

Terms of Reference for Volunteers/Interns for English Teaching and Supporting School Management In Rural Nepal

Nepal's Broad Educational Context

The distribution of educational services follows the general development situation in different parts of the country is generally better in the East than in the West, South than in the North with exceptions of urban centers in between. Nepal has made impressive progress in basic education in recent decades. Data shows 95 percent of children are enrolled in primary schools but there is a high a rate of drop out and repetition in same grades especially in public schools. There are millions of students who are unable to read and write basic books even after four years of schooling.

In public schools, there are several reasons why they are unable to provide a quality education to students. Among all, non-child friendly education is one of them. Teaching learning is not a child centered, all of the schools are teacher friendly. Atmosphere of schools are not child-friendly. There are no organized extra-curricular activities, such as sports or recreational facilities in the schools. The method of instruction still involves in teacher, rote learning rather than encouraging children to explore, analyze and understand what they are learning. Besides this hyper politicization of education system, lack of accountability, high rate of teacher absenteeism, poor governance are also other factors that decrease the quality of education in public schools. Higher priority of upgrading schools from primary to secondary and so on are also the next factors, this decreases a focus on foundation of a children.

Rapid urbanization augmented with an ailing public education system in the country, leads to some 1/5th of school children attending for-profit-private schools. Private sector investment in education has flourished in Nepal in recent years, especially in urban areas. It is believed that in Kathmandu Valley, there are over 1,200 private schools compared to only 300 public schools. Many of them are operated highly commercialized money-making enterprises. Furthermore, most 'aware' and well-to-do people in Nepali society place their children in for-profit English medium private schools. In general, public schools has become the only option for those who have low socio economic status, low voice in community.

Context of the Job

The government has adopted a policy of teaching English from Grade I. However, there are few teachers who are reasonably capable enough to teach English. Therefore we need some volunteers to support them. If you want to contribute in teaching English at a local public school in rural Nepal, this opportunity is for you. Beside teaching English you will able to learn the local culture, including language, food and rituals. You will also be able to gain additional knowledge and skills related to teaching and learning. You will also enhance the personal relationship with an accompanying foreign volunteer/intern including foreign languages. As an outsider you will gain first-hand experience of village stay while helping the local communities in improving the status of their public schools. You will then transfer the skill and knowledge gained during this internship to another location within the country or abroad.

Scope of Volunteers' Work

You can be a catalyst in improving the learning environments of the school. You can be a good role-model for motivating teachers. You may also get involved in general academic management of the schools. You can teach/train teachers how to develop teaching materials including drawing and crafts. You will be generally one or school but you will be helping in the surrounding areas.

Your main job would be to work with foreign volunteers/interns, you will get to know English better and pupils have opportunity to hear 'better' English. Volunteers support foreign volunteer/interns in communicating with teachers, students and parents and the work as mediators. You will be supporting teachers for improving quality of education, teaching students with child friendly, child centered approaches, managing classrooms and developing teaching materials. Overall, you will be developing schools as an attraction point for both students and parents.

Expected Qualifications

The main qualification is that you are willing to help and contribute with what you know in the given context. We prefer students from public campuses with a minimum of a Bachelor Degree. We also accept students who are at their final year of degrees. But you need to be good at English skills. We expect a portfolio of your assignment at the end of your term with a condensed report of not more than 3 thousand words. We will provide a format for reporting.

Working Conditions

We expect volunteers to work for 1 to 3 months excluding time for transfer. You will be treated as CEPP staff and entitled for leave as applied to you (Saturday/Sundays closed in Ktm). Once you are placed in a public school, the rules of that particular school will also apply. An agreement will be made between the school, CEPP and the volunteer/intern. You also accompany with the volunteer/intern up to the school. You will be assigned in a school that agrees 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 will 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 backgrounds. Language may pose a practical challenge although mutual learning is high when you do not have an interpreter.

What You Get!

You will get the satisfaction of having helping people in such an important aspect of their lives. 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 located normally several hours away from road heads and it generally requires walking for several hours. There are also options for those of you 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 water'. 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. Some houses may not even have proper latrines.

CEPP – the host

The Centre for Educational Policies and Practices (CEPP) promotes school education as a right, placing teachers and pupils at the center 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. Our mission is to 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 public education in Nepal.

Currently we are working in 45 public schools in Central Nepal including Raigaun VDC of Makwanpur, Pipalmadi VDC of Sindhuli, Chadpur municipality 6, 7 of Rauthat and Boch VDC and Bhimeshwor municipality 11, 12, 13 of Dolakha district.

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