Books for a Better Society

By Carmen Oo ’17

In 2012, Myanmar abolished censorship, and the military eased control over the government. However, villages including Dumbang, a small community located in Kachin State, still continue to thrive without electricity or internet. As a result, books are the only form of education and medium for attaining information for the people.

"Books for a Better Society" is principally targeted for the people of Dumbang. The main focus of the project is to provide books to the public through the establishment of a library in the Dumbang Baptist Church. By doing so, the project aims to instill a habit of reading among the locals, helping to improve the standards of education in the village.

When I first proposed the idea of establishing a library in Dumbang, the people were thrilled and overexcited about it. The village had been planning to build a library since its foundation, about 65 years ago; however, no budget existed to implement the plan. After I received $10,000 grant from the Davis Projects for Peace1, I returned to the village to work on the project. However, it was not as easy as I had expected it to be. I started the project in late July, which was not a good time to be travelling in Myanmar due to severe floods. The railway lines were cut off and two bridges had been knocked down by the flood. Heavy rainfall made transportation a lot harder than usual. The shipment of over 3000 books and electronics, including a TV and computer was delayed for two weeks; this was a setback as it interfered with the timeline of the project.

However, I was determined to make the project successful. The harsh conditions did not deter me from my goal. The place allocated for the library was a small room of about nine and a half square feet inside the compound of Dumbang Baptist Church. This was enough space for a library considering that the village has a population of only 3500 people. The leaders of the Baptist Church and the high school students joined in helping the establishment of the library; from making bookshelves and furniture to decorating the room.

Education is the key for a better future, and for a country like Myanmar, it is the building block for a better society. I hope that the library will contribute to bring peace and awareness of current affairs to the local people and help them make better choices for their society and country. Through this project, I learned that even small contributions from an individual can help in making a difference in a community.

Apart from doing the project, I got a chance to talk to the students from fifth grade to high school. I got to know their dreams, future plans and struggle to reach their goals. I was glad to see honest students full of hopes and dreams for a bright future. The Davis Projects for Peace gave me not only a rewarding experience over the summer, but also a feeling of giving back rather than taking for myself.

1. The grant posthumously honors Kathryn W. Davis, a philanthropist and peace advocate who started the grant program in 2007 in celebration of her 100th birthday.
2. Contact iss@bucknell.edu for more information about how you can apply for a Project for peace grant for 2016.
Nepal will rise again

By Kanishka Suwal ’18 and Diva Shrestha

On April 25, 2015, Nepal was struck with a disastrous 7.8-magnitude earthquake. This was the worst earthquake Nepal had seen in about 80 years. Then, a second earthquake of 7.3 magnitude struck Nepal again on May 12, 2015.

The entire world sprung to action and began raising funds for immediate relief efforts. The Nepali students at Bucknell gathered and held a candle-light vigil on April 28, 2015. Over 170 members of the Bucknell community participated in the vigil, where the Nepalese students shared facts from the earthquake and personal stories about how tense the situation was due to lack of communication back home. Rabbi Serena blessed the crowd and prayed for the families back in Nepal. The final few days of the semester were then spent on discussing possible projects that Bucknell students could do over the next summer break. President Bravman, Prof. Eric Martin, Prof. Meenakshi Ponnuswami, Prof. Coralynn Davis and Jennifer Figueroa were present as faculty for the meetings and have shown constant support for the projects we could do in Nepal.

Recognizing the need to establish a common platform through which to channel these efforts, a non-profit Nepal ko Yuwa (NkY) (literal translation: Youth of Nepal) started a global campaign called Nepal Rising. The campaign is based on an integrated overlapping model geared towards relief, rebuilding, and resilience.

The campaign collaborates locally and globally with NGOs, local leadership and the government of Nepal to implement relief and rebuilding efforts in the hardest hit rural areas. The movement provides a platform for raising funds and sharing knowledge and envisions unity of the Nepali diaspora globally towards the common purpose of building resilient communities in Nepal.

To continue supporting local and grassroots movements, Bucknell joined the efforts of the Nepal Rising campaign and was able to raise upwards of $1600.

The Nepali students at Bucknell are immensely grateful for the generosity of the Bucknell community as well as the larger Lewisburg community. However, there is much that needs to be done. Throughout the year, the Nepali students will be partnering with different student organizations to fundraise for our project to rebuild and rehabilitate Nepal. We are hoping that the generosity of the community continues to foster the development of a project in Nepal which we hope to implement this summer. We invite you to join us and be a part of this movement for relief, rebuilding, and resiliency. Let’s join hands to see Nepal Rising, brighter and stronger!

