress to sign MoU.
- An article on "Biotechnology Growth partnership" is being published in the 4th Regional Conference, Houston Souvenir and will be discussed during the conference to solicit and invite expression of interest from the US region.
- The final project proposal will be submitted to potential partners in the near future for possible collaborations.
- Presented the project plan in the Technical workshop organised by Nepal Embassy in Canberra in March 2010 on the occasion of 50th years of diplomatic relationship between Nepal and Australia.

a) NRN Science Foundation

SKI team has agreed that in order to sustain and grow SKI activities, a trust NRN Science foundation is necessary to mobilise and channelize the funds for the project

activities. A project concept plan was discussed and approved at the SKI meeting and will be shared during the NRN ICC 4th Regional conference, Houston, US, May 2010. Though the project is currently under S&T Transfer and Investment theme, it will be an independent flagship project. The trust will be registered in Nepal and will use the interest of the capital fund for the project activities.

5. Communication and Publication

- All SKI meetings are held using Skype network.
- All meeting minutes are archived electronically and file stored in Google Documents.
- File is accessible to task-force and sub-task-force members
- Minute and agenda sharing mechanism established through Google URL document.
- SKI will provide a quarterly report to ICC.
- NRN SKI has submitted 4 articles on a) SKI and Science and Technology Transfer, b) Open University of Nepal, c) Skill Database d) Medical and Health Education for publication in the souvenir of NRN ICC Regional Conference in Houston.
- The Task force members are giving presentation in the workshop and invited as panellists in the Regional Conference.

