

# NEPAL FACTS

## Fast facts about Nepal and it's people

**Official name:** Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

**Capital:** Kathmandu

**Population:** Approx 29.3 million

**Area:** 147,181 square kilometres

**Official languages:** Nepali

**Currencies:** Nepalese Rupee

**GDP per capita:** USD \$427

**People living on less than \$2 a day:** 77.6%

**Percentage of literate people:** 58%

**No access to toilets:** 39%

### Location

Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia. The Himalayan range runs across the northern part of Nepal. It is bordered by Tibet (China) to the north and by India to the south, east and west.

### Climate

Nepal's climate is tropical in the south, temperate in the hills and arctic in the high altitude areas. There are five seasons: summer, monsoon, autumn, winter and spring. In summer, temperatures in Kathmandu reach 30 degrees celcius whilst it can be 45 degrees celcius on the low-lying Terai region. Winter in the mountains can be very cold with sub-zero temperatures. Even Kathmandu can be chilly with temperatures just above zero degrees.

### Land

Nepal is a small country, approximately 800 kilometres long and 200 kilometres wide, with an area of 147,181 square kilometres. It is home to eight of the ten highest mountains in the world, including the highest point on earth, Mount Everest, reaching 8,848 metres. It also

has vast low-lying plains. Three major river systems originate in the mountains and flow into the river Ganges in India. Only 20 percent of the land is cultivatable and 29 percent is covered in forest. Deforestation is a serious problem in Nepal because of the growing demands for firewood and grazing.

### Religion

The main religion in Nepal is Hinduism, practised by approximately 80 percent of the population. Buddhism, although officially practised by only about 10 percent of the population, has an important following since Nepal is the birthplace of Buddha. Other religions include Islam and Christianity.

### Government and Economy

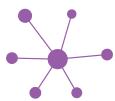
Nepal was a Kingdom until 2008 when it abolished the monarchy and became a democratic republic. It is ruled by a president and the government is headed by the prime minister. Widespread political instability has resulted in constant changes of government. No government has survived more than two years since 1991. A civil war lasting for 10 years (1996-2006) resulted in the death of more than 13,000 people.

Nepal was an isolated agrarian society until 1951, without schools, hospitals and electric power. Since then infrastructure has been developed but it is very basic. Foreign aid still accounts for 50 percent of the development budget. Eighty percent of the population is engaged in agriculture. Tourism is an important source of income in trekking regions and larger cities.

### Production

Tea, rice, corn, millet, wheat, sugar cane, jute and tobacco.





## Food

Dal bhat tarkari (rice, lentils and vegetable curry) is the main dish eaten throughout Nepal. Tibetan cuisine is popular in mountain areas and cities.

## Music

There is a wide range of popular music in Nepal, both modern and traditional. Each of the 36 ethnic groups has traditional folk songs in its own language, which remain very popular with all ages. Many songs tell of the hardship of life in Nepal.

## Sport

Football and cricket are the most popular sports played by Nepali people. Foreigners, however, know the country best for its trekking and mountaineering in the great Himalayas.

## Education System in Nepal

Education in Nepal was banned by the ruling Rana family until 1951. Today, education is still not compulsory though primary education is free. Even until the 1980's, very few girls were sent to school. This contributed to very poor literacy rates which are still low at just 58 percent. In fact, only 76 percent of children complete primary school and only 29 percent attend secondary school.

Schools, especially those in rural areas, are often inadequately resourced, and staffed by untrained or poorly trained teachers who use rote learning



References: CIA World Fact Book, Wikipedia and World Bank Development Indicators.

methods. Children learn to only memorise information and rarely question or analyse. Most rural schools are Nepali language, with English language schools in cities. A national level School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination is conducted at the end of Grade 10. As students must pass every subject, the success rate remains low, particularly in rural areas.

## Brief Political History

**563 BC** - Buddha born in Nepal

**1743 AD** - Nepal united into one Kingdom

**1846-1951** - Rule of the Rana family reduces the power of the king and creates a hereditary position for Rana Prime Ministers

**1951** - King Tribhuvan regains power from the Rana rulers and proclaims a constitutional monarchy

**1953** - Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay are the first men to stand on the top of Mount Everest

**1960** - Political parties banned under a party-less panchayat system. Many political leaders are sent to prison for up to 30 years

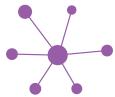
**1990** - Demonstrations for the restoration of democracy result in an end to the ban on political parties

**1996-2006** - Nepalese Civil war between government forces and Maoist rebels. A Comprehensive Peace Accord is signed on 21 November 2006. More than 12,800 people were killed and an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 people were internally displaced as a result of the conflict

