

as management input, policy guidance, and assistance in their relations with donors.

Attitudes toward you

Generally, your NGO partners will have a positive attitude toward you. You can enhance their appreciation and acceptance of you by making them feel that you are one of them. For example, you should accept their hospitality; eat *dal bhaat* (a typical Nepalese dish, generally eaten twice a day) with them; live the way they do in the field, and so on, especially if you are assigned to an NGO at the district or grassroots level.

They will be keen to learn from you, regard you as an expert, and give you the respect they would accord a person of high status in their society. Typical of a society that is more collectivist than individualist, they will expect that you become part of their family. (This expectation is valid for all types of NGOs.)

Suggested approach

Invest time in building relationships. Once the NGO professionals feel that they can trust you and that you are one of them, life will become easier for you. At the outset, clarify your role because they may have unrealistic expectations of you.

If you are planning on spending time in the field, ask your Nepalese

partners about the do's and don'ts of behaviour in the field. As Nepal is a multi-ethnic, culturally heterogeneous society, what is acceptable in one area may be a *faux pas* in another. Learn the local language; without it you will be constantly frustrated.

Be patient with your Nepalese colleagues. Management professionalism is often lacking in NGOs. Senior staff often need management training and orientation.

If you are patient with your Nepalese colleagues, they will respect you. If they ask you personal questions or drop by unexpectedly, be tolerant and don't get angry. If their behaviour persists, explain politely that Canadians value privacy and ask that they not inconvenience you.

Don't criticize your Nepalese colleagues openly because it would cause them to lose face. If you must give critical feedback, do it on a one-to-one basis. Encourage workers to meet with you informally to talk about office or project politics. Although they may be hesitant to express their true opinions during working hours, they will be frank during informal meetings and casual discussions over a cup of coffee or a glass of beer.

Often, when volunteers or advisors from abroad are assigned to work with NGOs, they quickly assume the role of