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dnh brief



DEUTSCH-NEPALISCHE

HILFSGEMEINSCHAFT e.V.

GERMAN-NEPALESE



HELP ASSOCIATION

www.dnh-stuttgart.org

Namaste

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Dear Members and dear Friends of the GNHA,

Anyone who is travelling in Nepal at the moment can see heavy building machinery everywhere that is used to help the people dig and excavate, lay new paths, widen roads and erect new buildings. Unfortunately, however, private reconstruction of the destroyed homes hardly progresses at all. We can only help here to a certain extent by providing new forms of technology.

Nevertheless, where the reconstruction of the school infrastructure is concerned, we are at the top of the list. Even by the end of March we had been able to hand over a total of 20 school buildings, ready for use. The reconstruction achievement of the GNHA earned tremendous respect from the authorities. A structural engineer from England took a close look at some of our projects and initiatives and wrote about them.

In March/April our Project Trip No. 8 took place with 14 participants altogether. An assessment was made by Claudia Kurz, Head of our Office in Stuttgart, who took part in the trip together with our treasurer, Sabine Spiegl, and came home deeply impressed.

The GNHA is indeed proud of the work involved in its projects, and also of being participant in projects that achieve an exemplary performance. A short time ago, our member, Sabine Pretsch, and our office assistant, Sunita Lama, took part in an exceptional Workshop run by our partner organisation, Children Nepal (CN) in Pokhara. A detailed report can be found in this edition.

As always, our GNHA Newsletters contain a great deal of text. We are aware that this no longer necessarily corresponds to the customary way of attracting attention, but we do believe that you would like to learn more, and that this is only possible with detailed content.

We therefore thank you for your attention and loyalty, and for your interest in our projects and support, in whatever form.

In this spirit, I greet you here with a sincere "Namaste".



Andreas Falk
- President -

GNHA Project Trip 2017.

When I took over the Office Management over two years ago, Nepal, the Nepalese people and the GNHA as a help organisation, were largely unknown to me. In the meantime I had at least been theoretically familiarised with the GNHA projects. But now it was time to get to know the country and our projects, on site. Therefore, it was only a logical consequence for me to take part in the GNHA project trip that offered the best opportunity for doing this. The fact that Andreas Falk, our President, partly accompanied the trip, was a tremendous enrichment for everyone, for being an absolute Nepal expert, he was able to inform us in great detail about the GNHA projects, the people and their culture.

On 17th March we set off on a 3-week discovery trip which gave me a very impressive insight into the country, its people and the projects.



When we arrived, Kathmandu only showed itself from the sunny side for a short spell, and then the heavens opened their floodgates and we gained an awareness of the difficult circumstances that the people experience with the rain in the monsoon season. The roads were unbelievably slushy, but at least it seemed as if the dust lying everywhere, had been swept away.

The colourful hustle and bustle, the tooting horns, the traffic and unbelievable shopping offers for scarves, singing bowls, felt and countless knick-knacks really fascinated us all, and at the end of the trip, most of the participants were then con-

fronted with the problem of how to pack everything in their cases.

For setting the mood, our sightseeing programme began with a relaxing tour of the Stupa in Swayambunath, which was already familiar to me from the typical pictures that I associated with Nepal.

Later on, when we walked through the ancient city and visited Durbar Square, the destruction caused by the earthquake was then, unfortunately, also present, and this was particularly sad for those who had known Kathmandu prior to the earthquake. The next day in Bhaktapur, however, we unfortunately witnessed a far greater destruction caused by the earthquake. This was a very depressing and horrifying sight. During our visit to a paper factory, we were able to climb up onto the roof of the building. Here, we had an almost eerie view of the countless vacant spaces where only piles of stones showed signs of the former dwellings. Nevertheless, the former splendour of the city with its small alleyways, large squares, temples and wonderful woodcarvings was still discernable.

We then visited our Dispensary in Kathmandu, the Armenapotheke, which is affiliated with BIR Hospital and very well organised and sorted for providing needy patients with the necessary medication.

We then drove on to Dulikhel in the Kavre District where 13 of the 62 schools that we supervise, are located. Our first visit was to the Golmadevi School; here we became aware of why the MGML Method is so successful. We were able to attend the lessons and were enthralled by the delightful and child-oriented way the classrooms are fitted out, and by the children's enthusiasm as they sat round their tables and immersed themselves in their learning material.

