

8 maart 2007, fundering ceremonie SEP

SEP Building

Foundation Laying Ceremony

A report

The foundation laying of the Special Education Programme (SEP) building was held in the midst of some 200 guests and children at the premises of CP Rehabilitation Centre, Dhapakhel, Lalitpur on the 8th of March 2007. It was a nice sunny day.

The function began with the offering of flower wreaths in the picture of goddess of learning Saraswati and in the national flag by two students with cerebral palsy. It was followed by bouquet presentation to Hon. Minister of Education and Sports Dr. Prof. Manga Siddhi Manandhar, Mr. Bob Corazza, Mrs. Frances Corazza, Ms. Susi Groeli Prof. Batuk Pd. Rajbhandari, Mr. Kamal Rupakheti and Mr. Bimal Shrestha.

Prakriti Bhattarai, a girl student with cerebral palsy welcomed the guests with a short speech appreciating their generous presence. After the hearty welcome, she read out a poem with a plea not to overlook the obvious aspirations of children and adults affected with cp in different forms.

Then Prof. Batuk Pd. Rajbhandari, President, Self-help Group for Cerebral Palsy, Nepal briefly dealt on how the organization came into existence in 1986-87. The organization came into existence as a human concern urged by the realization of duty towards the children with cp. The depth of the plight of the suffering caused by the non- existence of any rehabilitative services for the target group then was beyond description.

Though SGCP had a beginning with little technical knowhow and severe financial constraints. It had a gradual growth in terms of the five on-going programmes developed and introduced over the years. Four of these programmes are focused on cp rehabilitation and one on cp awareness.

The present status of SGCP in terms of number of programmes, development strategy, commitment, financial transparency, qualitative service delivery and physical facility, is a source of inner satisfaction for all involved for the cause of cp rehabilitation. This has been possible with the technical help extended by foreign organizations and individual friends in the process of its development. In this context, Prof. Rajbhandari mentioned the tragic PIA air accident in which Ben van der Stam was killed at the prime of his life in 1992. He was in his way to Kathmandu for a business meeting at SGCP Nepal. He also mentioned the long standing association and contribution of Mr. Bob Corazza and Mrs. Frances Corazza who were VSO volunteers in 1997. Bob and Frances have been the main contribution for land purchase and they have joined forces with Stitching "Holland Building" Nepal for bearing the construction cost of Special Education Programme building, the foundation of which will be laid after a short while by the Hon. Minister of Education Prof. Manandhar.

Prof. Rajbhandari said that the uphill task of SGCP is very difficult as there is no help or contribution from Nepal Government for meeting the running cost of the on-going programmes. He made a plea to the Hon. Minister for the regular support to Special Education Programme as it fits very well with the "Education for All" policy of the Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal.

Lastly he expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the following organization for their help and cooperation extended to SGCP for its growth and development over the years.

Rehabilitation Centrum Amsterdam, Holland

Danida/Royal Danish Embassy, Nepal

German Nepalese Help Association, Stuttgart Germany.

Stichting Lilian Fonds, Holland

W.P. Schmitz Stiftung, Germany

Stichting "Holland Building" Nepal, Holland

Nepal Project Defuring e.V, Berlin, Germany

Lions Club, Düsseldorf, Germany

Saraswati Foundation, Switzerland

Siddhartha Foundation Germany, and to Bob and Frances

The next speaker was Mr. Bob Corazza. He said that the fund he could raise for SEP building construction took more than ten years and it is not from rich people. It is from the common people including some severely disabled persons. He hoped that the support received from the severely disabled would work as an impetus to normal persons to respond to the cause of cp rehabilitation in Nepal.

Mr. Kamal Rupakheti, Representative, German Nepalese Help Association (GNHA) said that to him, children with cerebral palsy are the ones without any voice to ventilate their special needs and Prof. Batuk Pd. Rajbhandari, President of SGCP is the one working since 1987 as the voice of children with cp and their parents who are in need of specialized rehabilitative services. In view of the fact that organization committed for such target group can not be self-supporting, he suggested that Nepal Governments should at least meet the running cost of the on-going programmes of SGCP. He said that GNHA is, of course, happy that it could support the Out Reach Programme of SGCP in 11 districts till June 2007.

Then Hon. Minister Prof. Manandhar laid the foundation of the building by putting cement concrete at the foundation site according to the Hindu rituals which is mainly meant for the stability of the building. After the foundation laying, Hon. Minister expressed thanks for the opportunity given to lay the foundation and his happiness to know about the very good work done by SGCP for the rehabilitation of children with cp which is a life long disability. He further said that he will try his best to increase the amount allocated for such a target group in the budget and make it available for the running cost of Special Education Programme. He assured that he really meant to support the programme and asked not to take his commitment lightly as if ministers just speak at such function and their words are not turned into action.

Lastly, Mr. Bimal Shrestha expressed sincere thanks to all those who kindly spared their time to make this function a success. He specially thanked the Education Minister for his kind commitment to support Special Education Programme and suggested that the ministerial commitment needs to be formally recorded. He also paid special thanks to Bob and Frances Corazza and Mary and Margot who could make the trip to Nepal for this occasion.

The formal part of the function was followed by a simple lunch.