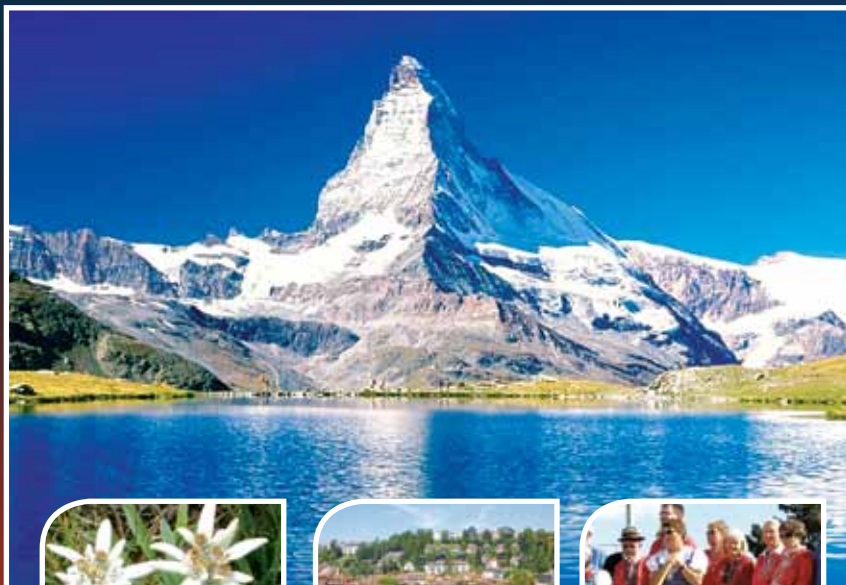


Meeteri

... beyond friendship



**Special Edition on the
Occasion of Swiss National Day**

August 1, 2012
Kathmandu, Nepal





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We would like to congratulate the governments of **Nepal** and **Switzerland** for their continued diplomatic relations.



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“Nepal must not and cannot develop into Switzerland in the future; however, Nepal has to become the Nepal of the future.”

- **H.E. THOMAS GASS**
Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal
20th June 2011, Power Talks Season 2

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Message from H.E. Mr. Thomas Gass, Swiss Ambassador to Nepal



August 1st 2012

His Excellency, Mr. Thomas Gass, Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal

Embassy of Switzerland,

Kathmandu, Nepal

It gives me immense pleasure to learn that the Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS) is bringing out its first annual publication, “Meeteri – Beyond Friendship” on August 1st, on the occasion of Swiss National Day.

We are looking forward to NSFS becoming an active organization to promote cultural and friendship relations between Nepal and Switzerland. Already on the second year of its operations, it is encouraging to see that this institution has been able to publish this new magazine called Meeteri, and I hope the readers will find in it many information on the activities related to the Nepalese-Swiss friendship.

Last year, I recall that colleagues from Nepal Swiss Friendship Society had already very nicely organized a celebration of the Swiss National Day and I am looking forward for a similar event also this year.

Finally, I thank the Nepal Swiss Friendship Society President, Mr. Bishnu Bhusal and his team for introducing Meeteri and wish the continued success of this magazine.

Thank you!

Thomas Gass

Ambassador to Switzerland to Nepal



Message from NSFS President

It is my pleasure to present you the first Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS) Souvenir named “Meeteri” on the celebrations of Swiss National Day, August 1st. NSFS family is pleased to celebrate this day with our Swiss friends in Nepal. “Meeteri” in Nepali means “Beyond Friendship” in English. NSFS will regularly publish this annual Souvenir, serving as information sharing platform on the cultural, friendship and other activities between Nepal and Switzerland. “Meeteri” will be widely circulated in Nepal and Switzerland among the friends of Nepal and Switzerland. At the cover page you will find the two famous mountains of both countries namely; Machhapuchhre and Matterhorn. The nature has already tied up “Meeteri” between the Nepal and Switzerland making these both countries mountainous, landlocked and rich in natural beauty. Accordingly, tourism is one of the major businesses of both countries.

Nepal was not open to foreigners for long time. After the end of Rana Regime in Nepal, it slowly opened to the foreigners and it has started expanding friendly ties with other countries of the world. Switzerland has entered into development cooperation with Nepal during 1955 through SHAG later known as Helvetas. The Swiss development mission those days used to be called SATA (Swiss Association for Technical Assistance). It may be recalled that Nepal is the birth place of Swiss development cooperation. Switzerland didn't have any such cooperation with other countries before Nepal. This has significant meaning to Swiss people. This is also one of the facts to reflect the special value Swiss people have with the Nepalese. Many people are not aware of

famous Swiss Mt. Everest Expedition just before the Hillary and Tenzin Expedition.

After the establishment of development cooperation between the two countries, the friendship between the two countries has taken new heights. The Swiss development cooperation in Nepal is seen in really friendship term with no strings attached. Some of the projects of Swiss development cooperation have shown their long term impacts the field of introducing and producing cheese to Nepal, the background support on making Nepalese carpets world famous, trail bridges all over Nepal, the developments on the technical and vocational education sectors and so on.

Now, both counties have their Embassies in Geneva and in Kathmandu. There are many inter-country marriages and mixed families. Nepalese students also go to Switzerland for studies and work as well as there are Swiss expatriates working in Nepal. Nepal is one of the most popular tourist destinations for Swiss. Specially, most Swiss tourists like trekking and mountaineering in and around Nepal. Beside, the official development cooperation through Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), many Swiss INGOs, foundations and family initiatives support many different levels of programs all over Nepal. The people to people level of cooperation is growing every day in Nepal, which reflects the growing mutual bonds between the people of Nepal and Switzerland.

To strengthen and promote friendship, cultural and economic ties, both countries have active friendship societies namely; Swiss Nepali Samaj



(SNS) in Switzerland and Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS) in Nepal. Both SNS and NSFS have sisterly ties and work very closely as the President of NSFS is also current Board of Directors and Nepal Representative of SNS.

I would like to specially thank to His Excellency Mr. Thomas Gass, Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal to encourage us and extend his support to “Meeteri” with his valuable advice and message to the magazine. The tireless effort of my colleagues at NSFS to bring this magazine deserves big appreciation. Accordingly, the editorial team deserves big thanks to bring this magazine to this shape in limited time.

I hope you will enjoy reading this magazine. Our editorial team will appreciate your feedbacks and suggestions so that the future issues will be even better. Thank you.

Bishnu Bhusal, President NSFS, Kathmandu, August 1, 2012. www.nepalswiss.org



Greetings from Your Swiss Sister!

Dear NSFS Friends and distinguished President, Bishnu Bhusal!

Let me convey my very best regards and a warm welcome on behalf of the Swiss-Nepalese Society to all our friends and esteemed members of the NSFS. Bishnu-ji, please accept my hearty congratulations and deep respect for the establishment of our new sister organization. Let me underline that I feel deeply honoured to be asked for this key note in the very first edition of the NSFS yearly magazine "Meeteri".

Meeteri - truly long-lasting

Scrolling through the SNS member lists is like a deep-dive in half a century of intense Swiss Nepalese ties, going all the way back to the 1960s, the times of Dr. Peter Schafroth or Annemarie Spahr. Today, we push wide open a new chapter in the rich history book of the Swiss Nepali ties.

It is a great pleasure to me to witness the foundation of the NSFS under the guidance of its founding President Bishnu Bhusal, who is undoubtedly best advised by the two of the best proven connoisseurs of the Swiss-Nepalese ties, the two former Ambassadors of Nepal to Switzerland, Dr. Shambhu Simkhada and Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai and others.

Think Out-of-the-Box

Dear members of the NSFS, friends and well-wishers of Switzerland, I wish all of you lots of

energy, diligence and persistence for the successful establishment of your new organization.

It is hoped that the two organizations can substantially contribute to extend the Nepal-Swiss cultural, economic and trade partnership, but also offering meaningful support for investors, business people, students or migrants alike.

I have no doubts that with Bishnu-ji's leadership and endurance, we can widen the horizon of collaboration and open new fields of activities. I take this opportunity to mention here that Bishnu-ji is same time, active Board of Directors and Nepal Representative of SNS. I see almost unlimited possibilities for us to become active. Let us think out-of-the-box and be practical with a few selected activities such as

- support in running small-scale humanitarian projects more efficiently;
- identification of easier trade channels between the two countries;
- establishment of a movie and literature trading platform;
- support for Nepali students in identifying serious colleges in Switzerland;
- advice for Nepali micro-entrepreneurs in reaching out to the Swiss market.



I would like to invite all of you to actively participate in a lively exchange of ideas where our two organizations could closely work together in achieving a meaningful and sustainable collaboration, aiming at promoting cultural and economic ties between Nepal and Switzerland.

We from the SNS are proud and excited being your partners and firmly believe that we can establish fruitful relationships in the years and decades to come. Let us use our well nurtured ties to enter a new era of collaboration!

I wish all of you a great and memorable August 1st Swiss National Day!

Dr. Markus Ruckstuhl
President Swiss-Nepalese Society
www.swiss-nepal.ch
Zuerich, July 2012

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Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada

Dr. Simkhada is first Ambassador of Nepal to Switzerland. He has PhD in International relations from University of Miami, Florida, USA. He is currently the Member - Secretariat of the Special Committee for the Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation of the Maoist Army Combatants, Government of Nepal Member - Secretariat of the Special Committee for the Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation of the Maoist Army Combatants, Government of Nepal.

In addition to his assignments, Dr. Simkhada has also served as Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights 2000-2001, Visiting Professor-Geneva School of Diplomacy, International Relations, Visiting Scholar-Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) 2007, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York 1994, Political Adviser on International Relations to the President of the Nepali Congress Party, Leader of the Seven Party Alliance and former Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Girija Prasad Koirala, Visiting Fellow-Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva 2003 -2005 and Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 1998-2003

Nepal-Switzerland Relations

Beyond aid, trade and tourism-learning from the Swiss Experience
Ambassador Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada

Soon after my arrival in Switzerland as the Acting Permanent Representative (PR) of Nepal to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, I met His Excellency Prof. Arnold Koller, then President of Switzerland. He was scheduled to visit Nepal, one of the first ever state visits by the Swiss Head of State. He invited me to Bern and I went to see him. He came out of a Parliamentary session for our meeting. I briefed him on Nepal and he shared his interests and impressions. Our 40 minutes meeting confirmed; the president was greatly looking forward to his visit to Nepal. But, there was a small hitch; Thai Airways had not yet confirmed some seats for his entourage of 18 for the Kathmandu-Bangkok sector. I was touched that the President of the country with one of the highest, if not the highest per capita income in the world was travelling on a regular flight. I informed Kathmandu but in the meantime the remaining seats were confirmed and the historic visit took place adding a new chapter in Swiss-Nepal relations.

Alps and Himalayas: After the meeting I had almost reached the other end of the long corridor of the *Palais Federal* when I heard someone calling, *Monsieur le Ambassador*. I turned back and saw the President's aide running towards me. When close, he said "the President wants you back". So,

I rushed. As I entered the *Salon du President*, the President opened the curtains of his window and said, "I forgot to show you *Jung Frau*, one of the most beautiful of the Swiss Alps. Of course, it is not as high as your Himalayas and I am waiting to see them". I thanked the President for his gesture and added "the Alps and the Himalayas represent the height, width and sparkle of Nepal Switzerland friendship".

Goodwill: Nepal is the first country to start receiving Swiss economic assistance and today Switzerland is one of the major contributors to Nepal's development. Tibetan Carpets, Cheese and Suspension Bridges are some flagship projects of Swiss Nepal cooperation. Just as the financial and technical assistance, bilateral trade and large number of tourists, the goodwill at both government and people's level is tremendous.

The late Dr. Toni Hagen personified the best of Swiss Nepal friendship. One day he called me to say with excitement "I am going to Nepal one more time". I was greatly shocked and deeply saddened by the call two days later that he had passed away. Attending his last birthday celebration in his village, Lenzerhede was a memorable moment. He was a true lover of Nepal



and his daughter, Dr. Katrin Hagen is keeping the friendship and memory alive with regular visits and activities through the Toni Hagen Foundation. Recently, Toni Hagen's third book on Nepal, Decentralization and Development: the Role of Democratic Principles was launched by the Toni Hagen Foundation and Kathmandu University.

Mutuality: Often the world is divided as First, Second and Third worlds or Developed, Developing and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The developed world is seen as extending economic and technical assistance with the developing and the LDCs as recipients. My role as ambassador to Switzerland was somewhat different. The Swiss PR to the UN Françoise Nordmann once called me to say "Switzerland has a candidate for one of the *Special Rapporteur* of the UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR). The Swiss Government would like to request you to consider his case". When I was in Bern President Adolf Ogi too made that request to me personally. During one of my visits to Bern Walter Fust, Head of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) hosted a lunch in my honor and again repeated that request. He stressed the importance of this appointment in creating favorable public opinion before the third referendum on Switzerland's joining the UN. As the Chairman of the CHR it was ultimately my responsibility to appoint Special Rapporteurs. Besides his credentials, Nepal-Switzerland friendship and Swiss membership of the UN were important considerations leading me to appoint Jean Ziegler as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food from among a large number of qualified candidates. This appointment did not make me very popular in

some powerful quarters but contributed in making Nepal-Swiss relations and in a small way enabling Switzerland to join the UN. As another example of this relationship, on my request Swiss Ambassador Pierre Louis Girard Chaired the Working Party on Nepal's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and helped in making Nepal the first LDC to join the WTO.

