

18

November  
2019

# dnh brief



DEUTSCH-NEPALISCHE  
HILFSGEMEINSCHAFT

**DNH**

GERMAN-NEPALESE  
HELP ASSOCIATION

# नमस्ते

## NAMASTE

Dear members and dear friends of the GNHA,

It is the GNHA's birthday, and it is even a round one. Our Association will be 40-years-old in December. I can remember a discussion taking place last year, as to whether to celebrate, make use of, or simply ignore this anniversary. Finally, we came to the conclusion that there are good reasons for highlighting the GNHA's 40 years of continuous work in Nepal, by regularly drawing attention to the GNHA through smaller activities throughout this anniversary year. Otherwise, however - and in line with our philosophy - we did not want to overdo it. The annual Nepal Bazaar which is held at the end of November, is the meeting place and natural setting for our members, friends, supporters and guests to congratulate each other. We could not wish for a better occasion than the bazaar and a nicer location than the spacious ambience of the Trelleborg company. By the way, the bazaar will already be celebrating its 38th year this November. During the first 18 years it was held in the winding basement rooms of the company Busak and Shamban and then for about the same duration in the canteen in the old Trelleborg building. And now it is held in the beautiful premises in Trelleborg's new building.

Continuity, reliability and the striving for improvement are the GNHA's hallmarks. In my opinion, this is expressed by Jürgen Drost's chronicle presented in this "dnh brief", as well as in the texts on our four main areas of work. Whereas the weighting of the projects has shifted somewhat during the course of time, they all have one thing in common - we give them the same attention and commitment.

Initially, supplies and equipment, above all for clinics and health-care facilities which were scattered throughout Nepal, were the primary focus of our activities. In most cases individual measures were involved without any inter-connection. Since the equipment for the clinics was very important, and in some cases of considerable value, the GNHA was also respected by the highest authorities.

At an early stage, social projects were also supported for a long time by well-known and appropriately experienced project promoters in Nepal who looked after vulnerable young people, or women and their children. As these institutions had other additional sources of funding and we were unable to programmatically influence their orientation, we slowly withdrew from these projects.

Our own projects then came to fruition, as it were. Firstly, we should mention the Poor People's Dispensary (Armenapotheker), which we took over after the departure of its initiator, Christine Hoffmann, and also the PIN girls' home which was founded by women close to us and was, financially, completely dependent on the GNHA. We also went to villages in Kavre and the Dhading District in order to build reliable supply systems for drinking-water. Our involvement in the villages led to other activities also being taken on there, especially where schools and sanitation were concerned. In addition, however, targeted facilities were also supported that did not get the necessary attention and funding from the state, such as those for mentally disabled children, mentally ill people, elderly Tibetans and Dalits. The facilities remaining until today are the Children Nepal Project for Dalit girls in Pokhara and payments to the elderly and sick Tibetans.

Our involvement in public elementary schools in the mountainous areas has, with the emergence of new educational concepts, successively continued to develop and today it represents one of our outstanding activities.

For 16 years, the GNHA in Nepal was supervised by just one person from his home, Kamal Rupakheti. With good advice and selfless deeds Gajendra Shrestha provided and still provides his assistance as a volunteer. When we went to the villages, progressively leaving the urban milieu behind us, we engaged a young man to support Kamal, who had the rural background, was mobile, and slowly but surely became involved in all the projects. After Kamal's retirement, this young man, Kedar Tamang, became his successor. When taking over the Poor People's Dispensary we also took over their 5 employees. For our educational programme we had to gradually build up a team of its own. The GNHA in Nepal today has a cadre of 17 people altogether, with rented office rooms, two vehicles, several motorcycles and its own Teachers' Training Centre.

What has not changed is the transparency and correct handling of all the financial transactions. Here Kamal had set standards that Kedar conscientiously continues.

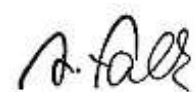
If you target a 40-year period, generational changes cannot be avoided, and are even self-explanatory. In Nepal, this generational change has worked perfectly so far. With Chandra Kumar Shrestha, the Programme Coordinator for Education, there is even a potential successor already emerging there. When the GNHA was founded in 1979, Margot Busak was almost in her seventies. She headed the GNHA until 1991. After her death, which marked a turning point, continuity was ensured by the Office Manager Doris Keppeler, the Deputy Chairman Erika Belz and by Heide Rolfs, the niece and one of the heirs of Margot Busak. Due to my knowledge of Nepali and my relevant project experience I was asked to take on a responsible role in the GNHA. Now I have been the GNHA President for 25 years and have even exceeded the age of 70. Although I am just as old as Margot Busak was when she began her work for the GNHA, the next generation change has to be envisaged, nevertheless.