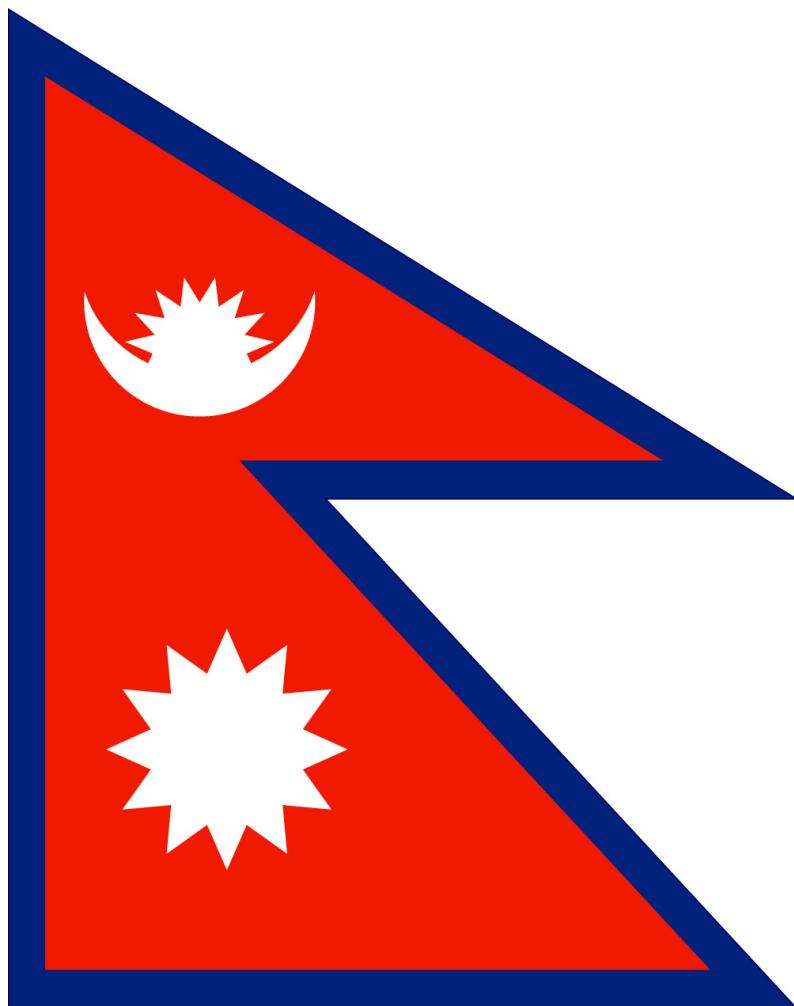
**2001** - Crown Prince Deependra allegedly shoots the King and other members of the royal family. King Gyanendra ascends the throne

**2008** - Monarchy abolished and formation of the Democratic Republic of Nepal





## THE FLAG OF NEPAL



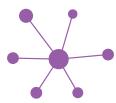
The flag of Nepal is the world's only national flag that is not rectangular in shape. The flag is shaped as a combination of two triangular pennants which date from the 19th century.

The flag borrows the basic design from the original flag which had Hindu origins dating back more than 2,000 years. The upper pennant bears a white emblem of the moon symbolising the Royal House. Below it is the sun representing the Rana dynasty which ruled Nepal from 1846 until 1953. Originally these symbols were drawn with human faces but these were removed in

1962. The flag anticipates that the nation will last as long as the sun and moon are on Earth.

The red of the flag represents the national flower - the rhododendron, that covers the lower slopes of the Himalayas. It is also the national colour. Red clothes and jewellery are very popular with women. The blue-edged triangles mirror the jagged edges of the Himalayas. The blue border also symbolizes the peaceful nature of the country and hope for continued harmony between the two main religions, Hinduism and Buddhism.





# LANGUAGES IN NEPAL

## How do we say "Hello"?

The official language of Nepal is Nepali.

Nepali or Nepalese (नेपाली) is written in Devanagri script as are Hindi and Sanskrit. The line across the top of the letters joins them together into a word. Vowels are shown above the line and the words read from left to right.

Nepali is the mother tongue of 48 percent of the population. It is also spoken as a second language by millions more. Nepali is one of the 23 official languages spoken in India and is spoken widely in Bhutan. Other languages in Nepal are spoken by different ethnic groups. However, Nepali is spoken in cities and is taught in schools.

### Some Nepali Words

Tapai ko nam ke ho?

What's your name?

Mero nam .....ho

My name is....

Namaste

Hello

Kosto chha?

How are you?

Ramro chha

Fine thanks

Pheri bhetaula

See you later



Children studying at school

### Nepali Proverbs

Nepali people like using proverbs in conversation. Here are a few:

गर्जने बादल वर्षदैन!

(Garjane Baadal Barsa Daina)

Thunder clouds do not always give rain

(Explanation: Don't trust people despite their promises)

एक्ता नै बल हो!

(Ekta Nai Baal Ho)

Unity is strength

(Explanation: Working together achieves more)

बिद्या नै धन हो!

(Bidhya Nai Dhan Ho)

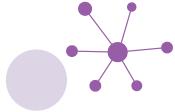
Education is wealth

(Explanation: Education leads to a good job)



Story time for pre-schoolers





# THE HIMALAYAS

## Mount Everest

Nepal is home to eight of the world's 10 highest mountains including the highest, Mount Everest, which is 8,848 metres. It was named by Sir George Everest in 1841. Nepali people call it Sagarmatha, whilst the Sherpa people of the Everest region call it by its Tibetan name Chomolungma (goddess of the sky).

Mount Everest, which is more than 60 million years old, was formed by the movement of the Indian tectonic plate pushing up against the Asian plate. Everest grows by about four millimetres every year.

The first attempt to climb Everest was made in 1921, by a British expedition led by Colonel John Hunt. However it was (Sir) Edmund Hillary from New Zealand, and Tenzing Norgay a Sherpa from Nepal, who reached the summit first on May 29, 1953. Since then, thousands of climbers have attempted to reach the highest point in the world.

While there have been around 5,000 successful summits, many climbers have lost their lives. There is 66 percent less oxygen in each breath on the summit of Everest than at sea level. Lack of oxygen, exhaustion, extreme cold, and climbing hazards all contribute to the death toll.



Mt Everest above the Khumbu region



Transport in the mountains

## Life in the Mountains

The majority of Nepal's mountain people are Buddhist and are originally descended from Tibet. Their culture is quite different from people in the lower regions of the country. Sherpa people are perhaps the most well known of Nepal's mountain people. They are famous for working on mountaineering expeditions in the Everest region. Other mountain regions are home to Tamang, Gurung, Magar and Rai people.

Life in Nepali mountain villages can be very hard, as there are few or no roads. Almost everything, food, water, medicine and even materials to build houses, is carried up on the backs of porters, yaks or donkeys. Electricity is a luxury in some more distant villages. Children walk long distances to school, often up and down mountains.

Winter is very harsh and the temperature drops one degree Celsius for every 300 metres of



A mountain village





ascent. Few food crops grow at high altitude. Local people must work very hard in the barren soil to produce any crops. In remote districts where there is no income from tourism, there is not enough to eat and the people depend on food aid from the United Nations Food Programme.

