



HIA NEWS 2019

1) EDUCATION

GANGCHEN SAMLING SCHOOL

The number of students enrolled in the school has increased once again for the academic year 2019-20. The number of students is now just over 600, but the new school building, inaugurated last year, that created space for new classrooms and facilities is able to take up to 700 students. Most of the children studying in this school are from very poor families living in the outskirts of Kathmandu, and are only able to attend school thanks to our sponsorship programme.

This year 16 sponsored students from the school sat the Secondary Education Exam (SEE), all receiving A or B grades! We couldn't be happier with these results. All these students will now go on to further education. The high standard of education in the school, shown by the SEE exam results, is one reason why many poor families from the local area are requesting admission for their children.

Solar panels

The installation of solar panels on the roof of the school has completed the expansion project in the best possible way by supplying ecological power through the use of solar energy. Kathmandu is becoming increasingly polluted



due to the continuous increase of the population coming from the countryside, and the lack of environmental strategies. The installation of the solar panels also makes it possible to reduce the costs of running the school and guarantees a continuous supply of clean energy. In recent years the supply of electricity in Nepal has been sporadic, sometimes available for only a few hours a day, and expensive in relation to the standard of living of the population.

To carry out this work, which is fundamental for the functioning and safety of the school, we used a part of the amount received from the 5x1000 programme in 2018. (*Italian tax payers can allocate 5x1000 of their Income Tax to support non-profit organisations*).

Music and dance

The dance and music courses at the school were increased after the 2015 earthquake because of their great therapeutic effects: the aftershocks that followed for many months, profoundly affected the psychological state of everyone, but in particular of the youngest children.

For the academic year 2019/20 music and dance classes are available for any child, of whatever age, wishing to participate. There are two distinct music classes, one for the traditional marching band and the other a more modern class for those wishing to play guitar, keyboards and drums. The marching band plays every morning at the close of the school assembly. Classes take place before the school day begins and the children are really enthusiastic and put a lot of effort into preparing performances. It is wonderful to see the pure enjoyment they get from these moments of fun and creativity. The highlight of the year for the children participating in the classes is the yearly performance - attended by Lama Gangchen Rinpoche and many western friends - that coincides with Losar (the lunar new year).



Volunteer work

This year a number of sponsored children - in order to give something back to their local community and in acknowledgement of their own good fortune - have been volunteering. They are participating in a programme to 'clean-up' the immediate area where the school is located as well as in a local monastery, home to a number of young monks, and an orphanage for disabled children.

LONG DISTANCE ADOPTIONS

For the academic year 2019-2020, the Association is giving financial help to support the education of school children studying in Nepal. Most of these children are from the families of factory workers, weavers, beggars, cleaners or from the ever increasing numbers of labourers working long back-breaking hours on building sites or road construction. After paying room rent and buying food, often these families have no money left over to pay school fees. Without help these children, who are already in desperate need, would be excluded from school. To attend school and have a chance of a better future these children rely upon the generosity of others.

School reports, letters and photos have been regularly collected and sent to sponsors.

The long distance adoptions project has also supported young monks in Nepal and India, a number of elderly persons and disabled children. Thanks to the kindness of their sponsors 69 students are presently studying in Further Education.



STATIONARY DISTRIBUTION

One of the happiest and most highly anticipated events for Help in Action is the stationary distribution programme. Every year we travel to a number of village schools to give stationary to school children. The only source of income in these villages is from farming - this means most families are not able to generate any income which means stationary for school is out of the question. The gift of stationary encourages families to send their children to school and offers children the advantage

of having all the materials needed to make the most of their education. Once again we gave exercise books, pens, pencils, ink, erasures, sharpeners, coloured pencils, book covers and geometry sets for the older children.

This year we gifted stationary to children from Mahendra Rastrya Adharbhoot School, Shree Saradha Mahi School and Ghan Jyoti Adharbhat School in Shankharapur District. We were also able to send stationary to the students in Tatopani Village In Rasuwa District. As we were unable to reach the Shree Saradha Mahi School by car, due to the conditions of the road, the students and their teachers - not wanting to miss out on the opportunity to receive stationary - walked for 2 hours under the hot sun to meet us! Truly inspiring!!!

Once again benefitting from our Stationary Distribution programme were the children living in the Jorpati Orphanage, the children living in the small group home of Hope Foundation and the young monks of Sed Gyued Monastery.

Office stationary supplies and board games were also supplied to each structure.



SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP

We are very happy to finance once again the annual running costs of the Shree Jana Bhuwana Primary School in Shikharpur Village for the academic year 2019-20. This community school needs funds for paying teachers, general running costs, books, stationary and so on, in order to guarantee the education of 70 pupils from local villages.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Entering the skilled work-force in Nepal is becoming increasingly difficult as employers are now requiring a higher level of education from applicants. Once the School Leaving Certificate (class 10) was seen as the 'great door' that would

open lots of opportunities to the world of work, now it is expected that applicants have completed college (class 12). But reaching this level of education entails ever-increasing costs that are impossible for the poorest families: one of our greatest joys is to see young people who - thanks to their sponsors - we have followed from when they were young children to obtain a 12th grade diploma or even a degree!

This academic year 2019-20 we are supporting 69 students who are studying in further education. Subjects such as hotel management, business studies, accounting, teaching and social work are all very popular.



This year Kabita, from Jorpati Orphanage and an ex-pupil of Gangchen School, who studied thanks to the help of our sponsorship programme, was absolutely overjoyed to share with us the news that she is now a qualified registered nurse. As well as working in a local hospital, Kabita is also now taking on more responsibility within the orphanage where she grew up and we really couldn't be prouder!

Bijay is currently in the last year of his degree course. As well as studying, Bijay is also working as a teacher in a local school - it was very inspiring to hear him talk about how much he enjoys teaching and how he is now able to help his mother by providing a regular income to help pay the school fees of his younger brother.

2) WATER PROJECT 2019-20

The purpose of the project is the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) n. 6 "Ensuring water and sanitary conditions for everyone in view of a sustainable world" through the implementation of a collection, accumulation and revitalisation system of water resources from a source to the village of Chapakhori in the Bagmati region, south-east of Kathmandu. Currently the population of the village lives without immediate availability of water resources necessary for human consumption (drinking water, supply for schools, etc.), sanitary, hygiene and animal needs. The supply of water in the area suffered a further impoverishment due to the earthquake of 2015. Currently 400 families live in the village (about 2000 people); the houses have no direct water connections and the supply points in the village are dry. Every day, sometimes several times a day, people have to walk a long way downstream, along a steep valley incision, to be able to reach water.

After site inspections in 2018 by Italian engineer Matteo Greggio, geologist Claudio Galli and EMES, a local drilling company, the first phase of the water project was finally started at the end of April 2019. This was also made possible thanks to the support of the 8x1000 programme of UBI (the Italian Buddhist Union) who partly funded the project and other donors.

After manually transporting the necessary drilling equipment to the site (not accessible by road), the engineers were ready to begin drilling. Under the supervision of our representatives 5 sub-horizontal boreholes were drilled into

the sloping foothills of Timaldada village and perforated pipes were installed to collect water and channel it out. A total of 89 metres were drilled and water was found from the 4th borehole. To make sure not a drop of this precious water was lost, two 500 litre tanks were installed to collect the water.

The water, collected from the borehole, was analysed by a laboratory in Kathmandu - Nepal Environmental & Scientific Services © Ltd - with the outcome "All observed values complied the prescribed NDWQS for drinking water". The NDWQS is the National Drinking Water Quality Standard.

The second phase of the project - to install a pump system to carry the water to main points in the village will be carried out in 2020. Details of this ongoing project can be found on our website.



3) HELP TO MONASTERIES

Tibetan monasteries in Tibet, Nepal and India survive only on the donations they receive. Many of them offer a home to abandoned children or those from poor families as well as to lonely old people without any support.

Aid reaches different monasteries and serves to cover essential costs (food, blankets, medicines, shoes, mattresses, furniture, kitchen utensils, textbooks, maintenance and reconstruction of precarious buildings) and contributes to the preservation of a precious culture.



SED GYUED MONASTERY

The exciting news from Sed Gyued monastery is that this year a non-profit school was officially registered within the monastery. From the start of the new school year (in April), the 65 young monks living in the monastery have been following, as well as their monastic education, the national curriculum

including English, maths, social studies, science...

Most of these children arrived in the monastery because their families are unable to look after them. In fact, many of them were brought to the monastery after losing their families in the 2015 earthquake, or because their families

having lost their homes and possessions were no longer able to take care of their basic needs.

However, a monastic education does not fully prepare them for life in the outside world if they later decide to leave the monastery. Now the young monks will be able to take government exams and have recognised qualifications. It will also give the monks who continue to live in the monastery better skills and information to administer the monastery in the future.

The Association has been supporting this monastery for many years and, as well as finding sponsors to support the young monks, is also financing teachers and offering economic support so that the young monks have the best conditions in which to live and study.

