

Terms of Reference for Volunteers/Interns for English Teaching/School Management in Rural Nepali Schools

Context of the Job

The government has adopted a policy of teaching English from Grade I. However, there are few teachers who know reasonable English to teach. If you want to volunteer teaching English, your main job would be to work with the teacher so that he or she gets to know English better and pupils have opportunity to hear 'better' English. Furthermore, most 'aware' and well-to-do people in Nepali society place their children in for-profit private schools. Public schools are reduced to schools for those who have no voice. Motivation and accountability of teachers in these schools is low. There is a wide gap on quality between the two kinds of schools. In the last decades, the situation has become so bad that Nepali people have lost faith in public schools in general. Nonetheless, there are schools and teachers who wish to improve public schools and who work really hard.

Scope of Volunteers' Work

Generally, Volunteers' work is expected to help raise the profile of public schools so that faith in public schools can be restored; image of public schools can be changed positively. Currently, Nepali is the country's official language and pupils also speak a wide variety of languages; it is English that most students fail in the final exam. Private schools are often English medium and high scores in the school's final English exam symbolizes quality of these schools. Volunteers can do a lot by their presence as hard working teachers and English speakers (irrespective of accents). They can be catalysts to change in improving the learning environment in schools. They can be role-models of good, motivated teachers. They may also get involved in general academic management of schools. Can teach/train teachers in few schools in the surrounding areas in English and in certain skills of teaching such as drawing where most of our teachers lag behind.

Volunteers vs. Interns

We roughly address more experienced people who could even be retired (but not tired of schools!) as volunteers and interns. We also address those people who still have to complete their studies and do an internship as part of their course work. Volunteers and Interns may be doing the same thing from time to time.

Expected Qualification

The main qualification is that you are willing to help and contribute with what you know in the given context. We prefer teachers who are trained to be teachers in smaller grades. We also accept students who are at the final leg of completing their teaching degree. The situation in our schools is so bad that if you are a graduate in any subject in an OECD country and make an effort to recall how you were taught and adapt methods to existing situation, you do not need experience or studies in teaching. Of course, this offer is not limited to OECD countries – this is an example. We review incumbents' CV individually – they can be from South Asia or Nepal itself.

We expect a portfolio of your assignment at the end of your term with a condensed report of not more than 3 thousand words. This should contain at least: Your Major Achievements (max 10), Major Hurdles (max 5) and the Lessons to be Learnt (5 lessons each for your country/Nepal, for CEPP and the school) and your personal experience. You may submit an album of max 20 photos with a caption or you can submit a whole report with 40 captioned pictures.

Working Conditions

We expect volunteers to work for 3 to 5 months excluding time for transfer. This is within the limits of a tourist visa given in a year for non-Nepalis. Visa can be obtained from Nepali Embassies located in different parts of the world or can be obtained on arrival on payment of around US\$100 (as of July 2012).

They will be treated as CEPP staff and entitled for leave as applied for them (Sat/Sundays closed in Ktm, schools are normally closed for Saturdays only). Once they are placed in a school the rules of that particular school will apply. An agreement will be made between the school, CEPP and the Volunteer/Intern. However, neither CEPP nor the school will be able to pay for the service kindly extended by the volunteers. CEPP will receive volunteers upon arrival if they are from abroad and look for temporary stays if they wish so. They may also accompany them up to the school. It places only if schools have looked for a place to stay and agree to make subsistence arrangements (not the cost).

You are obliged to refrain from preaching any ideology – political, religious or otherwise, or get involved with any of such groups. It is imperative that you try your best to avoid conflict with local culture and customs. Nepal is a land of heterogeneity of cultures, languages and customs where each pupil may have different background. Language may pose a practical challenge although mutual learning is high when you do not have an interpreter. Normally, there is someone who speaks communicable English in the village and some of the teachers also speak some English.

What You Get!

You get the satisfaction of having helped people in such an important aspect of their life. You can ignite people's inspiration to do something in life. Upon successful completion of the term, we can provide you with a certificate of this assignment. We think it will work as a turning point in your life. We hope you appreciate what you have and realize that nothing is for granted. If you are an intern, we can be your supervisor and can evaluate your work in agreement with your academic institution.

Living Conditions

This kind of job is normally for those who seek experience and philanthropy with adventure. Schools are normally several hours away from road heads and it generally requires walking for several hours. There are also options for those students who wish to walk for several days. This means you have to think of everything in advance, although the school or CEPP may be able to provide the things you require 'in the field' for your work. It's nearly like camping in the Western sense except that there are settlements around. Hygienic standards may be pretty low and particular attention is required to 'safe drinking'. Even though Nepal is considered as one of the safest places on earth, we advise you to lock everything

behind when you move out of your place. Small thefts cannot be ruled out. If you are from an OECD country, walking on your own and at night is not advised.

Privacy is not so much part of local culture. It will be unusual to be alone as long as there is day light and people are around. Some houses may not even have proper latrines. Monthly rent should cost around \$25.

Other costs of living depend on your location. In most rural areas three basic daily meals (without meat, eggs or dairy products but on 'as much as you can eat' basis – so called 'pet (full stomach) system') should cost around US\$5 if you could find some kind of hotel. Fruits and vegetables are not so much part of diet. Normal tea (boiled with milk and sugar) is found in most village kiosks (0.20\$/200ml cup) at certain times of the day. In some locations, being a paying guest may be the preferable option, and sometimes the only one. Nepalis are known to be friendly and hospitable. The cost of transportation depends greatly on the location and the type of transportation used. Maximum one way fare to any destination by public bus should not exceed 20\$. Flight or taxi can be 10-20 times more expensive for the same journey.

Currently we have requests from schools in Antichaur VDC in Bajura and Raigaon VDC in Makwanpur.

CEPP – the host

The Centre for Educational Policies and Practices (CEPP) promotes school education as a right, placing teachers and pupils at the centre of the process over buildings and benches (which does not mean that they are not necessary). It seeks to work in the interface between the school and the community. It was founded by a few individuals in the turning point of their professional career. We have but one mission: promoting education as the foundation for sustained prosperity in Nepalese society, guided by social justice. We firmly believe that motivation of parents and teachers are key elements that make a significant difference in improving education in Nepal.

Nepal's Broad Educational Context

With a value of 0.704, Nepal ranked 115th out of 129 countries, in Education-for-All-Development-Index (EDI) in 2007 (From a comparative perspective, Germany is in the 4th position with EDI Value of 0.994). The table below presents its rank along with other indicators. A comparison with Germany reminds us of the context of stark differences between the highest and lowest ranking countries. Djibouti is just above Nepal while Gambia is just below it.

Indicators	Germany	Djibouti	Nepal	Gambia
EDI Rank (value)	3 (0.0994)	114 (.704)	115 (.704)	116 (.678)
Total Primary NER	0.998	0.453	0.800	0.653
Adult Literacy Rate	1.00	0.703	0.565	0.425
Gender Specific EFA Index	0.993	0.783	0.835	0.865
Survival Rate to Grade 5	0.984	0.899	0.616	0.73
EFA=Education for All, EDI=EEA Devevelopment Indicators				
NER= Net Enrolment Ratio				
(UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, 2010)				

The distribution of educational services follows the general development situation in different parts of the country i.e. generally better in the east than in the west and better in the south than in the north with exceptions of urban valleys in between. Rapid urbanization augmented with an ailing public education system in the country, lead to some 1/5th of school children attending for-profit-private schools.

For more information please contact CEPP, the Centre for Educational Policies and Practices
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