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### UCSF Employee Anxiously Awaits Word on Nepalese Schools he Helped Build

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UCSF Business Analyst Wayne Cheung is anxiously awaiting word from Nepal regarding the status of one of two schools he helped build and other infrastructure projects his non-profit has been working on for the last eight years. The schools and other structures are located in the villages of Nakote and Nurbuling.

"Everything is demolished in the region," he said. "The houses are flattened. I heard that one of the two schools is still standing but several of the children were killed and others have lost their homes." Wayne has been using a variety of communication channels to try and reach his contacts in four villages and three different regions of the country. "I've been using social media, instant messaging, phone calls, Skype, very little is working," he said.



Wayne learned of the opportunity to help the Nepalese people when a friend told him that the only school, located in a remote village of the Himalayan foothills, had been destroyed in a landslide. Children from surrounding villages had to hike several hours each way just to attend classes in Nakote (Nakote students are photographed left), all the while, arriving to learn in outdoor makeshift tents that posed considerable safety hazards. Inspired by what Wayne witnessed as tremendous student and community tenacity for education, despite the lack of proper infrastructure and resources, Wayne started recruiting volunteers and fundraising in the San Francisco Bay Area, New York, Japan, Hong Kong, China, and Nepal. These efforts resulted in the formation of Nepal Education Initiative Organization (NEIO).

Wayne said the Nurbuling school is still standing but an office and kitchen that were built prior to NEIO have been damaged. He hasn't heard if the first school NEIO built in Nakote is still standing.

For more information or to donate to NEIO, visit the group's website at <http://www.neio.org> or follow NEIO on [Facebook](#).

"Changes begin with education," Wayne said. "NEIO aims to provide a sustainable educational environment for the children living in the regions of Nepal's Himalayan Valleys, thereby empowering them for a better future and enabling them to break the cycle of poverty." NEIO's school construction 'model' involved teaming efforts among expert volunteer engineers, Wayne's persistence on quality and safety standards, and very committed local community leaders and families. The local community provided the land for the school along with cash contributions and labor during construction. "The NEIO team verified the structural integrity of the building. It was designed to withstand most earthquakes and it sounds like it did what it was supposed to. We also made sure it could withstand the monsoon rains," Wayne said. "Our goal was also to build the schools with zero administrative costs so that all donated funds were used directly on construction

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needs.”

In addition to building schools in the villages of Nakote and Nurbuling, NEIO also built two libraries, two sanitation facilities, including water tanks, sinks, showers and eco-friendly toilets. Wayne is awaiting word on whether these projects have been damaged. The eco-friendly toilets, the first of their kind in Nurbuling and the region, involve conversion of human waste and buffalo dung to create bio-gas for the school's kitchen. Similar to the teaming demonstrated between volunteers and the local communities in constructing the schools, NEIO's approach is to take a 'wholistic' view towards improving all the different aspects that contribute to the delivery of quality education. Accordingly, NEIO has also trained and hired teachers in English and science, and created a digital technology program. Other than serving the Nurbuling school, NEIO also provided 'Early Childhood Development' materials and medical supplies to a school in Singhadevi, located in northern central Nepal and Khanigau, located in eastern Nepal. Currently, NEIO is in the process of formalizing a volunteer program and sponsorship for female students.

From 2008 to 2011, Wayne lived in Nepal for four to eight months a year and stayed in Asia for five years overseeing NEIO. In September of 2013, Wayne led a team of volunteers to the first school NEIO built in Nakote village. "It was really amazing to see the progress that had been made and the impact it had on the lives of the children."

Now Wayne waits to hear whether the school he helped build at Nakote and the various infrastructure projects are still standing.

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