I have therefore decided to hand over certain tasks already, especially the editing of the "dnh brief". Our board member, Jürgen Drost, is now responsible for this. When compiling the chronicle, he familiarised himself with the history of the GNHA, which is a good prerequisite for this work.

At the beginning I explained that the bazaar is an excellent meeting platform. Together with the Board and our wonderful helpers, we hope that we will meet as many of you there as possible.

In this happy expectation, I greet you warmly.

Yours Andreas Falk



President

## The GNHA has reached its 40<sup>th</sup> year – and this is how it all began. A review by Jürgen Drost

- 1975** The entrepreneur, Margot Busak, travels to Nepal for the first time.
- 1977** Doris Keppeler commences her work with Ms. Busak, as an assistant to the managing director, and later takes over the office management of the GNHA.



Margot Busak and Doris Keppeler at work

- 1979** Erika Belz contacts Ms. Busak with her wish to do something in Nepal.
- 1979** On October 5, 1979, 17 interested people meet at Degerloch's heights and found the Deutsch-Nepalische-Hilfsgemeinschaft (German-Nepalese Help Association) e.V.
- 1979** On December 6, 1979 entry in the Register of Associations.
- 1980** Sister Christine Hoffmann founds the Dispensary at Bir Hospital in Kathmandu.
- 1981** On the occasion of her 70th birthday Margot Busak plans a bazaar with handicrafts. In addition, she gains support from Andreas Falk who, through his contacts, enriches the bazaar with artisans from Nepal.
- 1982** Kamal Rupakheti becomes the National Representative of the GNHA in Nepal and Gajendra B. Shrestha the Honorary Adviser.
- Ms. Busak is appointed Honorary Consul by the Nepalese state. During this time, the association continues to evolve, the membership numbers and donations continue to increase.
- 1986** The Nepalese royal couple visits Germany and also Stuttgart. The GNHA thereby receives fresh impetus.
- 1987** Start of the GNHA's engagement in elementary schools. Firstly, sponsorships of Tibetan schoolchildren in the Tibetan camps in Patan and Pokhara. Over the years, the GNHA has ensured the school operation for 9 elementary schools.
- 1989** Support begins for Tibetan pensioners in the refugee camp in Tashiling, Pokhara, and from 1993 also in Jawalakhel in Patan.
- 1991** Ms. Busak died in December shortly after her 80th birthday. The project work is continued in order to fulfil the obligations towards the project partners.



**1993** Thanks to the initiative of Andreas Falk, Margot Busak's wish comes true after her death, at the International Horticultural Exhibition (IGA) . An award-winning Nepalese Garden is set up with medicinal herbs from the Himalayas.

**1993** Start of the PIN project.

**1994** Andreas Falk becomes the President of the GNHA.

**1995** The Nepal Calendar known in its present form appears for the first time.

**1998** The first Nepal project trip takes place in the autumn.  
First contact with Kedar Tamang, who is to take over Kamal's work.



Nepal-Garden at IGA 1993



The Majesty confers a decoration on Andreas Falk

**1998** Andreas Falk receives the Nepalese Order of Merit on behalf of the GNHA from the Nepalese King Birendra.

**2003** Heide Rolfs founds the Margot Busak Foundation for safeguarding the GNHA long-term.

**2008** Under the motto "Better village schools for Nepal", the school programme is constantly being expanded and deepened.

**2009** The MGML concept comes from India to Nepal. Chandra Shrestha and Kedar Tamang participate in the MGML Pioneer Workshop.

**2009** During the Nepal Bazaar, the 30th anniversary celebration takes place.

**2010** The first "dnh brief" (GNHA flyer) appears and replaces the Nepal Notes in a new biannual form.

**2014** Change of generation in Nepal - the long-standing national representative of the GNHA, Kamal Rupakheti, goes into retirement and Kedar Tamang, who has been working for the GNHA since 1998, becomes his successor.



Kedar is taking over

- 2014** The laying of the foundation stone for the Margarete-Müller-Bull (MMB) Training Center. The MGML programme is gaining ground and in the following years it is extended to 100 schools in the districts of Dhading, Kavre, Dolakha and Sindhupalchok.
- 2015** Severe earthquakes hit Nepal in April and May, and 70 school buildings under our care are damaged or destroyed.
- 2015** The long-standing office manager, Doris Keppeler, is absent due to her serious illness and dies in October 2015. The GNHA office management is taken over by Claudia Kurz.
- 2016** In May Erika Belz dies at the age of 92, as one of the driving forces behind the GNHA.
- 2018** By the end of the year, the reconstruction of the school infrastructure is completed, so that the focus can once again be put on the extension of the MGML programme.
- 2019** The GNHA celebrates its 40th anniversary.