The Swiss Experience: Nepal and Switzerland are both lands of unmatched natural beauty, hard working people and landlocked between large neighbors. Mother Nature may have been more generous to Nepal with sizeable fertile plain land and generally warm and Sunny days even in the middle of winter. Despite nature's bounty and other similarities why is Nepal in such a mess whereas Switzerland a garden of peace and prosperity? This question was in my mind for long but it became more intense after my arrival in Switzerland as PR/Ambassador.

Time and space, history and geography partly explain why societies with similar physical features achieve different levels of development within the same time span. The beauty of the 21st century is the unprecedented access to knowledge and information. Today dynamics of time and technology allow societies to leapfrog avoiding many of the problems experienced by others in the past. My six years in Switzerland as Nepal's envoy gave me the opportunity to understand the Swiss people, society and government better. Subsequently, I got involved with the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations

as Visiting Professor and the well known Graduate Institute of International Studies as Visiting Fellow. The prestigious Graduate Institute also published my papers and books including on Nepal's internal conflict and means to resolve it. Since then I have been convinced that if there are lessons societies could learn from one another, the Swiss experience is one of the most fitting for Nepal.

Democracy and Democratic Institutions: Founders of Switzerland from the old Confederacy in 1291, the *Helvetic* Nation-state of 1648 to the modern Swiss Federal Constitution of 1848 utilized democracy to manage their diversity. Liberty and democracy were institutionalized to attain prosperity and security by creating and strengthening democratic institutions but preserving the right of the people to decide on major issues of importance through a system of direct citizen participation. Unity among the people and loyalty to the state was inculcated with strict discipline and responsibility of citizenship through a wise and skillful balance between self rule and shared rule.

Transparent, Accountable and Devolved System of Governance: The original Swiss Confederation and present Federation is a voluntary accession of independent cantons rather than through conquests. Cantons retain a high degree of autonomy, with power flowing partly upward to the federal and downward to the municipal (commune) levels with a highly devolved, transparent and accountable form of governance.



Rights with Responsibilities: Rule of law is so deeply rooted in Swiss society that along with seeking rights individuals feel the responsibility not only in obeying the law but also in law enforcement. It is mandatory for everyone to report crime and violations of law. Rule of law applies to everyone. Another feature of the Swiss experience is the fiercely democratic but highly disciplined culture. There are punishments even for crossing the streets at wrong places. Active neutrality and compulsory military training may have helped make Switzerland such a highly disciplined society.

Practical: For someone coming from a culture where rituals rule, absence of extravagant ceremonies and rituals is another striking feature of Swiss society. The Cabinet is composed of seven State Councilors (Ministers) elected by the Parliament based on a model of power sharing, with the State Chancellor appointed according to a formula. One of the seven State Councilors is elected President (Head of State) and one Vice President for one year. They retain their ministerial portfolio and return to it after their one year term as President or VP. For someone familiar with political power taking “larger than life” self-aggrandizements, it is refreshing to see the simplicity of the President driving herself without escorts and meet ministers walking in the streets or shopping malls carrying their own backpacks.

Economic and Educational System: The Swiss economy combines growth and productivity with efficiency and equity. Service sectors like tourism, banking, insurance, foreign investment

are the priorities. Chocolate and cheese based on local raw materials, technology and ecology friendly are given importance. On manufacturing the emphasis is on low volume high value products. The idea is, by correctly identifying and concentrating on areas of their comparative advantages, if the Swiss can generate revenue and provide employment they can import cars from Germany and Japan or clothes and shoes from Italy (China now!). Equally significant is the Swiss education system. At the technical/vocational and higher-tertiary levels a very high standard in education is maintained and is closely calibrated with the human resources and manpower needs of the economy and society. Land use planning is another simple but significant feature. Total land is divided as urban, industrial, forest, agricultural, roads etc. The law forbids leaving exposed soil to prevent soil erosion, landslides, dust pollution etc.

Power Sharing and Coalition Culture: The Swiss political landscape has been and still is quite divisive amongst conservative Christian Democrats on the right, centrists Social Democrats and Socialists and radical Communists on the left, with a number of other smaller parties. Despite deep ideological division, the Swiss have, however been successful in avoiding the pitfalls of the *winner takes all* politics by devising a model to share power as well as build consensus around the core of their national interests. The Swiss system of managing diversity by power/resources sharing, no rural-urban disparity as well as conflict resolution/coalition building is remarkable.

National Interest: Switzerland is well known for its foreign policy of active neutrality, friendship

with all hostility towards none but willingness and ability to defend itself if and when threatened. For a small country surrounded by big powers, implementing such a policy is possible only as a result of clarity and consensus on national interest and security amongst all major political actors. This policy helped Switzerland stay out of both the two World Wars, reaping the fruits of peace even when surrounded by conflict all around. This successful policy prompted scholars to talk of *The Power of Small States*.

Total replication of the Swiss model in Nepal is a fantasy. But there are important lessons of the Swiss Experience in crystallizing our own exercise in creating a peaceful and prosperous society by restructuring the present Nepali State and institutionalizing a more inclusive democracy. In the final analysis, long history of democracy and democratic institutions, highly devolved, transparent and accountable system of governance, avoiding the pitfalls of the “*winner takes all*” politics by sharing power at the top and encouraging people to work hard based on values and culture of reward and punishment in society, no compromise on national interests with peaceful competition for power internally have been the foundations of the Swiss success story. Similarities and differences aside, besides aid, trade, tourism etc Nepal could also benefit from the successful Swiss Experience of turning their small country into a garden of peace and prosperity today. This is however possible only with the political leadership of wisdom and courage capable of learning from our own history and the experiences of others.



Adventure of Observing Honey Hunting in the Himalayas

By **Mr. Niru Rai**, Adventure Geo Treks, Kathmandu

Honey Hunting is the real and frequent activity of indigenous Gurung and Magar Community in Bhujung and Pasgaon for honey hunting from which they are able to solve their problem of bread and butter. This ancestral job of honey hunting still continues in many remote villages of Nepal while offering high tourism potential. A large section of travelers are increasingly showing their interest in honey hunting thereby ensuring staple sources of local revenue generation, besides Ghalegoan Bhujung and the hole of Annapurna region, Dhading and Jharlang across Ganesh Himal Arun valley in Makalu and other trekking areas have become popular for honey hunting, a new tourist activity but in Nepal except Bhujunga area of Annapurna region, special package of Honey hunting for tourist is not developed yet. Nerveless few lucky tourist get chance to observe honey hunting on spot while traveling along the trekking routes. There are myriad be nests found in the inner and outer rings of different trekking areas which if professionally scientifically and technically managed, provides an immense potentiality of promoting honey hunting as an add- on product to tourism in Nepal.

Honey Hunting, the collection of Honey from the nests of wild Bees built on steep cliffs, is an age-old tradition. Local honey hunters show their exceptional skills by hanging themselves from cliffs as high as 300 meters using Bamboo ladders and hemp ropes, while harvesting the honeycombs. Everyone is thrilled to watch honey hunters at work.

Trekking agencies in Nepal, organize this kind of honey hunting tour with part of trekking. This is a camping



trek including honey hunting. They have well experience at Honey Hunters to do the job, you will enjoy the trip. Come to Nepal on holidays and discover local tradition and Gurung culture in Nepal. Don't forget your camera!!

Trekking in the foothills of the Annapurnas. See the spectacular honey hunting on the steep bee cliffs. Be welcomed by the Gurung people and learn about their traditions and customs.

These holidays give you the opportunity to sample traditions and culture. See them while you trek in the foothills of The Himalayas.
Season: Spring & Autumn





Dr. Ursula Gehbauer Tichler

CEO, SSTH Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality

Dr Ursula Gehbauer Tichler took over the leadership of the Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality in 2011. She is both CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and also responsible for the academic program as CAO (Chief Academic Officer).

Ursula Gehbauer Tichler has long-standing experience and an excellent network in the tourism industry, in the educational as well as in political sectors. Before being appointed CEO of SSTH, she was Director of Samedan's College for Higher Education in Tourism (Engadine, St. Moritz) and Municipal Councilor of the community of Madulain.

She is very committed to maintaining the competitive edge in education and tourism as well as the people that these fields involve. With determination she follows the business developments of her surroundings, pursues trends and integrates these in her exchange with internal and external partners. Ursula Gehbauer Tichler has the drive to innovate.

She studied in Zurich and Utrecht (Netherlands) and graduated with a PhD in German and English language and literature. She also completed an MBA at the University of Zurich (exchange programs at Fudan and Yale universities included) with focus on intercultural management.

Large enough to lead – small enough to care

Shared hospitality education of Switzerland and Nepal

Nepal and Switzerland have quite some similarities: they are both rather small landlocked midlands that need to stay in cooperative relations to their surrounding countries, both countries are the home of different cultures and languages and both countries have to find clever and smart solutions, in order to compete against the big players as natural resources are rare. Being small allows caring, but it requires suitable connections in order to play a leading part. A big part in that strategy is education, the only true renewable resource and a vital need in our knowledge economy.

Pulitzer Prize winner Thomas L. Friedman just explained a few months ago in a brilliant New York Time Magazine article, that a team from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (O.E.C.D) has come out with a fascinating study that shows the correlation between performance on the Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA, exam — which every two years tests math, science and reading comprehension skills of 15-year-olds in 65 countries — and the total earnings on natural

resources as a percentage of G.D.P. for each participating country. The results are impressing as they show “a significant negative relationship between the money countries extract from national resources and the knowledge and skills of their high school population”.

His conclusion is simple: if you really want to know how a country is going to do in the 21st century, you should not count its oil reserves or gold mines, but rather count its highly effective teachers, involved parents and committed students.

But how do we build an effective educational system? There is, where the Switzerland and especially the Swiss Hospitality Education can contribute some know-how that might serve Nepal as well. As the unemployment rate in Switzerland shows - it is just little above 4% - the system is quite successful. One key element is the balance and effective transfer of theoretical know-how into practice as only then people are empowered.

The Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality (SSTH) in Passugg near Chur, set in the beautiful



Swiss Alps, has been educating professionals in tourism and hospitality for more than 40 years. Since the early seventies not only Swiss, but also international students from over 180 countries chose the institution for their education. Apart from intercultural management, practical transfer is constantly present during the education as all students live and study in a school hotel. Students immediately use the theory by cooking and serving each other in a real life hotel situation on a daily basis. Step by step, on a well-paced rhythm students get to the level of education on a 5-star level, which makes the students a high demand when it comes to prestigious events. One example is the World Economic Forum, where SSTH students are running a whole banquet for 2600 people, amongst them even royalties.

This balanced rhythm between theoretical classroom input, true-to-life trainings in the school hotel and hands-on training in a real situation helps students gaining self-confidence and getting real-life assessments. Like this, students can be educated for the market demands.

Since 2008, GATE – the Global Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Education – in Nepal and the Swiss

School of Tourism and Hospitality joined forces in order to bring the Swiss System to the East. As in Switzerland the GATE hospitality management program is completely hands on – with some time in the classroom but most time cooking, serving, managing and making the on campus restaurant operate like a real restaurant. The Academic course is designed with the direct support of SSTH.

But this is more than a simple copy-paste agreement. The Asian market is growing, playing a leader role in the future. There is a huge need for intercultural competence, which creates the fundament of trust for cooperation. Switzerland and Nepal are both countries that have a lot of experience in that particular issue in their particular markets. But the new mix between emerging and traditional western markets needs to be learned and educated. Together with the Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality, intercultural seminars are provided for tourism professionals in Switzerland. The cooperation with Nepal gives valuable first-hand know how for these seminars that can be shared again the other way around. As the GATE motto says: Sharing is Caring!

“Just as cultural differences inspire and move us when we travel, we reach our limits and our experiences settle in our memories, so it is with the individual talents and strengths of our students and staff, whose further development I support. The strongest teams are molded by good choreography!”





Bishnu Bhusal

President Nepal Swiss
Friendship Society (NSFS)

Mr. Bishnu Bhusal was born in Arghakhanci, Nepal and had formal studies in Nepal, India and USA. He has worked in Nepal, Switzerland, US and other countries in the field of human rights, peace-conflict, environment and development for more than

30 years. He has been teaching and lecturing on Human Rights issues, Nepal's conflict transformation and peace process both nationally and internationally. Through his association with different Swiss NGOs and in his capacity of Board of Directors of Swiss Nepali Society (SNS) and President of Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS), he is overseeing different economic peacebuilding programs in Nepal specially focusing on providing vocational education, creating jobs and employment. At the political peacebuilding front, he is member of team of faculties from within Tufts University, Harvard University, CM Partners, Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, all Boston based institutions, and ICPD Nepal to work with senior Nepali politicians, women leaders and civil society.

