



Sharmila and Sashma Syangtan are both ANM students, a year apart at Makwanpur Technical Institute. They are not sisters, but share the same family name which designates their ethnic group. Their community was celebrating Tamang Losar (Tamang is a hill ethnic group, many of whom have immigrated to the Terai over the last few generations, and Losar is New Year), so we were given *khatas* (ceremonial scarves) and fed special foods. With the invaluable help of Gokarna Subedi, who

is the local person who identifies promising scholarship candidates and facilitates everything from getting funds to the girls to helping them find jobs, the Manakamana Fund has been able to assist a number of young women from Sarlahi district.



Gita Mangranti is an ANM student at Makwanpur Technical Institute, where most of the scholarship recipients from this area have done their degrees. It's a modest building on the outskirts of Hetauda, a large town on the main road from India. The campus chief and one teacher showed us around the facilities, which included a well-stocked lab and a library where students can borrow textbooks rather than buying them. The institute is 13 years old and had 65 qualified applicants for

40 places in the ANM class this year. The pass rate for the comprehensive nationwide ANM exam is 90%, and they told us that almost all of their graduates find jobs. There were no students at the campus because they were all away doing their on-the-job training or studying for upcoming final exams.

We visited Gita at her room in Hetauda, where she was preparing to take exams in 12 days. Then she will do her OJT at Birgunj Hospital, which is the busiest hospital in the region. Her tiny room was immaculately organized: a bed, a table with books and a battery-powered lamp (the power was out 14 hours/day in Nepal), a kitchen area with a small stove and a few dishes and pots and pans, and a set of shelves—one used as a Hindu shrine, one for books, one for clothes, and one for food supplies. She's confident she will pass her exams and looks forward to working in the hospital for 3 months.

NEWS FLASH: Gita was the "topper" (highest marks) of her class at Makwanpur Technical Institute on the national ANM exam!



Sita Damai, one of this year's batch of ANM students, was staying and working for 15 days at Bhimpheidi Hospital as part of her ANM training. It's the second oldest hospital in Nepal, in a 101-year old building, and Sita and her fellow students live crammed into a few small rooms and cook their food outdoors. But they are getting good experience, assisting in childbirth deliveries and

vaccinations, and learning how a hospital works. In Sarlahi, we visited Sita's home, where her mother lives alone now that Sita, her youngest child, is away at school. She cried because she misses her daughter, but cheered up a bit at the idea that one day soon Sita would be able to be at home and have a good job to help support her mother.



Chameli Singar is from a remote village in Lalitpur district. Her family owns a tiny plot of land which provides enough food for only 3 months per year. Her father works carrying loads. Chameli managed to attend school, and got a first division result on the SLC exam, but there was no money for her to

continue her education, so she came to Kathmandu and found a job as a dishwasher in a cafeteria. By chance she met Geeta, who encouraged her to apply for a scholarship. Now she is studying for her ANM degree at Lalitpur Polytechnical Institute, and doing community fieldwork as part of her course.