

Yours Humanly Nepal

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Project Report

Yours Humanly Nepal Computer Center & Library
Lalitpur Metropolitan City-14, Lalitpur District, Nepal



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Project Partners



Behring Global Educational Foundation

This project would not have been possible without the generous grant from Behring Global Educational Foundation. We are deeply grateful to them for their generosity and support.

<http://www.bgefoundation.org/>

Special Thanks To:



Blackboard Nepal

For providing access to the Library Management System (LMS) software free of cost for the initial year with flexibility of customization, as well as reduced fees for the following years.

<https://www.blackboard.com.np/>

And To:



For generous discounts on books, games, and teaching aid materials.

About Yours Humanly Nepal

Yours Humanly Nepal (YHN) is a local nonprofit that supports the education of underprivileged children throughout the country. It was established with the vision to bridge the gap between quality educational opportunities and underserved children of disadvantaged backgrounds in Nepal.

YHN focuses on three main areas: firstly, providing resources, such as uniforms, books, and meals, and scholarships to children from various disadvantaged backgrounds; secondly, providing funding for basic infrastructural needs, such as computer laboratories, lunch rooms, science laboratories, libraries, sports equipment, playgrounds, etc. of local impoverished schools; and thirdly, providing training to teachers, other school staff, and related human resources for the general betterment of education as well as awareness campaigns and camps for raising awareness on crucial issues related to child safety, child health, and family well-being.

Through our work we are lifting children out of poverty, exploitation, child labor, and other challenging situations and transforming their lives forever.

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About the Project

The Yours Humanly Nepal Computer Center & Library is Yours Humanly Nepal's first standalone project that will be managed directly by the Nepal team. It is located in Kathmandu city's southern suburb area right next to the YHN office.

The location was selected for both its closeness to the YHN office and its residential location, a heavily populated area full of schools and families with children.

Unlike previous similar projects, this center was not set up at a school. One of the reasons is that this allows the facilities to be accessed by people of the community as opposed to students of just one school. This opens up opportunities for many children's homes and hostels in the surrounding area as well as children who may not even attend any school due to problems at home, and to those who have dropped out of school due to financial hardships, or bad influences.

Through the computer center, basic computer literacy courses will be easily accessible to not just the children, but also the individuals who play key roles in their lives, such as school teachers, struggling single mothers, social workers, and students of Social Work (undergraduate degree) among others.

This center will play an important role in equipping the children and their supporting circles with the necessary skills to be effective learners, teachers, leaders, and guardians in this digital age.

The library, with over 800 books and games, serves as a safe and interactive space for children and young adults to develop a love for reading, improving their interpersonal skills, and gaining knowledge about the world.



The Computer Center

Course content and design



Each student who has satisfactorily completed the course will be awarded a certificate of completion issued by Yours Humanly Nepal.

The computer courses provided at the Computer Center have been carefully designed with the help of professionals. And for each age group and/or type of learner, the course content will be customized according to their needs.

The general course content (45 hours) is as follows:

- **Fundamentals of Computer**
 - Concept of the computer
 - Concept of hardware and software
 - Concept of I/O devices
 - Components of Central Processing Unit (CPU)
 - Memory and its Types
 - Introduction to various parts of the computer and its function
 - Introduction to 'Folder', 'Files', and 'Icons'
- **Typing (Nepali & English)**
 - Understand basic format of typing
 - Improve typing speed to up to 22 words per minute
- **Microsoft Word**
 - Clipboard (copy, paste, cut, select)
 - Save, save as, open, and all file ribbon work
 - Font (bold, italic, underline, change case, paragraphs (left, right, center, bullets, numbering), find and replace, how to make resume, and many more
 - Pages, tables, smart art, logo design, letter head, chart, pictures, hyperlink, Bookmark, letter, header, footer, page number, symbols and equations
 - Design, watermark, page color, page border
 - Layout like margin, orientation, size, columns, page break, etc.
 - Mail merge, different view formats, and many more
- **Microsoft Excel**
 - Introduction to excel sheet (rows, columns, cells, cell address, formula bar)
 - Learn to do simple calculations like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
 - Bill Sheets, Salary Sheets, Result Sheets
 - Filter and Advance Filter
- **PowerPoint**
 - Learn to add different slides with different titles and subtitles
 - Learn to add pictures, tables, SmartArt, shapes, WordArt
 - Design, themes, variants, and different transitions
 - Basic concept of animation
 - Slide show from 'Beginning' and 'From Current Slides', and different presentation views
 - Learn to present in front of people and improve presentation skills
- **Email and Internet**
 - The best way to use the Internet in our daily life with a practical focus
 - IP address, links, hyperlinks, browsers, firewalls, etc.
 - How to draft and send emails with attachments, links, etc.
 - How to use the Internet for research for study, school assignments, and projects OR for work
- **Printing and scanning**
 - Learn to make photocopies, prints and scans
 - How to save scans (format, size, etc.)
 - How to change print settings for documents, photos, B&W to color, etc.
 - Understand different types of printers (inkjet, laser, etc.)