He is President of Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS), Chairperson, Steering Committee of Lamjung Skill Development Foundation (LSDF), General Secretary of National Skill Development Foundation (NSDF), Chairperson of Swiss supported Hamro Sunshine School, Kathmandu, General Manager of Enterprises Development Company (EDC), General Secretary of National Skill Development Foundation (NSFS) and General Secretary of Institute for Conflict Management Peace and Development (ICPD). He is nationally and internationally known as peace builder, human rights activist, educator, social worker and facilitator/trainer. He has led more than 500 training programs during his association with ICPD and other organizations on peace building, human rights and other development and peace building related issues.

Nepal-Swiss friendship - a historical prospective

Historically, Nepal was closed for outside world for long time, which was continued until the Rana regime. Nepal only hosted Indian, Chinese and British missions in Kathmandu for long time. Around the end of Rana regime, the last Rana Prime Minister Mohan Shamshere sent one very unusual request on behalf of Government of Nepal to the Swiss Government for development cooperation. This request of Nepal was really a surprise to Swiss Government. The Swiss bureaucrats didn't know what to do with it as the development assistance was very new concept to Switzerland. In Nepal, after the fall of Rana regime during Nepali year 2007, Nepal entered into new chapter and opened the doors to the world. In Switzerland, the request of Nepal for development cooperation was still floating at the discussion tables of government officials and some professionals. Finally, during the mid 50s, one organization named SHAG was created in Switzerland as Swiss NGO, which is now called Helvetasintercooperation. Switzerland addressed the development request of Nepal when SHAG started its operation in Nepal during

1955 under the name of Swiss Association for Technical Assistance (SATA). Thus, Nepal is birth place of Swiss development cooperation. Accordingly, the development cooperation with Nepal has special meaning to Swiss people.

During that period, some very famous Swiss professionals also worked in Nepal under the United Nation's agencies. The famous of such personalities include, Dr. Toni Hogan – a very famous geographer, who had chartered every nook and corners of Nepal and documented professionally and Mr. Werner Schulthess – a renowned cheese maker, who had introduced cheese to Nepali and started cheese making in Nepal. The hard work of Werner Schulthess made Nepali Yak Cheese popular also in Europe. When I travel to Switzerland, sometime, I get requests from Swiss friends to bring Nepali hard Yak Cheese for them.

At the same time, the natural beauty of Nepal has attracted many Swiss people. The very first organized climbing attempt to then virgin Mount



Everest was carried out by Swiss mountaineers. Though this attempt was not successful for various reasons, but the knowledge and lessons learnt by this expedition was very helpful to successful attempt of Hillary and Tenzin to Mount Everest. Hillary used the same Sherpas and some equipments and tools used by the Swiss Expedition Team. Nepal is popular tourist destination to Swiss people be it mountaineering, trekking or other touristic activities. Some of such Swiss tourists later become real friends of Nepal and Nepali communities. Some of such tourists later come back to the communities in Nepal to help their Nepali friends in the sector of education, income generation, health and other community development sectors. Currently, one can find such Swiss people to people level of cooperation from Mechi to Mahakali zones of Nepal in different levels. Such interactions between the Swiss and Nepalese people have resulted in many cross country marriages. I personally have come across some Swiss friends who know the whole family members of their Sherpa guides during their mountaineering or

trekking activities and have strong desire to help them and their communities. Swiss people find Nepali very hospitable and Swiss people equally have high regards towards the Nepali. Currently, Nepalese have also started to study in Switzerland mainly on hospitality trade and some Nepalese are also working in Switzerland.

The initial friendship between Nepal and Switzerland that has started after the development assistance during the early 1950s has developed into many dimensions until now. Beside, the friendship, cultural dimensions, trade relationship is also gradually picking up.

Currently, both countries have Embassy level diplomatic missions in Kathmandu and Geneva. At the people to people level, Swiss Nepali Society (SNS) and Nepal Swiss Friendship Society are functioning from Zuerich and Kathmandu. All these organizations are very active to promote the friendly ties between Nepal and Switzerland.

Bishnu Bhusal, Kathmandu, 12th July 2012

The Swiss bureaucrats didn't know what to do with it as the development assistance was very new concept to Switzerland. In Nepal, after the fall of Rana regime during Nepali year 2007, Nepal entered into new chapter and opened the doors to the world.





Kunal Tej Bir Lama

Feature Swiss Alumni Owner of Mitra Cafe'

(Mr. Kunal Tej Bir Lama is currently Managing Director of Cafe Mitra and also works as a Marketing and Communication specialist in Hotel De La Annapurna, a prominent 5 star hotel in Kathamandu. Kunal pursued his O level education from St. Xavier school and A level from Davies College UK before obtaining his higher education in Hotel Management from SSTH Swiss School of Tourism & Hospitality, Chur – Switzerland. He has been Radio Jockey in Hits FM and Kantipur FM and works passionately in the field of interior design, architect and hospitality industry.)

Lessons in Heidi-land

By Kunal Tej Bir Lama

When I landed one early October morning at Zürich's Kloten airport many years ago, the winter was already flexing its muscles. My local guardian, Gian Pepi Saratz, was waiting with a 1st class train ticket in hand to take me straight to his hometown, Pontresina, up in the Swiss Alps. I was a still a little dazed from my long flight from Kathmandu via Bangkok. I had travelled far away from the familiar madness of Asia straight into the clinical efficiency of one of Europe's richest nations.

Gian's ancestors were the actual founders of the resort town of Pontresina, their roots going back to the Saracens, an Arab people who came from North Africa as early as 932 BC travelling via Spain, over the Alps, and into this region of modern day Switzerland. Gian had once been the mayor of the town, and so had his forefathers. The family also owned a hotel there though they were no longer running it. (Since 1996, renovated and with a modern wing, Hotel Saratz has reverted to the ownership of the 5th generation of the family to reclaim its former class.) Within minutes, ensconced in the warmth of the 1st class carriage, we silently sped away. We passed by many fairy tale villages and towns, including Zizers where Zita, the last Empress of Austria, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, eventually took up residence after the death of her husband, Emperor Charles, in 1922. A widow for 67 years, the couple was poignantly reunited when Zita died in 1989 and her heart, following an ancient custom, was rested

in an urn in the same church where her husband's heart had been placed since his death. This story has always captured my imagination, one of loyalty and love unto death – and forever after.

An hour later, we stopped at Chür (destined to play a big part in my 2 years in Switzerland as my hotel-school was just above this town in Passugg). We changed from our modern train to the famous narrow-gauged Rhätischer Bahn, which would climb even higher to take us to Samedan, where we would leave the train and drive up to Pontresina, a short distance away. If I had thought the journey from Zürich was beautiful, the stretch from Chür to Samedan – where one also jumps off to take a short drive into St. Moritz – was spectacular. As the train chugged its way up and away clinging to the ever-climbing track, the beauty of the Alps revealed itself in all its storied glory: mountain meadows spotted with late-blooming flowers; deep valleys misty with freefalling waterfalls; and fields of early snow which, with every revealing twist, got wider and whiter.

Samedan had arrived. We got out. Gian called out "Grüzi!" – a common greeting always delivered politely but seldom with a smile to one and all in the local *Romansch* language of this proud Graubünden region. We climbed into his trusty Subaru station wagon, crunched some snow and ice along the way, and were soon in front of his manorial house *Chesa Melna*, the Yellow House. Nora, Gian's wife, who was a little hard of hearing, finally appeared



and graciously welcomed me. After exchanging pleasantries, I was shown to a warm room on the 3rd floor with a high bed covered with the fluffiest, lightest and shortest duvet.

That first evening, we dined à la *maison*. The meal was simple: a hearty potage of chunks of meat and vegetables. The stock – enough to last an *entire* winter – for the potage was in the cold room, in a huge metal pot, a gelatinous, reduced product of many hours of slow boiling of marrow bones, onions, celery stalks, carrots, parsley and black peppercorns. Whenever soup was on the menu, the required amount of stock was brought back to life on a low fire, the heat gently releasing all its nutritious secrets. Then, if you wanted potato soup, you would throw in chunks of potatoes and, after half an hour so of simmering, voila, potato soup! However, this simple meal was accompanied by the *pièce de résistance* of the evening: an exceptional bottle of Bordeaux from the year of my birth retrieved from *Chesa Melna's* bountiful wine cellar deep down under!

The next day, the Saratzs' proposed we lunch out. The restaurant was in Corviglia, a skiing area above St. Moritz – the famous snowy playground of the rich and famous – run by the renowned chef, Reto Mathis, in a *funicular station*. This didn't sound at all good; neither was the restaurant, basic as it was in both structure and décor. Though the ski season was almost over, it seemed busy enough. Slightly disappointed, and out of my elements, I sat down, meekly expecting the worse.

Nora and Gian were greeted familiarly almost immediately by a bespectacled waitress in her 40s wearing a ruffled apron à la Heidi. The moment we were seated, the order was given: a bottle of white wine and *pâté de foie gras*, for which Chez Mathis was famous. The menu was, obviously, not necessary.

The waitress arrived with 3 wine glasses in her left hand, the bottle her right. She pulled out a corkscrew from her left pocket and deftly uncorked the wine. She offered some to Gian. He peered into the glass through his thick spectacles, swirled it a bit, slurped and spluttering, spat it out with a look of slight disgust. After one more look at the glass, he shook his head. No good. The waitress poured some wine and drank it. She nodded her head in agreement, and off she went muttering about a fresh bottle. No one seemed surprised, or unhappy. Another bottle appeared, tasted, pronounced drinkable, and it was "*Zum wohl, mittenander!*"

What had just taken place fascinated and horrified me. As far as I had been taught, a corked wine was a disgrace to the establishment, and to have brought it to the table casually with the glasses in one hand *sans* tray and the bottle in the other was simply wrong. Then for the server to have the gumption to drink the dubious wine *right at the table* and, with no sign of abject contrition, march off and produce a second bottle insouciantly was absolutely insulting. The puzzling fact was Nora and Gian were not the least bothered.

The wine, *Dézaley*, was deep yellow-gold, nutty, mellow and delicious, and one of Switzerland's best. Made from Chasselas grape, it became my favourite wine, along with *Aigle*, *St. Saphorin* and *Yvorne* (all white, which I preferred over the Swiss reds). The *foie gras* soon appeared on individual plates, one big lump in the middle accompanied by plump figs stewed in curry (!) sauce. It should have been a marriage made in hell but was heaven. With baskets of hot and crisp Melba toasts to spoon the *foie gras* into our hungry mouths, bottles of *Dézaley* washing it all down, ending with a wickedly luscious *mousse au chocolat*, I was lulled into a benevolent state from which even a shot of espresso could not awaken me, so much so the trespasses of Ms Heidi, the waitress, were duly forgiven.

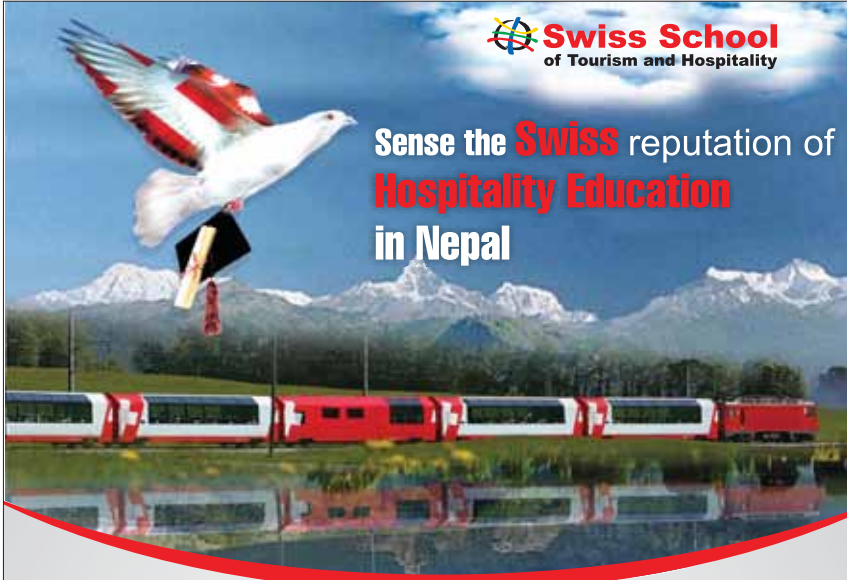
Unknowingly, my hotel management education had already begun. In Europe, the distinction between the guest and the server was not one of social hierarchy or status, merely a distinction of profession. One followed certain rules, but just because you were serving a customer didn't mean you needed to grovel, bent over, hands forever clasped and mutter "*Yes, Sir*"; "*No, Madame*". All you had to be was neat and clean, polite, professional and knowledgeable.

Lessons are learnt in different ways and places, and not always from a teacher in a classroom. In a funicular station, halfway up a ski slope, in the company of two 70-plus-year-olds? Unorthodox, yes, but priceless!





