

Linking the disconnected



Message from Chairperson

"It is my immense pleasure to express sincere thanks to all friends and well wishers of Chhahari Nepal for Mental Health. With your kind support, we have been able to bring changes in the lives of people who are on the streets and need our help. We all at Chhahari appreciate your concern for those with mental illness and your wish to work with us to help them in the future."

Dr (med) Chhatra Amatya
Chairperson

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In Nepali, "**Chhahari**" means shade or shelter. This highlights our commitment, to provide shelter and assistance, wherever person may be, irrespective of their location.

Our Journey of Street Project

In the 10 months since we started the Street Project we have met and helped many people who are living on the streets in Kathmandu Valley and affected by mental illness. A major challenge has been to track down their families and involve communities in the welfare activities needed to bring positive changes to the lives of these people, who are on the margins of society and often disowned by their families. With the encouragement of many community leaders, other stakeholders and line agencies, today we are proud of the progress we have been able to make.

Our limited resources prevent us helping everyone in need, but an important achievement is the increased understanding of individuals and organisations with whom we work about the needs of people with mental illness and the stigma associated with mental illness, so they are able to help directly and support the work of our team.

Our original plan was to focus on Lalitpur district (inside ring road) and around the mental hospital, but we soon realised there are needy people everywhere around the valley. With support from local stakeholders, we extended our services to clients outside the ring road, facilitating their access to the mental health care they need, developing a referral system, convincing families of the need for treatment and negotiating with health institutions to provide services at as low a cost as possible. We have identified key issues that need to be worked on related to



mental illness and street people, such as lack of availability of mental health services for poor people, poverty links with mental illness, stigma associated with mental illness, unemployment among youth, drug abuse, community bullying and physical, verbal and sexual violence suffered by people with mental illness, as both a cause and an effect.

Today, our project is in a very exciting phase. We have a team of experienced and motivated staff, an informal network of supportive local communities and support from individuals and organisations across the country and internationally. We are working to reach more people and to touch the lives of those with a vision of a just society, where mental health needs are addressed for all those in need. We need your support to make this possible.

Chhahari News

An Irreparable loss

Sadly, on 28th August 2011 Chhahari Nepal for Mental Health lost our great supporter, mentor and fundraiser, Mary Robertson from Scotland. At the age of 92 years, Mary's sudden departure has left a void at Chhahari. Mary had a deep attachment to Nepal, which dated from 1969, when she welcomed four Nepali students into her home in Scotland. Over the years, she raised thousands of pounds for causes in Nepal, including for Chhahari, with links to Gorebridge Church. At home, Mary offered warm hospitality to numerous Nepali visitors to Edinburgh.

HEARTFELT CONDOLENCE

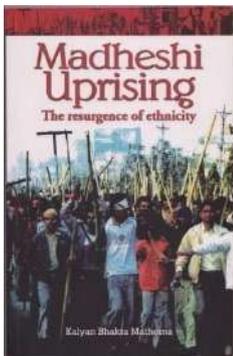


During her first visit to Nepal in 1994, Mary saw the poor conditions of people with mental health problems. As a nurse with considerable experience of working with mentally ill people, she was encouraged to visit a new initiative for rehabilitation of women who had been in jail due to mental health problems. This was the beginning of what later became the Aasha Deep Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre, managed by Mary Knoll Nepal, and kindled an interest for Mary in mental health within Nepal that continued.

In 2009, on her 5th trip to Nepal, Mary celebrated her 90th Birthday. On this occasion, her observation of mentally ill people wandering the streets in the Kathmandu valley, excluded from their basic human rights, challenged her to do more. From her own experiences she understood that the task Chhahari had set itself was indeed tough, but much needed. On seeing a mentally ill woman sitting on top of a mountain of garbage she asked "How does Chhahari begin to work with her?" Mary was encouraged by the work started by the Street Project to reach men and women existing under inhuman conditions. Until the end of her life, she advocated and raised funds to make a difference for mentally ill people in Nepal.

Mary Robertson continues to inspire everyone involved with Chhahari Nepal for Mental Health.

