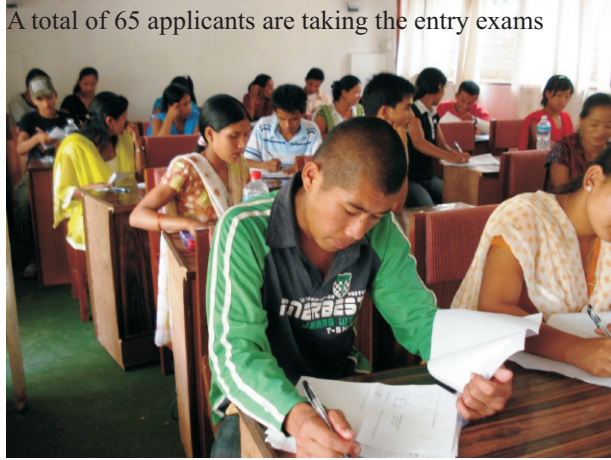


The LSDC Gairi Campus opened its doors!
By Nima Rijal, LSDC Campus Principal, 4 August 2008.

A total of 65 applicants are taking the entry exams



Dear SNS members, dear Beat-ji, dear Roland-ji, as the Campus Principal I am proud to send you this situation update on behalf of the entire LSDC team as per the 4th of August 2008. I don't want to miss this opportunity to express our gratitude for the trust and the support that we received from both organizations.

On 30 July 2008, only 10 months after laying the foundation stone by a DIGA delegation, our Campus opened its doors and started with the welcome classes for the 46 students that were enrolled in long-term courses for the two initial trades "Carpentry & Interior Design" and "Civil Construction".

The total project costs so far are quite well in line with the budget and exceed the project allowance by less than 10% despite the major political and economic instability.

50% Women Students for Technical Trades

These 46 students were the best ones from among approximately 65 applicants that took the entry exams. Surprisingly enough taken that the two trades are not exactly considered typical female professions, the ratio between boys and girls is almost exactly 50:50!

Moreover, the group of these first year students matches almost perfectly the composition of the local population: besides a majority of

Gurungs, we have young people of Brahman, Dalit, Janajati or Chhetri descent. We are also very happy to see that handicapped adolescents passed the entrance examination and were finally enrolled alongside some

particularly vulnerable conflict-affected teenagers.

The students are temporarily housed around the Gairi village for those who don't have any relatives in Besi Sahar. Student hostels are planned for the next construction phase starting at around December 2008.

Very Practical Course Curricula

The long-term courses will last for two years in total and start with a 4 months' training program at Campus, followed by 4 months on-the-job education in form of an internship in a private or public industrial company. The trainees then go through a period of intermediate examinations combined with further classes before they enter the second year's program in July 2009, provided they pass the half-term exams.

Great efforts were invested so far in assuring positions for all students for the internship periods. Agreements are already finalized with various employers for all graduates of the carpentry trade for the first internship. The situation looks similarly promising for the graduates of the civil construction trade.

Difficult Conditions for Construction Work

The construction schedule experienced significant delays due to the difficult economic conditions, the irregular power supply and the frequent strikes affecting the material availability on the local market. However, I am proud

to send you some pictures attached that show that the administrative building and two workshops are almost completed by now, missing only the outside paint coat. The meeting hall is due to be completed within the next three months as the last stage of the first construction phase. Two more workshops, a multipurpose conference hall and student hostels are planned in a later expansion phase.

The buildings of the Gairi Campus were constructed in close partnership with SKAT (Swiss development company with its head-quarter in St. Gallen, see also www.skat.ch), applying a special low cost, environmental friendly construction technology. We trained our workforces ourselves in dedicated short-term courses that were attended by about 60% women laborers. This construction technology has attracted much interest among the locals in and around Besi Sahar and we get regularly visitors that want to learn more about it.

Planning for a splendid Inauguration Ceremony

The Management of the Campus and of course all staff and students are now eagerly waiting on welcoming any of our Swiss donors and well-wishers to visit our facilities in the wonderful Marsyandi river valley on the foothill of the the Lamjung Himal. We are proud to announce the Campus' inauguration ceremony on November 26 and would very much welcome all our friends and well-wishers to attend this event. Hope to see you soon in Gairi Gaon.

Nima Rijal
on behalf of the LSDC Team.



The buildings are almost ready in early July 2008