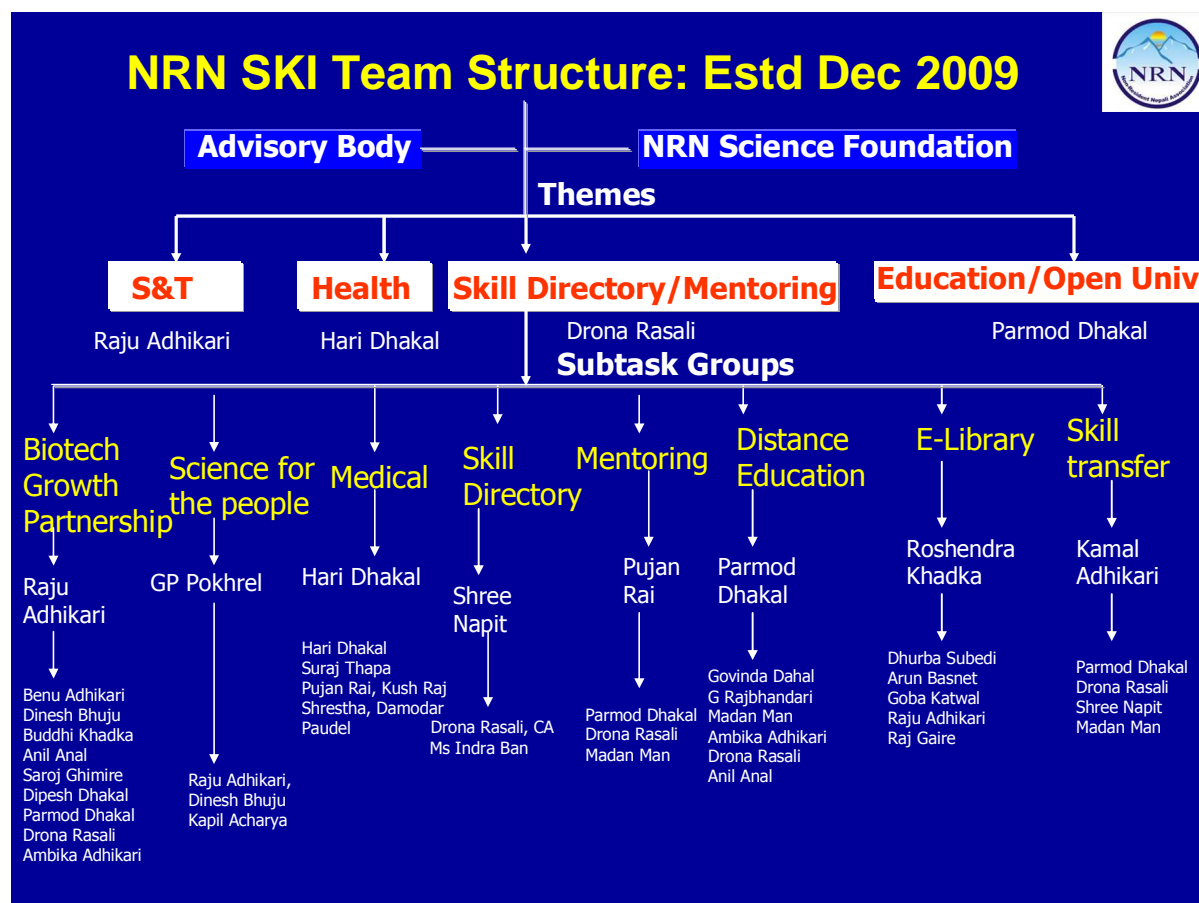
6. Others

- Raju Adhikari met with NRN Japan team and president Dev Man Hirachan in Tokyo in April. NRN-Japan's friends were excited to learn about NRN-SKI initiatives and pledged to work together.
- Invitation letter to Advisory team were sent and the progress in recruitment of advisor has been slow.
- Website devoted to SKI is in progress and expected to be launched after the NRN ICC 4th Regional conference in Houston, US.

Annexe:

- Team structure and members (attached)
- ToR of SKI (Attached)
- Copy of letter to PM and MoU to GON (attached)
- SKI workshop information on Open and Distance Education in Nepal
- For access to report and concept proposals related to Education, Professional mentoring and Skill Directory, S&T investment and Transfer, Medical and Health, visit link
<https://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=0AXgmorcvUu63ZGNzempzeGZfMzE4OHNtM240Y3o&hl=en>
- For meeting minutes: visit link
<https://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=0AXgmorcvUu63ZGNzempzeGZfMzE4OHNtM240Y3o&hl=en>
- For report of the fact finding mission on Open and Distance Education: visit link
<https://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=0AXgmorcvUu63ZGNzempzeGZfMjQ2YzY0NXo3ZmY&hl=en>
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NRN SKI Exchange Team and Structure



NRN SKI Exchange Task Force (TF) Members

Dr Adhikari, Raju, AU – Chair-Member, Theme leader- S&T Investment
Dr Dhakal, Pramod, CA- Member, Theme leader -Education initiative
Dr. Drona Rasali, CA- Member, Theme Leader –Education and Mentoring
Dr Prasad, Krishna, Netherlands, Member
Dr Ambika P. Adhikari USA- Member-Project lead-Education access
Dr Kamal Adhikari, JP- Member-Project lead-Distance education
Dr Tribhuvan Shrestha, NZ-Member
Dr Hari Dhakal, NO-Theme Leader-Medical and Health
Shree Napit, AUS-Project lead, Skill Directory

Current Sub Task Force (STF) Members

Dhruba Subedi, AUS
Dr. Anil Anal, TH
Goba Kotwal, AUS
Gokul Pokhrel, Nepal-Project lead-Science for the People
Dr Pujan Rai, SG-Project lead-Mentoring
Roshendra Dhoj Khadka, UK-Project lead, e-Library
Dr Suraj Thapa, NO
Dr Benu Adhikari, AU
Dr. Govinda Dahal, US
Dr Ghanashyam Rajbhandari-CA
Dr Madan Man, UK
Saroj Ghimire, Swiz
Raj Gaire, Aus
Dipesh Dhakal –Nepal
Dr Kush Shrestha-Aus
Dr Damodar Poudel-US
Indra Ban-AUS

NRN SKI Exchange Task Force Terms of Reference (ToR)

Terms of Reference (ToR) and Scope

Task Force on NRN Skill, Knowledge and Innovation Transfer (NRNSKIT)

Scope and Background

The NRN Association has decided, at its 22nd meeting on 20 December 2009, to establish a task force on **NRN Skill Knowledge and Innovation Transfer (NRN SKIT)**. The objective of this task force is to undertake and coordinate activities in education and S&T areas to help and facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skill and innovation to Nepal for the overall development of the country. The ICC entrusted NRN ICC Oceania member Raju Adhikari to chair the task force and Ambika Adhikari, Drona Rosali, Parmod Dhakal, Kamal Adhikari, Krishna P Sharma, Hari Dhakal as members.

