

NEPAL—ENGLAND SCHOOL FRIENDSHIPS

Eco-school environmental awareness exchanges



Make friends with a school in Nepal!

Would you like your pupils to exchange letters with students from a school in Bardia in the west of Nepal?



What would the friendship involve?

You will be given the contact details and information about a school in Bardia, in the west of Nepal. Each school in Nepal has an eco-club where the Nepali pupils learn about all things environmental, especially about people and nature all over the world. Your pupils can exchange letters and gifts with the Nepali pupils. If you want, you can deepen the friendship and sponsor the Nepali pupils - it's up to you and your school what you wish to do with your Nepali school friendship.

How will the friendship benefit our pupils?

Your pupils will gain an invaluable appreciation of a different culture and a wider perspective on the world. As the friendship is with eco-clubs in the Nepali schools, you can link it to a variety of different national curriculum elements - English, Geography, PHSE, citizenship. Beyond the national curriculum, you will be giving your pupils a priceless wider perspective on different people and places.

How will the friendship benefit Nepali pupils?

The Nepali pupils would love to hear from children in England! It will give them a unique and exciting opportunity to connect with people from another country and learn more about the world. If your school decided to provide any extra support to the Nepali schools (such as sponsoring children through school, or buying books for the Nepali schools) it could have a great impact. If your school just chooses to exchange letters, the Nepali children will still be very excited!



What is Nepal like?

Nepal is famous for being a beautiful and mountainous country, and for being the home of Everest, the highest mountain in the world. It is sandwiched between the two rising giants of India to the south and China to the north. All along the north of Nepal are the Himalayas, the tallest mountains in the world. A strip along the south of Nepal bordering with India is flat grasslands and jungle where you can find tigers, elephants, leopards, monkeys, crocodiles and rhinos. This area is called the Terai. Bardia is a region in the west of the Terai where there is an enormous national park (968sq

km) and where approximately 250 000 people live around the edges of the park in small villages.

In Bardia most people are subsistence farmers, meaning they grow just enough food to eat. They grow rice, wheat, maize, and lentils, and keep goats, buffalo and oxen. People live in neatly thatched mud houses in small villages. Half the people in the area speak a language called Tharu, the other half and speak Nepali. Most people are Hindu.

What are schools like in Nepal?

It is only in the past 50 years that Nepal has had a mass schooling system. Nowadays you can find schools all over Nepal and Nepalis are keen to send their children to school, but many people in the older generation never went to school. Even now only 1/3 of teenagers go to school. There is a minimum class size in secondary schools in Bardia of 80 pupils per class - so sometimes there are up to 120 pupils in one small classroom! The government schools charge a small registration fee, and pupils have to buy uniform and school books. Although this is about £8 a year this amount prevents some children from going to school as their family has no income, and the family loses a valuable extra hand on the farm.



What are the eco-clubs in Nepali schools?

Every school in Bardia has an eco-club which is run by the pupils and one teacher and does various environmental activities such as eco-dramas, tree-planting, litter collecting, making nature art and learning about ecological issues and the environment.

In Bardia, the wildlife is incredibly unique but is under threat due to habitat destruction and poaching. Rhino and tigers are endangered. Hope for the future of these animals and the whole ecosystem in which they live lies in the hands of the future generation of Nepalis. The eco-clubs and envi-

ronmental education in Nepal are part of the solution that will help Nepal to develop in a way that conserves its rare and rich natural environment.

Eco-clubs in Nepal are especially interested in hearing about the wildlife in other countries. Perhaps your pupils would be interested to hear about what it is like to live in a country where there are tigers, leopards, elephants and rhinos?

How does the school friendship work? Who is making the school connections?

I am a teacher who is working for the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) in Nepal developing a conservation education program with a Nepali NGO called the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC). Whilst the school friendships will be initiated with the agreement of these two organisations, the idea is that once schools are put in contact it is up to the schools how they wish to progress.



Yes! I'd like our school to make friends with a Nepali school.

Please send your name and school contact details to joanna.carter@zsl.org
You will be sent the name of a teacher and contact details of a school in Bardia, Nepal,
and you can take the friendship from there!