

## **HeNN e-Library, Dang: 6 months later**

### ***Field Visit Report***



### **Submitted to**

Help Nepal Network (HeNN)

### **Submitted by**

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## Background

HeNN e-Library at Shree Adarsha Ma Vi, Lalmatiya Dang was Help Nepal Network's first step towards e-Library. The e-Library was the first computer lab in the government school in mid-western Nepal and perhaps the first implementation of Linux Terminal Server Project (LTSP) for a social cause in Nepal. The project was deployed during January, 2007.

On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2007, I visited the e-Library to see how things are going. It was my personal visit and was kind of surprise to the school. Here are my findings..



*Photo 1: Everything was same except the corn field and the heat..*

## The e-Library

### **Hardware**

The hardware is in quite good condition, except few faulty keyboard and mouse which haven't been changed till now.

However, I made some changes. Some time back the IT students from the Rapti Science Campus had (without permission) opened one of the P4 computers in our e-Library and damaged it. So as compensation, the IT College had bought a new computer for the school. But now since the construction of the college has been stopped, the computer they'd given was going back. This wasn't fair (in my opinion) as our P4 was still not functioning. I took a look at our malfunctioning computer and found out that the hard-disk was causing trouble. So I exchanged the hard-disk with IT college's computer. I don't know if this was a good thing to do or not, but since IT college had to compensate for our damaged computer, now we're even.

And by the way, the scanner and printer that HeNN had donated along with the computers are being used as photocopy machine. I can't tell if this is a misuse or not, but the scanner-printer combination is rocking.

## Software

Linux is running great, whereas MS Windows has been showing its true colors in the e-Library.

Even after six months of installation and massive usage by the students, Linux (which is LTSP backbone in the e-Library too) is still running good. Whereas the MS Windows installed in three P4 computers are the real troublemakers. Govinda sir has several times reinstalled the OS and even when I was there i reinstalled and fixed one of the system.



*Photo 2: With Govinda sir*

## Traditional Library

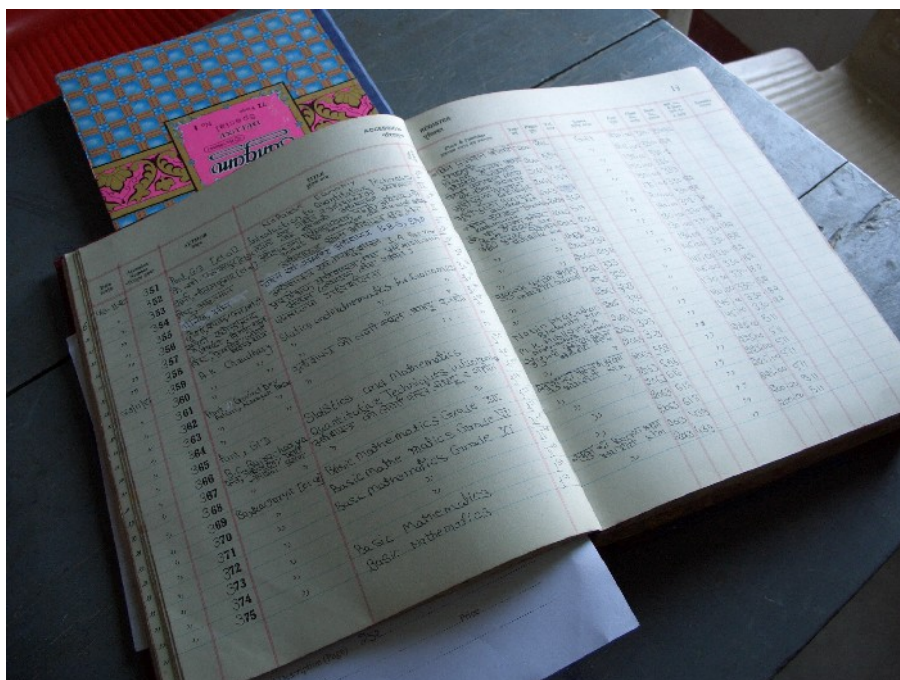
The developments in traditional library were kind of surprise to me. Along with the computers, HeNN had also donated 49 computer-related and 1,111 other books. When we (deployment team) were in Dang, the bookshelves were still to be bought so the books were just lying on the floor. But later on the school purchased some bookshelves and spent around Rs. 10,000 for proper cataloging and management of the books. For this they hired experts from nearby Mahendra Technical College and had a week long training on library management system. They have also made library cards for students and teachers. Students can issue a book for a week, whereas the teachers can issue it for one session. The students also have the facility of reading the books within the library without issuing it (which is what they do currently as the library cards have not been issued to them yet).



As far as room for library is concerned, well, there isn't any. Currently the bookshelves are in one side of the staffs' room. But the school has plans to allocate a separate hall for the library.