The Library

Books and Games



All library members are issued membership cards and sign the code of conduct for library membership. Each one is entered into the LMS and all books borrowed and returned are recorded digitally.

The library is stocked with over 800 volumes carefully selected in both the English and Nepali languages along with educational board games for every age.

The books are first widely categorized as Beginner Readers, Intermediate Readers, and Advanced Readers, which are then sub categorized into genres, such as comics, picture books, facts books, children's classics, fairy tales, folk tales, graphic novels, biographies, maps and atlases, picture encyclopedia, and many more. This is done for both English and Nepali books.

Furthermore, we are proud to include over 200 volumes that are dual-language. That is both English and Nepali versions of the same book. These books have been critical in encouraging young readers to develop the confidence to read English books as they would already be familiar with the contents in Nepali.

To manage all these books, we have incorporated Library Management System (LMS) software in coordination with *Blackboard Nepal*. We have been working together to create a customized LMS to suit our unique needs at the library. It can be accessed on all YHN devices for easy management.

Board games and card games suitable for all ages are available at the library, with more well-known ones, such as Monopoly and UNO, and locally designed ones, like the 'Momo' card game and 'Samrajya' board game.

All the materials were selected keeping in mind our main target group of Nepali speakers, who learn English as a second or third language in school. There are more books in Nepali in the advanced level, while there are fewer ones in English. Popular teen novels in Nepali have been stocked, whereas English volumes have been selected at a more basic level. However, the books number equally in the intermediate level as there are many more readers at this level.

We have also kept in mind that a familiar native-based context is more likely to encourage reading compared to a story with a western setting with unfamiliar values and concepts. Thus, most of our books are from local authors and publishers.



Books & Games

Here are a few snapshots of our amazing book and games collection.



Design Concept

A briefing on the design concept

Facilities

Both the computer center and library have been separated by a partition with a door. This allows light to enter through both rooms while controlling noise. The entire space has been installed with power-saving LED panel lights for artificial illumination. For temperature control, two units of air-conditioning have been installed - one each in the library and computer center. These are supplemented by electric wall fans for days when air-conditioning is not required. As for the reception area, it has been outfitted with two electric fans, a drinking water dispenser, a reception desk and chair with printer and computer, and welcoming sofas for visitors.

Color Scheme

The color palette of the walls, furniture, and furnishing were selected with the purpose of maintaining a calm and peaceful atmosphere. The palette includes soft shades of grey, beige, white, and blue.

Computer Center Layout

The Computer Center's layout was designed keeping in mind the position and type of windows in the building structure. As the space gets plenty of sunlight and heat, semi-blackout curtains were installed instead of regular blinds, which would be ineffective in keeping out light and heat. For the placement of computers and seating, a centered approach was taken where a 10-seater desk/table (with all wiring and ports hidden under it) was placed in the middle of the room. This has allowed us to utilize the space more efficiently and avoid multiple wires on the floor and walls. The instructor's desk and PC has been placed on one end of the space with whiteboard on hand.

Library Layout

The library area has been softly divided, by a two-way book rack, into (1) a research & study zone and (2) reading for pleasure zone. On one hand, the first zone is near the entrance where two reading tables and eight chairs are arranged comfortably opposite the 'seniors' rack'. This setup doubles as an excellent arrangement for playing boardgames. On the other hand, the second zone can accommodate seven children on the cozy child-sized sofas with a low table situated opposite the 'juniors' rack'. In addition, *chakkatis* (floor seating cushions) are provided if the children prefer to sit in the traditional Nepali way.