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ABC of Climate Change by Dr. Bharat K Pokharel¹

Basics:

Climate change is real. It is now being felt in everyday life that it affects to all of us. Some are of course going to be affected more than the others. Most of the poor people from developing countries who are living in poverty in a vulnerable place are the most affected population from the negative effect of climate change. Like poverty, terrorism and social conflict, climate change has now been an important agenda at the international, national, local and individual level. In this context, it is quite important to know what climate change is all about. In technical term, climate change refers to the changes in temperature, in the pattern of precipitation and wind which are believed to cause to alter agricultural pattern, eco zones and lives. How these changes happen? When carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydro fluorocarbons, per fluorocarbons and *sulphur* hexafluoride, which are called greenhouse gases, concentrates or accumulates in the atmosphere, these symptoms of climate change occur. Both mitigation and adaptation measures are considered to be inevitable means for the survival of mankind to fight against climate change. *Adaptation to climate change* refers to adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderate, harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Whereas, *mitigation to climate change* refers to an anthropogenic intervention to reduce the emission of Green House Gases at the source or to enhance sinks.

Global initiatives but often upturn by the powerful!

Once climate change has hit the developed nations, it has become global agenda. In result, there have been some key initiatives. The notable are -the Stockholm conference, 1972; the Brundtland Report, 1987; the Earth Summit, 1992 - United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED, 1992 - CBD, UNFCCC (The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change); UNCCD; Climate Change: Kyoto protocol 1997-2012, CDM - A/R; MDG, 2000; the World Summit for Sustainable Development, 2002; Climate Change: REDD in Bali, 2007; Copenhagen 2009; Cancun, 2010 and Rio 20+ conference in 2012 and so on. Among all, the most important one is the UNFCCC which is supplemented by the Kyoto Protocol (1997) that contains legally binding targets, by which industrialized countries called Annex 1 mostly industrialized countries must reduce their combined emissions of six key greenhouse gases by at least 5%. At the 3rd COP meeting held in Kyoto in 1997, the Parties to the Convention adopted a protocol aimed at paving the way for emission reduction in Annex I countries until

2012. This instrument is known as the Kyoto Protocol. Similarly, the three most important global instruments for adaptation measures are; National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Nairobi Work Programme, 2005 and OECD Declaration on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Co-operation.

However, despite all these instruments and the recommendation of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to Conference of Parties (COP), US has not signed the Kyoto protocol and in many occasions the US and China have been resisting to agree the reduction target of the emissions and at times have imposed veto.

Who are the drivers of climate change?

Figures speak by themselves. Among top 20 nations of high carbon emission nations, US is the largest carbon emission country which emits twice that of the next highest nation – china and nearly four times that of Russia, Japan, India, Germany, UK, and eight times that of Canada,



¹ Dr. Pokharel works for HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation as Dy. Country Director and also responsible for Environment and Climate portfolio.



Italy, S. Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, France, Australia, Ukraine, S. Africa, Iran, Brazil, Poland and Spain. So, it is clear who the polluters the cause of climate change are? They are mainly the industrial nations.

Who are the sufferers of climate change?

Poor people from the poorer nations are the most sufferer of climate change because they have inadequate resources to cope with the risks and disasters that climate change may bring. Below are few examples how they will be affected by it as it hits to agriculture and food security, water and energy, natural disasters, forests and biodiversity and health and sanitation and so on.

There will be declining in crop productivity because of reduced water availability and increased variability of water availability, reduced winter rains, loss of local crops and their diversity increase in crop diseases and pests, upward shift in agro-ecological zones, landloss through erosion, nutrient loss through erosion, siltation of productive land, changed cropping calendar and monsoon onset and termination, changed flowering, declining livestock productivity, increased incidences of diseases and sterility and lack of fodder species, shorter winter periods and longer dry spells.

Water resources and energy will be scarce as there will be decreased access to water supplies, drying up of springs, less flow in springs and rivers, melting

glaciers, increase in surface runoff, increased erosion, and frequency of floods and droughts.

Climate induced disasters will be increased as the frequency and magnitude of floods increase, glacial lake outburst floods may occur, increased magnitude of landslides, drought, hail storms, wind storms and forest fires will go up. Reduction of permafrost will occur, conflict over natural resources, displacement and migration may go tremendously high.

There will be loss of forests and biodiversity because of reduction of wild animals, local and migratory bird species, loss of some non-timber forest products and high altitude herbs, changes to wildlife habitat, fuel wood scarcity, increase in diseases, pests, invasive species, early flowering and fruiting, increased dryness in the forests, increased incidences of forest fires will happen. There will be decrease in timber production as a result of increased extreme events such as forest fires, hurricanes, flooding and droughts, changes in ecosystems and increased pests, changes in the quality of timber, impacts on the timber chain due to changes in quantity and quality, changes in the regional distribution of timber and non-timber species e.g. food, medicinal plants, fibre, impacts on the ability of some species to maintain growth rates and wood quality, impacts on the availability and quality of forest ecosystem services. Also, there will be changes in land use due to an increasing demand for new agricultural land.

Climate change will have tremendous negative impacts on public health because of increase of cold and heat related injuries and illnesses, deterioration of water and air quality, increased risk of water and vector borne diseases, damaged public health infrastructure, lack of access to health services during severe weather conditions and health related migration and displacement during epidemic and outbreak of diseases and so on will happen.

Although some high altitude and cold area may have benefit of increased temperature as the rotation months of some agricultural and fruit crop may reduce. The overall impact of climate change in Nepal will be negative. This will ultimately, hinder or even divert our attempts to achieve the aim of poverty reduction.

Nepal's attempts:

Nepal has developed its national policy of climate change. It has promulgated its National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) and Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA). DFID, EU, DANNIDA, Germany, Finland, JICA, Norway, SDC, UNDP, GEF, FAO, ADB, WB, ICIMOD, Practical Action, Winrock International, WWF, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and many international organizations are supporting government and local communities to adapt with climate smart sustainable agriculture practice and food security measures, water use plans, prevention of climate induced disasters, forestry and biodiversity conservation practice, good health and hygiene



and climate sensitive infrastructure. The role of government is to create local communities and organizations an enabling environment to work.

Roles of international development organizations:

In order to empower local communities and farmers, research and development organizations could offer more information and knowledge on various climate mitigation topics such as carbon emission observations, emission projections, climate observations, climate projections, provide menu of possible mitigation measures, provisions of government policies and plans, clean development mechanism, potential of renewable energies, climate smart agriculture and soil management techniques. Similarly, farmers can be provided climate adaptation related information and knowledge on national and local adaptation policies and plans, prevention, prediction, protection plans, reinforcement of community base coping capacities, reinforcement of local institutions, community adaptation planning and processes, households and individual plans and strategies, findings of assessments, studies, action research, sector policies, risk analysis, vulnerability assessment, impact analysis, development and application of methods and various tools on climate proofing, development of a climate sensitive project management approach, portfolio screening, community based risk assessment tools such as CRISTAL, other tools such as Climate FIRST, Climate Change Screening Matrix, ORCHID, Climate quick scans, Climate check, SERVIR climate mapper, ADAPT tool so on and so forth.

Another important initiative that development organizations should inform and empower to local communities is REDD+ initiative. REDD+ stands for Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Degradation and forest conservation in developing countries. This is a mechanism by which developing countries may benefit by their attempts of reversing the rate of forest degradation and deforestation and increase forest conservation practice. The role of development organizations is to inform and educate local communities about the technical requirements and complexities of REDD such as additionally, leakage, permanence, measurement and so on. Moreover, awareness is required about the safeguard mechanism. For example, to be REDD+ successful, Nepal's experience shows that it is necessary to have another set of "red+" elements in place. These include: r=rights of local communities over forest resources; e=equitable benefit sharing mechanism in place; d=devolution of power to local communities; d=democratic practice at all levels and + =integrated development plan in place for sustainable management of land, water, energy sector for wood, food, energy and water together.

What should we be doing more at personal and organizational level?

Without change in behavior as climate smart person, household, neighborhoods, group/ community and village/settlement in terms of efficient energy use, sustainable management of forests, soil fertilizer, sustainable management and use of water, coping with erratic weather and

sustainable management of biomass (carbon sequestration and biomass production), we cannot fight against climate change. Some of the personal behaviors that are simple and doable can be called climate smart behavior such as – to use water economically and wisely. Make the tap water small by controlling the spout volume. Reuse water from puja. Wash hand for watering potted plants. Switch off lights when not needed. Use CFL bulb instead of other ordinary bulbs. Put off computer when not in use. Print out on both sides. Reuse of paper and envelope and avoid using plastic polythene bags. Make habit of carrying cloth bag for shopping.

We should practice ourselves to be climate smart individual and make other to practice climate smart behavior and demonstrate to various individuals and institutions to the extent possible, especially at the grassroots level. The main organizations to work at the grassroots could be VDC level Integrated Planning Committee, Agriculture Environment and Forestry Committee, Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) implementation committee if any, Ward Citizen Forum, Community Learning Centre, various user groups, schools teachers, students and farmers and government and non-government organizations of various departments which are supporting these institutions.

To conclude;

Be a climate smart person Change your habit to fight against climate change Go for adaptive livelihood strategy to save yourself.









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Glimpses of NSFS Swiss National Day celebration

August 1st, 2011 at GATE College, Mandikhatar, Kathmandu







Dr. Poorna Kanta Adhikary

Advisor, Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS)

Dr. Poorna Kanta Adhikary was born in Dura Danda, Lamjung. He studied in Nepal, India and USA. Dr. Adhikary is very well known planner, peace-builder, educator, trainer and facilitator nationally and internationally. He has conducted more than 1000 training programs in Nepal as well as in different parts of the globe. Currently, Dr. Adhikary is Chairperson of Institute for Conflict Management Peace and Development (ICPD), Enterprises Development Company (EDC), Lamjung Skill Development Foundation (LSDF), National Skill Development Foundation (NSDF). In addition to these organizations, he is also involved in different other social sector organizations because of his passion for social service in Nepal.

Dr. Adhikary is also Advisor of Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS).

On My Own Swiss Experience

By **Dr. Poorna Kanta Adhikary**

With a grant from Indiana University, USA, I landed in Geneva, Switzerland in January 1972 for a post-doctoral internship with Prof. Paulo Freire who was then located at the World Council of Churches. I was having rare opportunity to engage with him in an intensive dialogue almost every day for nearly four months on such subjects as: his own pedagogy of the oppressed, non-formal education, social transformation and human culture, political economy and Third World development. It was during this time Paulo motivated me to go to Chile, which was a living laboratory to study the process of socio-political transformation during the government of Salvador Allende. Since then both Paulo (until he returned to Brazil in early 1990's) and my good Swiss friend Othmar Kaufmann being in Geneva, it became my second home several times whenever I visited or crossed Europe on my way to and from the Americas, Africa and Asia. Out of many, one thing that I learned from Paulo then was the serious inadequacy of the formal education system of our time; and the need for an alternate education for the down trodden, especially in the Third World countries. Peru had already attempted to bring an alternate education, parallel to the formal one, where I was fortunate to work for some time during 1973-74.

After I returned to Nepal in 1979, I was invited by Heidi Bachtold, Advisor of Non-Formal Education Program of Integrated Hill Development Project (IHDP), implemented by Swiss Agency for Technical Assistance (SATA) to observe their work there. It was a very good program which also attempted to apply Freirian pedagogy. It was unfortunately discontinued later before it reached its maturity. My own reading was that this could have provided a sound basis for livelihood oriented vocational training to out-of-school youth and I was very sorry when I heard about its early death. During the late 1980's and early 1990's, I was very much involved as a consultant trainer/moderator in review, planning, training and evaluation of several Swiss supported programs in Nepal including the participatory review in 1987 of 32 years of Nepal-Swiss cooperation. Such involvements also took me occasionally to Switzerland and visiting with friends in several parts of the country. In such visits to Bern and Zuerich, I had also very nice discussions with Swiss politicians and parliamentarians. The informality of the Swiss is very commendable indeed and so is their respect to professional work. Unlike in Nepal, there is hardly anybody in Switzerland who is a full time politician; the MPs do not get monthly salary but only meeting allowance and a railway ticket to attend the meeting. Otherwise, they earn



their livelihood through their regular work. The professionals in Nepal on the other hand, seem to be totally unfit in the ongoing political culture and the politicians are engaged throughout their life until they go to grave or cremation.

During the last 47 years, Nepal-Swiss cooperation has had multiple programs from cheese making to potato development, from integrated rural development to watershed management, from public health to community forestry, from vocational/technical education to carpet weaving, from micro-hydro turbine production to solar water heaters and environment friendly construction material development, from trail bridge construction to green road development. For many years the settlement around the road from Jawalakhel to Nakkhu has been identified with the Swiss, and the easily accessible and beautifully maintained Ekanta Kuna compound carried the Swiss identity even without the Flag-staff. The fractured Ekanta Kuna compound however, since last few years, although housing the Swiss Embassy with the Swiss flag-staff, breaks the heart of many friends of Switzerland as the compound seems to have lost its old glory by being surrounded by alien structures and their associated activities. The famous landmark has been blurred for forever. For many years the vocational training and technical education remained the Swiss Flagship in Nepal, which somehow has also lost its old glory as the Swiss pulled out from being important stakeholder in this sector.