The 1st TF meeting held on Jan 3, 2010 proposed that the task force activities could be launched in three major streams 1) Professional Skills Inventory and Mentoring 2) Initiative for Access to Education in Nepal (particularly to remote areas and 3) S&T investment and Technology transfer. Following subtask force and projects have been identified in the above 3 major streams via; a) Skills directory b) Professional mentoring program c) Remote education through E-Library initiatives d) Access to higher education for remote areas and disadvantaged people e) Short term skills education f) Science for the People g) Biotechnology growth partnership h) Health/Medical knowledge transfer. TF is seeking expression of interest from all NCC chapters to join the TF and STF groups and will send an invitation letter soon.

The meeting agreed to form an Advisory committee, comprising of high profile members of our stakeholders in Nepal and from Overseas to help forge a strong linkage between NRN and Nepal to meet the TF objectives.

The TF will adopt a coordinated approach and synergise all project activities within subtask forces to the main theme areas.

General Guidelines:

Open communication and dissemination

The TF team will coordinate with NRN RC and NC to undertake collaborative projects in accordance with clearly stipulated Term of reference and guidelines defined by TF. NRN ICC will fully support the TF team in managing the wider dissemination of research outputs and its strategies where necessary to capture benefits for Nepal and of others and respects confidentiality.

Debate, participation and encouragement on project activities

TF will encourage debate on projects from all NRN NCC through exchange of ideas by email, conduct meetings, workshops and seminars to ensure accurate information and expert's opinions are available for the successful completion of the project.

Project coordinators and team should communicate and share ideas with NRN community and stakeholders in their area of activities. TF will ensure accurate information is provided to NRN ICC and to Nepal Govt as an input in policy making process. All STF and projects within the TF will follow guidelines as defined in the TF ToR, work independently and report to TF. TF will submit project reports to NRN ICC on quarterly basis.

Contestability of ideas and projects

The Nepal Govt and NRN community look to NRN ICC to provide experts advice and opinion in this field. Validation and peer review through TF is central to assuring that the quality of above information and should be the foundation of NRN ICC policy decisions.

Independence and integrity of TF

NRN ICC would fully support the business of TF team in conducting above research projects and in communicating the outputs of project activities and managing the legal obligation including to third parties. NRN will encourage and uphold the independence of the TF.

Action Plan

- Send letter of invitation and expression of interest to NRN NCC
- Finalise the subtask force team and project coordinators
- Identify the names of potential advisors to the TF and send letter of request
- Set up a website devoted to all activities of the Skill, Knowledge and Innovation Transfer Task Force
- Mobilize submission of project proposals for possible grants and funds
- Generate financial and other resources from NRNs and other pertinent donors and/or investors globally in coordination of respective NCCs
- Finalise and approve project proposals
- Launch of project activities
- Undertake feasibility study of establishing NRN Science foundation trust
- Undertake a participatory assessment of “barriers of access to higher education in Nepal”.

