

“Only in Nepal!”

This expression is often muttered by expats as they cope with the differences of life here compared to in their ‘home’ countries. Giving way to elephants on congested roads is one example of how life in Nepal can be very different to what you might expect. Below are some examples of scenarios that happen as part of a ‘normal’ day in Nepal...what would you do?

SCENARIO 1

A ‘holy man’ [Hindu priest] arrives at your doorstep [at six o’clock in the morning] asking for money.

Do you:

1. Give him what he asks for?
2. Give him nothing?
3. Give him something else [e.g. fruit, rice]?
4. Other [specify]

SCENARIO 2

You join a local church and are enthusiastically welcomed. The members of the congregation are generally poor [though not compared to rural Nepal] and several show great interest in you. After 2-3 weeks, one of the members comes to your home: ‘My mother is in hospital. I cannot afford the hospital fee or the medicines. Can you lend me Rs. 15,000 [US\$150, more than a month’s salary for a poor person] now?’

Do you:

1. Give the money as a gift because you can afford to?
2. Give the money as an interest-free loan with a pay-back timetable?
3. Refuse to give anything?
4. Agree to pay the actual costs once the receipts have been presented?
5. Stall for time [difficult in this case] and try to consult the church leaders for their advice?
6. Other [specify]

SCENARIO 3

As you walk to the ‘Compound’ you pass a man who is scruffy and dirty in appearance. He is lying face down in the road.

Do you:

1. Walk by thinking: ‘The local people will deal with him - they don’t need me’?
2. Go to a neighbour or local shop and inform them of the situation?
3. Stop and assess whether the man’s life is in danger. If it is, take him to hospital. If not, just leave him?
4. Stop and try and wake up the man. Even if his life is not in danger, help him by e.g. getting him some tea and trying to get him back home?
5. Other [specify]

SCENARIO 4

You go to the immigration office to have your visa renewed and have all the paperwork in order but the officer in charge says you need to produce further documents [documents that you know are not required by law and that you do not have] or your visa will not be re-issued.

Do you:

1. Work out a way to get a copy of the suggested documents even though you know they are not needed and will not provide any further information?
2. Approach the personnel manager of your organisation to take over negotiations on your behalf?
3. Offer the minister a bribe and get your visa issued immediately.
4. Other [specify]

SCENARIO 5

You are in a restaurant that is serving local food and, combining your Nepali with the waiters English manage to place an order and double check they have recorded it correctly. After 1 hour of waiting your food arrives and the order is incorrect.

Do you:

1. Ask for the order to be corrected and wait another hour for the right order to come?
2. Eat what you have been given but refuse to pay for the incorrect dishes?
3. Eat what you have been given and pay the bill for all the food served?
4. Other [specify]

SCENARIO 6

You negotiate for a taxi driver to take you into the city and describe the route you want them to take you. After agreeing on a price of 300 rupees, the driver begins and then tells you they are going to do a different route because it is quicker. There is a traffic jam on the route and the driver takes many back street detours to go around the jam. Upon arriving at your destination the taxi driver demands 400 rupees because the route took longer than they expected and insists that because of the rising cost of fuel it is difficult to feed his family and he will be penalised by his boss if you do not pay the extra money.

Do you:

1. Pay the extra money the taxi driver is asking for?
2. Pay the agree amount explaining that he chose the route and you still believed it was a fair fare for the distance travelled?
3. Pay the extra amount as well as tip and wish him and his family well?
4. Other [specify]