Connectivity & Security

In addition to the 24-hour security guard and outdoor surveillance cameras provided by the building management, we have installed three HD CCTV cameras: one each in the computer center, library, and reception. All cameras have motion sensors, intercom, alarm, and playback (stored onto SD cards mounted onto each unit). The feed can be directly streamed to authorized cellular and computer devices that belong to the YHN team. For connectivity, we have a 120MBPS high speed dedicated internet connection with 5G support.

Target Groups

A quick look into the beneficiaries of the project



Classroom condition of a community school



YHN team visit to a nearby community school serving the poorest members of the community



Home condition of the community's poorest

The computer center and library has been built with the aim to provide computer literacy and access to a modern and child-friendly library to the children and young adults living in and/or around it, and in particular to children of families who are struggling to pay school fees. For a clearer understanding, here is a brief look into each group:

- **Community school students:** Almost all students that attend community-based schools come from the least financially stable communities, who are mostly migrant workers from other parts of the country. The only schools that they can afford for their children are the ill-equipped community schools that struggle to provide even the most basic education. In such an environment, these children never get a chance to be familiar with computers except through textbook pictures.
- **School Teachers:** Another group that has come to our attention through the local government are educators - school teachers and administrative staff of community schools. Unfortunately, the teachers and school staff that work in these schools are themselves strangers to computers. Except for the appointed computer teacher (if they have one), most of them do not even know how to turn on a computer, let alone send an email. So this abets the poor quality of education the students receive. Despite the fact that most community schools have computer labs provided by the government, they go into disuse as no one knows how to use them.
- **Youth:** A large target group are the Nepali youth with big dreams, but little to no financial support from their families. They were, with some luck, able to finish school, but do not have the means to pursue higher education or technical training in any field. Despite being hardworking and intelligent, this puts them at a further disadvantage from their counterparts from upper socioeconomic backgrounds. Another sub-group are the youth who never completed school. Instead they chose to undertake unskilled labor, even as children, so that they could ease their families' situation. They have the desire to do something better, but feel like they are stuck with no better options.
- **Women:** One of our target groups is underprivileged women with children, who struggle daily to put food on the table, clothe their children, and send them to school. They are often young single mothers with some basic education, but because of abuse, mistreatment, neglect, and/or abandonment by their husbands or families, have had to resort to temporary unskilled work. They do not believe they can become computer literate and perhaps move on to better jobs that they can be proud of.
- **University Students:** A large portion of university level students in Kathmandu are from poorer parts of the country. They come to the big city and rent cheap, overcrowded rooms (without basic facilities, like running water), just to be able to attend university. They scrape by with rice sent from their home village and a little bit of cash they make from tutoring others. They struggle to find entry level jobs as they do not know how to make their own resumes, type a cover letter for job applications, or make presentations, as they never had the chance to even touch a computer while in school.
- **Social Workers:** Surprisingly, people in the public service sector (local wards, other NGOs, youth clubs, etc.) often have no clue how to even send an email. This creates problems such as not receiving information from local government officers for projects, lack of clear communication, issues in coordination, and the resulting delay in project initiation, continuation, and completion.

Challenges & Proposed Solutions

Getting the services to the most needy



Typical street within Kathmandu city's outskirts



A poster depicting a short video on social issues by professional theater actors*



Public awareness program with live acting conducted at a public school *

One of the main obstacles in providing computer classes to school-going children, within the community, has been transportation. To put this into perspective, here is a little background. A few community schools in the area that do not have a computer lab are eager to send their students to the CCL so they can get computer education and complete the school curriculum requirements in the computer subject. Despite one school being only three kilometers away, they are unable to arrange for their students to come to the CCL as they do not have a school bus or vehicle of any kind. Walking the three kilometers to and from school (35 minutes each way) on a fairly busy dirt road was rightly considered too time-consuming and unsafe for the students. So for the 160 students of that school, their barrier to computer classes has become the lack of a vehicle.

For this problem, the best solution would be to actually have a computer lab installed at the school run by a qualified computer teacher. However, this will be a costly venture and only presents a solution for this one school. The other schools with a similar problem would still be unable to send their students to attend classes.