Outcomes/Results

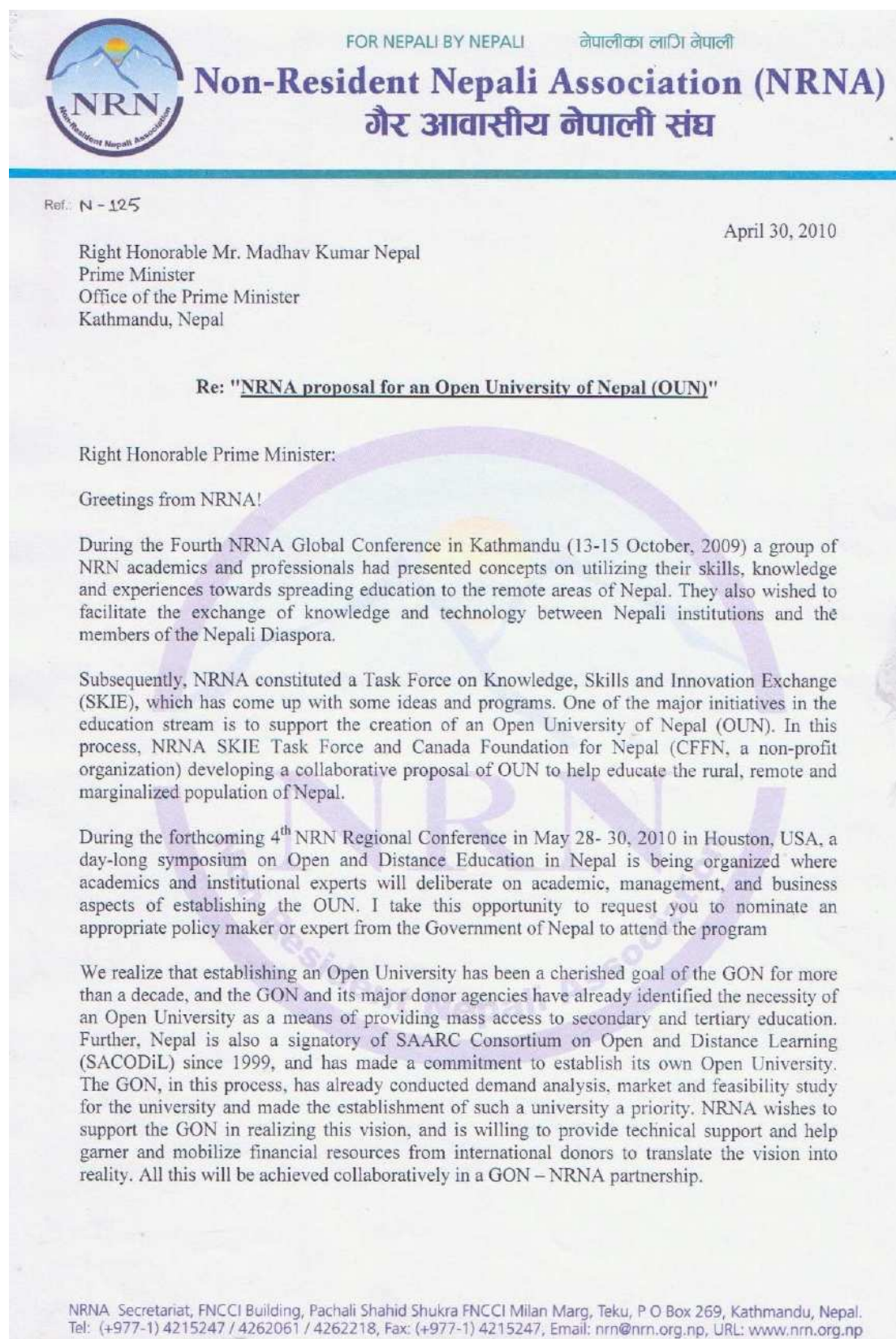
- Subtask forces and Project teams formed and advisors appointed
- Website launched
- Project proposals synthesised and approved for follow up with internal and/or external sources.
- Projects to transfer of knowledge, skills and innovation to Nepal initiated
- Strong networking and partnership among NRN community and stakeholders including the Government of Nepal established

- A comprehensive skills database of NRNs, Nepal professionals and Stakeholders prepared
- A global NRN program for professional mentoring among Nepalese everywhere will have been running.
- Ways to remove barriers of access to higher education will have been identified
- A road map to establish the NRN Science Foundation (NST) will be prepared.

Time Frame

This TF will be operational from January 2010 to October 2011.

Copy of NRN ICC (SKI) letter to PM of Nepal





FOR NEPALI BY NEPALI

नेपालीका लागि नेपाली

Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) गैर आवासीय नेपाली संघ

Ref.: N-125

We share the view of GON that an open and distance education is valuable in bringing quality education at secondary and tertiary levels for the disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, it will provide the opportunity to the rural youths to improve their skills and knowledge while being engaged in agricultural activities thus reducing the pressure to go abroad for low skill jobs. In the long run Nepalis will be able to occupy high paying jobs in the international market. Nepal will be embarking on this mission at this right and most opportune time of technological advancement, increased international collaboration, when institutions in the distance education are achieving unprecedented success internationally. Distance education has made it possible to rapidly close the knowledge gap between the rich and the poor, village folks and city dwellers and men and women.

