
2012 Manakamana scholarships report

1 message

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To: Charles Gay/Pamela Ross <rossgay_0@gmail.com>

Namaste to friends of Manakamana Scholarships,

In March of this year we met with 5 girls from Sindhupalchok District who are studying for ANM (Nurse-Midwife) and CMA (Certified Medical Assistant) degrees at campuses near Kathmandu.



Radhika Bhandari is from Sindhupalchok District, just northeast of Kathmandu. It is very poor, and one of the worst areas for trafficking of girls into prostitution. As Radhika told Geeta, her choice, because she is from a poor family with lots of sisters, was get married or go to Bombay to be a prostitute. Higher education is only a dream for these girls, even those who do well in high school and pass the School Leaving Exam. Radhika,

because of her Manakamana scholarship, will receive her ANM degree from the Banepa school, and plans to return to her village to work.



Karmu Sherpa's father journeys to Kashmir every year to labor on construction of roads or in the fields, and Karmu and her mother and siblings also join him for 4 months a year because they cannot earn enough to live on in their village. When she first applied for a scholarship, Karmu was so shy and quiet, and spoke such poor Nepali, that Geeta was worried about her ability to complete the CMA degree at Lalitpur Polytechnic Institute. Now, one year later, there has been a big change—Karmu is confident and talks enthusiastically about her future and her hopes for a job at the health post in her village.



Parbati Tamang got a job right after graduation from the Banepa school and is earning Rs. 14,000 per month at her village health post (that's \$160, an excellent salary in a village in Nepal). She did her 3-month on-the-job training there, and was hired as soon as she passed her ANM exam. Parbati married after finishing high school and came to Kathmandu with her husband, who found work as a carpenter. She was commuting to Banepa every day (at least one hour on the bus each way), but her mother-in-law was very supportive of Parbati's education, so they moved to Banepa while she finished school.



Ganga Maya Gurung



Sanju Tamang and **Ganga Maya Gurung** are from lhachok village in Sindhupalchok, a very poor village from which many girls are trafficked into prostitution. They are both enrolled at Lalitpur Polytechnic Institute and plan to return to lhachok to work after graduation. Girls who attain higher education are an inspiration to others to pursue education as a way out of the cycle of poverty and trafficking.



We also met with **Sarita Shrestha**, a girl whose story is depressingly common. Her father went to "Arab," as Nepalis call the Middle East, to work many years ago, and the family has never heard from him again. They have no idea whether he died there or abandoned his family. Sarita's mother was working as a domestic trying to support Sarita and her siblings when Geeta met her by chance in a medical shop, heard her story, and encouraged Sarita to apply for a scholarship. The shop, Ugratara Pharmacy, is owned by a woman who agreed to hire Sarita to work there before she began her studies for her CMA degree from Binayak Campus. Now that Sarita has completed her degree, she's working full time in the shop and is hoping to find funding to study for her nursing degree. Pharmacies function as clinics in Nepal, so someone like Sarita, who is knowledgeable about common ailments and their treatment, is in effect a medical practitioner. She explained her work to us, and even mentioned side effects of some of the medications. She is now supporting her mother and siblings.



News of recent graduates: Rabita Duwal, who finished her nursing degree in Bhaktapur this year, has been hired at the Nepal Military Hospital in Kathmandu. This is one of the most prestigious hospitals in the country, and for a girl with no connections to get a job there is almost unheard of. There were 1000 applicants for each place, and Rabita got one of them!

Menuka Kumari Padhyay, who earned her ANM degree from the Institute of Community Health in Nepalgunj, called Geeta to report that she has her own medical shop in Bajura, her home town in the far west, and is also working in a maternal and child health project sponsored by Helen Keller Foundation International.

Pabi Maya Rana Magar completed her ANM degree in 2004. She opened her own medical shop in her village in Nawalparasi District. She also completed her I.Ed. in Education and is now the Headmaster and English teacher of the primary school. That's three full time jobs!

Kantijwola Karmacharya from Banepa completed her Staff Nurse degree in 2008. Now she is working at a family planning clinic in Kathmandu and studying for her Bachelor of Nursing degree.

With your ongoing help, we at Manakamana Fund raise and spend about \$18,000 per year, 90% of which is direct payments to the 40+ scholarship recipients. This year we've had the invaluable help of two new people: Leigh Williams has taken on the marketing and sales of our calendars in the US, and come up with many good fundraising ideas, and Zach Larson is doing our website design and management--you can now donate and order calendars online. Many thanks to both of them!

The SLC results have just been announced in Nepal, so the applications are pouring in. The 2013 calendar is in production. Thanks for your help. We couldn't do it without all of you.

Best wishes, Pam Ross & Geeta Manandhar

(All photos by Tamia Marg Anderson except Parbati Tamang by Tom Anderson and Rabita Duwal by Geeta Manandhar.)