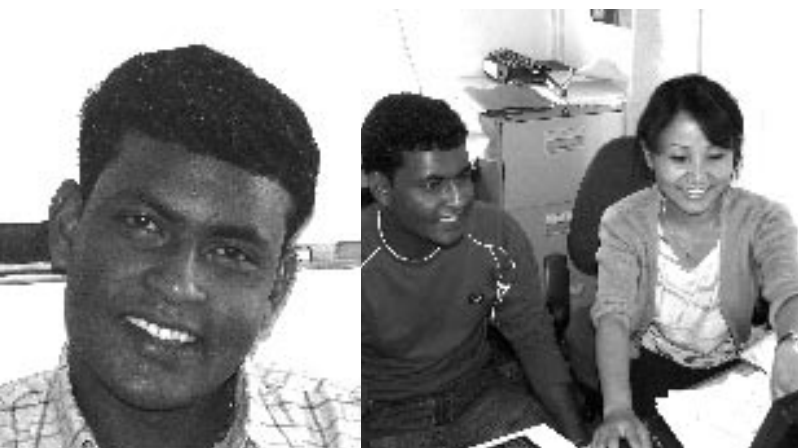


Nayan Singh Nepali's Story

Nayan Singh Nepali is the oldest child living at the ISIS Children's Homes in Kathmandu. He loves singing Nepali folk songs. He has a dream to one day become a teacher and to go back to Humla and teach mathematics there.



My name is Nayan which means eye in Nepali language. I spent my childhood in darkness and misery. It is ISIS who brought a vision into my dark "Nayans".
Nayan Singh Nepali



At the end of 2006, Nayan Singh was working towards his School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination. This is the first external exam kids sit in Nepal – after SLC, they complete two further years of schooling (usually in a different school to their secondary college). He will be the first ISIS student to sit the Nepali SLC exam, in April 2007.

Some eighteen years ago Nayan Singh was born into a Dalit family in one of villages of Humla. The term 'Dalit' refers to the lowest caste in Nepal, similar to the 'Untouchable' caste in India. Dalits are treated as second class citizens in Nepal. Having no villages of their own, they usually live in small communities on the outskirts of villages, providing services and labour to those of higher castes. Dalits are discriminated against in virtually every sphere of life in Nepal, including marriage, religious practice, access to land and access to education. Nayan Singh is among the very few in the Dalit community in Humla who have had an opportunity to go school in Kathmandu. He grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

Nayan moved to Kathmandu at the age of twelve, when the civil war became fierce in Humla. He was brought to Humla by DB Phadera, one of the traffickers who ISIS fought for several years to try to stop him bringing children out of the mountains. Since then – six years ago – Nayan Singh has not seen his parents or siblings. He remembers having one younger brother and three younger sisters back at home in Humla.

During his 5 years in the trafficker's 'orphanage' in Kathmandu he experienced some of the worst times of his life. He was sometimes sent begging for food and money, and had to spend days without proper meals. There were often no adults in the orphanage to look after the children, and for a year he was not sent to school.

As the result of poor diet, lack of proper drinking water, and lack of personal hygiene, Nayan became seriously ill in 2005. With no adults in the orphanage to help him he lost consciousness. The other kids in the home surrounded him – they were panicked and didn't know what to do, fearing that their friend was going to die. However one of the older children contacted ISIS, and we raced out to the home to find Nayan Singh icy cold. He was hospitalised for a week where he was treated for cholera and dysentery.

In August last year, Nayan Singh moved from the trafficker's orphanage over to the newly established ISIS homes. The other kids call him "Nayan Dhai" which means 'elder brother', and they treat him with respect, as one of the more mature and responsible kids. He's taken some younger kids under his wing, to help them in the transition from the chaos of the undisciplined homes to their more calm and organised lives in the ISIS Homes. He feels that the world is beautiful and full of opportunities. He says 'right now is the best time of my life'.