## Himalayan Animals



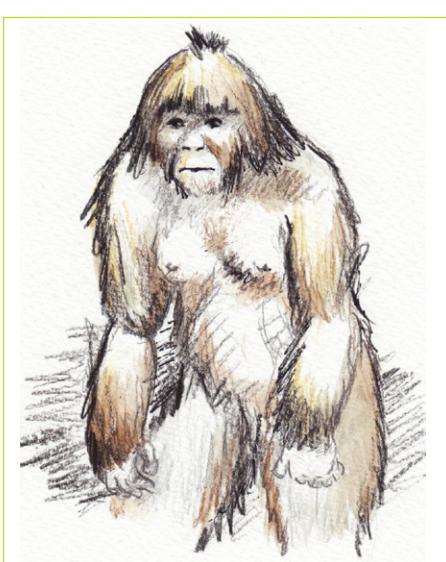
A number of rare animals inhabit the high Himalaya. Yaks are kept by mountain families to provide milk, wool and meat. Yaks also carry heavy loads at high altitude. They have adapted to altitude and have larger lungs and heart so that they can carry more oxygen in their blood. This means that they cannot survive at altitudes lower than 3,000 metres.



Snow Leopards are very elusive and solitary big cats that live between 2,000 and 5,500 metres. Their thick coats protect them from the cold mountain temperatures. They are endangered but can be seen in remote parts of Nepal as well as mountain regions of central and south Asia, China and Mongolia.



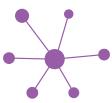
Himalayan Tahr is a type of wild goat that is generally found across the Himalayas in sloping scrubland and mountain pastures up to 4,500 metres.



## The Yeti

The Yeti, an ape-like creature, is said to inhabit the Himalayas and a number of mountaineers have seen large footprints in the snow. The Sherpa people have a firm belief in the existence of the Yeti. A few scientists think it is a descendant or relative of a tall extinct ape that lived in the Himalayas. So far there is no proof that the Yeti does exist but the story appeals to many.





## DURGA'S STORY

### Giving Nepali children a childhood

Namaste!

My name is Durga and I was born in the small village of Jitpur in the Nepali hills. I am the youngest of eight children, four boys and four girls. By the time I was born my parents already had three grandchildren.



Durga with his brothers and sisters

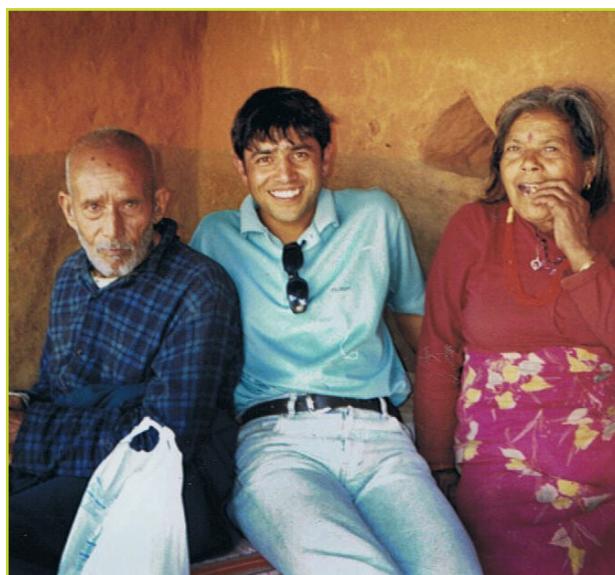
My father was a great influence on my life. He loved travelling and had been on many pilgrimages. He had even worked in India during the Second World War. When I was young, many people would come to our house asking for help. He would give his time and lend money. He would always jump to the defence of those in trouble. He taught me the importance of helping other people.

When I was just six years old, my parents sent me to live with my grown up sister to look after her two-year-old son. I also had to cook food for them on the open fire. This was the start of my love of cooking! This was a very tough time for me and I dreamt of being allowed to go to school.

A year later, I moved back home and was finally allowed to attend school. I walked with my brother for an hour each way. We had one classroom for three grades. We sat on the floor and there were no resources. However, I enjoyed school. When I was 10, my dad announced that I wouldn't be able to go to school any more. We needed more people on the land so my brother and I reluctantly stayed home to help. We fetched water from the spring and cut hay for our animals - buffalos, goats and oxen.

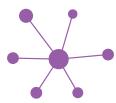
When I was 13, I persuaded my father to send me back to school. The secondary school was in the valley far below. It took two hours each way and I often carried 50 kilogramme loads of grain on the way. Coming home was the hardest as it was steep uphill.

My parents arranged my marriage when I was just 15. The marriage would provide our family with an extra worker on the land. They chose a



Durga with his parents





girl from another village who I had never seen before. The date was set and I was presented with my first pair of shoes. It would seem that my future was decided. I had other ideas!

I had seen people returning to the village from the capital, Kathmandu. I decided to take a chance. I borrowed some money for the bus fare and found a job working in a tourist restaurant drying dishes. Quickly, I began working my way up in the restaurant, trying to learn English and ended up managing the restaurant.

After 10 years in the tourist industry, I met my partner Fionna who encouraged me to start my own business, taking tourists on treks in the Himalaya. After the birth of our twins, I left Nepal to live in New Zealand where I am now based.

Seeing how children have a good start in life in Western countries made me think about the hardships faced by children in Nepal. I wanted to find a way of giving Nepali children a proper childhood. I remembered how much my father had helped others. I too, wanted to give something back.

Together with my partner, I founded **First Steps Himalaya**, a charitable trust providing quality early childhood education in rural Nepal. All children deserve a good start in life and we



Durga addresses communities in Nepal

wanted to ensure that Nepali children were given every opportunity to reach their potential.