NRNA also believes that the shortage of human, educational and financial resources in Nepal could be mitigated through the mobilization of NRN's resource pool of higher knowledge and skills base through its globally coordinated platform.

We envision that the OUN will be a public university a nonprofit institution accountable to GON and Nepali people living in Nepal and abroad. NRNA will work with GON in ensuring sustainability of the OUN.

NRNA will be grateful for the opportunity to work with GON in the establishment of the first public Open University catering especially to the disadvantaged groups in Nepal. NRNA SKIE Task Force is currently preparing a detailed report which will be submitted to your good office as soon as possible.

I thank you for your kind consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Please accept our kind regards with the highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Dev Man Hirachan
President



Cc:

Hon. Sarbendra Nath Sukla, Minister, Ministry of Education

Hon. Dr. Jagadish Chandra Pokharel, Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission

Copy of SKI, NRN ICC (Open University) MoU submitted to GON



**The Ministry of Education
Government of Nepal**
Kathmandu, Nepal



**Central Secretariat
Nor-Resident Nepali
Association**
Kathmandu, Nepal



**Executive Board
Canada Foundation for
Nepal**
Ottawa, Canada

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU) For Establishing the Open University of Nepal (OUN)

Whereas, creating an educated population in Nepal has been an aspired goal of the Government of Nepal (hereinafter GoN), Ministry of Education (hereinafter MoE), the Non-Resident Nepali Association (hereinafter NRNA), and Canada Foundation for Nepal (hereinafter CFFN); and

Whereas, an open and distance education is recognized as an effective mechanism to educate the masses, especially the remote, rural, poor and traditionally marginalized populations that are hard to reach through conventional mechanisms; and

Whereas, GoN has been working towards the creation of an Open University of Nepal (hereinafter OUN) as an additional measure to meet the stated goal of producing educated population; and

Whereas, Non-Resident Nepali Association (hereinafter "NRNA"), a membership-based global organization duly established in the Federal Republic of Nepal in accordance with NRNA Act 2009 promulgated by the Government of Nepal and having worldwide network of National Coordination Councils (hereinafter NCCs) duly registered in more than 55 countries, has a mission of promoting the interests of Nepali Diaspora and Nepal; and

Whereas, Canada Foundation for Nepal (hereinafter "CFFN"), a membership-based organization registered with the Government of Canada, is dedicated to improving the access to education in Nepal, and has established a working partnership with Athabasca University which is Canada's leader and a pioneer in on-line and distance education; and

Whereas, a significant number of the Nepali Diaspora possess skills, knowledge, and international academic experiences needed to support a distance learning institution in Nepal; and

Whereas, NRNA and the CFFN wish to mobilize the Diaspora resources and international academic, technical and financial support towards establishing an OUN; and

Whereas, GoN, MoE, NRNA, and CFFN (hereinafter "the parties") desire to establish a partnership for establishing Open University of Nepal (hereinafter "OUN") to benefit the people of Nepal;

Therefore, the parties to this Memorandum of Understanding hereby agree to collaborate in establishing an OUN in Nepal based on the following principles:

1. The goal of OUN shall be to remove the barriers to higher education in Nepal, especially for the people in the remote and rural areas, and who are economically disadvantaged, and marginalized,
2. The OUN shall seek support from internationally established educators for institutional and instructional development in Nepal, and in organizing and managing academic programs of the OUN,
3. The Government of Nepal (GoN) shall be the owner of the OUN; the NRNA's International Coordination Council (ICC) shall coordinate to mobilize international funding and the volunteer teaching from the Diaspora. The CFFN shall be NRNA's working partner in this task. The professional support from the NRNA and CFFN shall be made available on a voluntary basis with no financial burden to the MoE or GoN,
4. The structure, management and any change in the ownership of the OUN shall be decided upon by the MoE and GoN in consultation with other members of the parties. The parties agree to have OUN established as a public and independent institution with legal standing like that of other universities in Nepal,
5. The MoE or GoN shall support, assist, and provide authority and documentation of support as appropriate to NRNA and CFFN to enable them to establish partnership with technical and educational institutions, to approach international donor agencies for securing bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and to mobilize financial and technical support for OUN,

