

Nation Building Through Young Journalists

About us:

Jon (21) is the published author of a novel entitled “The Darkside” and also an active community organiser. Jon has organized events like ‘Spread a Smile’ in collaboration with Prisoners Assistance Nepal and ‘Hunger Campaign’ for the malnourished children of rural Nepal. Jon is also working with Food Recovery Network and Bon Appetit to help the Annapolis Light House Shelter.

Sagar (19) is a climate and education activist who, at the age of 10, founded the Sano Sansar Initiative (www.sanosansar.org), a youth-led global initiative working for environmental conservation and sustainable development. The 2009 ‘Little Doctor’s Program’ which was inaugurated by the Hon’ble President of Nepal, and 2013 ‘Kathmandu Debates’ are some of the most successful events Sagar led through Sano Sansar Initiative. Sagar is a former president of Plant for the Planet Billion Tree campaign and a youth advisor of United Nations Environment Programme TUNZA.

Background

In June 2014, we travelled to various parts of Nepal to visit public schools, observe socio-economic and environmental status as well as the youth actions in rural districts. During our visit, we interviewed senior citizens, government officials, teachers and young individuals about their feelings towards the ongoing development process. Despite the decade-long civil war and the sudden shift in political landscape which led to the restoration of democracy, we witnessed the enthusiasm and creative actions of young people to ensure a better community. Yet, despite their positive endeavors, many issues that have direct effect on the community are being overshadowed by the headlines, with their focus on the attainment of country’s political stability.

Youths are the prospect for a country's development. We being from Nepal came up with an idea to foster communication among youth of our nation. We decided that the best way to accomplish this vision was through active youth journalism.

Taking this challenge as an opportunity for youth, we plan to establish a national network of creative young minds. As community organisers, we have been working with researchers, business personnel and scientists on several projects. We plan to invite them to contribute to this network by training, working with, and inspiring these highly motivated young individuals. We believe that this collaboration of creative minds could have a significant impact on all sectors of the country.

When and Where:

The project will be piloted in Nepal, the youngest republic, which is going through a transition period. The country has seen a dramatic shift in its political landscape, its citizens are more hopeful of development than ever, so the timing for this project could not be more perfect. The project will start in June 2015 and will last until August 2015 within the Kathmandu Valley. However, having created a strong network of talented individuals, we plan to hand over the project to the Sano Sansar Initiative, which will continue supporting the project.

Project Plan and Action:

Through the network of schools and youth organizations we've connected with, we plan to invite approximately 75 youth representatives, aged 15-24, from different parts of the country for a three-day long training which includes a day long conference with researchers and business persons. The training event will focus on rhetoric, creative writing and paradigms of sustainable development. In this three-daylong program, participants will emphasize on creative writing and how they can trigger social change through journalism.

The trainers will be comprised of young leaders, professional journalists, and conflict negotiators from whom the participants will learn invaluable life skills. The young leaders will encourage participants by sharing their initiations and the changes that they are aspiring to bring. The Journalists will train our participants on creative and ethical writing. As the country recently went through a decade-long civil war, conflict negotiation training is crucial for the participants. We believe this will help them play a major role in solving social conflicts.

The conference will begin with a world cafe discussion format, comprising groups of seven individuals. The groups will come up with feasible ideas and plans for different regions of the country, to be accomplished through youth journalism. The conference will end with a panel discussion inviting people from different sectors including politics, law-making, and civil society.

After the completion of the event, we will be using our network of young journalists to continue to collect articles and ideas, which will be published on our website and a magazine on a regular basis in partnership with a local media house. In addition to this ongoing process, our first batch of young journalists will educate other individuals back home and grow the idea.

Impacts:

- 75 young individuals will return to their community and effectively implement ideas, gaining traction for their project through our network, which would lead to community development
- The program will also help increase the frequency of development initiatives in rural communities since one community can learn from the initiatives of another through our publications
- The citizens of the nation will be motivated to work for social change after seeing the initiatives that are being taken by young individuals through our website and magazine
- The citizens will be apprised of the ongoing development and its challenges which will result in increased public interest and support for the projects.
- The leaders, law-makers and civil society organizations of Nepal will directly receive the aspirations of the people through our website and magazine which could better help them make plans and policies

Sustainability:

We will continue to support and monitor the development of the project in collaboration with the national youth organization, Sano Sansar Initiative. They will help the program grow through their expertise in this field. Online Communication might not be feasible in rural Nepal, which is why participants will be communicating with us and our members through cell phones and paper mail.