To learn more about Nepal, visit:

To learn about the campaign:
www.nepalrising.org

some facts about the quake:
- 8800+ lives lost; 22,000+ injured and 2.8 million+ people displaced, 8 million+ people affected (almost ⅓ of the total population)
- million+ children in urgent need of assistance
- 3.5 million+ people in need of food assistance
- 505,000+ houses destroyed and 279,000+ damaged, Many villages completely destroyed without a single house remaining
- At least 950,000 children will not be able to return to school
- Total loss of 6 billion USD, equivalent to 30% of Nepal’s GDP
- Centuries-old world heritage sites leveled to the ground

Source: http://www.sevensummittreks.com/
International Orientation 2015

By Emily Becker ’16, International Orientation Assistant

A symphony of beeps, buzzes, and vibrations filled the bottom floor of the Langone Center as eighteen International Orientation staffers scurried around the sea of furniture carrying boxes, folders, keys, and bedding. The alerts were a message from a fellow staffer informing us that they and nearly 80 of Bucknell’s newest international students were about to arrive on campus after a long journey from the JFK airport. It was about 1am and instead of feeling the usual tiredness brought about by this time, I was hit with a rush of energy fueled by the excitement of finally getting to meet the new students. The twenty-two of our staff had been preparing day and night for the past four days to get everything just right for the arrival of the new students. We played every icebreaker in the books, crafted doordecks, discovered our “true color”, learned how to correctly navigate myBucknell, re-learned how to open our mailboxes, designed a scavenger hunt, conquered the “flying squirrel” at Cowan, and created a U.S and Bucknell stereotypes themed play. I made twenty-one of the most wonderful friends during those four jam-packed days. Finally it was time. We burst out of the LC running down the steps and across the street to the Smith Parking lot. We stood there in the parking lot jumping up and down, yelling, and frantically waving posters. We looked like a group of twelve-year-old girls awaiting the arrival of their favorite boy band. Finally the buses rounded the corner and we began screaming the Bucknell fight song, the roar of the buses engines wasn’t loud enough to drown out our voices. We certainly woke up any students that may have drifted off during their ride through Pennsylvania. As the newest Bucknellians cautiously descended down the steps of the overflowing buses the excitement could be sensed in the crowd. These students were about to embark on such a wonderful adventure and being a part of it was truly incredible. The next week of international orientation was unlike any experience I’ve had at Bucknell. I met such extraordinary friends from all over the world and I could not be more thrilled that they chose Bucknell to call their home away from home.

By Gabriel Robaina, Exchange student

Fourteen people from Brazil, including me, knew that we were coming to study at Bucknell for a year long exchange scholarship program, but only that. Most of us did not know the place and the people, and for some of us, it was the first time speaking English outside of our home country. When we arrived at the airport, everyone was trying to socialize and make friends in this new environment that we would call home for the next year. Everything was so different! We finally arrived on campus around midnight, and experienced something we had never expected. We heard a group of people cheering, dancing and yelling a nice and warm “welcome”. It made us feel like home once again. We just wanted to know every single one of those people who stayed awake until late at night just to say hello to us and some other international students. The next day, the international orientation formally began and we thought it would just be an introduction to the university routine, but it was much more than that. The International Orientation Assistants and Leaders (IOA/L) made us interact with each other, using icebreakers and team related activities, and before anyone knew it, we already had new friends from all around the globe, and learned a lot about each other’s cultures. Each day, there were different, fun activities: from playing soccer to board games and a visit to an amusement park, they did their best to make us enjoy our first week at Bucknell. The orientation’s schedule was tight, but fun. Now that it is over, everyone misses it and wishes that it never had to end.
Cultural Organizations at Bucknell

BASA
By Zoe Russell ’17

Bucknell’s Africa Students Association, or BASA, is an organization dedicated to embracing, experiencing, and spreading awareness of African culture. BASA is a community that both provides a home and familiar connection to students who are here from various countries across the continent, and a place to create new connections for those who are interested in learning more about Africa. That being said—EVERY-ONE IS WELCOME!! BASA strives to create events that are educational, creative, and of course, lots of fun. The first Friday of every month, for instance, we hold our First Friday Discussion, where we choose a topic relevant to the continent, a specific country, or our community here on campus, and host an open campus discussion on the issue. We also have BASA Bash, our annual cultural event in the Fall, when we come together to showcase and celebrate African culture with singing, dancing, acting and more, in an amazing dinner event. These events, in addition to our various ice cream parties, movie nights, community service excursions, and group dinners, are what make BASA an incredible and close-knit community. We meet at 5pm on Friday every week in the IEA Lounge.