From 2005, we have had the pleasure to initiate people-to-people level cooperation through Swiss-Nepal Society (SNS), a Swiss NGO made up of Swiss returning from Nepal and Nepalese residing in Switzerland and Nepal. Even with small fund, good things can be initiated as it is demonstrated by Lamjung Skill Development Foundation (LSDF) (www.lsdfnepal.org) Campus at Gairi, Lamjung. LSDF was initiated by a group of professionals of Institute for Conflict Management Peace and Development (ICPD) (www.icpdnepal.org) as an economic peacebuilding activity and supported financially by several Nepalese and Swiss stakeholders. The land for the Campus is provided free by a group of concerned professionals of Enterprise Development Company (EDC) (www.edcnepal.com), Kathmandu. In collaboration with EDC and Employment Fund Secretariat, managed by Helvetas Swissintercooperation and other stakeholders, LSDF has provided employment oriented 3 months long vocational courses to around 1000 youth in six districts of Nepal, which is hoped to have further extension next year. The construction and running cost for the first five years are substantially financed through DIGA Stiftung, Galgenen. Swiss-Nepalese Society is facilitating the co-operation between DIGA Stiftung and LSDF and also finances community based short-term courses and development programs in agriculture, livestock, horticulture, beekeeping and handicrafts. Similarly Gartenfluegel Foundation of Switzerland has provided financial support for equipments in

mechanical trade. Equipment for electrical trade has been provided by Lions Club Etzel and Concert ConBrio of Switzerland.

The Campus providing employment/self-employment oriented skill training to out-of-school youth since 2008, has already provided a tested model and is radiating to such an extent that interests are building up to establish similar campuses in several districts of Nepal on self-help approach. Making such initiatives sustainable is the main concern now of the Nepalese and Swiss promoters of LSDF. It is hoped that this will eventually lead to developing a separate national stream of alternate education parallel to the formal one with co-lateral entry possibilities for both horizontal and vertical promotion of underprivileged learners and those at work. It is hoped that this system will eventually contribute to establishing the long awaited National Vocational Qualification Framework (NSQF) based upon cognition and skill testing systems with associated training and other support programs to provide new opportunities for many youth who are left-out, pushed-out or dropped-out of Nepal's sick formal education system. Many friends of Switzerland in Nepal wish for the return of Swiss Government Cooperation support in materializing this dream.



Red scarf on top of the world: Swiss attempts to conquer Everest before Hillary

By **Sara Elmer**
Board member, SNS

Next year will be the 60th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest, the highest mountain of the world, by a British mountaineering party. Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary are celebrities to the Nepalese people and to the thousands of tourists who travel each year to Nepal to experience the impressive Himalayan mountain range. Yet, what is unknown to most people is that the British triumph at Mt Everest was almost hampered one year before by a Swiss Everest expedition, which had to give up only about 200 metres below the summit.

Driven by the fascination for mountains and explorative ambition, climbers of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research (SFAR) started exploring the Himalayas in the late 1930s when none of the eight-thousanders had yet been conquered by human beings. Climbing on Nepalese soil was first done in 1949 when the SFAR explored the Kangchenjunga region after several successful first ascents of seven-thousanders in Sikkim.

These explorative expeditions were good warm-up exercises for one of the most exciting and

most prestigious adventures of that time: the first ascent of the world's highest summit, Mt Everest. Sponsored by the Canton of Geneva, the SFAR sent two expeditions of experienced climbers and researchers to Nepal, the first one in spring 1952 and the second one half a year later in autumn.

As there were no "ready-made" routes to Mt Everest like today, the Swiss climbers were highly dependent upon the support of local Sherpa guides to open up a route to the summit. The aim of the spring expedition was not the ascent of the summit but the exploration of the access to the South Col and of the labyrinthine Khumbu Icefall. Yet, when the expedition reached the South Col thanks to the well guidance of Sardar Tenzing Norgay, Tenzing Norgay and three Swiss climbers continued towards the summit. As high altitude climbing was still in its infancy the climbing party was not sufficiently equipped for the low oxygen and cold temperatures. As a consequence, two members of the expedition team returned, leaving alone Tenzing Norgay and Raymond Lambert who still wanted to tackle the summit. After spending a very tough night at over 8200 metres in a small tent with no sleeping



bags, no stove, and hardly any water and food the two mountaineers still climbed further up to about 8500 metres. Very close to the summit though, at an altitude that has not been reached by anyone before, Tenzing Norgay and Raymond Lambert had to give up due to the lack of oxygen and the horrible cold temperatures. Despite the fact that Lambert could hardly speak any English and Tenzing Norgay didn't speak French, the two climbers had developed an intimate and long-lasting friendship during the expedition. As a token of friendship and talisman for future expeditions, Lambert gave Tenzing Norgay his red scarf, which he was wearing during the dramatic events at Everest.

The second expedition in autumn could build upon the experiences gained by the spring





expedition. But due to bad weather the team had to give up at the South Col at about 8100 metres. Tenzing Norgay finally succeeded to climb the 8848 metres high summit the following year as part of a British expedition. As he reached the top of the world on 29th May 1953, almost exactly one year after the dramatic experiences with Raymond Lambert, he was wearing Lambert's red scarf. Later on, Tenzing Norgay reported

that, although he was extremely happy about his success, he wished he could have shared this special moment with his Swiss friend.

The defeat of the Swiss at Everest by the British climbing party did not discourage the SFAR to further explore the Himalayas. In 1956, a new and technologically much better equipped expedition team was sent out to tackle not

only Mt Everest but also Lhotse, the fourth-highest mountain of the world. The 1956 SFAR expedition was a grand success. On May 18, 1956, Fritz Luchsinger and Ernst Reiss achieved the first ever ascent of 8516 metres high Lhotse and on May 23, Jürg Marmet and Ernst Schmid finally reached the summit of Mt Everest as the second human beings after Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary.





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We congratulate the people of Switzerland on the occasion of “Swiss National Day” on 1st August, 2012.

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In Fond Memory of Beat Diethelm

By **Dr. Poorna Kanta Adhikary**

Advisor, NSFS

From 2005 Institute for Conflict Management Peace and Development (ICPD) and Swiss-Nepal Society (SNS) together had already commenced a common journey starting from rehabilitation of a primary school at Fulmro, a remote village in Lamjung to strengthening infrastructural capacity of a local initiative in Besi Shahar to provide housing and education of children who were orphanized during the decade old armed-conflict in Nepal. In view of SNS engagement with the communities in Lamjung and their encouraging participations to the program, Beat Diethelm also a member of SNS, approached Annemarie Spahr, SNS Vice-Chair, if his foundation could do something in the sector of education and community development? As the volume of amount was bigger than the small projects of SNS, there was great deal of discussions within SNS whether it should implement such volume of project. SNS, then approached its Nepal Representative, Bishnu Bhusal, also General Secretary of ICPD, to carry out the feasible study of different programs it could support with DIGA's assistance. That feasibility report presented five alternatives for possible collaboration with DIGA; Beat liked the report of Bishnu Bhusal and saw merits on priority proposal for a trade school among other alternatives, which was designed to function as economic peacebuilding activity in the post-armed-conflict Nepal. In April 2007, Beat Diethelm together with his son visited Kathmandu

and Lamjung to discuss further the proposal and agreed with the technical and vocational training center. The foundation stone for the Lamjung Skill Development Foundation (LSDF) Campus was laid in September, when he also brought with him a large group of friends and family members to observe the ceremony.

At the time when Swiss Government was pulling out of its cooperation from the sub-sector of the technical education and vocation training from Nepal, Beat took the opportunity to jump into it with people-to-people level cooperation. He had admired the cooperation modality we have established in making this campus as it is truly initiated by Nepalese for whose development Enterprises Development Company (EDC) donated land and professionals of ICPD provide voluntary service. The efforts of Bishnu Bhusal, Annemarie Spahr and Markus Ruckstuhl on behalf of SNS in initiating, facilitating and following up of DIGA Foundation support to LSDF has been highly commendable indeed, without which the Campus would not have come to this reality. LSDF has demonstrated that even with small fund, good things can be initiated (www.lsdfnepal.org). In just five years of its inception, LSDF has made a successful pilot scheme and has attracted national attention and plans are being made to replicate its modality in other parts of the country.



The LSDF team had observed Beat's weak health right from 2007 and felt that every visit of his could be his last one. Yet he was determined to visit Gairi every year putting all his energy to it and extend all the support he could provide with great encouragement to all of us at LSDF. In November last year when he visited Gairi, he was extremely frail and could not even walk down to the new buildings, which were inaugurated on his behalf by his son Roland. The tears in his eyes at that moment reflected both sadness and pleasure; sadness was due to his age and illness and pleasure was that his contribution had already bore fruit that he could see himself. It saddened us deeply when we came to know that he had to be taken straight to hospital upon his arrival at Zuerich Airport and that he departed from this world on December 6, 2011. The dedication of Beat towards Nepal and Nepali people is really praiseworthy. In addition to LSDF, Beat supported numbers of programs on health and education sectors. Until his last time, Beat cared most on how to provide supporting hands to the underprivileged Nepali friends and he will be remembers always as true friend of Nepal. In fond memory of his contribution, LSDF Gairi Campus has decided to establish a Memorial Park at its premise to honor those who have significantly contributed in its development.







Alfred Gafner, Owner of EXchangeACT, from Kloten, Switzerland

A passion for food and a long standing family tradition influenced Alfred Gafner to pursue a career as a professional chef. Another reason to enter the culinary field was the opportunity to gain international work experience, travel, study, and exchange knowledge.

After the formal training he continued to learn the classic cuisine in Geneva. Soon after, the Hilton International kitchens became his workplace for 18 years based in locations like Amsterdam, Vancouver, Caracas, Cairo, Manila, Seoul and Zurich. The key learning's from this experience was flexibility, find out about different cultures and their cuisine, adapting to people, respecting local customs and their social values. In each location he had to start learning all over again, which made it a pretty humble experience.

His next position in 1991 was Food Service Manager and in 1997 he became the Director of Food Production at Gate Gourmet Airline Catering in Zurich, Switzerland. He managed a

large kitchen brigade that was producing up to 50'000 meals/day for 35 different International Airlines, a fantastic experience. He concentrated on developing industrialized production methods like standardized recipes, meat tumbling, hot fill and modified atmosphere packaging. Food preservation technology by extending shelf life has fascinated Alfred ever since.

In 2006 Alfred joined Compass Group Switzerland Ltd, a world leading Food Service Company, where he was focusing on Production Planning & Steering for the 300 plus Restaurants.

You probably are familiar with the phrase that says "The person that has turned his hobby into his profession is a happy one." So in 2010 Alfred decided to make this step and is now a visiting lecturer at Les Roches, Bluches/ Crans-Montana, International School of Hotel Management in Switzerland and the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts / Affiliate of Les Roches based in Amman, Jordan. He focuses on topics like "Advanced Food Production Methods". He urges the students

to the fact that Continuous Improvement, Lean, Poka Yoke, 5S... should not fear to enter a kitchen!

He also enjoys sharing his wealth of practical knowledge to guide Food Production Companies focusing on producing chilled ready-to-eat foods and chilled meals.

Alfred has seen the huge need for culinary professionals to help support deprived and vulnerable organization. Today it is one of his greatest pleasures to work under the patronage of Swisscontact to give a helping hand to Chefs in need. This experience enables and exchange cultural and social contact between the host nationals and Alfred, which he enjoys tremendously.

Alfred has provided the recipe of famous Swiss food "*Birchermousli and kaese und Zwiebelwähe – cheese and onion tart*", which is presented over leaf. NSFS is thankful to Alfred for cooking Swiss food for Swiss National Day at GATE College.





SWISS MUESLI -BIRCHERMUESLI

Ingredients for: 10 Portions

Metric

400 gr	Oats
50 gr	Sultanas, soaked in water
2 ea	Apples, grated
50 gr	Almonds or hazelnuts, shredded
1 ea	Apple, sliced
1 ea	Orange segment
1 ea	Banana, sliced
1 ea	Any other fruit
3 dl	Milk
2 dl	Cream
100 gr	Yogurt, plain
100 gr	Sugar
50 gr	Honey
50 gr	Any kind of jam

Method:

1. Soak the oats, almonds, sugar in the milk for two hours.
2. Mix everything together and serve.

KAESE UND ZWIEBELWÄHE – CHEESE AND ONION TART

**Ingredients for : 1 Tart 28 diameter
8 Portions**

Metric

300 gr	Short pastry
30 gr	Butter
500 gr	Onions, chopped finely
50 gr	Garlic Salt, pepper and paprika
100 gr	Shredded cheese (blend of Emmentaler & Gruyere)
2.5 dl	Cream
2.5 dl	Milk
3 ea	Eggs Salt, pepper, ground nutmeg

Method:

1. Roll out the short pastry and place into a greased tart pan or sheet.
2. Heat the butter and simmer the onions and garlic slowly over low heat.
3. When onions/garlics tender, season with salt, pepper and paprika and remove from the heat. Let cool.
4. Spread the cheese and cooled onions evenly over the dough. Combine the cream, milk and eggs. Blend well and season with salt, pepper and ground nutmeg.
5. Pour this mixture into the tart pan and bake at 180°C until the custard is firm, approx. 1 hour.