6. The GoN shall take steps to establish legislative and legal framework necessary for establishing the OUN in Nepal.

For the purpose of achieving the above goals, the parties to this MoU shall:

1. Work together to explore strategies, policies, programs, and activities, in order to bring-forth a detailed proposal and a business plan of the OUN; the detailed proposal shall identify the specific objectives to be accomplished, the products or services to be delivered, the time frames for completion, the assignment of official representatives for joint initiatives, fund mobilization programs, and about the ownership of intellectual property generated or exchanged in connection with the initiative;
2. Designate contact persons to coordinate the communications and meetings of the parties for any matters pertaining to the planning and implementation of the detailed proposal and the business plan of the OUN;
3. Hold meetings at a regular and mutually agreed upon interval, to evaluate past activities and to work out detailed plans for future cooperative initiatives;
4. Seek and mobilize skills, knowledge, innovation, academic expertise and financial resources as may be available from the international cooperation for all initiatives pertaining to infrastructure development and operations of the OUN, and provide documents of support as needed for the purpose;
5. Formulate and implement work plans based on the detailed proposal and the business plan.
6. Develop Interim Governing Body of the OUN for channelling operation until the time when the OUN is formally and legally established in Nepal; the following structure shall provide a model for the Interim Governing Body of the OUN comprising current working partners:

- 1) Government of Nepal representative - Chairperson
- 2) GoN National Planning Commission - Vice Chairperson
- 3) NRNA International Coordination Council representative - Vice Chairperson
- 4) Canada Foundation for Nepal (CFFN) representative - Member
- 5) Representative from an collaborating Open Universities - Member
- 6) Representative of Universities in Nepal - Member
- 7) Representative from the Nepali Diaspora Academics - Member
- 8) Representative from the NRN Proponents of OUN - Member
- 9) Representative from University Teachers' Association, Nepal - Member
- 10) NRNA Skills, Knowledge and Innovation Exchange Task Force representative - Member
- 11) Ministry of Education representative - Member-Secretary

12) Other members as may be decided by this body.

Three copies of the MoU have been drawn up in English. All three copies are equally binding, and will come in force when signed by all the representatives of GoN, NRNA, and CFFN.

The Agreement shall remain in effect for ten years, and will be reviewed every two years. The agreement may be renewed with mutual consent or be revoked by any party by giving a ninety day advance notice.

Agreed by:

On behalf of MoE	On behalf of NRNA	On behalf of CFFN
-----	-----	-----
Signature	Signature	Signature
-----	-----	-----
Name	Name	Name
-----	-----	-----
Title	Title	Title
Date:	Date:	Date:

Witnessed by:

-----	-----	-----
Signature	Signature	Signature
-----	-----	-----
Name	Name	Name
-----	-----	-----
Title	Title	Title
Date:	Date:	Date:

Workshop Information on Open and Distance Education in Nepal
NRNA 4th Regional Conference Houston Marriot Westchase, 2900
Briarpark Dr, Houston TX 77042 USA Friday-Sunday, 28-30 May 2010,
8:30 A.M. – 5:30 P.M.

Background

Nepal has been labouring through a long period of under achievement, while the age of technology, information and knowledge is already knocking its door. Its urban population has already come face to face with the internet and high technology. The population in rural and remote areas has also come to know about the illusive internet and information technology due to tourism, mobility of residents, mass media and efforts of the government and non-governmental organizations.

While the exposure to new technology has brought a surge in demand for higher education, its access for the rural residents, and women and marginalized groups is still severely limited. This is due to the shortage of institutional capacity to meet the demand for quality education. Further, financial and resource constraints within the sub-group make it difficult for them to move to cities where education may be more easily available. Because of the lack of educational opportunities to support decent jobs, most rural young people are taking short-term employment in foreign countries and, are forgoing the chance to obtain higher education.