Street Project



A Book Published by
Mr. Kalyan Bhakta Mathema –
Board Member of CHMH.



Reviewing the Progress

After 10 months' successful implementation of the Street Project, a one-day workshop was organised to review progress and discuss findings. The discussions covered wide range of issues faced by people with mental illness who are on the street, including their security and treatment, family and community support, the role of different sectors in mental health, staff development issues and funding constraints. The workshop helped clarify our ideas about the status and way forward for the project.

Some Findings of Street Project

- ✚ Half of the mentally ill people in the street are of productive age group of 20 to 40.
- ✚ 65% of the people in the street are male and remaining 35% are female.
- ✚ 1 out of 20 mentally ill people in the street are above age 60.
- ✚ Among the clients whose information are available, 93% of the of people on the street are from inside Kathmandu valley whereas 7% are from outside Kathmandu Valley.
- ✚ Brahmin and Chhetri (29%) occupy the highest portion of the people in the street which is followed by indigenous people (25%)

*"No One is
Immune against
Mental Illness."*



CN program



Press Conference



Chhahari organised a press conference to raise voice against the picture used by the central bureau of statistics for the 2012 census.

The picture depicts people with mental illness as violent and self-harming, which is totally misleading. Chhahari stated that use of this picture is unfair to mentally ill people and could even lead to the collection of unreliable and invalid data in the Census.



Dr. Chhatra Amatya, Prof. Kapil Shrestha & Dr. Pashupati Mahat- leading the Conference.

Awareness program with Youth

To raise voice against the stigma associated with mental illness, young people from various colleges and organisations gathered together to stand silently in front of Sherpa Mall, Durbar Marg. They displayed posters and pamphlets with information about mental health. The programme was jointly organised by Chhahari and the Rotaract Club of Kathmandu Mid-Town. More than 90 people participated and even people passing by on the road joined in.



Participants standing in the Foot Path Rally Program



Continuing the relationship with Rotaract Club of Kathmandu Mid-Town, A collage making competition was jointly organised, in which 14 teams, each of three members, participated from various colleges and NGOs. The theme was "Let's Talk about Mental Health" and the aim was to explore perceptions and ideas about mental health amongst young people. Participants were given colours, sign pens and paper and three hours to prepare a collage. Two professional artists contributed mental health paintings, which were gifted to the chief guest of the programme. We thank the Himalayan White House College for providing the venue.

Involving youth in Mental Health



Chief Guest, Dr. Chandra Lekha Tuladhar; announcing winners

My Feelings

Speaking through heart



What I feel about Chhahari

Mental Health is an important but often ignored aspect of overall health. Working with Chhahari on this three-month joint project with Rotaract Club of Kathmandu Mid Town has challenged my level of concern and knowledge about mental health and taught me a great deal. Participating in events such as *Stand up Rally*, *Collage Competition* and *Lets Run for Mental Health*, has been a great privilege and has certainly fostered knowledge and awareness among youth about issues of mental health. The work of Chhahari in supporting the rehabilitation of mentally ill people and their resettlement into their families is something very special in the field of humanitarian service and worthy of tremendous praise. As president of my club I feel proud

to have involved our youth members and guests in this important issue.

I thank the Chhahari team for providing this opportunity and for all their hard work, including Miss Gael and all national and international supporters. I would love to work together again in the future.

Rtr. Er. Samir Nepal

President Rotaract Club of Kathmandu mid –Town

"I didn't even dare to keep my footsteps outside my home. They used to sit on the junction and start to tease me saying I am mad." - A client who was on the street in past.

The 2 hour made me happy

"Mental disease and its classification" was the topic written on the white board as I went to clean it. Students of the health science college were busy memorising the symptoms, types and drugs used to treat mental illness. As I cleaned the board I asked, "Have you ever experienced any mental illness in your life?" After pause, some said yes and some said no.

I threw them another question "Have you ever noticed anyone that you know is mentally ill?" Everybody said yes.

