

<i>item:</i>	7
<i>report:</i>	CYP05/09

CELEBRATING SUCCESS & CHALLENGING STIGMA: WHO CARES? SCOTLAND TREK TO NEPAL by Bill Alexander

Summary

This report informs Committee of proposals for *Who Cares? Scotland* to enable looked after children and staff to undertake a trek to Nepal in November 2009, and seeks to support two staff and two young people from Highland to participate in this exercise.

1. Background

- 1.1 *Who Cares? Scotland* is a voluntary organisation, working with and for children and young people in care. It provides a range of services, including advocacy, advice, information and support.
- 1.2 Highland has always been an active supporter of *Who Cares?* and has funded a local worker for a number of years.

2. Who Cares? Trek to Nepal

- 2.1 To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the organisation, *Who Cares?* is organising a range of activities around the theme of 'Celebrating Success & Challenging Stigma'. A major component of this is a fundraising trek to the Himalayan mountains of Nepal in November 2009.
- 2.2 This will be a circular trek of the Annapurna region of Nepal, covering the Bhara Ridge which gives views to some of the highest peaks in the world. Foreigners seldom follow this route, and consequently, significant interest is expected in the trek from local indigenous communities.
- 3.3 There will be between 4 and 7 hours walking each day over moderate terrain, starting at first light, and continuing until camp is established around mid-afternoon. Participants will be assisted by local porters, who will carry personal luggage, equipment and food.
- 2.4 *Who Cares?* is working with Community Action Nepal to give young people and some of their workers this opportunity to participate in what could be a life-changing event, including raising funds to improve the health and education of the people of Nepal, and also to support the work of *Who Cares?*.

- 2.5 Community Action Nepal is a mountaineers' charity, founded by Doug Scott to help mountain people to help themselves raise their standard of living and strengthen indigenous, community-based culture. It supports over 40 local projects, including: new school buildings; funding for teachers and school equipment; funding of health centres and health staff; the development of land for agricultural use; and community-based social enterprise initiatives. More detail is available at: www.canepal.org.uk.
- 2.6 *Who Cares? Scotland* is asking every Scottish authority to support at least one looked after young person and a worker to take part in both the trek and the associated fundraising.
- 2.7 All participants are expected to raise the minimum of £1,980 to cover the inclusive cost of the trip and contribute to the work of Community Action Nepal and *Who Cares?*. A non-refundable deposit of £250 needs to be raised by March 2009, and the remaining funds need to be lodged with the organisation 8 weeks prior to departure.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The Joint Committee is asked to support two young people and two staff to participate in this event. It is proposed that this involves:
- Funding half of the required amount for each participant, equivalent to £1,000 each.
 - Supporting a campaign to raise the outstanding amount through the agencies of the Joint Committee and their staff, and from the wider community and public.
 - Enabling the staff involved to take time away from their employment, at the normal terms and conditions of service.
 - Assisting the young people to have time away from their normal activities.
 - Promoting the event as a positive activity by four of Highland's looked after children and staff.

Recommendation

The Joint Committee is asked to support half the costs of this trip, for two young people and two staff, at a cost of £4,000, and also to support the fundraising efforts of the group to raise the outstanding amount.

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