**First Steps Himalaya** supports Nepali parents to raise happier, healthier children starting from birth and early years, the most critical stage of child development. The trust operates a number of early childhood development and school support projects promoting improved nutrition, home safety and the importance of education.

Sometimes I cannot believe how far I have come. I was uneducated and now find myself educating rural Nepali communities so that they can make positive changes in their lives.

For more information on **First Steps Himalaya** go to: [www.firststepshimalaya.org](http://www.firststepshimalaya.org)

**First Steps Himalaya** is a 2012 project partner for Purple Cake Day®



Durga with children of Bhimtar School - a First Steps Himalaya project school





## A CHILD'S STORY

### A day in the life of Sita

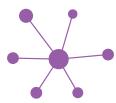
Namaste!

My name is Sita Giri. I am five years old. I was born in Sangachok, which is a village in the hills three hours by bus from Kathmandu. We can see snow on the mountains from our village. I dream of touching snow.

I have one older sister and a younger brother. We live with my mum. We don't see our dad very often as he works in India where he works cycling a rickshaw. It is a hard job and when he visits once a year, he doesn't bring much money. That means that my mum has to work very hard. We don't have much land so Mum has to labour in other people's fields so that she can earn enough to feed us. When we were little, Mum had no choice but to lock us in the house when she went to work. Then as we got a bit bigger,



Sita (middle) with her Mum and siblings



Sita's brother locked in the house

my sister and I would play by ourselves near the house. Our baby brother would be locked inside. Mum thought he was safe until, one day, he poured boiling water from the cooking fire over himself. He was so badly burnt that mum had to take him to hospital. Mum never left us alone at home after that.

Our house is made of mud and stones. Our kitchen is downstairs. We don't have any furniture, just little wooden seats around the open fire. At night our goats and chickens share this room. Upstairs, we have one big bed for all of us. Our toilet is outside and we wash with cold water. We have electricity in our house but we don't have a TV – just a few lightbulbs.

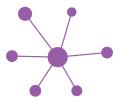
I wake up at 6 o'clock each morning. Mum lights the fire, sweeps the mud floor and fetches water from the village tap. Sometimes she has to walk about half an hour to find water. Then she makes breakfast, usually roti (flat wholemeal bread) or roasted corn. After that, Mum goes to collect firewood from the forest and cuts grass for our animals. While she does this, my brother and sister and I take the goat to graze in the forest.

At 9 o'clock, we eat lunch. This is usually dahl bhat (rice, lentils and vegetable curry). Sometimes



Sita's house





Sita washes her hands

we can't afford rice and we have to have dhero (maize or millet flour cooked in water). Then my sister and I walk to school. School starts at 10 o'clock and we stand in line and sing the national anthem. Then we go to our classroom. Sometimes our teachers are late or don't come and we just sit and talk to our friends. The teachers are strict and we have to copy everything they say. It is hard to understand sometimes.

We come home from school at 4 o'clock. It is uphill and we feel tired when we get home. Mum gives us a snack and we do our homework. Then we have to help Mum with the animals and housework. We eat our evening dal bhat at 7 o'clock and go to bed.

I hope my life is not as hard as my mum's.

**"I dream of being a teacher when I grow up." - Sita**

### LEARNING ACTIVITY:

Bicycle rickshaws are a common mode of transport in Nepal's capital city Kathmandu. They are a great way of getting around the twisting narrow streets and can go places where the taxi drivers cannot. They also have a side benefit; they do not add to the pollution in the Kathmandu Valley.

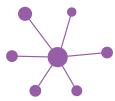
Find pictures of different kinds of rickshaws and compare the different ways they are powered.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?



Kathmandu, Nepal





## A CHILD'S STORY

### A day in the life of Karma Gyalpo

Karma's family are of Tibetan origin but have lived for many years on the Nepali side of the Himalayas.

My name is Karma Gyalpo and I am eight years old. I was born in a village called Mugu, which is in the mountains and a five to six-day walk from Jumla.

Now I live in a rented house by the market in Jumla. I moved here with my mother and my grandmother in 2007 as my mother had heard about the Kailash Bodhi School and she wanted me to have an education.

I have an older brother but my mother was not allowed to bring him to Jumla. He has to stay in Mugu and work on my father's parents' family land. The Maoist rebels killed my father in 2004 so my mother, Sonam Lama, looks after me on her own. My grandmother used to help a lot but she died last year. It is a big burden for my mother to do everything and she misses my grandmother very much who was a huge support to her in our home.

It is traditional after a family member dies to have a period of mourning, so my mother will be in mourning for a year after my grandmother's death. This means she does not go out of the house or socialise except to work and for food.

My mother is a weaver. She weaves blankets at home and she makes one blanket every four or five days and this earns her about NZ \$10. My mother must make four blankets a month just to pay for our rent. She also works in the fields in return for vegetables. If the crop does well my mother will be paid but if it fails she will not receive anything.

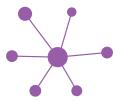


Karma at prayer

I wake up at 6.30am and get myself ready for the day. I wash using a bucket and get dressed. If it is cold I put my school uniform on over my clothes. As I am Tibetan I do my prayers and then I study. My job in the morning is to collect water for our house. We are lucky to have electricity but it comes on only in the morning and again at night. There are often outages and we have no power. My mother and I sit beside the fire in our house to eat breakfast, which is Tibetan tea and tsampa (roasted barley).

I have a 20-minute walk to school. I love to go to school. I study English, Tibetan, Nepali, mathematics, science, general knowledge and social studies. My favourite subject is Tibetan as it is my culture and I really enjoy learning it.





Karma walking to school



Karma watching his mother work

My mother brings lunch to school every day. We have dhal and rice and I eat using my hands.

After school I walk home and do any jobs my mother needs done. I go to collect wood or water and then I can play with my friends. I have a friend, Karma, who has television so I like to run to his house and watch cartoons. We do not have any pets but there are chickens and dogs that live in our street and sometimes a rat will be in our house and my mother and I will shoo him outside.