Just how this MGML Method functions was demonstrated to us in greater detail afterwards by our Nepalese teaching staff, during our visit to the Teachers' Training Centre. Each child is able to determine its own learning progress according to its own capabilities, which is also of an advantage particularly for those children who have to help their parents working in the fields, and are therefore absent from their lessons for a few weeks. Once this work has been done, these children are then able to return to their class without any problem and carry on learning from where they left off. We already have the complete learning material available for Classes 1-3 and at the moment we are working together with the teaching authori-

ties for providing the learning material for Class 4. Class 5 is then to follow next year; and the MGML programme will then be able to be taught throughout the primary schools from Classes 1-5.



As the MGML teachers attend the training courses at our Training Centre for several days, so-called "homestays" have been set up around the Training Centre with the support of the GNHA. The families were taught how to look after their guests, prepare meals and provide simple accommodation. We were all absolutely stunned by the result. In groups of four we visited the families and were all offered an absolutely excellent dal bhaat at lunchtime, and had the opportunity to establish contact with the families and also take a look at their homes. With this concept we are able to reduce the costs for the course participants' accommodation, that are paid for by the GNHA, and enable the host families to earn an additional income.

We had the opportunity to take a look at the "earthbag" house directly next to the Training Centre, that belongs to the teacher, Mr. Keshav. For the Nepalese, the "earthbag" house is a completely new house-building method and simple to carry out. The family feels very happy in their 2 rooms, and optically the house also radiates a great deal of warmth and fits beautifully into the surroundings.

Another alternative building method is using self-made bricks, and we were shown how uniform bricks are pressed using a hand-operated machine, such that they do not have to be fired. After a drying phase of one month they are ready for use and can be implemented excellently for housebuilding. In between some beautiful sightseeing stops - e.g. our visit to

the Namobuddha Monastery, where we took part in an emotional Buddhist puja ceremony, a trek to the sacred place of Kalinchowk, that demanded an impressive degree of fitness of us with 26,500 steps, 311 floors and a walking distance of 16 kilometres, and our visit to a nunnery -, we visited four other schools in the Dolakha District. The children greeted us with chains of freshly picked flowers, colourful khata, delicious biscuits and tea, and they were absolutely delighted to perform the dances they had studied for us. This was all accompanied by numerous Nepalese flags fluttering in the wind.

We drove back to Kathmandu again on the B.P Koirala Highway. After already having driven from Dhulikel to Dolakha along terrible, unpaved, dusty tracks running adjacent to incredibly deep, yet scenic gorges along the Tamakoshi and Sunkoshi Rivers, we then discovered that the Koirala Highway was in an even worse condition. Due to a landslide this Highway, which had only been completed just 5 years ago, had completely disappeared in one place over a stretch of approx. 10 m, and subsequently the former, provisional road for the construction site had to be used without further ado.

But this, too, was only to be a small foretaste of a 14-hour bus ride that lay ahead of us along the route to Chitwan National Park, where an enormous landslide forced us to wait patiently in one place for six hours, before being able to drive on, and then the journey continued at a snail's pace during a thunderstorm and in the darkness.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend our participants highly for accepting these circumstances in a very disciplined manner and with great composure. For me, personally, these drives were a tremendous challenge; for others they tended more to awaken a spirit of adventure.

Nevertheless, there was of course a great deal to discover during our drives - fantastic scenery with precipitous mountains, delightful pastures, dry river beds and lush rice fields. We were all fascinated by the arduous work of the farmers who cultivated the rice fields with their oxen, the women in their brightly coloured clothes, and the colourful fruit stands along the roadside.

Back in Patan we then had the unique opportunity of discovering the city through the eyes of an absolute professional for the reconstruction work of the destroyed temple complexes. Wolfgang Korn, who as an architect, had surveyed the temple

many years ago out of his own interest, gave us a highly interesting guided tour. The plans that he had made at the time serve as one of the very few existing sources for the reconstruction of the temple complex.



In the evening, at the request of all the trip participants, our local workers organised a big party in the Office garden. This gave us all a unique opportunity to meet our workers and partners who had made an immense effort for the GNHA and Nepal, and become better acquainted with them.

