

Bhutanese Refugees in the United States Video

Full Script

<i>Time</i>	<i>Speaker; time in U.S.</i>	<i>Script</i>
00:28-01:08	Suk and Dilu Rai 14 months in the U.S.	When we all landed here, we found greenery within the city. The cities had rivers, streams, space for kids to play and beautiful scenery. We had this misconception that America was just a vast land with big tall buildings and we would get lost. However, we've seen beautiful greenery everywhere, just as in Nepal and they have hills like those in Bhutan. America is indeed very beautiful and I'm happy to be here.
01:17-01:46	Kumar and Dhan Maya Adhikari 2 years in the U.S.	In the refugee camp where we were, our living standards were really low. Because of this, we didn't think we could adapt to the environment here. America is a rich country with educated people, and if you compare them with ourselves, we're really behind in technology. I was scared because I didn't have any skills. Now, I've been living here for a year and I've started to adapt to the system. We can do the same jobs as people here. We don't have the high-level jobs we had back home – we have to do entry-level jobs here. There's no discrimination here, which has helped us survive.
01:54-02:24	Biba Rai 14 months in the U.S.	At first I was very worried, wondering if birds have even been to that place. I was nervous thinking of that place. I was tense. My kids came here and my three daughters came here, too, and more people are coming. So now, we're not going to live over there – we're going to live over here. I tell everyone back home not to worry; they are people here just like the people over there.
02:33-02:49	Durga Bahadur	My heart does hurt because I don't understand anything. I do feel lonely. No, I don't feel anything, but I can't go anywhere. I

	Adhikari 2 years in the U.S.	can't do anything.
02:52-03:21	Dhan Maya Adhikari 2 years in the U.S.	<p>We tolerated a very difficult life back there in the camps. Everyone left for America. Since everyone left, we thought that life would be better in America. We thought it would be better – not just for us, but for our kids, too. Everything has been okay so far.</p> <p>It's good. My daughter has been going to school. She speaks English well. When I tell her to have some breakfast, she tells us that she'll have it at school. She prefers to have it in school.</p>
03:29-04:00	Rajina Adhikari 2 years in the U.S.	I go to Indian Creek – Indian Creek elementary school. My teacher is Ms. Worschell. I'm in the second grade. Sometimes I eat hamburger, orange juice and chips. I go to school at 7 am and return at 2 pm.
04:00-04:31	Krishna Adhikari 2 years in the U.S.	<p>Even if you speak English in Nepal, they have a different way of speaking English here. You speak English in a certain way there and you have to speak it by twisting your tongue. Here, when you speak English with your friends, you have to laugh a lot with them. You can't be stubborn or repetitive. They will understand you the first time around.</p> <p>If you miss school repeatedly, you won't be allowed to go to school for 10 to 12 days.</p>
04:39-05:05	Krishna Adhikari 2 years in the U.S.	<p>Compared to schools in Nepal, schools here are different in every aspect. There, if you don't do your homework, the teacher can hit you or make you do other things. Here, if you don't do your homework, your grades will go down.</p> <p>Here, you can do a lot of different things as long as you follow the rules of the school.</p>
05:07-06:07	Laxmin and Don Maya Gurung	Our kids are doing well here in America. Our eldest daughter is in ninth grade. The middle one is in eighth grade and the youngest one is in second grade. The kids are studying well.