At night I do my homework and prayers and then we eat our dinner of rice and dhal.

Our house has two and a half rooms. One room is the prayer room and bedroom, which I share with my mother. We sleep in a small wooden bed with blankets on it. The other room is the living room and kitchen where she cooks and we eat and the small half room is our storage room for sacks of flour, barley and wood.

I hardly ever see a car here in Jumla but there are motorbikes and very rarely you might see the old ambulance that takes people to the hospital, but usually you will see them being carried there.

We have no doctor in Jumla and it has been my dream for a long time to become a doctor so I can help these people who are so sick or who are injured.

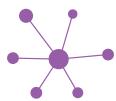
### LEARNING ACTIVITY:

Many ethnic Tibetans live in Nepal but try to retain their language and culture. What can you find out about the Tibetan people and the Tibetan sovereignty debate?



The Dalai Lama visiting New Zealand in 2011





# A CHILD'S STORY

## A day in the life of Sarita

My name is Sarita Kulal. I am 10 years old and I live with my mother and brother in a village called Kulal Bada, near Jumla.

I am a low-caste Nepali girl (Dalit). That means that some people in Nepal look down on us and we are never expected to succeed or have a good life. In our religion, our place in the world is very much at the bottom and that is why I feel so lucky that I am able to go to the Kailash Bodhi School. Many low-caste children cannot afford to go to school.

I started school when I was nine years old. I am in class with children who are mostly seven years old but I am very excited and lucky to be able to go to school. I do not mind that the children in the class are younger than me. Most importantly, it makes my mother very happy.

I usually wake up at 6am. If I have any homework, I do it then as we do not have any electricity at night. As we don't have any running water, I then walk down to the village water pipe. I get water for the house and wash at the same time so I am ready for the day. I do not have any soap or shampoo for my hair.

For breakfast I drink a cup of black tea. Then at 8.30am I have rice and dhal. The dhal we make is from mashed up kidney beans with sometimes a little turmeric and salt. I then walk 40 minutes to my school. For lunch at school I have a millet bread chapatti. Sometimes after school I have a chapatti. Then later at night my mother and I have rice and dhal for dinner. Rice and dhal is our staple food, and if we want to change the flavour of it my mother will add more or less salt, chilli or turmeric. It is not often we have vegetables or fruit.



Sarita collects firewood for cooking

I really love my school and especially my teacher. Her name is Reshma and she is very kind to me and helps me with my study. It makes me feel so happy.

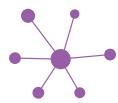
During the day my mother goes to work. Her job is to break stones and she will earn NZ \$0.95 cents per bag. It is never enough to live on. It is very hard for my mother. On weekends I can help my mother break stones or go further away to collect firewood for her.

I usually go to bed between 9pm and 10pm. I don't have a mattress or a pillow. I sleep on the dirt floor next to the fire. Our house is small and it has two rooms. We have dirt floors and only one window as more windows would let the cold and rain in. In winter it can get as cold as minus 7 degrees and in the summer it can reach as high as 32 degrees. Our house is very empty. We have a few pots and some plates.



Sarita collects water for the house





Sarita rubber band skipping with her friends

My best friend lives close by and her name is Rupa. She is also nine years old. We like to play hacky sack together, and we also skip when we have finished our jobs collecting water and firewood. Our hacky sack is made from any piece of rubber we can find. My mother worries about me when I am playing as she does not want me to hurt myself. We have no doctor in Jumla. The nearest doctor is a four or five-day walk away. I have had a stomach ache for a long time and we do not know what it is, as we cannot afford to go to the doctor. So now I am used to it, but it hurts.

I love to study. Then I can find a job, any kind of job that pays well so I can look after my mother.

**"My dream is to be able to stay at school and study."** - Sarita

## KAILASH BODHI SCHOOL

The Kailash Bodhi School is located in the mountainous area of Jumla, a poor and remote area in Northwestern Nepal. The school is a private trust formed primarily to provide an education for the Tibetan children who live on the Nepali side of the Himalayas. Nepali people refer to them as the Himalayan people.

The school was established to offer these children the opportunity to preserve their language and their culture. It also takes Nepali children from the low caste (Dalit) or untouchables. Tibetan children are taught to read and write three languages - Tibetan, Nepali and English whilst the Nepali children are taught to read and write two languages - Nepali and English. Many children at the school are from one-parent families. The Tibetan and Nepali families these children come from are both illiterate and destitute, and are not able to pay education costs.

The Kailash Bodhi School has 297 children attending, ranging in age from 4 years to 15 years. The school has few resources. Classrooms are equipped with a teacher, a whiteboard and a marker pen and children are limited to 10 pieces of paper a term and allocated one pencil.

For more information on the school and on the In Time Trust go to:  
[www.intimetrust.org](http://www.intimetrust.org)

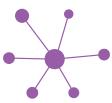
In Time Trust is a 2012 project partner for Purple Cake Day®

### LEARNING ACTIVITY:

Write your own "A Day In My Life" story.

Think about what may be similar and what may be different between your day and Sarita's.





# CHILD LABOUR

## What is Child Labour?

In general terms 'child labour' is work for children under age 18, that in some way harms or exploits them physically or mentally or by blocking them from education.

An International Convention, adopted in 1973 by the International Labour Organisation, sets the minimum age of work at 15 (in most cases). It encourages countries to reduce the number of children under the age of 18 in work, but suggests that children between 15 and 18 can participate in some employment activities as long as it does not adversely affect their health and schooling, they are paid at least the minimum wage, and given rights. Individual countries, however, set their own minimum age for children to work, and in some cases this is below that recommended by the International Convention.

