



# Mitini Nepal Fact Sheet

Dr Jane Stephens, a British GP in London, has been working in Nepal since 1993. She set up the Green Tara Trust in 1999 to provide 'health-related services to some of the most disadvantaged children, women and men in rural areas of Nepal.'

In Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, Dr Stephens discovered Mitini Nepal, another disadvantaged group, of which she writes: 'Homosexuality is, supposedly, illegal in Nepal yet the constitution states that basic freedoms of association, expression, and assembly must be enjoyed by all without discrimination. Sexual violation of people of all alternative sexualities is common and hidden from public view. The main NGO working to support these groups is called the Blue Diamond Society. However, the focus of their work and funding is for men who have sex with men due to the increased HIV risk incurred by penetrative gay intercourse. This increased HIV risk means they can get good NGO funding but only for men who have sex with men.'



Mitini Nepal founders Meera (left) and Laxmi (right)

'The Blue Diamond Society are supportive of lesbians but there is no funding to help them address their own health, education and advocacy needs. As far as I can see there is a huge hole in the development input given to lesbians. For this reason I have recently started to become involved with these groups. Very few gay people can live an openly gay lifestyle. I met four lesbians who had left their villages to come to

live in Kathmandu because their families had disowned them and threatened violence and/or forced marriage. Two of them went to work for a prominent women's NGO supporting sex workers; when it was discovered that they were a couple the head of the organization threw them out onto the street.

'The Blue Diamond Society have helped them find housing and they now run a small grocery store to support themselves. However, they would like help in improving their literacy, English and computing so that more jobs are open to them. Secondly,



Lesbian wedding



Peaceful demonstration

would go a long way in assisting these women, and others like them, to live with more stability, positivity and self-reliance.’

along with others from the Blue Diamond Society, they need support in understanding their rights as employees as well as challenging any discrimination through the courts. It is illegal for people to be discriminated against due to sexuality in the workplace but this is not enforced. T

‘The lesbians I have met feel impotent and do not understand their rights, but they are strong women who have shown they can move away from their families, live together co-operatively and run a small business all off their own back. I feel that a small amount of regular financial support

## Timeline

January, 2009. BODHI began working in 2008 with Dr Jane Stephens in Kathmandu on a skills-training project for the members of Mitini Nepal. They are learning English and computer skills. BODHI has committed A\$3,000/US\$2,000 per year for three years.

December, 2008. BODHI has increased skills training support for Mitini Nepal to A\$3,000/US\$1,900 for a group facilitator’s workshop run in a rural area with one of Green Tara Trust’s sister organisations. This covers training for two people, including travel and accommodation, food, etc. This will help develop counselling and communication skills and benefit their organisation.



November, 2008. Scott Trimmingham in the U.S. and Michelle Engelsman (upper right) in Australia formed a committee to raise funds for Mitini Nepal. We welcome new volunteer Michelle, who is writing an article for gay magazines in the U.K., U.S. and Australia about Mitini Nepal.



## English students 2009



ITEM	Budget for Mitini Nepal Programme			(All costs in GBP)
	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	
English teacher salary (3 hrs a wkx 2 groups x 40 wks a year)	700	700	0	
English teacher salary (3 hrs a wkx 1group x 40 wks a year)	0	0	350	
Computing teacher salary (3hrs a wkx 1 group x 40 wks a year)	0	400	400	
English textbooks	80	80	40	
Stationery	150	180	180	
Travel to classes	100	100	100	
Monitoring/ Evaluation	150	150	150	
Contribution to office rent and bills for classes (GTN)	120	120	120	
<b>TOTAL</b>	1300	1730	1340	
<b>TOTAL FOR 3 YEARS</b>	4370			