BURE CHABISSALAT - FARMER'S CABBAGE SALAD

Ingredients for: 1 Portion

Metric

150 gr	Cabbage, white, sliced
30 gr	Onions, sliced in strips
30 gr	Bacon, strips dash Oil
	Salt and freshly ground pepper
½ tsp.	Garlic, chopped finely
1 cl	Vinegar
3 cl	White wine
	pinch Cumin
1 tsp.	Chives, chopped

Method:

1. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onions and bacon briefly.
2. Season with salt, pepper and garlic. Add the vinegar and white wine.
3. Remove from the heat and let cool. Add the cabbage, cumin and sprinkle with chopped chives before serving.





Chef Santosh Nepali Chicken MOMO Recipe

Ingredients for dough wrappers

- 1 kg all-purpose flour
- Water, as required
- 1 pinch salt

Directions Dough:

- 1: In a large bowl combine flour, salt and water.
- 2: Mix well; knead until the dough becomes homogeneous in texture, about 8-10 minutes.
- 3: Cover and let stand for at least 30 minute.
- 4: Knead well again before making wrappers.

Filling

- 500 g lean ground chicken
- 60 g red onion, finely chopped
- 30 g green onion, finely chopped
- 20 g fresh cilantro, chopped
- 10 g fresh garlic, minced
- 10 g fresh ginger, minced
- 2 g turmeric

- 2 g meat masala
- 3 g cumin powder
- 3 red chili powder (or to taste)
- 50 g butter
- salt and pepper to taste

Preparing Filling:

- 1: In a large bowl combine all filling ingredients, except butter and onions.
- 2: Sauté onions in butter until soft, and add to step 1
- 3: Mix well; adjust for seasoning with salt and pepper.
- 4: Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour to allow all ingredients to impart their unique flavors.

Directions Stuffing:

- 1: Give the dough a final knead.
- 2: Prepare 2 cm dough balls.
- 3: Take a ball, roll between your palms to spherical shape.
- 4: Dust working board with dry flour.
- 5: On the board gently flatten the ball with your palm to about 5 cm circle.
- 6: Use a rolling pin to roll out each flattened circle into a wrapper.
- 7: For well executed MOMO's, it is essential that the middle portion of the wrapper be slightly thicker than the edges.
- 8: Hold the edges of the semi-flattened dough with one hand and with the other hand begin rolling the edges of the dough out, swirling a bit at a time.
- 9: Continue until the wrapper attains 5 cm diameter circular shape.
- 10: Repeat with the remaining semi-flattened dough circles.
- 11: Cover with bowl to prevent from drying.



- 12: For packing hold wrapper on one palm, put one tablespoon of filling mixture and with the other hand bring all edges together to the center, making the pleats.
- 13: Pinch and twist the pleats to ensure the absolute closure of the stuffed dumpling.

Cooking instructions

- 1: Heat up a steamer, oil the steamer rack well.
- 2: This is critical because it will prevent dumplings from sticking.
- 3: Arrange uncooked dumplings in the steamer.
- 4: Close the lid, and allow steaming until the dumplings are cooked through, about 10 minutes.
- 4: Take dumplings off the steamer and serve immediately.

To serve, arrange the cooked dumplings (MOMO's) on serving plate with hot tomato achar or any other chutney as condiment.





Hans Keller

Associate editor,
Meeteri

Prior to starting his consulting career, Hans Keller was Vice President of Penta International (a Lufthansa subsidiary) and CEO of the New York Penta. During his tenure he managed to entirely restructure this 1700-room, 1,000 employee New

York City Hotel. He brought The Ascona Group a wealth of International experience, both in hotel consulting and hotel and resort operations. He has provided his expertise and directed a wide range of projects. Some of his clients include Park Plaza Hotels, BV, London, where Hans created a franchise division and actively managed acquisitions and franchising for the Group.

For the Lancaster Hotel Group he restructured several hotels including the Lodge and Spa in Breckenridge, Colorado. He also provided technical assistance and restructured the Hotel Los Tajibos in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. For Millennium Hotels he opened the Royal Palms Hotel in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. For the 400-room J.W. Marriott in Cairo, Egypt, Mr. Keller designed a luxury Wellness Institute.

Additional significant contributions included stints with Sonesta International Hotels (twelve years) as Vice President International, where he added the Orlando, Cairo, Jerusalem, and Eilat properties to their portfolio. As President of the Amsterdam Sonesta Corp., he built and operated this luxury downtown 300-room hotel in The Netherlands.

With Rock Resorts, Inc. (six years) he managed the Cerromar Beach Hotel, Dorado, Puerto Rico (500 rooms, Casino, 4 golf courses, 800 employees), and also was Director of Systems analyses in New York.

He was educated in Switzerland, attended the Hotel School in Lucerne, Switzerland. He speaks English, German, French, Spanish, and some Dutch. He has dual citizenship: Swiss and American.

Hope, the essence of our existence

Hans Keller, Associate Editor, Meeteri, writes about why he decided to live in Nepal.

Why would a Swiss/American retired person decide to live in Nepal? Of course you could make a case for a *Karmic* relation to the country from way back, but you could also make a case that one can accomplish more in a situation where a definite need exists.

For me doing business and making money is not the main reason - it is more rewarding to find myself in a situation where sharing what I have learned with people here and students that have not been exposed to the world therefore I often do volunteer guest lecturers to Hospitality students of forward thinking academy as part of my hobby.

Sharing knowledge can create hope and this gets us back to a very logical place in our lives without any doubt. If Nepal would in general terms agree to accept more energy patterns based on bringing hope back, we could certainly experience a major shift. Switzerland took hundreds of years to

fully establish their democracy and not without struggle. Nepal would be well served to accept change in true sense, not only blaming few greedy people in power but there are so many trendsetter and trailblazers who could push the idea of a rapid evolution forward.

There is simply not enough time to play out all the games that are being played now. Switzerland, one time or other recognized the huge advantage of providing road and rail connection from north to south. Nepal is in the same position where their dedication to provide transport between 35% of the world population would, India and China, create a viable and lasting system to generate revenues. And if the Nepali Government would cleverly play India and China in balance, I am sure these Nations would even happily sponsor basic infrastructure such as Hydro power, Rail and road links.

So, fairly simple everyone wants it and yet it is not happening, therefore my stay here will push continuously why young and fine minds have to bring back the hope - I know you can do it.



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Featured Alumni

I am Purnima Limbu Palunga and I've attended Center International De Glion, Institute of Higher Education, for undergraduate studies in International Hospitality & Management in Switzerland. I completed my Associate degree from Glion, Montreux Campus and my Bachelor's from Glion, Bulle campus in December 2001.

After my graduation, I came back to my country and worked for an International Hotel chain, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu. After having worked there for 5 years, I felt a need to enhance my scholastic capacity for which I headed to University in London, UK to pursue my Master's Degree in Business Administration. After completing my Master's Degree, I came to Nepal and felt an urge to work for social sector and contribute towards social development in Nepal. Hence, currently I'm working for an International Organization for Migration as Social Marketing Specialist for Counter Trafficking Program unit, which supports in economic rehabilitation to those trafficked survivors.

Especially my work experience and my hospitality and management education in Glion, helped greatly in planning and establishing many micro enterprises including franchisee for trafficked survivors. Till this date, I have been able to establish many enterprises comprising of food & beverage, boutique & saloon businesses

operated in Kathmandu and Patan districts of Nepal for trafficked survivors. In addition to this, I've also trained the women and girls in managing/operating the restaurant business and entrepreneurship development, which would not have been possible without my qualification and experiences gained in Switzerland.

One of the beautiful experiences during my stay in Switzerland was, when I first arrived in Switzerland I was helped by a kind Swiss Lady named Anna who worked as a volunteer in Nepal. We were only acquainted in Vienna during our transit flight to Geneva; she asked me why I was going to Switzerland and whether I knew any one there. After I explained that I was on my own and was my first visit, she kindly accommodated me at her place overnight and dropped me off to Montreux, Glion Campus next day. There are many other great memories that I cherish during my stay in Switzerland such as going for a hike & picnic on beautiful Swiss hills, ski holidays and staying in chalet and having fondue & enjoying great wines from all the regions in Switzerland.

During my four years stay in Switzerland, I was highly impressed with infrastructure & public transportation service run by the Swiss Government, the train, and bus, ferry services were always on time and well managed. The public transportation services are by far the best as compared to any



Purnima Limbu Palunga

other European countries that I've travelled. I've also been impressed with the Ski Resorts managed in Switzerland, where tourists from Europe would flood in for skiing holidays. Nepal being a small country with beautiful geographical landscapes like Switzerland has a great potential in hospitality and services tourism like Switzerland if it further enhances its development in infrastructure and facilities in mountainous regions.

Switzerland is a great place to study for hospitality and culinary expertise; I definitely had best times of my life and gained expertise and also made friends from all over the world, for those who decide to pursue study in Switzerland be assured that the great and exciting moments await you there.



Alumni profile

Ashish Maharjan is the head of the Consulting Department of the Global Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Education (GATE). He is currently leading the creation of the documentary on Food Hygiene in Nepal entitled “Aali Dekhi Thali Samma” - Farm to Fork.

Having acquired his degree in Hospitality & Tourism Management from the Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality (SSTH), Chur, Switzerland, in 2004, Ashish traveled the world before returning to his home country. He has been to Switzerland, USA, India, Malaysia, England, Turkey, UAE, Brazil, among others.

He states that the Swiss education was essential to understand how the hospitality and the business field are developed abroad, and their differences to the Nepali context. Because of his Swiss education and his experience overseas, Ashish is now improving the quality of the hospitality field in Nepal. Therefore, a good education was the trigger to complement the motivation he had to come back home and help on the progress of his nation.

Ashish recalls his final year in Switzerland as a student, when he, along with five classmates, decided to create an innovative program for

his Project Management Application class. As there was no food provision for students on the weekends, the group started to offer lunch at the patio of the college for the other students on Saturdays and Sundays. Due to this project, he says “we learned not only how to cook independently, but how to manage our resources, calculating the necessary supplies and using them without wastes”. In addition, the profits generated with the lunch sales were fully donated to a local philanthropic organization.

Ashish declares that he is happier than ever to return to Nepal, although there are three improvements that he wished to see here, which deeply impressed him in Switzerland: “In Nepal, the people don’t understand the necessity of being punctual as if this is negotiable”. We should understand that punctuality denotes professionalism and helps to work more efficiently. Furthermore, I would like to see in Nepal people working to maintain the highest standards in the service industry. Over here, people just want to get the job done; they don’t know how important it is to cause a long lasting impression on guests. Most importantly, Nepal has a lot to learn on Food Safety and Hygiene. That’s why we are training and teaching hospitality staff on food hygiene, which will improve our health conditions and promote a healthy lifestyle to future generations”.



Ashish Maharjan
Head of the Consulting Department at
GATE College



Remembering Dr. Toni Hagen

Late Toni Hagen is well known as a true pioneer in Swiss development aid. In an era when foreigners had to seek government permission to travel outside the Kathmandu Valley, the geologist Toni Hagen, born 1917 in Switzerland, with a Swiss team, was allowed to explore the countryside, an experience that inspired him to see more of this “unknown” land. Thus began a relationship with a country that grew into a close friendship over the course of half a century. He was later appointed by the United Nations to conduct the first geological survey of Nepal, making him the original “UN expert” in the country. He spent nearly a decade in this field, during which he travelled more than 14,000 km on foot. His explorations took him all over Nepal and he saw the country like no one else before him, and very few have since. Throughout the rest of his life Hagen became deeply involved in the study and practice of development in Asia and elsewhere.

Remembering Dr. Toni Hagen



Dr. Hagen is one of the very few foreigners to receive very high level Nepalese medals and honorary citizenship of Nepal.

His book, “Decentralization and Development”, has been recently launched by his two daughters, Monica and Dr. Kathrine Hagen. This book summarises his experiences as a development practitioner in Nepal and elsewhere. While many experts of his generation understood “development” as a primarily technical process, Hagen had visions that included political institutions. In this book, Hagen offers a panoply of insights and recommendations for development and democratic transition that are still telling for the development community in the 21st century.

The major theme is the virtues of decentralisation. Contrasting Nepal and Switzerland, he argues that development and democracy in Switzerland have strongly benefited from the decentralised organisation of the Swiss state. The main lesson Nepal can learn from the Swiss experience, according to Hagen, is that democracy arises from the grass roots and that a centralised structure does not allow democracy to be learned locally. The advantages listed in the literature are manifold: decentralisation brings the state closer to the people and helps to develop a sense of ownership among its citizens. More decentralisation, - this is the lesson that Hagen teaches - could be a viable option for Nepal as well.







Annemarie H. Spahr

Advisor, Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS)

Ms. Annemarie Spahr lived in Nepal for around 30 years in her different capacities. Popularly called as Spahrdidi, she is one of the very few foreigners to receive naturalized Nepali citizenship. She still is a Nepali citizen. Spahrdidi worked in different social service projects in Nepal. Additionally, she was first General Manager of Tara Gaon and Dwarika's Hotel. She was first Swiss Consul to Nepal. Even after returning back to Switzerland after 30 years in Nepal, she is very active in Switzerland to be a resource person on providing latest information on Nepal. She is Vice President/Secretary of Swiss Nepali Society, Switzerland and at the same time, Advisor of Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS).

