



Newsletter

of the Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal

November 2011

Message from the Ambassador



Dear Citizens and friends of Switzerland,
As this is the last Newsletter in 2011, allow me to borrow Mandakini's editorial pen to personally reflect back on a year that has been very intensive and exciting of us all in Ekantakuna.

The year has been important for Nepal, bidding farewell to the UNMIN mission and thus taking a further decisive step towards a national solution to the challenges posed by the peace process. So much remains to do to address the root causes of the conflict and Switzerland stands ready to support.

With an elating National day celebration, hosted by the Nepali Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS) and the GATE College, the Swiss Embassy in Nepal entered its third year of existence. Our integrated approach – that is with operations of the Swiss Agency for Development and cooperation (SDC) and those of the Political Directorate for Peace and Human Security fully included in the structure of the Embassy – is no longer just an original idea, but an inspiration to our Ministry's approach in other countries where development cooperation and/or dealing with the consequences of conflict are major priorities of Switzerland's foreign policy.

I am extremely proud of my Team, as well as the leaders and staff of the many projects that allow us to effectively implement our cooperation strategy. This year we launched a number of new projects, including on migration, on motorable bridges and on strengthening the services of the state at the local level. For a number of existing successful projects, such as the Employment Fund, Switzerland and the Government of Nepal have agreed on extensions into new phases. So all in all a development portfolio of more than 20 mio CHF is being implemented successfully with particular attention to promoting social inclusion and conflict sensitivity.

I would also like to acknowledge the precious contribution of my wife Nathalie, Culture Attaché of the Embassy, who has this year put together or supported several important events giving visibility to Switzerland in Nepal, including a much noted Jazz Concert and our input to the first of August celebration. As this Newsletter reaches your homes and emails, she is working with GATE to promote Swiss food at this year's Food festival in Gokarna on 26 November.

In closing, please accept my warm wishes of peace and joy to you and your loved ones as we enter the time of Advent and approach the end of the year.

Thomas Gass
Ambassador



Ms. Nathalie Gass

Swiss contribution of over 7 million CHF to local level state building and to enhance employment opportunities in Nepal

The Swiss government has granted CHF 4 million and CHF 3 million respectively, to realise the State Building at Local Level project and to contribute to the gainful employment opportunities for 35,000 youths in Nepal through training and skill testing.

The State Building at Local Level Project is designed to increase the access of poor and disadvantaged people to local government's services and to improve the capacities of the local authorities to increase their service delivery to the people as provisioned in Local Self Governance Act (1999). Similarly the Employment Fund project will enhance the income and employment opportunities for poor and disadvantaged youth in particular. Based on the successful past experience with training through the involvement of private enterprises, this project will directly address issues of youth employment, income generation, and improved employability consistent with the Government of Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

What migrants need to know

In our last edition, we highlighted how Switzerland, through its new SDC project 'Safer Migration' is helping women and men make informed decision about migration. In this regard, a series of workshops was conducted for national and international migrants rights organisations, who provide pre-departure orientation. The purpose of these workshops was to inform and raise awareness about the legal systems that govern migrants' life in the Gulf Cooperation Council (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman). One of them being the Kafala system.¹The Kafala, or Sponsorship System is a system used to monitor the construction and domestic migrant laborers in the Arab Gulf States. The system requires all unskilled laborers to have an in-country sponsor, usually their employer, who is responsible for their visa and legal status. This practice has been decried by human rights organizations for creating easy opportunities for the exploitation of workers, as many employers take away passports and abuse their workers with little chance of legal repercussions. This system is particularly difficult for women who mostly work as 'maids' in private homes. They often suffer from extreme exploitation and many are not even allowed to leave the house by their employers. In 2022 Qatar is hosting the World Cup and has started building the stadiums and other infrastructure. It has already become the most important destination for the 45'000 Nepali migrants. Acquiring important information on the prevalent legal systems can help these aspirants make better decision and protect themselves against fraud and exploitation.

August first celebration 2011



This year's Swiss National Day celebration was hosted by Nepali Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS), with the patronage of the Embassy of Switzerland at GATE College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Mandikhatar, Kathmandu. The invitees gathered at the GATE college and relished appetizing repas prepared by the students. The students also presented a short cultural programme to commemorate the day, while Samuel Gass and Anya Petrovani sang a modern arrangement of the Swiss National Anthem.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kafala_System

The Swiss Connection...

The Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal hosted the Swiss band 'BConnected' for a special performance at the Embassy garden on the evening of 19th October for 140 guests. Having performed in several jazz festivals around the globe, Bconnected's music reflects a diverse influence while keeping its roots in jazz. Be-Connected came to Nepal to perform as a part of the Jazzmandu music festival which ran through till October 25 in different endroits in Kathmandu.



The band themselves



Guests pose for a photo during the occasion

Restaurant managed by the members of the Swiss Community in Nepal

'For continental or thai cousine... It's the Yin Yang restaurant...' sings the jingle in the radio...



Situated in the heart of Thamel, the Yin Yang restaurant serves a wholesome complementary array of delectable Thai and Continental dishes. Yin" and "Yang" are two terms which according to Chinese cosmology stand for the masculine and feminine principles in nature that together produce a wholeness of "all that comes to be". The restaurant has a history in Kathmandu dating back to the 1970's when

it was a popular venue at Durbar Square around, now it has been reborn with a difference, as a unique Thai restaurant of international standard in Thamel.

Mr. Martin Kromer (in the inset above), co-owner of the restaurant suggests *'Tom Yam Kung'* is a not to be missed item from the Thai menu.

For more information call: 4701510 or visit the website: www.yinyangrestaurantbar.com

(Mr. Kormer's picture has been taken from:

http://www.gate.edu.np/2010/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=111:martin-kromer&catid=71:testimonials&Itemid=100)



Switzerland.

A Swiss visit in Kathmandu – Encounters and Impressions (September 2011)

(This excerpt is contributed by the members of the Manjushree Association, Switzerland who came to Nepal in September 2011 to attend the inauguration of the project which they supported. At the end of their trip they also visited the Embassy of Switzerland)

Our two micros weaved slowly up the hill towards the new school. We moved further and further away from the big Boudhanath stupa and closer to the green outskirts. Curiosity and excitement seemed to fill the air in the vehicle. Everybody brought their own ideas and expectations about the place and the project which we were going to see – and which all participants of this trip have generously been supporting for several years. Exchanging letters and e-mails was the only way those in Switzerland had been able to look out for the well-being of the children they had each sponsored and follow the progress in the development and construction of the new school. And now, in mere minutes, we were going to attend the official inauguration ceremony of the Manjughoksha Academy. The five-year long effort was done; our project was successfully completed.



One of the fur buildings supported by the Association



The group members at the inauguration ceremony

The school provides a regular curriculum set by the Nepalese government and offer a possibility of a comprehensive education to under privileged children of Tibetan refugees and ethnic Tibetan from the poor Himalaya region. The Manjushri Association in Switzerland was approached for financial support to build a new building for the school. With the help of numerous sponsors, the Association facilitated this project successfully. The Academy now hosts 354 students.

The beautiful dance and song performances by the children at the inauguration, the relief and joy in everybody's faces on behalf of the successful outcome of the project, and above all, the very warm and hearty encounters with the lovely kids and some of their parents, made this visit in Kathmandu an unforgettable event for everybody.

Upcoming event...

- **Food festival... in Gokarna... by The Himalayan Times ... Yak Cheese Raclette**

The much awaited International Food Fest is back !!!

The Himalayan Times International Food Fest 2011 is scheduled this year on November 26, 2011. With the history of seven unprecedented successful years, this year too, the theme of the festival is to bring special cuisines from various parts of the world in one venue. The exotic cuisines from near and far will be served with a flourish. **For the first time there will be a Swiss Food stall.** Apart from mouth-watering goodies, there will be plenty of other means to keep you engrossed. For instance, you could enjoy other exciting events such as live music concert and various other interesting games.

Entrance fee of the event is Nrs 100/- / Nrs. 50/- (for below 3ft).

Notice Board



Nepal has been featured in the Swiss Peace Supporter magazine on its September edition. Please follow the link below to read the stories.

http://www.vtg.admin.ch/internet/vtg/en/home/dokumentation/publik_zeitschr/magazin_swiss_peace.parsys.16953.downloadList.75120.DownloadFile.tmp/swisspeacesupporter032011.pdf

Weblinks

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