"Do you have a friend who is mentally ill?" I asked watching eyes of each student. They all said, "No Sir". They start laughing and making a noise, and I could hear some comments about mental illness. They explained, "It's not fair to make friends with them. What if they come naked to gathering?" Everybody laughed. "What if they take a stone and start chasing people?" "What if they create problems when we are with our family?" "It's better to be far from them."

Everyone supported the idea of isolating the people with mental illness. In their view, people with mental illness are like criminals and are violent. On the positive side, they don't agree that mentally ill people should be tied up and locked inside a room for years, yet they are also not ready to make them friends. Somewhere in our conversation they started making fun of health professionals working in mental health sector. I could only watch them explaining their logic about why they ignore people with mental illness.

I wondered about these future health professionals,

who will be working in public health. Some will be head of a health post, some will serve in hospitals and some will lead health programmes. Somewhere inside, I felt sad, and silently said to myself, there is unlimited scope for work with these people.

"OK, OK stop guys, today let's talk about mental health", I said, and began sharing some stories about our clients. Time passed and my class ended. I realised I had left my planned syllabus topic untaught.

The log book was on the table, where I had to write which topic I had taught that day. I rolled my pen with some confusion and wrote nothing. As I moved to the door, one of the students said "Thank you sir, we had not understood the issue, now we will make them our friends". "You have unlimited scope to work" I said, and bid them good bye with a smile.

Anil Shrestha

Programme development officer
Chhahari Nepal for Mental Health

"It's not fair to make friend with them. What if they come naked in gathering?
(Everybody laughed)

CN Program



Reaching to people's Door

A street drama programme was organised at Imukhel on the road. A team of nine members, led by Ms Bhagavati Adhikari, performed a street drama, which included general information about mental illness, drugs and mental illness, and the family's responsibility for people with mental illness. This was followed by an inspirational speech by our Chairperson Dr Chhatra Amatya.



Chairperson Dr. Chhatra Amatya interacting with Community People

Interesting Incident:

During the drama, an old man appeared and began to scold the artist who was acting being rude to a child with mental illness. He did not realize it was just an act. It was encouraging to see a community member protecting the rights of a child with mental illness.

Running for Mental Health

To raise awareness about mental health among the general public and use the opportunity to raise funds for Chhahari, 24 supporters participated in the 5th Real Kathmandu Marathon, organised by Rupak Partisan.

Runners participated in different categories of the marathon, including 5 km open, 5 km school and half marathon. Our Admin & Finance Officer Mr. Surendra Panday completed 21 km in 2 hrs 11 min and 57 sec.



Runners of Kathmandu Marathon

We were able to raise more than Nrs.100, 000 for Chhahari activities and raise the profile of mental health, as many people saw our T-shirts and asked about our work.

Preparing Resource List



Orientation for the Students from Golden Gate

Seven students from the 2nd year Bachelor of Social Work Department, Golden Gate College, volunteered to develop a resource list, mapping the organisations working in mental health in Kathmandu Valley. They visited organisations to collect information about their mental health programmes and the type and cost of services provided. Chhahari will make this information available to the public on the website.

Helping Hands for Chhahari



Barbara Gieniusz conducting half day orientation program on depression

Ms. Eliza Siwakoti – BSc. Nursing Student & Mrs. Anju Regmi – MSW Student

Both have been team members with Chhahari for some months, and we wish them a bright future as they move on to other work.



At Christmas: We had a stall at the Hotel Summit market, where we were able to establish relations with visitors and raise donations for the programme. We collected NRs.1, 150 as donations and NRs.1, 950 by selling T-Shirts and caps.



We would also like to welcome Ms. Samragyi Singh Thakuri, prospective MBBS student, who joined Chhahari as a volunteer until February and Ms Sangeeta Khanal, BSW student from St Xavier College, who will be with us for the next year.



Reach to us

Chhahari Nepal for Mental Health (CN)
GPO 8975, EPC 983
Kathmandu
Nepal
Tel: +977-1-2114300

Email: chhaharinepal@wlink.com.np

Web: www.cnmh.org.np

Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/chhahari.nepal>