In Nepal, nearly 50 percent of the population are aged 18 and under. Nepali law sets the minimum age to work at 14. Sadly, there is a really serious problem with high numbers of children under the age of 14 who are involved in work - hard and dangerous work. It's difficult to know exactly how many there are, but unofficial figures suggest that approximately 2.1 million children between five and 14 years are involved in child labour of some kind in Nepal.

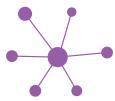
In rural areas the number of child labourers is often higher than in the cities. The majority of rural Nepali families struggle to survive on land which is hard to cultivate because of geographical and climatic conditions. Children are expected to help with domestic work from an early age – even as early as four years old. Poorly educated parents lack understanding on the importance of education and many do not send their children (especially girls) to school. Instead they are put to work as farm labourers or to care for siblings. Some children have to work as labourers to cover the costs of going to school, for uniforms and stationery. This often affects their attendance and exam results and many eventually drop out of school.

In the cities, a substantial number of children are put to work in factories. Others work in brick kilns and stone quarries in risky conditions. Some of the health hazards they face include swollen knuckles, arthritis, eye strain and lung diseases. Many children work as domestic labour in homes. Some children work up to 18 hours a day and are treated badly.

Child trafficking is one way to recruit child labourers and this is especially problematic in remote rural areas in Nepal. Frequently, parents



Children work from an early age



A young boy works breaking rocks

desperate to increase the family income or give a better future to their children are tricked by agents, who travel to remote areas promising good wages and education for the children in cities. The reality is very different. The parents entrust their children into the care of the agents, often paying them a fee, and then the children are taken to the city. The children live and work under terrible conditions and the agent keeps their wages. These children rarely get any formal education. Sometimes the children are told their parents are not alive and they have no way of knowing otherwise. Thankfully there are some organisations, like Next Generation Nepal, trying to work on reuniting trafficked children and helping rural communities become stronger, healthier places to raise their children. For more information on child trafficking go to:

[www.nextgenerationnepal.org](http://www.nextgenerationnepal.org)

Sometimes children run away to the city in an attempt to escape the cycle of poverty and they end up living on the street. The term 'street children', according to the Human Rights Watch Group, refers to '...children for whom the street, more than their family, has become

their real home. It includes children who might not necessarily be homeless or without families, but who live in situations, where there is no protection, supervision, or direction from responsible adults.<sup>1</sup> There are an estimated 5,000 street children in Nepal trying to earn a living. Life alone in the city streets is tough and it can be hard to find enough food to eat. Groups and individuals have established shelters and facilities to try to support these children but the need is far greater than resources to provide for them.

The Nepalese Government aims to outlaw child labour by 2020. However Nepal does not punish parents if they fail to send their children to school. The long-term solution to eliminate child labour lies in reducing poverty, improving the quality of education, particularly in rural schools, and improving awareness on the value of education.

Your support of Purple Cake Day will help to educate parents about child labour and the value of education.

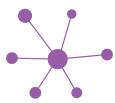


Working in the fields

#### References:

- Association for the Protection of Nepali Children: [www.apc-nepal.org](http://www.apc-nepal.org)
- Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN): [www.cwin.org.np](http://www.cwin.org.np)
- International Labour Organization: [www.ilo.org/dyn/clsurvey/lfsurvey.list?p\\_lang=en&p\\_country=NP](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/clsurvey/lfsurvey.list?p_lang=en&p_country=NP)
- Nepal News: [www.nepalnews.com](http://www.nepalnews.com)
- Next Generation Nepal: [www.nextgenerationnepal.org](http://www.nextgenerationnepal.org)
- United States Department of Labour: [www.dol.gov/ilab/media/reports/iclp/sweat/nepal.htm](http://www.dol.gov/ilab/media/reports/iclp/sweat/nepal.htm)
- Wikipedia





# ENVIRONMENT

## Save the Planet



### Air Pollution

Environmental issues pose a great concern to Nepal. The rapid modernisation of the country, lack of legislation and limited public services has resulted in a massive environmental problem, particularly in urban areas. Nepal's capital city, Kathmandu, has seen its population double in the last 50 years to around one million inhabitants in 2011, and with this comes an escalating problem of air pollution. Toxic fumes from old vehicles and the burning of tyres and low-grade coal at brick kilns around the Kathmandu valley are just some of the contributing factors. This is further exacerbated by the city's geographic location in a bowl-like valley surrounded by high mountains, which causes the pollution to hang like a blanket over the city.

### Rubbish

Rubbish dumps in public places are increasingly common in Nepal, particularly in the cities which lack adequate waste disposal services. This creates major health hazards and contributes to outbreaks of air and waterborne diseases, especially in the hot and wet seasons. Many poor families make a living by sorting and selling recyclable items found in the rubbish heaps. This is dirty and dangerous work. Cows and goats are often seen eating the rubbish and often become ill because they ingest plastic and other non-food items. Many people dispose of their rubbish near rivers because they know that when the monsoon rains come it will all disappear downstream! In fact, hazardous waste from nursing homes and private hospitals is frequently dumped in the Bagmati River which runs through Kathmandu. Most of the rubbish is eventually washed into the Ganges and the Bay of Bengal, creating a larger problem for the environment. Very few Nepalis understand how they affect the waterways and fish so far from home.

### Deforestation

Nepal was once covered in forest. Now only 29 percent of forest cover remains. The main reasons for deforestation have been land clearings to gain new agricultural land and to meet the demand for timber for firewood. About 87 percent of domestic energy in Nepal is produced by firewood and this is used mainly for cooking. As forests decline, Nepali women spend more and more time looking for enough wood, an activity that may take several hours each day. Further, many rural people depend on cattle for their livelihood but do not have sufficient land for grazing. Instead, the cattle graze in forests, which destroys tree seedlings, exacerbating the problem.

### What's Being Done?

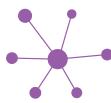
The good news is that there are groups and individuals, local and international, taking action on environmental issues in Nepal.