Because of her affection to the rural people of Nepal, Spahrdidi is always busy on planning and looking ways on how small scale community development activities can be implemented to improve lives of Nepalese underprivileged people. There are many programs implemented in Nepal by small Swiss foundations through the link of Spahrdidi. Even after returning to Switzerland her affection towards Nepal brings her here every year. During her stay in Switzerland, her activities and thinking are always around Nepal.

Spahrdidi and Werner Schulthess worked in Nepal at the same time and she is one of the closest friends of Schulthess family.

Remembering Werner Schulthess – a pioneer who introduced cheese in Nepal

By **Annemarie H. Spahr**

By request of Government of Nepal (and maybe also by King Tribhuvan), FAO sent Werner Schulthess, a renowned Swiss Cheesemaker, whose short CV appears below, to Nepal to find a solution to the abundance of milk, produced by Yaks and Chowris (mountain cattle) as dairy animals living at an altitude of 3000m to 5000m and it needs 7 to 10 days' foot-march to reach them. Out of the surplus milk a kind of Himalayan cheese called "Churpi" was made. "Ghiu" (ghee) - very essential for Nepali food, was also made from Yak milk. What is internationally called cheese was not known and therefore not made. Werner Schulthess proved to be a real entrepreneur and saw soon that cheese might be not only a solution to the surplus of milk, but maybe also an export item. In one place in the Eastern part of Nepal, he tried to make cheese, buying the milk from the local farmers who liked this new enterprise, because it gave them cash money. Werner tried to involve Government offices but they were of course reluctant to grant him funds, not being sure of the outcome of this "Cheese adventure". But Werner Schulthess was convinced that the "experiment" would succeed. He paid the farmers out of his own pocket many times when bureaucratic worked in Kathmandu was too slow. One can very hardly believe when

an answer would come from Kathmandu in the area being without roads and could only be reached on foot after eight to ten days' walk. To introduce producing cheese or anything else out was a Herculean task at that time. It rightly needed personality like Werner Schulthess, with hard head who will not to give up so easily, to do such jobs.

To start the cheese making, we have to imagine what it needed: first of all a place to cook, not a meal, but several hundred litres of milk in a huge bowl of metal. The first such bowl came from Switzerland and served as sample for the smiths in Patan and then all the bigger and smaller tools. Above all, it also needed somebody who knows what to do and at exact the right moment. Then, it needed a strong piece of cloth to heave the content of the bowl out of it and into a kind of a form, meaning a round cheese form of wood. Heidi Schulthess, wife of Werner who received a training in hand weaving in Switzerland, started with women near a Cheese-making plant, to weave the "cheese cloths." It did not last too long, as it was much cheaper to import the cheese cloths.

Now when the cheese-cake had settled and become solid, the form is removed, but now the "caring" for the cheese begins: turning it at regular intervals in a cool place, into which no direct sun can enter,



the loaves have to be washed with saltwater very regularly which helps the cheese to settle down properly and what is called ripen. Once a year the produced cheese was carried down to Kathmandu and this has to be done in dry season. And, how was it received in Kathmandu: by much scepticism - hardly any Nepali would buy cheese those days. In their opinion, it smelled too much and too bad. Local hotels bought some cheese for their tourists and most of it was exported mainly to Pakistan. Slowly, slowly cheese became more popular, among many just out of curiosity, but it happens now quite frequently that students and other people go to a dairy shop and want "cheese for their rupees". Though gradually popular in Kathmandu, but even now, cheese has not become a popular item for every household. One reason for this is also the price which is quite high for such a luxury.

It is also possible with a fully ripe cheese to make an excellent Fondue, Raclette or other cheese dishes. There were two main cheese "factories" in the East; Thodung and Semila Pike and then later also at Langtang. During 1964, the production of export quality cheese was 20 to 25 tons, 1996 it was six times higher. The cheese-making does not absorb all the milk, therefore Werner Schulthess created so-called Chilling Centres where the milk is kept until it can be distributed.

Producing cheese and all by-products like yogurt, ghee etc. was one part of Werner's activities. The other was to form Nepali cheese-makers and to establish a centre for all these activities. Later, the Swiss aid agency had given him the sole responsibility to set up a dairy in Nepal. And, this later became the Central Dairy in Lainchour, Kathmandu. Werner Schulthess also started in Kathmandu a milk supply scheme and when he left Nepal the daily turn-over was 2'000 lt. and 12 years later it was 140'000 lt. This hard work Werner Schulthess contributed to give shape of establishment of current Dairy Development Corporation (DDC) – government owned corporation, which is still market leader of milk supply not only in Kathmandu but also in other parts of Nepal.

Much later, after the establishment of DDC a private dairy was started by a Nepali having had his dairy education in New Zealand and producing various kinds of soft cheeses from cow's or buffalo milk. Currently, there are many private enterprises who produce wide variety of milk products including pasteurized milk, yogurt, icecream, various kinds of cheese and milk based sweets.

Werner Schulthess died on December 2011 and Nepal Swiss Friendship Society (NSFS) takes this opportunity to tribute our legendry Swiss friend who

will always be remembered for his contribution to introduce cheese and development of dairy in Nepal.

Born 1924 in Wädenswil, Switzerland

- 1950 Graduation as Ingenieur Agronome, specialisation Dairy Technology From Federal Insitute of Technology, ETH, Zürich
- 1950-52 Practical work in Denmark and Germany
- 1952-64 FAO Expert in Nepal for development of the Dairy Industry
- 1964-74 FAO Expert of dairy industry in Madagascar
- 1974-85 Senior Lecturer (Dairy Technology) and Chairman Dept. of Food Technology & Nutrition University of Nairobi
- 1984 Award of Dr. Sc.techn. h.c. by ETH Zürich

Various Consultancy Assignments in India, Cambodia, Mauritius, Afghanistan





Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai

Former Nepalese Ambassador to Switzerland and Advisor, NSFS

Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai is a retired career diplomat of Government of Nepal. During his long career in foreign services of Government of Nepal, he served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in different capacities. He served at the Nepalese mission in India. He was acting Ambassador at the Nepalese Embassy, Washington DC and he recently retired from Nepalese Embassy in Geneva, Switzerland as Ambassador and Permanent Representative to United Nations, Geneva.

Despite being veteran on diplomacy, Dr. Bhattarai has also keen interests in Human Rights and social service issues.

Nepal-Swiss friendship – a prospective from former Nepalese Ambassador

Nepal and Switzerland are good friends. This friendship based on mutual respect and spirit of cooperation was formalized during the time of first democratically elected government of Nepal on November 10, 1959. Switzerland has remained Nepal's reliable development partner since 1950s. Nepal upgraded its Embassy to Switzerland in Geneva to the ambassadorial level in 1998. Switzerland opened its resident embassy in Nepal in 2009. The fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations was commemorated in 2009. Nepal-Switzerland relations have matured. They are broad based and forward looking.

Though geographically far apart, Nepal and Switzerland share several similarities. Switzerland is a land-locked mountainous country in the heart of Europe, surrounded by powerful neighbours. Swiss people display supreme love for mountains. The Swiss Alps provide with ideal settings for mountain climbing, and create appetite to test their mettle on the snowy peaks of the Himalayas in Nepal. Given the varied potentials of tourism in Nepal, there is a great deal of potentials to work with.

Switzerland is a multiethnic and multicultural country. Unique unity in vast diversity is a common feature in both the countries. There are no social or economic upheavals in Switzerland. This has paved

the way for national unity and political stability. Switzerland has proportional representation in the parliament, its committees, Supreme Court, executive and federal administration. They have a power sharing political system. Swiss way of compromise and negotiation remains a model for peaceful resolution of conflict around the world. Switzerland has a long tradition of humanitarian commitments and respect for human rights and promotion of democracy is one of its foreign policy objectives.

Economic cooperation

Switzerland is among the few countries, which started economic cooperation programme in 1956 with technical assistance scheme for cheese production in Nepal. Switzerland has put Nepal in the list of priority countries to receive Swiss assistance. Areas of cooperation between Nepal and Switzerland include among others literacy, poverty alleviation, adult education, women empowerment, promotion of small businesses transport infrastructure, suspension bridges, access to drinking water, synergies between humanitarian aid and health programmes, vocational training and, sustainable utilisation of natural resources and good governance, land reform, institutional pluralism and social justice and equity.

The Swiss Government, through the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) has



been engaging in promoting economic relations and initiating various development projects in Nepal. It has helped in the construction of suspension bridges in various parts of the country. These bridges stand as symbols of friendship and goodwill between the two peoples. Hundreds of thousands of Nepalese rural population has benefitted from the Swiss cooperation. Besides economic cooperation, the Swiss government offers technical assistance, which has been regularized since 1972 when the Government of Nepal and the Swiss Federal Council signed the Agreement on Technical Cooperation. Technical and vocational training, dairy production, tourism development and hydropower are some of the potential areas that Swiss can assist in Nepal's development.

Switzerland is an open economy with one of the highest standard of living. Thanks to its high political stability and strong economy, it has highly developed financial services industry. Switzerland is a modern, industrialised and democratic country. Its political institutions are strong and provide perfect unity with four official languages, and different regional cultures. Business interactions between Nepal and Switzerland are growing. However, it must be said here that the level of investment and volume of bilateral trade do not reflect the growing civil and political engagement between the two countries. This is one of the areas, which has great potentials to work with and harness the export potentials of Nepal. Nepal looks to Switzerland as a source of inspiration for its political stability as well as economic wonders it has achieved.

People to people relations

It is a matter of great satisfaction that people-to-people relations are emerging as a high point in Nepal-Switzerland relations. The people are as ethnically diverse as their geography. The people driven relations are creating direct linkages between the two peoples, business houses, and education and research institutes. They are sharing best practices, exchanging technical knowhow and developing new approaches to problems that are common to us. This partnership forged at people level is not only increasing but also widening, and sustained by a network of linkages that spread across educational institutions, entrepreneurs, organizations, professional associations, government officials and non-governmental organizations. Our people admire values of democracy and have unshakeable faith in liberty, justice, dignity and equality of every person. People from varied disciplines are engaged in academic, political, social, cultural, rural development, community development, health care, welfare of women and children beyond media publicity. Organizations such as Swiss Nepal Society (SNS), Nepali Janasamparka Samiti, and Non Resident Nepalese Association (NRN-A), are working in promoting relations at the grass root levels. Other community organizations in cultural and literary fields are emerging and contributing to the strengthening of bilateral relations at the people level. Lamjung Skill Development Foundation (LSDF) initiated by SNS has been focusing on employment oriented vocational and technical training to conflict affected and underprivileged youth. Similarly, Nicole Nikki-Pasang Lhamu Hospital in Lukla of the Solukhumbu district,

founded by the first woman mountaineering guide of Switzerland Nicole Nikki and Swiss friends of Nepal are working in remote region and providing services to the people. Initiatives like these are making immediate impact in the life of common people and bringing the people of Nepal and Switzerland together at the grass root levels thus widening and deepening the bilateral relations at the government level.

The success of the People's Movement in April 2006, and declaration of Nepal as the Federal Democratic Republic by the Constituent Assembly in 2008 has brought our two countries and people further together. It has unlocked doors for possibilities and opportunities for progress and prosperity. Nepal is currently engaged in concluding the peace process started following the success of the People's Movement in 2006. Switzerland has been an early supporter of the ongoing peace and constitution making process in Nepal.

The interactions at the people level have opened up constructive relations with people of different culture, faiths and languages. The public dimension of the foreign policy will never be complete without a mention of the remarkable contributions made by the eminent personality Toni Hagen. His role in linking the cross section of people together in the two countries is exemplary. He was a great admirer of the *cheerfulness* of the Nepali people coming from the full harmony with their environment and culture and religion. The potentials of Nepal-Swiss relationship/friendship at all levels need to be fully harnessed to the larger benefit of the two countries and the people.



Touching Moments

Written by Monika Zech for *Wir Eltern* 3/2008: English

translation by Kathrin Cooper

30 years ago, a young woman from Nepal decided to introduce a different approach to baby care to Switzerland. In the past 30 years this remarkable woman has added significantly to the well-being of countless babies and their parents. Nasma Scheibler-Shrestha is calm and concentrated and listens attentively. Her hands have massaged thousands of babies. For 30 years Nasma has been teaching Swiss mothers and fathers the art of baby massage, having learnt it from her own mother in the traditional way of the Newar people in the Kathmandu valley of Nepal. Except that Nasma's mother had to leave Nepal and travel to Switzerland to join Nasma who was about to give birth in a Zurich hospital.

In the Newar tradition, a woman who has given birth is taken care of by a midwife or another close female person such as her own mother, her grandmother or aunt. The new mother is expected to recover from the strain of giving birth in a darkened room, separated from the everyday bustle of family life and street noise and other distractions, so that she can concentrate fully on her newborn baby. Her only visitor is the midwife who attends to the needs of mother and child, washing and massaging them both. Among the Newar, the daily massage of mother and baby is as

natural as eating and drinking. Nasma only really began to think about the value of this ancient tradition when she became a mother herself, far away from her native country and the customs of her people.