On the next day we travelled westwards via Bandipur to Pokhara and then on to Chitwan National Park.

The "short" excursion around "car-free" Bandipur led us to the idyllic village of Ramkot, where one had the feeling of going back to a civilisation existing centuries ago.

In so doing we also learned that when our Nepalese travel guides define time and space, it would still nevertheless be better for us to equip ourselves for every possible eventuality. For a "short excursion along a flat path with a small uphill climb at the end", we instead encountered a brisk walk of almost 6 hours altogether, with countless ascents; a "half an hour's car drive" turned out to be a 2-hour trip, and earth roads with a single-track could be interpreted as "wide highways". After a while we took this with humour as being well-meant attempts at increasing our motivation.

An absolute highlight was our visit to the NGO we support, namely "Children Nepal (CN)", which takes care of a total of

450 children living under precarious circumstances. The children live partly under the most difficult conditions in the slums near Pokhara, with their mothers who are frequently single. The children and also their carers with parental authority are supervised by social workers on a regular basis, in order to ensure that these children attend school regularly and, if necessary, are able to do a vocational training course. The CN House offers the children a safe point of contact where they are given the individual support that they need.

The children told us about their living conditions. Afterwards in small groups, we had the opportunity to take a look inside their homes which, in most cases, were nothing more than draughty huts of corrugated iron on a clay floor.

On the initiative of, and with a start-up funding by the GNHA, the children's relatives have begun smaller income-generating activities. In the meantime the cooperative that resulted, has over 100 members. After visiting Children Nepal we experienced a very "down to earth" feeling and appreciated all the more, just how fortunate we are, and how much good one can do, with just a little help. The aim of the GNHA is to increase the number of Dalit girls it sponsors from 100 to 150, which in view of our experience, can only be supported.

The next day we enjoyed gliding across the Phewa Lake and very much hoped that the clouds would now at last allow us a clear view of the Machhapuchhare and the Annapurna Range. After an uphill walk to the World Peace Stupa, we were already able to gain a vague impression of the mountains, but we still had to wait until a thunderstorm cleared the air, and then at last on the next morning, when watching the sun rise in Sarangkot, we then managed to see the real beauty of the



mountains of Nepal. We had waited so long for this and were then finally rewarded.

Another event was our visit to the elderly Tibetans in the Tibetan Refugee Camp. It gave us the feeling of being in "a little paradise" and radiated an unbelievable calmness. The elderly people here were so pleased and happy that we had visited them, and we were overwhelmed with brightly coloured khatas. The new museum showing the expulsion of the Tibetans from their home-country and the subsequent difficulties involved in Nepal, was very impressive and distressing, as the people have no hope of going back and in Nepal they have no rights at all.



The last lap of our journey took us to the Elephant Breeding Centre with elephant rides, and crocodile and Indian rhino watching in Chitwan National Park. An ox cart took us at a completely slowed-down tempo to a Tharu village where we had the opportunity of visiting the people in this ethnic group at their homes and seeing how they lived.

After our return flight from Chitwan to Kathmandu, it was time to take our leave of a unique country with its very sincere, friendly people and an infinite number of possibilities to help.

During this journey names were given faces and projects, content.

Namaste
Claudia Kurz, Stuttgart

Support for the Dalit girls

Workshop on Personal Development and Career Selection

For the girls who belong to the Dalits (the lowest caste, untouchable, unclean) and who are supported by the GNHA, the local help organisation Children Nepal (CN) regularly carries out workshops for helping them in their personal development and career selection.

The Workshop which CN refers to as "Career Counselling", is held for three days altogether. On two of these days, the young participants who attend Class 10, are shown different possibilities and ways for shaping their future. By working in small groups, and with presentations and drawings depicting their own life story, they are to become more aware of their strengths and



weaknesses, and subsequently gain a better idea of their targeted career, or think it over anew. The third day of the seminar was additionally included by the CN for teaching the young ladies how to run a household economically. The main content consists of showing practical examples and learning how to keep a housekeeping book.