[Children for a Green New Nepal \(CGNN\)](#) raises awareness about environmental issues among school-aged children and local communities, through easy-to-understand messages about current environmental issues. CGNN volunteers have started school eco-clubs, planted hundreds of trees and performed street dramas for spreading environmental messages directly to the public. Read more about CGNN at:

[www.cgnn.org.np](http://www.cgnn.org.np)

[Bhaktapur Highway Green Movement](#) is a responsible citizens' environmental initiative to build green infrastructures along the Bhaktapur highway. The group aims to plant trees along a 10km stretch of the highway to improve the environment, road safety and public awareness in the area.





Check out this website, started by a kid. It is a great source of information and activities: [www.kidsforsavingearth.org](http://www.kidsforsavingearth.org)

Increasing concern over the ecological impact of water pollution has led to campaigns by a number of organisations to clean up Nepal's rivers. **Friends of the Bagmati** works to restore the environment of the Bagmati River and other rivers of Nepal by raising local awareness through clean-up campaigns and tree planting. Another organisation, **Nepal River Conservation Trust**, works to conserve Himalayan rivers, preserving cultural heritage and developing an environmentally responsible river tourism industry. The trust organises a Bagmati River Festival each year, which brings attention and awareness through rafting events, essay competitions and of course clean-ups.

[www.friendsofthebagmati.org.np](http://www.friendsofthebagmati.org.np) and  
[www.nepalrivers.org.np](http://www.nepalrivers.org.np)

## What issues are there in our own environment?

We all need to take responsibility for our environment. What can we do?

• **Learn about Rubbish:** So What's The Problem? There's only so much space on Earth and there is way too much trash. Factories, hospitals, businesses, schools and homes all create tonnes of it every day. What does it mean to throw things away? There is no 'away' actually, most of it doesn't ever disappear; it just gets put out of sight! We're running out of land for landfills (garbage dumps) and some of the trash we make is dangerous. Improperly disposing of it can hurt the land, the air and the water. Research your rubbish! Make a daily list of the rubbish that is thrown away in your classroom or at home each day and see how much of it can be recycled.

• **Organise a Garbage Walk:** Have a competition to see how much rubbish you can find and collect in the environment around you. It could be in your school, in the city, at the beach. Talk about what you found and how to get people in the community to dispose of their rubbish responsibly.

• **Say NO to Plastics:** Be aware of how often we use plastic bags and think of alternatives.

• **Use recycled containers** for snacks and school lunches; take your own recycled shopping bag to the market or supermarket; say 'No' to a plastic bag when you purchase something from a store; Use a washable fabric bag for your sports gear.



• **Compost Food Scraps:** Observe how food scraps are disposed of at home and at your school. Do they get thrown away in the same place with all the other rubbish? Food scraps can create great compost that can then be used to put back into the garden to help everything grow. This natural fertiliser is much better for the food chain - right from the plants, insects and birds, to people. Use your food scraps to start a worm farm, or why not suggest you grow an edible garden at school. Here are some great resources to get you started: [www.nec.org.nz/kegs](http://www.nec.org.nz/kegs) [www.createyourowneden.org.nz](http://www.createyourowneden.org.nz)

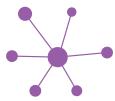
Learn the inspiring '**SAVE THE PLANET**' song, by acclaimed children's songwriter Kath Bee. We have to 'RETHINK, REUSE, RECYCLE and REDUCE'. Download track #10 on the album and the proceeds will go to Purple Cake Day - thanks Kath, you're awesome!

[www.amplifier.co.nz/release/45686/ive-got-a-dinosaur-in-my-back-yard.html](http://www.amplifier.co.nz/release/45686/ive-got-a-dinosaur-in-my-back-yard.html)

References: BBC: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/926610.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/926610.stm), Environment News Service: [www.ens-newswire.com/ens/feb2004/2004-02-23-01.html](http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/feb2004/2004-02-23-01.html), Wikipedia



[www.purplecakeday.org](http://www.purplecakeday.org)



# COOK A NEPALI FEAST

Create your own tasty Nepali feast with these easy recipes!

## Menu

### Dhal Bhat Tarkari and Momos

(serves 4-6 people)

### Dahl

2 cups of red lentils

6 cups water

½ tsp each of cumin and coriander powder

salt to taste

### Method:

Wash the lentils and rinse several times until the water is clear. Cover with 6 cups of water and add spices and salt. Bring to the boil and then reduce to simmer until lentils are soft and watery. Taste to check spices and salt and adjust accordingly.



A typical Nepali feast

### Vegetable Curry

1 tbs cooking oil

1 medium onion (chopped)

2 cloves of fresh garlic (crushed)

6 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped into cubes

1 large cauliflower (split into florets)

4 large tomatoes diced

1 tsp each of cumin powder and coriander powder, ½ tsp turmeric powder, a generous pinch each of chilli powder, salt and black pepper (to taste)

water to add for sauce

1 bunch fresh coriander (optional)

### Method:

Heat 1 tbsp cooking oil in a large frying pan or wok. Add onion and garlic and cook until brown. Add the potatoes and stir fry for five minutes until they are partially cooked. Add cauliflower, chopped tomatoes and seasoning. Reduce the heat slightly and cook for another three minutes, stirring from time to time. Add approximately 1-2 cups water to make a sauce. This will evaporate slightly with cooking. Make sure the cauliflower doesn't overcook. Stir in a handful of chopped fresh coriander leaves before serving.

Rice: Cook either basmati or long grain rice to accompany this meal.