LACOS
By Rose Quispe ’18

The Latin@ Alliance for Community and Opportunity for Students (LACOS) is a new club at Bucknell. LACOS concentrates on the 4 caucuses, which include the Caribbean, Iberian Peninsula, North & Central America, and South America. Its mission is to create a community among students of the Latin@ diaspora through cultural programming and social activism. LACOS will host many events throughout the year like event for Hispanic Heritage Month, a Dia De Los Muertos event, a celebration for Feliz Navidad, celebration for El Dia De Los Reyes as well as our greatly anticipated Latin Gala. LACOS will also be hosting its annual Tamale Party, a fun and inclusive event where students from different backgrounds are able to enjoy a traditional dish from various Latin countries and at the same time meet new people. We welcome any student to join LACOS, it is not only limited to those of Latin background. We meet at 1pm on Sunday every week in the IEA Lounge.

SASA
By Abishek Raghavan ’16

The South Asian Student Association (SASA) is an organization aimed at bringing together students from all walks of life and forming a community which focuses on campus outreach and spreading awareness about the South Asian culture in general. We are proud to be the host of the longest-standing student-run event - The Annual SASA Dinner - celebrating its 44th anniversary this fall. This event aims at bringing together students, faculty, staff, and members of the community to celebrate South Asian culture and showcase our group's talents. Our program includes dancing, singing, and general showcasing our culture. Other activities include the members getting together and discussing pertinent events; occasionally we are involved in discussions related to diversity on campus. We also encourage creating strong bonds between members through cricket games, movie nights, cooking dinner and so much more. We meet at 5pm on Thursdays every week in the IEA Lounge.
Meet some members of the Class of 2019!

Name: Deepshikha Parmessur
Hometown: Rose Belle, Mauritius

Major(s): International Relations and Philosophy

Why Bucknell: I never got the opportunity to visit Bucknell before applying and I did not know anyone studying here at that time. However, based on my college research, I did not come across any other college with a strong sense of community and set of values as Bucknell upholds. Moreover, I have a very strong interest in International Relations and a passion for Dance. Bucknell’s balance between sciences and the arts is simply commendable.

Favorite Bucknell experience(s): International Orientation has been by far the most amazing experience that I've had. I remember, when I came on the first day, not having any friends or anyone I could relate to. I told myself that I probably will never be able to fit in here. But I will always be grateful for the IOAs who’ve done a wonderful job from making sure that I got to my room safely to taking care of the tiniest details. Thanks to them, I am able to form really good friendships and fit in the Bucknell community.

Name: Landers Mayer
Hometown: Los Angeles, California

Major(s): Undeclared

Why Bucknell:
Bucknell has a great balance between academic, social, and athletic life along with a really close-knit community where people are open-minded and diverse, which was incredibly important for me when choosing a college.

Favorite Bucknell experience(s):
White-water rafting on my Buckwild (Bucknell Wilderness experience) trip and Color Wars during the New Student Orientation, with my hall mates are two of my favorite experiences at Bucknell so far.

Name: Abdul Mateen Qureshi
Hometown: Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Major: (Possibly) Electrical Engineering

Why Bucknell: Set in the rural Susquehanna Valley, Bucknell exhibits a certain charm that makes it very difficult to not fall for it, but being an international student, I did not have the luxury to behold it in its splendor before I moved in.

So why Bucknell? Bucknell, for me embodies the liberal arts values that I have heard so much about. It checked all the boxes for me: an admirable reputation, a competitive engineering program and a good scholarship to go with it.

Favorite experience: I feared the transition to college life in another country would be tumultuous, but it couldn’t have gone more smoothly. During the few weeks I have been here, I have had several experiences that I will surely reminisce upon in the future, whether it was the trip to Knoebels during International Orientation or the fossil hunting trip. If I had to go for something specific, I would say the first football game of the season against Marist. The atmosphere was terrific, and the game, to which I am new, fascinated me.

Oh and we also won. Ray Bucknell!
Upcoming IEA Events

**Film: Am I**  
Thursday, Oct 1  
Nadia Sasso, '11, dinner and discussion on her documentary film *Am I*,  
Time: 5-7pm  
Location: ELC 45  
RSVP to wr@bucknell.edu

**Global Women Film Series - The Purity Myth**  
Thursday Oct 15th  
Time: 7-9pm  
Location: ELC 45

**Celebrate Difference Photo**  
Thursday, October 8, 11:45am  
Rooke Science Steps: National Coming Out Day  
"Celebrate Difference" photo: get your free T-shirt in the LGBTQ office, 3rd floor ELC

**Global Hot Topics discussion: China Today**  
Hosted by Nancy Wang '16  
Friday October 2  
Time: 12-1pm,  
Location: ELC 63  
Free lunch included

**Lecture: "The mischief of bias in our lives"**  
Wednesday, October 28  
Time: 7:30pm  
Location: Gallery Theater, ELC

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Myrna Perkins (Administrative Assistant)  
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