	9 months in the U.S.	I'm going to school, too. I get back from school and the kids return home at the same time. When I first got here, I felt lonely. I didn't understand the language and I felt awkward. Now, I'm taking English classes. We've been here for 8 to 9 months. I might not be able to converse but I can understand what the teachers are talking about. I'm starting to understand the language. I've made a few friends, so I'm enjoying myself now.
06:22-06:47	Geeta Subedi 2 years in the U.S.	In the beginning, we didn't know our neighbors, so it was difficult. Here, you don't know who lives around you. Back home in Nepal, we knew our neighbors; we visited one another and helped each other. Once we entered our house here, we just stayed inside and that was difficult – but now it's getting better.
06:50-07:12	Homa Subedi 2 years in the U.S.	At first, we didn't have a car, we didn't know our neighbors and we didn't have any friends. So, it was difficult to go to the market. Now, we have a car, we know our neighbors, and we're used to going to work. We've made some friends and we're used to our lifestyle here.
07:13-08:45	Dilu Rai 14 months in the U.S.	<p>It's true that I was worried when I first got here. I was worried about finding work and supporting myself. I was more worried about my other Bhutanese brothers and sisters who don't have an education. How would they support themselves?</p> <p>I found that you don't necessarily need to speak English as long as you take pride in your work and work very hard. If you prove yourself to them, then you will find that many people like you. People are very kind to the Bhutanese here and we take pride in that.</p> <p>I work in security. Altogether, we have 15 officers in our company. The company owns a lot of properties. The security personnel go to the various properties. As you can see, there are video [surveillance] screens to secure the properties. I report whatever I see on the screen to an officer. If I see anyone loitering around, then an officer gets dispatched to ask them to</p>

		leave, according to the rules.
08:53-09:15	Homa Subedi 2 years in the U.S.	If you're able to speak English, you will find work sooner. If you don't speak English, it will take longer. So, it would be good to learn the language before you come. You can also take language classes once you arrive. Take initiative in your language and study hard.
09:32-10:24	Laxmin Gurung 9 months in the U.S.	Now, I work at the refugee center – I'm on the storage staff. I arrange goods for storage at the refugee center. When new refugees arrive, I distribute goods to them. In America, work is relatively easy; you don't have to carry heavy loads and heavy stumps the way you do in Nepal. It's not hard on your body. You don't have to carry heavy loads. It's not hard on your body. It's mostly technical work done using machines. However, it's most important to manage your time.
10:27-10:48	Homa Subedi 2 years in the U.S.	The work in America is very different in nature from [the work in] Nepal and Bhutan. You have to be on time, to work on time. You also have to work fast. You might get tired from hard work. But, if you work hard, you will be compensated well for what you do.
10:58-11:22	Homa Subedi 2 years in the U.S.	It doesn't matter if you are highly educated or not – whatever you do, first, you have to get a job. Later on, you can switch to a better job. I was working at a restaurant job for three months before I got a better job at a hospital, where I'm working now.
11:25-11:56	Suk Rai 14 months in the U.S.	I used to teach at the camp. I had a "grade A" kind of job. There used to be a lot of people working under me; now, I work under other people. You can't expect to have the same high position that you had back in Nepal. There's a system here and you have to follow this system. I was saddened by the fact that I had to start at an entry-level job. The education I had was not of any value here. Other than that,

		things are fine here.
12:03-12:26	Homa Subedi 2 years in the U.S.	When you come here, you can't think that just because you had a certain job there, you're going to have the same type of job here. You have to have a positive attitude towards work. In the beginning, you have to be able to take any kind of work. As the saying goes, "Slowly I will move forward and learn the skills – and in my work and my attitude, I will progress." This is the type of thinking to have when you come.
12:31-12:59	Durga Bahadur Adhikari 2 years in the U.S.	Everything that comes to mind is good. It's just the language. I have a hard time understanding the language. I can't talk to anybody. I can't ask for directions, because I can't speak the language. I have a hard time finding other Nepalese.
13:05-14:00	Dilli Ram Khapangay 1 year 9 months in the U.S.	<p>I had 33 difficulties in Nepal – water, food and so on. Here I've found only three difficulties. The rest of them are gone. One difficulty is that not all my family was able to come here. My kids and my grandchildren weren't able to come.</p> <p>The things I studied back home are not useful here because of the language. I'm free to move around here and there's been no objection to me practicing my religion.</p> <p>No-one forces me to eat things that I don't want. I'm a vegetarian, I don't drink or use tobacco. Nobody tells me what to eat. I'm 64 and hopefully I can live a good life.</p>