

INLS Global Network Helps NRN in Keeping Nepali Identity Alive in their Communities

-Puru Subedi and Kamala Sarup

There are many membership based non-profit Nepali community organizations in various Nepali Diaspora around the world who are working for the betterment of their own local communities. At this point in time in history, there is only one international organization that has strong global network of Nepalese whose members are currently actively working on various Nepali Diaspora communities to keep Nepali identity alive. The name of this fastest growing organization is International Nepali Literary Society (INLS) whose headquarter is in Washington DC. INLS has been promoting languages, literature, culture and arts of Nepal for 12 years at the international level.

The organization lunches projects in the Washington DC area first, then transitions them to the major cities in the US and further transitions them to major cities in the other countries via its Chapters and representatives. This model has been working quite well because it removes the duplication of effort, promotes standardization, resource sharing and provides many networking opportunities for its member communities on the Network. More and more Non-Resident Nepalis (NRN) communities throughout the world are forming INLS Chapters every day because of the benefit provided by this model. Once the Chapter is formed, it works hand in hand with existing local organizations as focus group reducing their burden and local organizations also became part of this network.

The umbrella organization of North America, Nepalese Americas Council (NAC) is very supporting of this networking and collaborative model and encourages communities in North America to join INLS Global Network. Nepali Embassies on various countries are also supportive of expanding this network. INLS currently has chapters in major cities of United States such as New York, North Carolina, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, Nebraska as well as on other countries such as Japan, Australia, Russia, Portugal, Belgium, UK, HongKong, Canada. The organization has regional representatives where it does not have Chapters. The representatives work to bring awareness in their community and eventually expand this Global Network. INLS continuously organizes poetry festivals, Bhanu Jayanti, Devkota Jayanti, Art Exhibition, Book Exhibition, Cultural Show, and many other collaborative efforts in all those cities and countries. It is in the process of opening School of Languages and Cultures of Nepal in these communities. The School has been running successfully in the Washington DC community for a long time and it has now been transitioned to Denver and Boulder cities of Colorado and Melbourne city of Australia. Because of its global activities, INLS is now one of most dynamic non-profit literary organization dedicated in serving the global Nepalese community by promoting, preserving and creating awareness of languages, literature, arts and culture of Nepal throughout the world.

INLS produces a range of excellent publications, including Poetry Review, which provides a forum for poems from both new and established poets and Poetry News, the Society's newsletter, which has interviews with poets, and writers, articles on listings and news of events, competitions, festivals and the poetry scene in general.

INLS provide numerous events, performances, exhibits, concerts, workshops and special programs for all. We assist other literary and arts groups in their formation and in the promotion of their activities. We hire performers from INLS membership, in addition to outside talent. We work from a strong volunteer base. INLS has taken great strides in creating programs designed to assist writers and publishers in bringing their literary works to a wider, global readership and also to provide them with the infrastructure necessary to reach one another. It is vigorous in that pursuit.

INLS is a collaborative effort involving poets, writers, educators community and volunteers from throughout society who are committed to promotion of the literary work. INLS, is a religious secular, non-political and non-profit organization. We now have a general forum in our web site where visitors and members may post their thoughts, comments, questions, and poetry. It is a great medium to get to know the people of the society. INLS welcomes all poets, writers and friends.

INLS's program also has tremendous potential to create awareness of and interest in the literary work as alternative leisure and professional pursuits. In the future, as our efforts to secure sponsors and funding succeed, we plan to both expand and increase the awards and publishing opportunities. We believe we can make a difference. We want other people to get recognition. INLS celebrates the literary work by offering readings and talks by established and emerging writers; writing workshops; performances music, dance and school-based programs; publications; TV programs and special public programs and events.

INLS, lunched a Worldwide Nepali Education Program to create awareness of Nepali language and culture through out the world. As stated earlier, INLS has been running a School of Languages and Cultures of Nepal in Washington D.C. as part of DC Nepali Education Project (DCNEP). It has developed nine year curriculum and school offered three Nepali language classes and one Nepali folk dance class in Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 semesters. Nineteen students graduated from the School with one year course of study on May, 2003. As stated above, INLS is working on transition this School throughout the communities on its Global Network.

INLS is establishing a Nepali Library in Washington DC. We have started process of ordering books for INLS library in collaboration with Nepal Embassy. INLS plans to institute a statue of Bhanu Bhakta in Washington DC in sponsorship of Indira Foundation, publish Bhanu Bhakta's bio, approach city/county government for naming street on Bhanu Bhakta's name in the near future. INLS was able to encourage Nepalese communities in two additional states namely New York and Colorado to cerebrate Bhanu Jayanti this year.

INLS has established International Nepali Literary Best Book Awards. This Award, worth of NC 85000.00 will be given every two years to author(s) of the winning literary book to encourage and recognize Nepali Literature internationally. This Best Book Award has three different categories, as follows:

1. International Nepali Literary Best Book Award for Outstanding Contribution to Nepali Literature.
2. Late Dr. Dilliram Timsina Memorial Award for Outstanding Contribution to Nepali Literature by a Female
3. Late Dr. Dilliram Timsina Memorial Award for First Published Outstanding Contribution to Nepali Literature by a New Author.

INLS has recently announced the Best Book Awards for the period January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2002. It is currently accepting nomination for the book published between January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2004 to be awarded at the Devkota Jayanti function in 2005.

INLS has also established following two annual Poetry Awards which is held every year at the site of ANA convention:

1. Sharma Mudhvari Poetry Award for Adults
2. Amar Mina Poetry Award for Children

As a 2 year plan, INLS will be collaborating with Timsina Foundation and Aankha Prakashan to publish a book with comprehensive historical writing on the Global Nepali Language and Literary Growth. Timsina Foundation will also be sponsoring an INLS Literary Scholarship.

With the propose of encourage authors to publish their writings online for greater readership, INLS has recently established an Award called □Bodhathoki Online Writer Award□ for a writer who makes outstanding contribution to Nepali Literature by publishing on the Internet.

INLS has been publishing a tri-monthly magazine called Insight since its inception in 1991. We publish only new, original and previously unpublished poems, stories and articles. To promote the NRN Conference in Nepal, it has decided to publish current issue as a Special issue on Non-Resident Nepalis. It is also organizing a community meeting in Washington DC to discuss NRN issues before the conference.

Everyone is welcome to get involved in INLS to keep Nepali identity alive throughout the Diaspora as well as help promote languages and literature of Nepal at the international level. If interested, please e-mail INLS at info@inls.org.
(Authors are current President and Vice President of International Nepali Literary Society (INLS), Washington D.C. respectively)