20 to 24 students attend the seminar. In order to create a pleasant, anxiety-free atmosphere, the participants and the CN staff all sit in a circle. There are no hierarchical differences. Every morning the daily programme which was varied and well-balanced, was pinned on the board. Activation exercises and games are repeatedly included during the course of the day, so that they can relax and replenish their energy. In Nepali this part of the programme is called "raamro ramailo". In English it stands for things that are "good and pleasant".

The other items on the agenda range from where the participants introduce themselves and name the future activity they wish to pursue, using the so-called SWOT Analysis (S = Strength, W = Weakness, O = Opportunity - Possibilities and T = Threat or Challenge), and a self-evaluation by the girls, to a guided dream-trip focussing on the next 5 years. The individual results are then presented in small groups, each comprising 6 - 7 girls. After analysing the group results, a talk is then held with the whole round.



The last task on the first day is to fill in the form, "Interests and Qualities" that contains a list of the teaching and professional activities such as learning languages, working with children or logistic activities.

On the second day, information on the five different development potentials, i.e. analytical-logical, personal, linguistic, spatial, physical-mechanical, is hung up on the walls throughout the seminar room. The students first have to position themselves under their "main potential", this having been determined the day before using the form "Interests and Qualities".

Following this they have the task of drawing their own life path with stops after two months, six months and up to two years. The emphasis lies here on the following questions: How can this goal be reached? What challenges can occur? Are there any alternative ways?

Finally, two young ladies who had formerly been with the CN and supported by the GNHA, spoke about their individual and greatly differing life paths. One of them had followed a very successful path and is meanwhile working as a nurse. The life path of the other young lady was beset with a great many challenges due to leaving school early, marrying at an early age and having children, as well as experiencing problems within the family. However, due to her close and regular contact with CN, that has continued up until today, she has the possibility of changing this orientation and pursuing an activity in keeping with her situation, perhaps even as a seamstress in the affiliated sewing facility of Suryamukhi Handicrafts. The content discussed and taught in the Workshop is clearly reflected for the participants in these real-life stories.

"I thought the Workshop was very interesting and informative. At the beginning, I found it rather difficult and I didn't find it easy talking about my strengths and weaknesses. What touched me particularly were the life-stories of the two young ladies. They will stay in my memory for a long time," so a participant at the end of the seminar.

Sabine Pretsch,
Kathmandu

GNHA Building Projects

– Impressions of a structural engineer

After Jacob Borchers, a structural engineer from England, had visited some of our building sites in Dolakha together with our engineer, Birendra Kumar Shrestha, we asked him to give us his impressions. He, himself, had been able to gain concrete experience in Nepal in 2012 and wrote the following about our projects:

Almost all International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) building schools in Nepal control the project budget themselves internally; directly hiring labourers, buying materials and organising transportation. In other words, the community has no idea of the value of the school or where the money has gone, they just get a completed school at the end of the project. The GNHA takes the opposite approach, of complete financial transparency and community control.

The entire project budget is given to the School Management Committee (SMC) consisting of teachers, parents and local politicians, and under the guidance and watchful eye of the GNHA, they control the money themselves. Birendra explained how this gives the community a feeling of ownership of the school, as well as giving the SMC the training required for them to run their own construction project next time.

Birendra also believes this financial transparency is the best way to deal with corruption. The GNHA also has a strict policy of only employing local labour and using local materials, even if the local labour doesn't have the required skilled set or the local materials are more expensive. Birendra and his GNHA colleagues train the local masons on the job, so that next time they can build seismic-resistant buildings themselves, using local materials.

The GNHA's school designs are popular amongst both the teachers and children. They are simple designs, only one or two rooms, and the finished school looks almost identical to the traditional rural school the community is familiar with. However, there is one key difference: unlike the traditional school, these schools are completely seismic resistant. They achieve this with a clever structural system. The room sits on a steel frame that is separated from the non-load bearing masonry walls. This has two advantages. It reduces the weight acting on the walls, and thus the seismic loading in the event of an earthquake. It also ensures that the two systems, which will have different natural resonances due to their stiffnesses, will move independently of each other when the next earthquake strikes.

In summary, I was very impressed by the work of the GNHA in Dolakha. Their policies of involving the community so deeply, as well as the trust and autonomy they give to them by handing over complete control of the project finances, seem to be very effective tactics. Credit must also be given to Birendra's skill and diplomacy as a construction manager.