Nevertheless, for those schools with computer labs, but no trained teacher, we can provide training for not just the computer teacher, but all the teachers and school staff. This would make them capable of running their own labs and providing the required computer education to their students.

Another obstacle that we have faced in delivering our free computer classes to the most vulnerable children has been the child's home environment. This environment is the result of the mixture of illiterate parents, loss of parents, parents with substance abuse issues, marital issues, economic struggles, the effects of the Caste System, certain toxic cultural practices, and inherited poverty. And among these, the main underlier is extreme poverty. What happens when you are too poor is, you cannot keep your focus away from surviving. So despite our courses being free, and for the betterment of these children's future, not many have shown interest. And it is not just the parents or adults in charge of the children's education, the children themselves have no interest as their condition pushes them towards income-generating work from a young age. After a few years in and out of the community school system, and upon reaching their early teens, these children drop out of school and start working in unsafe environments.

Though we cannot go and change the family condition of each child, and though we cannot provide each community school with a computer lab, there is something we can do that can reach them. One is to continue offering these courses to high-school drop outs and youth who have been out of the school system for a significant time and are without formal education. Another is to address the misconception of "this is not for us" with impactful awareness campaigns. These campaign videos can be broadcast on national television and social media in partnership with the local government. This can potentially help in creating awareness about pursuing education no matter what background they come from, and that there are opportunities like our courses that can help them.

*Images used with permission from Theater Actor, Bedana Rai.

Running the Center

Necessary personnel and expenses



The Yours Humanly Nepal Computer Center & Library requires a set of qualified people and funds for its ongoing services and activities, that is being funded by Yours Humanly, US.

To start off, the lease on the space incurs rent with utility bills (electricity, water, internet, phone) as well as related monthly and annual taxes.

Furthermore, personnel including, computer instructor/s, librarian/s, assistant/s, and housekeeping staff are needed to deliver the services provided and to keep the place operational. Necessary roles are filled by interns from universities, usually in their senior year, and fellows who receive a competitive salary. Management and housekeeping staff are shared with the main office of YHN.

Other expenses such as drinking water supply, daily stationery needs, teacher's supplies, student registration forms, membership ID cards, certificates of completion, and similar are covered by the organization and supplemented by the nominal registration fee collected from students who can afford it. It is free for needy students.

The CCL opening hours are 8 AM to 5 PM daily, except Saturdays, in which each working day is divided into four shifts among the interns, fellows, and YHN team members. The computer classes are conducted throughout the day.

The image shows two interns working together to enter student details into the center's database.

Activities & Goals

A forecast for the coming five years



Computer Literacy Course for Young Adults
(8 AM to 9 AM session)



Computer Literacy Course for Teens
(9 AM to 10 AM session)



Computer Literacy for Young Adults
(5 PM to 6 PM session)

Current Activities

Currently (as of August 2023), we are providing three sessions of computer classes - two in the morning and one in the evening. By the first week of September 2023, this will be increased to five daily sessions (with three in the morning and two in the evening) as our waiting list of new applicants is growing. Each session has a maximum student capacity of ten. We foresee that within a year of initiating these classes, we will have 300 new computer literate children, teens, and young adults.

Another way in which we are planning to provide the basic courses is through a dedicated YouTube channel. The course content will be delivered in a recorded video in the Nepali language by our computer instructor in an easy-to-follow topic-by-topic basis with supporting images and links. This is especially planned with a focus on educators in other districts of the country as part of our *Train the Teacher* campaign, whereby we aim to improve the quality of education received by children all over the country.

Meanwhile, library membership is growing daily with most active members being teens and young adults who have just finished school or are currently pursuing their undergraduate degree. We have already started working on "Storytime with Didi" (big sister) which are pre-recorded videos of our interns/volunteers reading a storybook to children and teens via social media. The video will feature two *didis* who will introduce a storybook with pictures and read it out loud during which the pages of the book will be presented in a slide one by one. This way, viewers can read along with the audio, and later, visit the library to read it themselves. This gives children, who live far away from the library, access to the books in a different platform.