We also supply the monastery every year with stationary supplies to ensure that they have the best possible conditions to study. This year we have provided medical supplies and new robes for the monks. Due to problems of drying clothes, especially in the monsoon season, the young monks were wearing damp clothes causing and aggravating skin rashes and other health problems. Hopefully having dry clothes to change into will help to solve this problem and make them a little more comfortable!



4) EMERGENCY

DISTRIBUTION OF BLANKETS

After seeing the desperate living conditions in the villages of Mahottari District last year 2018, some of the worst we have come across, we were determined to bring more help to these people. This area of Nepal, already very poor, was affected last year by heavy monsoon floods that swept away the few possessions of many families. These people are still living today in conditions of absolute poverty and have received little or no help - many are living in makeshift shacks with no furnishings. These villages are inhabited by people of the untouchable caste, who are seen as being on the border of humanity. It is very difficult to help these people also because the journey with trucks is long and uncomfortable due to the bad conditions of the roads.



In March, with help from the local authorities, we were able to distribute quilted blankets to about 2000 families. For these families living in makeshift



accommodations - many don't even have a bed or mattress - these blankets will bring comfort and warmth in the coldest of times.

Once again Thonla Sonam and volunteers from Gangchen Drupkhang, who produced the blankets, made the difficult journey to reach these people - we thank them all for this help! A huge thank you also goes to each and every person who donated money for a blanket!

This project was financed with money from the 5x1000 programme received in 2018. (*Italian tax payers can allocate **5X1000** of their Income Tax to support non-profit organisations*).

EMERGENCY FUND

The Emergency Fund allows us to give immediate help to those in need. The money is used to make sure that vulnerable people, such as the elderly, sick and disabled have a safe place to sleep, food to eat and medical care if they need it. Most people who request help are experiencing extreme difficulties and need support for their day-to-day survival.

This year, for example, we were able to help 10 year old Dawa Tenzin from the remote village of Tatopani in Rasuwa District. Although we have no official diagnosis it is thought that Dawa suffered a brain haemorrhage - he collapsed in school and was paralysed when he recovered consciousness. Using every available resource the father of Dawa took him to hospital in Kathmandu. After some days the doctors told the father there was nothing they could do. Help in Action was requested for help to transport Dawa, almost completely paralysed, back to his family home. Concerned that he would be unable to cope with the journey we transferred him to a small clinic that specialises in traditional Himalayan medicines and therapies. After intensive care Dawa has slowly regained his speech and movement. He is now talking, walking and laughing! To make sure he can continue with his treatments, such as physiotherapy, Dawa was also assigned a sponsor. Thanks to support from the Emergency Fund this little boy has now the chance to live a relatively normal life.



The village where Dawa lives is in a remote area in the pre-Himalaya. Once famed for its natural hot springs and frequented by local people and tourists alike, this village is now suffering the consequences of the 2015 earthquake as the water source has dried up. The village that was once prosperous is now abandoned and the people living there have lost their livelihoods. The elderly population of the village are now without any source of income. During a visit

to the village with an hydro-engineer to assess the situation of the hot springs we were able to offer aid to the eldest residents thanks to the Emergency Fund.



ORPHANAGES

This year we were able to support again Jorpati Orphanage which is home to 26 children (between the ages of 4-16). This orphanage, that we visit regularly, survives mainly from donations from the local community. Most of the children are studying, thanks to our help, in Gangchen Samling School. The orphanage needs help to buy food, clothes, and other basic necessities.

5) HEALTHCARE

MEDICINE

Once again we were able to help the small health post in Mawakanpur District by providing a supply of much needed medicine. This health post is responsible for the primary health care needs of about 8,000 people. During the rainy season these people are cut off from any other medical services. Amar Lama, who runs this health centre, made the 7 hour journey to Kathmandu to collect the medicines. During our meeting he explained that one of the most common problems he is faced with now are problems relating to malnutrition in young children. This year we provided the medicines requested by the health post, including: antibiotics, pain relief medication, antiseptic, cough medicine, vitamins...

We also provided an extensive 'first aid' kit to Sed Gyued monastery. Having 65 lively young boys living so closely together means that skin conditions, colds, coughs and so on, spread quickly throughout the monastery. These boisterous young boys also suffer from all the normal scratches and scrapes associated with outdoor play. A stock of antiseptic creams, plasters, disinfectant, cough medicine, dressings, pain relief and so on were gifted to the monastery.



If you would like to help support any of our projects you can visit our website: www.helpinaction.net or email us at: helpinaction@gangchen.it

On behalf of all these people who have received help we send each and every one of you our most heartfelt and sincere thanks!