*Photo 3: Headsir and Librarian ma'am in the Library*



*Photo 4: Book Registration*

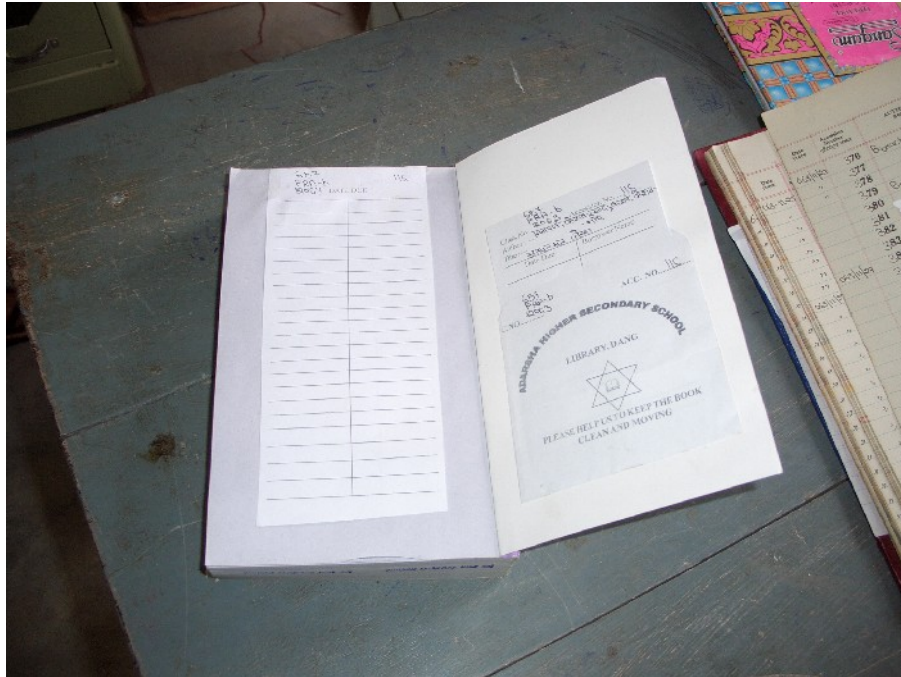


Photo 5: Book issue page



Photo 6: Library Cards

## **E-Library usage**

The usage of e-library is quite exciting. The school has included computer as a subject from class 6. For class 6 to 8, it is as an extra period whereas for class 9 to 12, it is as a course. While students from class 9 and above visit the computer lab as per their routine, others visit the lab whenever they have a leisure period. However, the timing also depends on teachers - if the teachers are free, the students can visit the lab. So whenever the class is off, the students come running to the office asking to open the lab. There has been at least 2-3 groups visiting the lab each day.

There seems to be great enthusiasm among the students about the computer technology. According to the teachers, even the so-called 'dull' students seem to have great interest in computers.

## **Other Developments**

The school had a tie-up with an IT college (being constructed within the school premises) to share the computer lab, according to which the school was to share the computer lab hall and the college was to share the computer furniture. But now since the IT college construction has been shut down, all the nice chairs in the lab has been taken away. But the computer tables are still there as they are nondetachable and difficult to move.

Meanwhile the e-Library hall was also shared by a local computer institute, but they have gone too.

Just the day before my visit, the members from Eco-club run by Taal INGO had visited the e-Library and filmed everything. They are going to make a documentary on the e-Library. In fact, this INGO has started Eco-clubs in many schools in Dang and other districts and their motive is to create awareness on environment among the students. Good thing is that they want to make use of our e-Library as a Resource Center.

It is noteworthy that Taal INGO had previously donated two P4 computers to the school, one of which is being used in the e-Library as MS Windows box and another is being used in the Administration Section.

## **Turn-downs**

The major turn down was to know that the e-Library wasn't being used for the community purpose. Immediately after the e-Library was deployed, students from Maurighat School (a nearby school) had come to use the computers but it was only twice or thrice and since then there hasn't been any visits from anyone else outside the school. The computers have been solely used by the school.

Another turn down was to know that the school has been using the e-Library as a computer lab instead of a library. The website caches and other educational stuffs haven't been used much. The students from class 6 to 8 use the computers to play games (in Linux), while the students in the higher classes use them as per their curriculum. The earlier report that the students have created the website of the school using the local Wikipedia was false.

Similarly it was also very disappointing that the school hasn't taken any step to add more computers. The school could at least have changed the faulty keyboard and mouse which they can get from nearby Nepalgunj. This attitude of the school management to depend entirely upon the donor is really discouraging.

## **The Priorities**

There were two major priorities – internet and additional computers. I came to know that HeNN had given the school around Rs.12,000 for internet connection but the money hasn't been used till now. The teachers were suspicious if the school management was trying to use the money somewhere else instead of spending it over internet.

When I asked the teachers to choose one between internet and additional computer, they told me that internet was at the top of the list. They also suggested that HeNN should pressurize the school administration to utilize the money given for internet connection.

## **Suggestions**

The most important suggestion to HeNN would be to pressurize the school administration to submit the progress-reports on time. We've also given them a fax machine, so sending the report is not a big deal.

Next step for HeNN would be to get the internet running in the e-Library. Actually HeNN has already given money to the school for internet, so all HeNN needs to do is to make sure that the money has been properly utilized for the intended purpose.

Finally if possible, it would also be great to have more computers in the e-Library. Currently the student vs. computer ratio is just too high, especially in the higher classes. Actually the school itself is financially sound to add more computers. The only thing HeNN has to do is make proper coordination.

The e-Library at Dang is solely being used as the school's computer lab. HeNN should take some actions on this. For further deployments of e-Libraries HeNN should also take proper measures to ensure that the e-Library is used for community purposes and not as school's computer lab.

Since we have two e-Libraries deployed till now, we can also have a teacher exchange program. We can also conduct a training program to the teachers on Linux and LTSP.