

# Srongtsen Bhrikuti Boarding High School : how we can help ?

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## Introduction :

Srongtsen Bhrikuti Boarding High School is a Tibetan School based in Katmandu's Tibetan area welcoming Tibetan students from child care center to senior high school.

Having heard of that school students and engineers from the French Engineering School "ENSI de Bourges" had the idea to set up a volunteer program mixing humanitarian mission and travelling.

The aim of that report is to state the needs of that school and how us, students and engineer can help it.

I write that report because in August 2009 I had the chance to participate to a short but nevertheless very enriching mission in that school. As I was a last year student in computer science engineering I had to teach computer science to children from 10 to 15 years old.

I totally immersed myself in the School's everyday life, living in staff hostel with the other teachers, monks and employees.

From that experience I drew what were the school needs and how us student and engineer can work with it. All of this is described in the following report.

## 1. School's presentation

### 1.1. School's seeds

#### **1982: Birth of the school**

The school was first established in a rented house. The number of students at the beginning was barely 100, studying as day scholars with around 12 teaching and non-teaching staff. Three years later, the number of student rose dramatically and a need for a boarding facility became an utmost importance.

#### **1988: Transformation into boarding school**

#### **1989: Launching the project of school building**

In 1989, the present principal Ven. Jampa Phuntsok joined this school as the principal. With the growing number of students every year, the school realized that it was high time the school had its own school building. And these projects the funding were sent out to various help associations and individuals requesting for of the school building. The Swedish Organization for Individual Relief (SOIR IM) offered to fund the school and dormitories building motivated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama's fervent hope and need for imparting education to the younger generation of Tibetans whom he considers to be the "future seeds of Tibet."

#### **1992 – 1994: Removal**

The school then moved to its new building in 1992 and hostel in 1994.



**1999: Office Building:**

The school completed constructing the school office building incurring all the school's expenses by its own.

**2001: Kindergarten building:**

With financial aids from the European Union the school built a separate Kindergarten.



## 1.2. Goals of the school : education and culture preservation

The schools aims to provide quality educational facilities to about 700 poor students whose relatives are enable to pay school fees. Students are splited into classes of 50 to 65 students.

They study the following subjects: English, Nepali, Tibetan, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Geography, History, Civics, Computer, Music & dances and Games & sports.

In the past student had also the opportunity to study French as a French girl came there during several months to teach them the basis. As a consequence some of the students were happy to exchange a few word in French with me.

Others Activities:

As most of the students live in the boarding school the school also proposes them to participate to several activities:

- Games & Sports: The school owns a field where children can play football and a play ground where various sports tournament are organize (basketball, Volleyball, Badminton...)

- Culture: the student can attend to Tibetan dance, music, song classes.

-Literacy: students participate to quiz, elocution, debate, painting events.

### 1.3.Origins of the children

Students of the school are: children recently arrived from Tibet, orphans, children from very poor family, divorced parents or from remote places in Nepal.

Around 400 poor students are sponsored by individuals and associations all over the world so that they can keep on their studies in good conditions.

## 2. School Needs

### 2.1.Building Maintenance

The school is very clean and modern. The classrooms are quite spacious and ventilated. The hostels are very comfortable and provide hot water facilities.

So in my point of view working on the building maintenance is not a priority comparing to other schools I saw in Katmandu.

### 2.2.Education

During my stay in the school I have noticed that Science subject do not interested the students. Most of them hate mathematics and do not care about computer science.

That lack of interest may be due to the lack of teaching material used to draw the attention of the student.

The school is unable to afford consistent practical classes due to expensive equipment.

#### **Science lab:**

I did not visit the science lab but know that the students use it only occasionally. Indeed the equipment required to teach physics, biology and chemistry and to do experiments is very expensive

#### **Library:**

Providing up-to-date and reliable books about every possible subject is an important point to develop children general knowledge and curiosity. But the school do not have the means to purchase it regularly.



### **Computer Science:**

Students from grade five to grade seven receive computer sciences lessons.

The first issue I would like to put forward is the fact that the computer sciences books are obsolete. It does not show what exactly is computer science nowadays and what are the job possibilities offered by that domain. Indeed few students want to work in that field and the ones who want it want to work in hardware. They know the definition of software very well thanks to their book but have no idea of how it runs in practical terms.

Moreover, even if they are doing everything which is in their power to teach computer science and do it very well, the two computer science teachers of the school are not computer scientists.

The second issue concerns practical exercises. Their book supply numerous exercises but the school's labs do not suit.

The school owns two labs with among 40 computers, one for little section and the other one for bigger.

In the first one, among the 20 computers only 10 maybe run well. As a consequence the children are 3 or 4 by computers which makes inefficient their work on educational software (typing...).

They face the same problem the the other lab even if the computers are a little bit more recent. That lab allowed students to connect to the Internet but due to financial issue the Internet connection has been cut more than one year ago.



### **3. How can we help.**

#### **3.1. Sciences**

Apart from the fact that the school needs financial aids to buy science equipment I think that if students or engineers could go there to set up attractive sciences activities.

We could bring them some books about science or pay the school a subscription for scientific review.

#### **3.2. Computer science :Connecting Srongtsen**

The Labs:

The computer science teacher are not able to check whether the computers which are not working can be restored or if they have to be replaced. But in my opinion some of them have to be replaced to propose more recent technologies (one of the lab is currently running with Windows 98).

Another thing the school would like to set up is a shared network. It could allow all the computers of the school to be linked and to exchange documents.

Apart from a private network, it would be great if the school could have an Internet connection. But it is very expensive.

According to the following quotation I received from the school, it has to pay at least 66000 NRS (without taxes) for a year (670€) for a 128 KBPS Bandwidth.

### Monthly Recurrence Charge In Wireless:

S.N	Description	Per Location Charge Payable in NRs.
1.	64 Kbps Bandwidth	3,000/-
2.	128 Kbps Bandwidth	5,500/-
3	256 Kbps Bandwidth	10500/-

During my mission students asked me a lot of questions concerning the Internet, what is a Virus, how msn messenger is working...

That is why I have proposed to the teachers to work with them on the content of the lessons, bringing them accurate and up-to-date example but do not have receive answer yet.

I also think that it is important to talk to the students about the different jobs and fields that computer science can offer.

These kinds of interventions could perfectly be realized by ENSIB's students if it is well prepared (with attractive documents...).

## 4. Sources and Website

School website : <http://www.srongtsen.edu.np> (in English)

Solhimal: <http://www.solhimal.org> (in French)

Summary of my mission: (in French)

<http://www.delhisjungle.com/2009/08/dix-jours-au-coeur-de-la-vie-des-refugies-tibetains-de-katmandou-1/>

<http://www.delhisjungle.com/2009/08/dix-jours-au-coeur-de-la-vie-des-refugies-tibetains-de-katmandou-2/>