Goals

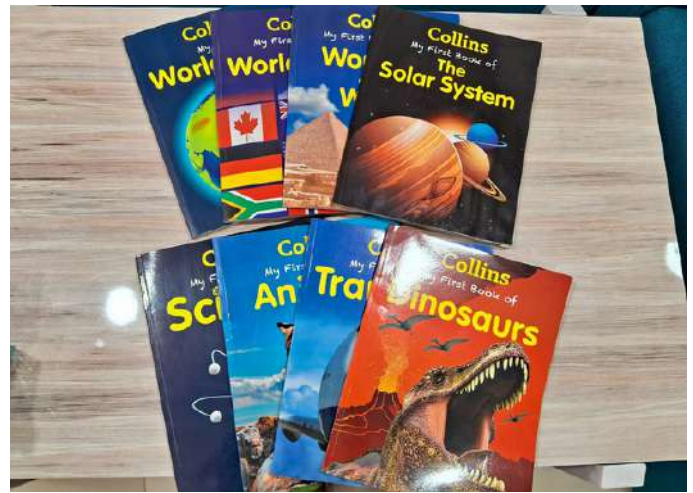
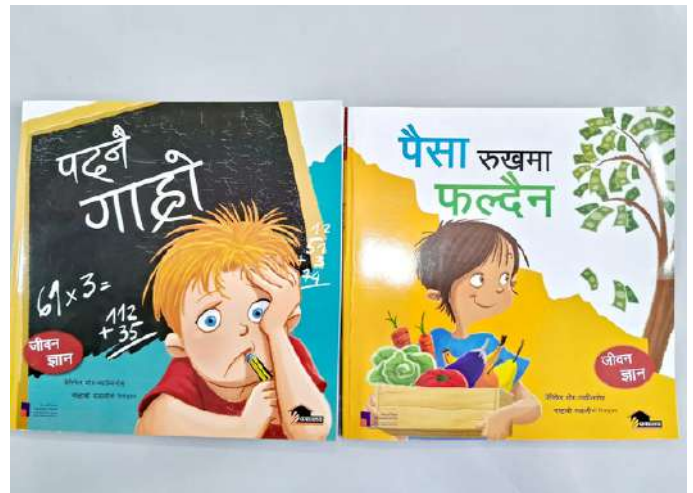
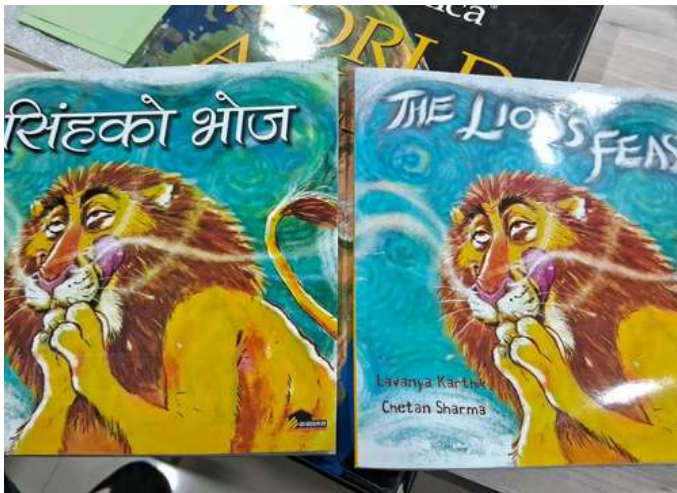
After the first year of running the CCL, we are planning to expand the types of computer courses we provide to reach students who require more specialized training: creative individuals who do not have the means to pursue Graphic Design courses, Accounting Software training, programming and coding courses, to name some. Since the opening of the CCL, we have had many young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds who have been seeking such courses so they can start a career as soon as they are out of high school.

A big step that we hope to achieve within the foreseeable five years is an affiliation with the *Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT)* for all our computer courses so that every certificate/diploma earned by a student can be issued with their quality guarantee. This will make our courses valid regionally.

In the future, we hope to extend the CCL to have another unit for vocational and technical training (like computer hardware and cellphone repair, and tailoring), and classrooms for English language and music lessons.

Gallery

Selecting books and games



Gallery

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony



Gallery

Computer Classes & Library Activities



Gallery

YHN Staff & Interns





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