Lately opportunities have been unfolding in multiple fronts. First, Nepali Diaspora and friends of Nepal have been making efforts to bring improvements in selected schools and colleges through infrastructure, libraries, scholarships, trust funds, and even tutoring programs. Second, many international institutions have made significant advancement in distance learning principals and practices. Third, the information and communication technology (ICT) has not only reached a matured state but also has become affordable to developing countries. However, Nepal has not been able to integrate all those opportunities, innovative technologies and generous contributions to develop a body of formal knowledge, quality education system, accreditation of programs, and flexible access to education.

Believing that an Open University of Nepal (OUN) would be the most appropriate response to address these needs, Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and Canada Foundation for Nepal (CFFN) joined hands in an initiative to support the Government of Nepal (GON) to build an OUN. As the GON had long identified OUN as an excellent means to address the problems of access to higher education, there is an outstanding opportunity for NRNA to collaborate in this initiative.

Houston Workshop

The Houston workshop is organized to bring together some prominent academics and institutional thinkers to deliberate the academic, management, and business aspects of creating an OUN.

This workshop will be a part of the 4th NRNA Regional Conference to be held in Houston, TX, USA during May 28-30, 2010. It is organized by the NRN Skills, Knowledge and Innovation Exchange Task Force (SKIE) and will take place all day on May 28th.

The objective of the workshop is to hold deliberations on a proposal for the institution, more specifically on 1) content and academic development, 2) governance, management and administration, and 3) business plan to organize financial and human resources for the proposal.

Keynote speech: Dr. Frits Pannekoek

“Developing a New Open University: Lessons from the Past”

Dr. Pannekoek is the President of Athabasca University, the best known and most experienced Canadian university in distance education. He is also the President of the Norway based International Council for Open and Distance Education, the leading global organization for the open and distance education community. He is a notable scholar in open and distance education.

Dr. Pannekoek is known for his works in communication, digital learning environments and the new information revolution. He has published widely on policy issues relating to digital environments, on information seeking behaviours in an internet world, and on open access publishing as well as in the history of Indigenous peoples. Dr. Pannekoek earned his Ph.D. from Queen's University.

Chairs, Speakers, and Discussants will include the Following Scholars:

Dr. Renu Khator, Chancellor of the University of Houston System and President of the University of Houston. The UH System's first woman Chancellor and the first Indian immigrant to head a comprehensive research university in the United States, a noted scholar, author of five books on global policies, recipient of 2006 Outstanding Americans by Choice award, Hind Rattan (Jewel of India) award, member of Indian Prime Minister's Global Advisory Council

Dr. Darcy W Hardy, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs of University of Texas System and Executive Director of UT TeleCampus, long experience in the advancement of distance education, a foremost woman in academic leadership, a writer and a scholar

Dr. Mohamed Ally, Professor and Director of Centre for Distance Education of Athabasca University, Past-President of the International Federation of Training and Development Organizations (IFTDO), Founding Director of the International Association of Mobile Learning, a writer and a scholar

Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari, a graduate of Harvard and MIT, an urban planner at SRPMIC, and Faculty Associate of Arizona State University, Past President of NRN-USA, Regional Coordinator of NRNA for Americas, community leader, and one of the original proponents of OUN

Dr. Drona Rasali, Research Chair of CFFN, Adjunct Professor of University of Regina, Provincial Chronic Health Epidemiologist of Government of Saskatchewan, Deputy-Regional Coordinator of NRNA, strong credentials in research and development

Dr. Pramod Dhakal, Executive Director of CFFN, Senior Scientist at EION Inc., Research Associate at Carleton University, ICC Member of NRNA, International Affairs Coordinator of NRN-Canada, team lead and one of the original proponents of OUN, researcher and a writer

Dr. Jeet Joshee, Professor of Education and Dean of the College of Continuing and Professional Education at California State University, Long Beach, proven experiences in developing and delivering fully online courses, oversees Technology-Enhanced Learning Center that develops, administers and supports online and hybrid degree and professional certificate programs

Dr. Prahlad D. Pant, Founder and President of PDP Associates Inc, Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering of University of Cincinnati, entrepreneur, researcher, respected intellectual and community leader