## Momos

### Wrappers

2 cups of plain flour

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water

### Filling

500gms minced meat

(beef, lamb or chicken)

1 large onion chopped

1 tbsp fresh crushed ginger

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp crushed garlic

1 tsp salt

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp ground pepper

1 tsp each cumin and coriander powder

1 tsp mixed spices

a handful of fresh chopped coriander

2 tbs cooking oil

### Spicy sauce

$\frac{1}{2}$  an onion chopped

6 fresh tomatoes chopped

a handful of fresh coriander

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp cumin powder

1tsp chilli powder



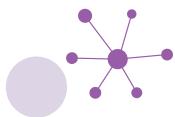
Steamed momos with spicy sauce

### Method:

Finely chop all the filling ingredients and mix together. Mix the wrapper ingredients to make a dough. Roll the dough and make circles 6-10 cm across. Place a spoonful of mixture in the middle of each circle and wet the edges to stick together. Pleat if possible. Boil a pan of water with a steaming pot on top. Oil the steaming pot to stop sticking. Alternatively place in an electric steamer for 10 minutes. For the sauce, fry the onion till brown and add the fresh tomatoes and seasoning. Bring to the boil and reduce to simmer for 10 minutes.

Vegetarian momos taste great too. Try different combinations of finely chopped vegetables.





# FESTIVALS

## Celebrations in Nepal

Nepal has a strong cultural heritage which has changed little for centuries. Festivals play an important part of everyday life for Nepali people. With more than 50 festivals a year, there is always a celebration going on. Many of the festivals originate from Nepal's different ethnic groups. The dates of the many Hindu or Buddhist festivals are set by astrologers.



Dashain Swing

### Major Festivals

The biggest festival, Dashain, is usually held in October. This is a Hindu festival worshipping the Goddess Durga but is celebrated throughout the country by all Nepalis. Lasting for 15 days, families get together for special meals. This is the only time of year that children from poor families are given new clothes. At Dashain, Nepali children play on enormous bamboo swings constructed in each village.



Children celebrating the Tihar Festival

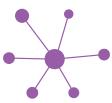
Not long after Dashain, families enjoy the Tihar festival worshipping the goddess of wealth, Laxmi. Tihar usually coincides with the rice harvest. Children go house to house singing traditional songs and dance in the hope of being given some money. On the last day of the festival, all men and boys receive a tikka (a mark on the forehead made from rice flour and colour) from their sisters. In exchange they give money or presents to their sisters.

Another colourful festival is Holi which is usually celebrated in April. People gather together and throw coloured powder at each other. It is very messy and most people try to wear old clothes at Holi.

Nepal follows a calendar different from the Roman calendar. In Nepal it will be 2069 in our April 2012. Nepali New Year is a national holiday. In addition, Tibetans and Sherpa celebrate Lhosar (Tibetan New Year) in February with colourful dances. People put up new prayer flags, buy clothes and exchange gifts.



Women dancing at Teej



# RESOURCES

For a copy of the 2011 Purple Cake Day Resource Kit (country in profile: Haiti) email: [admin@purplecakeday.org](mailto:admin@purplecakeday.org)

## Online Resources

Learn more about the work being done with Nepali children through these recommended organizations: (\* our 2012 partners)

\* **First Steps Himalaya**  
[www.firststepshimalaya.org](http://www.firststepshimalaya.org)

\* **Hillary Himalayan Trust**  
[www.himalayantrust.org](http://www.himalayantrust.org)

\* **In Time KBS**  
[www.intime-kbs.org](http://www.intime-kbs.org)

Dharma Projects  
[www.thranguhk.org/en\\_project\\_smd.html](http://www.thranguhk.org/en_project_smd.html)

dZi Foundation  
[www.dzifoundation.org](http://www.dzifoundation.org)

Global Dental Relief - Project in Nepal  
[www.globaldentalrelief.org](http://www.globaldentalrelief.org)

Himalayan Children  
[www.himalayanchildren.org](http://www.himalayanchildren.org)

The Greater Himalayas Foundation  
[www.theghf.org](http://www.theghf.org)

The Small World  
[www.thesmallworld.org](http://www.thesmallworld.org)

Volunteer Service in Nepal  
[www.vsnprojects.org](http://www.vsnprojects.org)

## Children's Books

- (1) Daly, B., Tsiza and the Caravans: My Village in Nepal, Macdonald, 1984
- (2) Ganeri, A., Spilsbury, L., and Spilsbury, R., Living in the Himalaya, (World Culture), Raintree Perspectives, 2007
- (3) Hacking, S. M., Sir Edmund Hillary: Mount Everest and Beyond, Benchmark Biographies, 1997

- (4) Schofield, L., Erik's Travel Diary, Nelson Cengage Learning, 2002
- (5) Somervill, B., The Magnificent Himalayas, (Geography of the World Series), Child's World, 2004

## Adult's Books

- (1) Gill, M., Himalayan Hospitals -Sir Edmund Hillary's Everest Legacy, Craig Potton Publishing, 2011
- (2) Greenwald, J., Shopping for Buddhas, Harper and Row, 1990
- (3) Grennan, C., Little Princes: One Man's Promise to Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal, Morrow, W., 2011
- (4) Hillary, Sir. E., View from the Summit: The Remarkable Memoir by the First Person to Conquer Everest, Gallery Books, 2000
- (5) Hendry, S., Radhika's Story: Surviving Human Trafficking, New Holland Publishers, 2010
- (6) Iyer, P., Video Night in Kathmandu, Vintage, 1989
- (7) Johnston, A., Sir Edmund Hillary: An Extraordinary Life, Viking, 2005
- (8) Klatzel, F., Gaiety of Spirit: The Sherpas of Everest, Rocky Mountain Books, 2010
- (9) Krakauer, J., Into Thin Air, Anchor Books, 1997
- (10) McCormick, P., Sold, Hyperion, 2006
- (11) Murphy, D., The Waiting Land: A Spell in Nepal, Murray, J., 1967
- (12) Potton, C., Offerings from Nepal, Craig Potton Publishing, 1995
- (13) Stephens, J., Window on to Annapurna, Victor Gollancz, 1990
- (14) Wood, J., Leaving Microsoft to Change the World: An Entrepreneur's Odyssey to Educate the World's Children, HarperBusiness, 2006

