



Sustainable Energy Transition in Suburban Kathmandu

Before departure

During my first years at KTH I realised I really wanted to visit another country and at first, I didn't know if I wanted to do a field study or an exchange term. After talking to previous students who had done FS (previously MFS) I really wanted to challenge myself and use my school knowledge and apply it in real life. What me and my friend (who I wrote my thesis with) did at the beginning of the project was to contact many different embassies to see in what countries it would be possible to do a field study in. We did not have any preference on what country we wanted to travel too so we contacted as many as possible. After contacting a lot of embassies and different NGOs we got in contact with an organisation in Nepal. After we got in contact with the we started to investigate what type of project we wanted to do. After reading about Nepal's challenges and putting it together with our programme and knowledge, we decided that the project would be about investigating the energy use in our study area and how it could be improved from different aspect like sustainability and reliability.

Before departure I did not have any big expectation however, I looked forward to visiting a new country and try to see what we could do to help the village. Before departure we needed to take vaccination such as hepatitis B and meningococci and for the visa, we fixed it at the airport and needed to pay 150\$ for a 60-day visa. We did not take any language courses; however, we took a course called intercultural competence to get a better understanding about culture differences and how to communicate in different environments. This course helped me get a broader view on culture differences and I would recommend everyone who does FS to take the course.

Upon arrival

We stayed in Kathmandu for the first two days in Nepal before going to the organisation where we were going to do our project with. These days we tried to fix all the necessary things we needed such as sim-card and learn more about the city. The field study was conducted for 8 weeks where everything was conducted in the village we stayed at.



The view from our accommodation.

Financials

Almost everything is cheaper in Nepal compared to Sweden, where food (not imported) is the cheapest. Activities and more touristy sightseeing could go up to 20-30 \$ but it's still not more than it would cost in Sweden. My tip on how to save money in Nepal would be to compare different products with different shops, and to bargain because they tend to increase the price for tourists.

Accommodation

Because we did our project connected to an organisation where volunteers could come and help, we got offered a place to stay from the organisation. It was a big house where all volunteers lived. We paid 30\$ a day and for that price accommodation and food was included. Me and my thesis partner shared a room with three beds and shared two bathrooms, with shower, with all the other volunteers. For every meal we had, we and the volunteers didn't need to cook, and we ate every meal together. For breakfast and dinner, we ate at the dining table in our house and for lunch at the café, see pictures below.



Breakfast and dinner area.



Lunch area at the café.

Project

The project main investigation was to see if the current energy situation could be improved to be more sustainable, reliable and efficient. The study days looked mostly the same. We studied 10am to 5pm Sunday to Friday. Most of the days consisted of literature study and just finding information. A couple

of days went to interviewing, the field part of the study, with locals and people working at the foundation.



Interview with the founder of the organisation.

Our contact person was the founder of the organisation, and he helped us with general information about the area, Khahare, and with the interviews with the locals by finding a translator because of language barriers. The finished project wasn't done in the country and therefore we have not presented the results locally. However, we have plans on sending the rapport to our contact person when it's done. For now, I don't have any plans to continue with the project, however it would be interesting to see further investigation either locally or by other students.

Country

I wanted to travel to a country that differs from Sweden. In a lot of ways, Nepal did. The grocery stores were smaller, sold different foods and had different stores for different products like one for meat and one for vegetables. As for culture differences, the biggest one was the weekend. Nepal only has one day off and that's Saturday. That means you work 6 days out of 7. However, the working days are shorter which almost made the number of workhours almost the same as in Sweden. Another cultural difference was how people treat other people. The people in Nepal are very nice and friendly and like to talk. Though, not everyone spoke English which made it a language barrier sometimes, especially when we tried to book taxis.

Leisure and social activities

Because Nepal only has one day off from work, Saturdays, we usually planned activities every Saturday. Most of the times we went on trips with the volunteers that stayed at the organisation. For instance, one week we went tracking and another we went to see temples. Because there were a lot of volunteers who came and stayed, we also went to different places spontaneously like to the nearby lake.



Tracking.



Buddha stupa.

In these 8 weeks we were in Kathmandu they celebrated two big holidays, Holi and new year's. The founder of the organisation and his family took and showed us how they celebrate these holidays. For Holi they celebrate it with a lot of colours and they throw and face painted people with different kind of bright colours.



Us celebrating Holi.

During our time in Nepal, we got to learn Nepali culture and meet locals, especially when we did the interview for our project. Moreover, we meet a lot of international people and got to learn about their culture and some of them even taught us how to cook some traditional dishes from their country.

Sustainability

We travelled by flights to Nepal and mostly used taxis when we needed to go to places in Kathmandu. They had some busses we could take but those were limited. In that way it was hard to travel in a sustainable way. Food wise, Nepal has a lot of vegetarian and vegan food, and at our organisation we only ate vegetarian and vegan food. Because Nepal is a big agriculture country, inhabitants can grow a lot of food by them self and therefore a lot of the ingredients were locally grown.



Our lunches and dinners, usually consisting of lentil soup, rice and vegetables.

The project investigates how a semi-urban area could be adjusted to be more reliable, sustainable and efficient. Relevant global sustainable development goals for this project were SDG 3, good health and well-being, SDG 7, affordable and clean energy, SDG 11, sustainable cities and communities. By reducing the reliance on wood and fossil fuel and switching to more electricity in the area would contribute to achieving those goals.