



## FEATURE

## Toiling For a Better Nepal

### These child reporters take peer education to a different level

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FROM ISSUE # 158 (February 2009)

They solve children's issues and fight for child rights. The children at Antenna Foundation are doing what adults should have done a long time ago. Established back in August 2002 with the mind set towards peace building, Antenna Foundation has come a long way. By involving youth in the programs has not only given hope to children across the country but also helped them achieve what they believe in.



30 Children from 17 districts from all over Nepal have come together to collect news regarding child issues from their respective areas. They then record it at their nearest radio stations with the guidance from an adult producer who in no way influence them. "Some say the shows hosted by the children have too serious a content and that it's not children friendly" says Madhu Acharya, Director of Antenna Foundation, adding "but the children actually are enjoying what they are doing and that they are having fun."



Inspired by Golden Kids program in South Africa, Search for Common Ground, an INGO, wanted to create something similar in Nepali context, thus came Sunau Bolau; the show which focuses totally on children and programmed by the children for the children. "We started with a segment in Nepal Chautari, a politically driven program, but the presence wasn't felt and then we decided to start a whole new show on it" explained Madhu. The shows are distributed to 30 radio stations around the country and Radio Nepal but it can also be

heard online at [www.afn.org.np](http://www.afn.org.np)

Nirmala Marasini who's been hosting Sunau Bolau, says that she has learnt a lot after doing shows with Antenna Foundation. "Things I didn't know came my way which at times perplexed me. But I went with the flow and I am definitely more confident now."

Having worked for almost one and a half year, Utsav Rasaili says "I feel that children share their problems and issue better with their friends of similar age rather than with family. We try and make friendly shows so the child listeners can relate to us and share with us the problems they are facing which can be solved."

Sitting down to hear how the shows were recorded in the studio, Ganga Gurung, Program, Research & Distribution Manager at Antenna Foundation, explained that the guest was from Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN), Nepal - a national Child Rights

NGO. That itself was enough to rattle some nerves but the confidence Utsav exuded and started the discussion was awe-inspiring.

Only 16 years of age, he explains his happiness saw no boundaries after he started his broadcasting career at such an early age. "I am proud to be working and whatever sum of money I get from my work, I hand it over to my mom. She's proud of me too but keeps repeating herself that education is more important and that I should know how to balance work and education," says Utsav.



A job of a young journalist was a blessing in more ways than one for Neera Bhattarai, 15, of Surkhet. Neera's family had to flee from Jajarkot because of the Maoist insurgency 6 years back and had settled in Surkhet. She joined Antenna Foundation as a child reporter from her area when she filled out the form provided to her by the school. "I am very thankful that I got to work so early and expand my knowledge. The money I get from it lets me pay for my education. I don't know if I would be studying now if I didn't have this job" says a happy Neera.

Aspiring young journalists of Nepal, all these young minds are set to do something and to create a space for themselves in the field of media. "I'd love to stay with Antenna Foundation after I turn 18 and work as a producer for at least 4 or 5 years," expressed Utsav. Nirmala on the other hand wants to be a journalist. Neera Bhattarai aims to be a journalist too but hasn't made up her mind yet. Giving these children confidence and helping them realise their aim in life is a goal achieved in itself.

Working towards a goal of educating children and toughening them up to face the outer world, Antenna Foundation along with Search for Common Ground has stepped forward and the children seem to be excited about it as they toil for a better Nepal, not knowing they are!

Children looking forward to join Antenna Foundation can drop there CV at the following address.

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