One difficulty in getting your design built in Nepal is the availability of materials. Almost all must be sourced from Kathmandu, and depending on the remoteness of the site, this could be days or weeks away by dirt road. Transporting materials long distances along winding mountain passes can triple the cost of a project. Landslides and traffic accidents block the roads, or ancient trucks break down, increasing the time and expense.

Yet the German Nepalese Help Association (GNHA) had found a way of cutting material transportation costs to zero. They have imported four ingenious machines to create a sustainable building material from the local soil. These contraptions are simple to operate and maintain, and require minimal training to use. Using the power of a lever arm, they compress earth - mixed with a little cement and sand - into interlocking bricks. After drying in the sun for 28 days, these bricks have the same compressive strength as conventional fired ones, but with the advantage of fitting together like Lego pieces. This reduces the amount of mortar required, further reducing costs.

The GNHA invited masons to attend a pilot workshop at their training centre (MGML) in Badalgoun, demonstrating the use of these earth brick machines. Our instructors demonstrated the assembly of the compression machine, and how to mix



the earth, sand, cement and water together in the correct ratio. The paste formed was pressed into the machine, a lever was pulled, and, to great cheers and applause from the crowd, a perfect grey brick emerged. While the brick dried, the masons queued for their turn at making a block.

I spent the day talking to the masons. They were optimistic and excited by this new technology. Being able to produce your own bricks on site would transform their working lives. The bricks are carbon neutral as they require no energy to make or transport.

The GNHA plans to spread them around the most earthquake damaged areas, with training programs for the local masons.

Report by Jacob Borchers, England
(abridged)

We would like to express our thanks

to all our donators - to both the new and the regular donators who trust in us and give us their support.

And to those who, since our last GNHA flyer came out, have also been continuing their work with tireless commitment and collecting donations.

Our special thanks in this regard go to Kiran Hansen-Gurung for setting up a jumble sale at his grammar school, Mallinckrodt-Gymnasium in Dortmund, the staff at the Montessori School in Forchheim for requesting donations instead of Christmas presents, and Form 7c at the Maria-Ward Grammar School in Augsburg for holding a cake sale. They have all done this to support the GNHA.

And to all those who wished to go without presents on either a happy or sad occasion and requested donations for the GNHA instead.

Our special thanks in this respect go to Dr. Paul Kellerwessel and the Engelmann, Führ and Neulen families for requesting donations on their birthdays.

In addition, we received donations upon the death of Thomas Röhrich and Gottfried Metz; here too, we would like to express our thanks and heartfelt condolences.

Another "thank you" also goes to Christel Graf and Emmy Zehnle, Hubert Grevenkamp, Dr. Thomas and Sabine Klett, the company Krinner Schraubenfundamente, Claudia and Ruth-Ilse Lenz, the company Mekra Lang, Dr. Gisela Sperling, the Stiefel family and the Herzogin-Diane-Stiftung for their generous support.

Once again we thank Ulrike Drasdo, Mr. and Mrs. Rohrer, Christine Reuter and Peter Schöderlein for their numerous talks held in favour of the GNHA.

And our special thanks also go once again, too, to our partner organisations, Nepalhilfe Aachen and the Children's Mission Organisation, "Die Sternsinger e.V", and also the Margarete Müller-Bull Foundation, that continue to support us generously with donations.

The successes we have achieved until now have been achieved jointly and would not have been possible without your help.

Special dates and latest information

For the latest information on special dates and our projects, please see our Homepage or Facebook page

www.dnh-stuttgart.org
[www.fb.com/Deutsch-Nepalische-Hilfsgemeinschaft-117494788313902/](https://www.facebook.com/Deutsch-Nepalische-Hilfsgemeinschaft-117494788313902/)

24.06.2017:

Annual General Meeting in Stuttgart

Place: Firma Trelleborg, Handwerkstr. 5-7, 70565 Stuttgart-Vaihingen

25.06.2017:

Traditional GNHA Trek in Remstal; further information is to appear soon on the website.

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The GNHA is a recognised, non-profit organisation. Donations are tax-deductible. Donation receipts are issued at the end of the year, but also beforehand upon special request.

Last Notice of Exemption 04.04.2017

