

## **Prevention of deafness and promotion of hearing among school children of Nepal: act of kindness by “The Rotary Club of Potomac-Bethesda”, Maryland USA**

In December 2014 Dr. Milan Maharjan, Chairperson, Ear Care Nepal was invited by The Rotary Club of Kathmandu Mid-town to speak about its programs during one of its breakfast meetings. Ear Care Nepal is a charitable organization which is working in Nepal with an aim of “Prevention of deafness, conservation & promotion of hearing in children of Nepal”. Mr. Ed Edmundson, a member of The Rotary Club of Potomac-Bethesda was also attending same breakfast meeting as a guest. Knowing about the charitable programs conducted by Ear Care Nepal in the field of deafness Mr. Edmundson with help from his club wanted to support Ear Care Nepal's programs on school children. On September 4<sup>th</sup> 2015 The Rotary Club of Potomac-Bethesda through The Rotary club of Kathmandu Mid-town delivered the grant of US\$3700 equivalent to Rs.381947.30 to sponsor middle ear surgeries of underprivileged children of Nepal.

Ear Care Nepal conducted 30 major middle ear surgeries on needy children with hearing disability to restore hearing by 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015, well ahead of its December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. List of 30 children who has undergone ear surgeries sponsored by The Rotary Club of Potomac Bethesda is attached with this. Please refer to attachment no. 1 for details.



Dr. Milan Maharjan conducting middle ear surgery



A child recovering from anesthesia in the post operative ward, community ear assistant providing him support



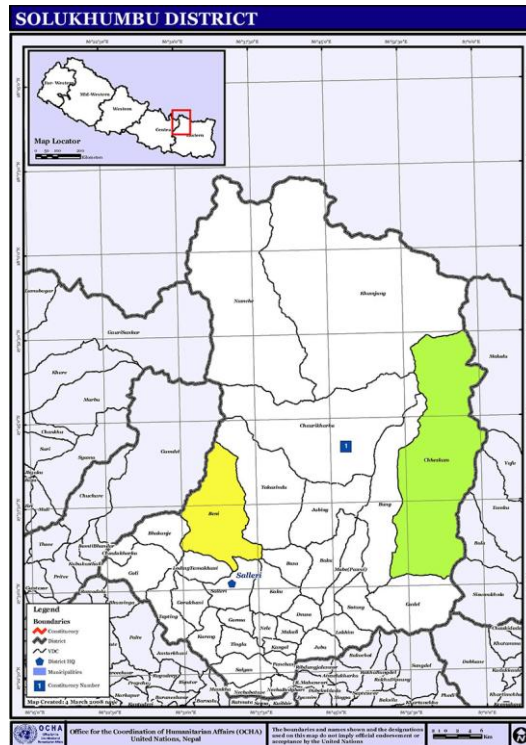
Children in outpatient's department for follow up after ear surgery

Following completion of surgeries of 30 children there was remaining fund of Rs.43,000. After receiving permission from The Rotary Club of Potomac-Bethesda it was planned to cover part of transportation cost of Ear Care Nepal's upcoming ear screening camp at Solukhumbhu district. Ear screening camp plays a vital role in prevention of deafness by directly reaching out to the population through primary ear care education programs and helps to identify much neglected cases of deafness.



Map of Nepal, Solukhumbhu district high-lighted

Solukhumbhu is a remote and mountainous district in Eastern Nepal, Mt. Everest lies in this district. Ear Care Nepal covered 3 schools and 2 Buddhist monastic schools of Junbesi, Beni VDC and Chheskam VDC on its 9 day trip from 5<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> December 2015.



Solukhumbu district, Beni and Chheskam VDC high-lighted, where ear screening camps were conducted

Salleri is the headquarter of Solukhumbu district which is just 250Km from Kathmandu but due to rough road it takes 10-12 hours to cover this distance. From Salleri there is no roadways so all the places has to be reached by foot. Junbesi located at Beni VDC is 6 hours walk from Salleri.



Roadways are rough, can only be reached by heavy-duty 4WD

At Junbesi, ear screening program was conducted at following schools and monasteries:

1. Shree Junbesi Secondary School
2. Shree Himalaya Sherpa Secondary School
3. Serlo Monastery
4. Thupten Choeling Monastery



Temporary classrooms of Shree Junbesi Secondary school (main school block is damaged by recent earthquake)



Community Ear Assistant, Ms.Mana Shrestha conducting ear screening



Free hearing aid distribution to children with neural deafness, which cannot be corrected by surgery





Primary ear education classes were provided to all the children and teachers, in an open air under clear blue sky



Audio-technician, Ms. Ramita Maharjan conducting audiogram



Delivery of primary ear care education to monks/ nuns

Total of 190 school children and 311 monks/ nuns were screened for deafness at Junbesi. Primary ear education was provided to these children, teachers and monks/nuns. Chronic middle ear infection; the main cause of hearing loss is found to be significantly high among these children and monks/nuns. Prevalence of middle ear pathology is found to be 7.68% in school children and 12.36% in monastic children/monks and nuns.

Following Junbesi, Ear Care Nepal screening team headed to Chheskam VDC. Chheskam is the furthestmost VDC from the district headquarter Salleri. It is four days hard walk along very difficult trail. At Chheskam all the children of Shree Chheskam High School were screened for ear diseases, the only high school in the VDC. Due to its remote location the need for health program seemed desperate. Majority of children are from a marginalized ethnic ground called Kulung, which dominates the village population.



Walking trail to Chheskam is rough and almost non-existing



Trails are full of adventure

#### Screening of Shree Chheskam High School

- Total number of children screened: 668
- Total number of children with middle ear problem: 66(9.88%)



Dr. Milan Maharjan screening children





Delivering lecture on primary ear care education to children and teachers at Chheskam



Audio-technician Mr. Ashok Maharjan conducting audiogram

Details of Junbesi and Chheskam ear screening camp:

- Total Children and monks/nuns benefited from our screening camp: 1169
- Total number of children/ monks and nuns with middle ear problem causing various degree of hearing loss: 120
- Total number of children requiring ear surgery to restore their hearing: 15
- Total number of children fitted with hearing aid: 8

All of these children and their teachers were given lectures on primary ear care education via education materials like posters, power point presentations on ear care and free distribution of animated booklets on primary ear care to all of them.

Ear Care Nepal will conduct all the surgery of these children and monks/nuns free of cost and will also provide Rs.5000 per child to cover transportation cost (due to its remote location and relatively high cost of transportation).



Solukhumbhu ear screening camp was of great success, it would help in prevention of deafness and promotion of hearing in many marginalized children. Ear screening camps are equally important (if not more) as surgery since these programs plays vital role in prevention of deafness.



Spectacular Solukhumbhu

Ear Care Nepal is very grateful to The Rotary Club of Potomac-Bethesda for providing a grant of US\$3700 which was used very carefully in both surgical correction of deafness and in preventive care of many underprivileged children of Nepal.