Dr. Uttam Rajbhandari, Lester Wolfe Professor of Molecular Biology and Associate Head of Department of Biology at MIT, a prominent scientist in genetics and molecular biology, and one of the most prominent scientific minds of Nepali origin

Dr. Murari Suvedi, Professor of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies, and Senior Associate to the Dean at Michigan State University, brings experiences in developing and delivering online programs, a prominent researcher and passionate contributor to rural development and educational advancements in Nepal

Dr. Shiva Gautam, Associate Professor of Harvard Medical School and Biostatistics director of Harvard-Thorndike General Clinical Research Center, he has made considerable effort in developing digital content for Nepal's elementary schools through e-Infrastructure Project, Nepal

Dr. Nanda Raj Shrestha, Professor at School of Business & Industry at Florida A&M University, Project Director of International Business Education Project, and Nepal researcher and author: The Political Economy of Land, Landlessness, and Migration in Nepal, In the Name of Development: A Reflection on Nepal, Nepal and Bangladesh: A Global Studies Handbook

Dr. Alok Bohara, Professor of Economics and founding Director of The Nepal Study Center at University of New Mexico, active researcher on socio-economic issues of Nepal, founder of annual Himalayan Policy Research Conference, regular contributor of newspaper articles

Dr. Bidya Nath Koirala, Head of the Central Department of Education at Tribhuvan University and a prominent educationist and researcher in Nepal, an academics who has been involved intimately in the OUN initiatives in Nepal

Dr. Mahendra Lohani, Vice President of Heifer International, a person of Nepalese origin who found tremendous success in international development arena, a successful business developer and executioner

Dr. Raju Adhikari, Principal Molecular Scientist in CSIRO, Australia, former scientist of Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, Chair of NRN Skills, Knowledge and Innovation Exchange Task Force, active researcher and creator of many patented inventions, ardent promoter of international collaboration in science

Dr. Gokul Bhandari, Assistant Professor of Business at University of Windsor, a young and aspiring researcher with critical thinking, a strong contributor to the cause educating the poor in Nepal through Help Nepal Network

Dr. Upendra Mahato, Notable industrialist of Nepalese origin based in Russia, a philanthropist and Past-President of NRNA, ardent promoter of Nepal, notable personality in entrepreneurship and organizational leadership

Dr. Aditya Jha, Canadian industrialist of Nepalese origin and a philanthropist, nominee of top 25 immigrants in Canada, a person who has substantial business experience in information technology and distance education, ardent promoter of Nepal

Dr. Krishna C. Prasad, Senior Lecturer in Land and Water Development at UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education at the Netherlands, carries field and research experiences from six countries, strong contributor in training, policy and institutional development

Dr. Neeru Shrestha, Senior Strategic Policy Analyst at Health Canada, carries long experience in development research from Tribhuvan University and then in Canada at International Development Research Institute

Dr. Kalyani Rai, Associate Professor of An Associate Professor in UWM Center for Urban Community Development, she brings first hand experience in development and delivery of distance education programs. Besides, she brings ten years of community development experience working with Milwaukee's diverse populations.

Dr. Nalini Chhetri, Dr. Nalini Chhetri, is teaching climate change, global social entrepreneurship, and interdisciplinary research methods at Arizona State University, her classes involve global collaboration between ASU and TERI University of India, resulting in distance and on-campus form of course delivery.

Madhavi Basnet Karki, LL.M.: Prof. Karki is the Associate Campus Dean of Strayer University and brings substantial experience in developing and delivering distance courses in law, and in managing and administering distance education campus of a university.

Evolving details on the program will be provided through openu.cffn.ca and nrn.org.np.

Program Format:

On each topic, there will be an introductory presentation. Some three or four discussants will summarize their written and verbal critiques and provide suggestions. A round table discussion to collect the participant inputs in writings, flip-charts, and recordings of conversations will be done. *Any contributions can be made in writing in advance by May 15, 2010, so that the suggestions could be incorporated in the final proposal by the core proponent team for OUN.*

This is an academic forum of open format and not a lecture and question-answer type. The speakers will set the theme for the debate, the chair will moderate and keep time, the discussants will critique the presentations and all present will participate in questions and answers.

Contact: Dr. Pramod Dhakal Coordinator of the Workshop
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