As the break between the 2013-14 and 2014-15 academic year takes place, EWB-Caltech takes no pause from its project and program planning. With invaluable assistance from professional mentors, our partner NGO, financial supporters, and others, we are able to continue on to make our first physical steps in Ilam, Nepal!

Assessment Trip in Summer 2014 – Updates

In preparation for the upcoming Ilam, Nepal assessment trip for the summer, EWB-Caltech recently submitted pre-assessment trip documents to the EWB-USA national review board for technical approval of the assessment trip. These documents were well-received; following a phone conference with an EWB-USA representative discussing final technical details, we got technical approval for an assessment trip to take place during September 4-18, 2014 – in time for the beginning of the next academic year.
Of course, the trip will involve the gathering of geological and topographical data around our spring sites so that we may begin designing our physical systems in detail. However, it is not only the technical aspects that we are focusing on – in fact, communication between EWB-Caltech and the local populations that would use our systems in the future will be just as important, if not more. At the end of the trip, we will be completely confident in our understanding of the communities’ needs and desires regarding water supply, as well as our technical data. We have been continually collaborating with our in-country partner NGO, Namsaling Community Development Centre (NCDC, http://ncdcilam.org.np/), which has almost 30 years of experience in the Ilam region and close to 10 years of working with EWB chapters, to ensure that every detail of the trip, down to the daily schedule, goes smoothly. We have also been communicating with the CU Boulder and Rocky Mountain Professionals EWB chapters, also working in the Ilam area, to coordinate and minimize overlaps in our activities.

Resulting from our efforts thus far, we will be surveying two sites in the Ilam area, in addition to the potential user populations around them: Nali Dhara and Bimal Dhara. We have received some preliminary information about them from EWB-CU Boulder and NCDC.

Thanks to a multitude of supporters including individual donors, Caltech GSC, and Northrop Grumman, we are able to fully fund our assessment trip.

**About Ilam**

Ilam is a district with a population of 280,000; the city of Ilam is 20,000 residents. 25% of the district lives below the international poverty line of $1.25 per day, and the infant mortality rate is 39%. Running water and electricity are in limited availability in the region, which has far-reaching effects. Such a lack of basic municipal services leads to increased effort on the part of residents to gather resources for living, meaning that there is less time available for them to work, learn, and play. Lack of education about safe drinking water habits leads to water-related illnesses, the majority of which affect children.

The programs aim to improve the standard of water quality in the Ilam Municipality. There, we will build simple facilities to allow access to safe water from spring sources. These spots additionally serve as a small community area where people can gather to do various activities involving water such as laundry, depending on the needs of the user population.
Looking forward

We continue to collaborate with both NCDC and EWB-CU Boulder, which has implemented water projects in Ilam in the past. As we gather information during our assessment trip, we will discuss our findings with them to gain greater insight for our future designs and goals for the project.

After the assessment trip, we will analyze our information and create a simple, sustainable, and effective design for a spring water collection, purification, and distribution system for one of the candidate spring source sites. The design will be extensively reviewed through our professional mentorship as well as EWB-USA to ensure quality. Afterwards, it would be constructed as planned at the spring source, and its user population educated on its use and maintenance as well as on general water quality and sanitation.

To ensure that we have continued financial support for our program, we will be hosting fundraising events and applying for grants as the summer and academic year progress. The implementation trip, which we hope to accomplish next summer, will be contingent upon the success of our funding efforts.

How can you help?

As a Caltech student, alumnus, or friend, you may be wondering how you can help! Students can participate in the development of the design, fundraising, sustainability research, and development of educational programs related to the project. Alumni and friends can also help out by investing in our work and advertising it. For a more hands-on role in EWB-Caltech, we welcome volunteers as technical mentors, faculty advisers, and financial supporters.

Donate here!

http://ewbcit.caltech.edu/donate.html