Switching off your brain

When Nasma gave birth in 1983 in a Zurich hospital her mother was present with cotton cloths and mustard oil and began to massage her little granddaughter soon after she was born, much to the amazement of the hospital staff. "For my mother this came naturally," says Nasma, while doctors, midwives and nurses witnessed how much the newborn baby enjoyed the firm touch of the massage and seemed wonderfully relaxed afterwards. Nasma realized that she wanted this baby massage to become part of Swiss life and this insight helped her to find her role in Western culture. When Nasma arrived in Switzerland in 1981 she was very much a foreigner. Her husband, a Swiss architect she had met in Nepal while working as a draftswoman on a German aid project, had told her much about his country. "He also showed me calendar pictures of Switzerland," she says and laughs. "But when I arrived at Zurich railway station it all looked very different, and there were neither cows nor snowy



mountains." Nasma settled into her new life in Zurich and discovered the Switzerland of picture-books on a trip to the mountains. Adjusting to Swiss life presented few problems for a flexible young woman, and she had already learnt much of the German language in Nepal. It was during her pregnancy that she began to notice cultural differences much more. "In Switzerland, the pregnant woman and her partner are left alone with their birth preparations." Nasma was missing her female relatives who would have been at her side in Nepal, and so it was with all the more enthusiasm that she welcomed the support of her mother after giving birth. As a new mother Nasma understood the advantages of the Newar traditions and felt that she wanted to pass some of these on to Swiss parents. Baby massage was not a complete novelty in Switzerland, as it had



been introduced in the 1970s in a book by the French doctor Frédéric Leboyer who had travelled to India. Nasma did not just want to write another book, though. She did eventually publish two books, but these were intended to accompany her taught courses and help guide the practitioner through the moves. "You cannot learn how to touch your baby from a book," she says. And she has always refused to massage a dummy for teaching purposes, preferring to work on a real-life baby instead, the way her mother had taught her. A question that has always preoccupied her is how parents learn to switch off their brains, because baby massage is not just a question of technique but above all a matter of feelings. "You surrender to the touch and the moment of intimate connectedness with the child." It is not a matter of thinking of particular moves or counting them but of tuning in with the baby's reactions. "Thus, a massage is not just beneficial for the baby but equally relaxing for the parent giving the massage."

Fathers are welcome

There are plenty of mothers and fathers who praise Nasma's massage method. The mother of four-month-old twins Julian and Felix says it is fantastic how the two little boys respond. She and her husband started massaging as soon as they came home from hospital. "After the first massage,

Felix slept non-stop for eight hours and Julian for six," she says enthusiastically. Massage has become an important part of family life, and the twins are treated to it three to four times weekly in the evening and at the weekend.

Among the Newar it would be unthinkable that fathers massage their babies. That is very much a woman's task. But for Nasma Scheibler-Shrestha it soon became clear that she could only teach baby massage by adapting it to local customs. In a small family the children do not have access to a large number of women but only to mother and father, hence fathers have to be involved, too, and they benefit from this experience. One father, Dominik Schumacher, has this to say: "When our daughter Lola was born I felt rather helpless. I didn't know how to make contact with this tiny creature who was of course fixated on her mother. This changed dramatically when I began to massage her. A new connection was formed which I had missed before."

And there are more and more....

In Nepal, fathers have not come this far yet even though much has changed in recent years according to Nasma. Increasingly, extended families are turning into small families and many ancient old Newar traditions are being abandoned. In her own country Nasma has

become something of an ambassador for these traditions. In 2005 she and her husband organised an exhibition in Nepal on the traditional Newar approach to giving birth and baby care. "Many old midwives turned up, some with tears in their eyes, happy to see their work being documented," Nasma comments.

Nasma's pioneering spirit remains unbroken. In addition to teaching regular courses for parents and showing her exhibition, which she is happy to take all over the world, she also teaches baby massage to the medical profession. Countless midwives and nurses have learnt the "language of touch" from Nasma Scheibler-Shrestha, among them Cornelia Märki-Homberger, who works in the maternity department of the Zurich University Hospital. She has become a course instructor in her own right and will be introducing new mothers and fathers to baby massage. But Nasma herself is far from thinking of retiring. She laughs and adds, "Who knows, maybe one day people will say that there is a 97-year-old woman in Zurich who massages babies...."

Information on baby massage courses according to the method of Nasma Scheibler-Shrestha: Baby Massage School BMN, Rüttschistrasse 21, 8037 Zurich, +41 (0)44 361 21 95, nasma@newar.ch, www.newar.ch





Khem R. Lakai, CHE
Vice-President (NSFS)

Khem entered the hospitality industry back in 1992 from Soaltee Oberoi, the member of leading hotels of the world, since then he gathered over 16 years of operational and managerial experiences including stints in Europe, North America and Asia.

Khem has a Commerce degree and also a Hotel Management degree from Chur, Switzerland (SSTH - Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality). Khem continuously acquired dozens of professional certification courses and then become a Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE) awarded by American Hotel & Lodging Association in year 2006.

While participating in various international workshops, and working as a free-lance consultant, Khem believes that the Hospitality can bring together entire Nepalese into a string of good economy, a unifying challenge of Nepal. Khem is passionate about creating jobs and providing opportunities for the needy youth from all over Nepal.

Khem founded a hospitality management Academy (GATE - Global Academy of Tourism & Hospitality Education) in Kathmandu that offers both vocational and academic education in international standard. Having 350 student populations, GATE College is the first ISO 9001:2008 certified hotel Management College. This year in the World Hospitality Awards 2011, GATE was nominated in the category of Management School Awards for "Best Innovative Training Program" held at Intercontinental Paris Le Grand. Khem received the award from the President of the Event, Mr. George Panayotis CEO & President of MKG Group. GATE College also won the national award in Food Safety from the government of Nepal.

4,478 & 6,993 Meters of Natural Friendship

You may be surprised with the title! Both figures represent similar shaped mountains, the Matterhorn and the Machhapuchhre (Fishtail) one in the heart of Europe (Switzerland), and the other in Nepal. Not only do these two mountains symbolize similarities of the countries, but there are quite many other comparisons. Both are landlocked, multi-cultural, mountainous and relatively smaller nations between giant neighbors or even having rare flags these two countries have, they represent uniqueness and are special, as they maintain friendship over the past six decades.

Both nations have marvelous tourism products, but Switzerland has wisely used these opportunities and Nepal certainly has yet to learn lessons from Switzerland in terms of how Tourism & Hospitality can be not just the tool to generate revenue but becomes a way of life. Initiation of transfer of knowledge however has started a long time back when the first ever Swiss guest house was operated in Ekantakuna, Lalitpur (previously occupied by Swiss Association for Technical Assistance - SATA). During early 60s, when moderate hotels were not available in Kathmandu, Swiss development experts as well as other foreigners including the mountaineers could stay and eat.

During 70s then SATA supported the Tara Gaon Hotel project through Mahila Sangathan (Women Organisation) which was later handed over to Tara

Gaon Development Board. The first Manager of Tara Gaon Hotel was a Swiss Citizen (later on become Nepali citizen) who is no other than Ms. Annemarie H. Spahr. Ms. Spahr helped establish Dwarika's Hotel, currently being operated in Battisputali becoming the first Swiss Manager of the hotel. Following the development, Machhan Wildlife Resort at Chitwan Wildlife Reserve was established and operated in cooperation with Swiss citizen, since then many hoteliers came and went including Mr. Thomas Meyer who was the Manager of Durbar hotel that closed during the armed conflict of Nepal.

Ever since many Swiss citizens have made Nepal their home and also operated hospitality outlets. Ms Judith Maag (Thapa) now operates a resort named Panorama in Charikot, Dolakha with her Nepali husband and Mr. Martin Kromer has been operating Ying Yang Restaurant in Thamel since 1996. Not to mention, Swiss Citizen Ms Yolanda Stillhard owns and operates Trekkers Holiday Inn at Chhuche Pati, Chabhil. These are some of the examples how Nepal is constantly receiving interest of the Swiss citizens who chose to live and operate hospitality business here in Nepal.

There are 100s of Nepalese students who went to Switzerland for hospitality education and have returned to Nepal and help elevate the standard of Hospitality industry of Nepal. My own official journey into hospitality education





Machhapuchhre (Fishtail) one in the heart of Europe (Switzerland), and the other in Nepal. Not only do these two mountains symbolize similarities of the countries, but there are quite many other comparisons.



was started back in first week of January 1999. It would be relevant to share how my education in Switzerland relates to what I am currently doing and my hope for the Nepalese youth who aspire to become successful hospitality professionals in their lives.

May 2001 - a fairly long but mild winter in Switzerland was already on its way out and the bare trees were coming alive with budding leaves and colorful flowers, all adding to the tranquility and homely ambience of the small town of Chur. The smell of freshly cut grass and the sound of

cowbells already proliferated the hills and people were venturing out again (Leute beim Wandern, as the locals called it).

Graduation was fast approaching and classmates were still working on the yearbook, as part of their school project. Despite the approaching finals, the yearbook team was running and approaching students with a question "What would you like to become in the future?" Simple as it sounded in the beginning, the question hit home harder for me, as I clearly knew that the dreams, career predictions and paths

are never easy, as they first seem to students. A dream that I had prior to landing in Switzerland was no longer valid to be considered as dream. However, I felt a few things in common with most graduates...uncertainty, but positive energy and lots of hope.

A few days later, one of my classmates, Lydia, handed me a copy of the yearbook. I eagerly scanned through the pages until I found columns where graduates had expressed their opinion as to what would they like to become. Sure enough, the entries ranged from "wish to become an owner

of chain hotels", owning a nightclub in Shanghai, get married and have family, owning a restaurant, becoming a GM of a reputed 5 star hotel and so on. Some even desired to 'become housewife in Beverly Hills' and 'become a taxi driver in Mumbai' (which I thought were only jokes).

Now I fast forward to August, 2006. Almost four years have passed then and I was still in touch with a reasonable number of friends. Most of them have already achieved remarkable success in the industry and few others shifted the career path but all have succeeded. I was quite amazed to see the positive results of how Swiss education helped them achieve their dream careers, such as becoming a project manager of a famous chain of resorts, e-commerce manager in a leading hotel group and rewarded for the same, opening a boutique hotel in Beijing, a Training Manager in a leading international hotel, opening own hotels and resorts and having job in the UBS bank of Switzerland, just to name a few.

I too found myself in my dream role in the field of hospitality education, becoming a teacher as well as a counselor that took me to 57 different countries around the world but only then when I landed in Bahrain, I happened to witness the harsh reality of Nepalese youth how they were forced to flee the country due to the Maoist led armed conflict that tolled over 15,000 lives of innocent Nepalese citizen. As a result, economy was lashed, and tourism was badly hurt where many hotels were shut down and tourism had



almost came to a standstill except quite a few active UN agencies and INGOs.

My dreams to serve my own country became more urgent than ever before. I was only thinking yet undecided but as the fate has it, I happened to meet Mr. Hussain Najadi an author to “Sea and the Hills” and shared my dreams and hope for my country then almost instantly inspired me that the best time to decide was then and there. Perhaps it was only a little push I needed to decide to open GATE (Global Academy of Hospitality & Tourism Education) having 16 students with the same academy in Switzerland I went to (Swiss School of Tourism & Hospitality – SSTH). The SSTH has been guiding GATE as an affiliate partner since the inception and now GATE has become an international award-winning academy that provides education to 350 students.

During my educational journey, I discovered so many interesting avenues of learning in Switzerland that I decided to live my life with and “Food Safety” training is one of the many such things that I continued and I am extremely glad that the skills I learned from Switzerland, (thanks to Brigitte Aeberli – Chief food inspector) who helped me understand how Switzerland operates food safety monitoring and now I share that core concept in Nepal with international experts such as Ms Karen White and Alphonsa Sebastian who helped me realize my dream to sensitize the need of food safety training and education in Nepal apart from what we regularly teach, managing,

supervising or cooking, baking, cleaning, serving or coffee making.

So far I have only mentioned about the Hospitality sector but I am aware that Switzerland has received students and scholars in many sectors therefore I believe that now, we must shift our focus from aid culture to technology and know-how transfer that is more sustainable and beneficial for Nepal in a long run. I cannot forget the support of Swisscontact volunteers from the retired community who selflessly came and taught in our academy and I must say that what we learned from them could never be compared to million dollars’ worth of donation. If the Swiss Alps could be drilled through tunnels for railways and highways, we can learn how to do that here in Nepal. If almost one-third in size and 7 million population can become a leading economy in the heart of Europe, 26 million Nepalese do not need to flee to other countries for a living. All it takes is to stop relying just on aid but understand how the economy is linked with technology, infrastructure development and hard-work. I have no doubt that the train that can reach to the top of Jungfrauoch, with pilgrims and tourists, it can also reach Muktinath temple in Mustang. If the cable car can cater to 1,000s of skiers in Flims - Laax, we don’t necessarily have to build dusty roads in many untouched natural heritage sites such as Khaptad in Nepal.

There is much more to learn from simple things and I take this opportunity to share this dream that one day Nepal will no longer see Switzerland as a donor country only but as a development partner that



will bring ideas, expertise, investment, technology and knowledge and we will be able to offer a strong, independent and successful democratic model in Asia.