Present board members: from left to right:

Dr. Richard Storkenmaier, Sabine Spiegl, Andreas Falk, Heide Rolfs, Jürgen Drost  
Brigitte Menrad is missing

## Infrastructure and Environment

This broad title covers construction measures, new buildings and extensions, as well as building repairs for the most varying purposes.

A prime example is the reconstruction work that was carried out after the severe earthquake of 2015. This work was carried out for 70 schools and their sanitary facilities, mostly in the form of the modules developed by the GNHA. But even before that, larger and smaller school buildings had been built and a large number were equipped with clean toilets. As a rule, these toilets were built in liaison with the construction of the village drinking-water projects, involving the installation of miles of pipelines - from the source, via



Kamal is testing the water from the new water tap

the drinking water storage, to the taps. These projects particularly were very complex due to their social aspects, and required a long preparatory phase, during which the beneficiaries were instructed in their rights and obligations to sustainably safeguard the investment.

For the homeless members of the Musahar caste a small hamlet has been created in the Terai with solid, single-room houses.

Meeting rooms have also been built and equipped for different groups of users (Tibetans, women, patients, schoolchildren), and at Dhulikhel Hospital accommodation has been set up for the patients' relatives. Most recently, the Teachers' Training Centre was built in Badalgaon, which is used and managed by the GNHA itself.

In the nineties, environmental projects were added in cooperation with the ECCA, a purely Nepalese NGO. Groups of schoolchildren acted as the direct contact persons for the environmental education camps, via whom an awareness of the environment was to spread in the parents' homes and in the village.

The construction and reforestation of a buffer zone on the edge of Chitwan National Park proved to be a very sustainable and pioneering project.

## **Social Issues**

Especially the marginalised social groups and members of the lower castes have always found life difficult in Nepal. As a rule, they live in bitter poverty and for the most part, under inhumane conditions. Subsequently, the children of these families are particularly affected. Their health is often in an appalling state, they do not go to school, and they run the risk of falling into bad ways. Often the girls, above all, are affected by this fate.

Immediately after the GNHA was founded, it began to support an orphanage and a group of Tibetan carpet-makers. The first microcredits were given to poor farmers. At that time, the GNHA also financed individual sponsorships for the needy.

Soon afterwards, it also came into contact with Father Gaffney, a Jesuit priest from the United States. He set up a home for abandoned, sick and disabled boys and young men in his St. Xavier's Social Center and provided them with a school education and craftsmen training. He was also active in the fight against drugs. His life's work was also supported financially by the GNHA for many years after his death.

A home for abandoned and widowed women and their children has been supported at the Ghandi Ashram since 1993. This was a development project which was planned for 5 years, and its main goal was to enable women to regain more independence. Jobs were created, the goods they produced were also sold, and many of the women were able to leave the Ashram after one year. Male adolescents were given training courses at recognised craft workshops and girls received training courses in making craft products or were able to attend computer or secretarial courses. The financial support from the GNHA was temporary and was phased out year after year, in order to encourage the Ashram management to force its own efforts.



In 1993, 6 Nepalese women came up with the idea of doing something for the so-called street children. They turned to "CWIN" (Child Workers in Nepal) and were given the project, "Emergency shelter for the girl children at risk". Sushma Bajracharya was in charge of the project which specifically looked after girls who lived in slums, were without parents, roamed around homelessly, had been abandoned by their families, or had run away. Thus, one year later, the PIN project ("People in Need") was created which, as from 1994, was financed almost exclusively by the GNHA. PIN maintained a house where the homeless girls could live and the external girls could find shelter, attend lessons and be cared for. In 2006 the house that had initially been rented could be bought, thanks to a legacy bequeathed to the GNHA by Carmen Weiss. From the very beginning it was in the interests of PIN that the contact with the parents was preserved or sought. This work with the



Kedar visiting the PIN girls

children also involved resocialisation, family reunification and helping and advising the parents with regard to their problems. Nevertheless, it regarded it, as we would say today, as a stationary facility for particularly needy girls. The approach of outreach and sustainable social work has not really worked out over the years. Nevertheless, it was a very successful project and many of the girls are very grateful to the GNHA for its help. In 2017 the project came to an end after nearly 25 years, and the house was sold.

Since 1995, "Children Nepal" (CN) has been looking after girls belonging to the Dalits, the lowest untouchable castes. They come from the slums in Pokhara and as children they are sometimes forced to work. In many cases they are orphans or have been rejected by their families and are therefore socially marginalised. Since 1998, the GNHA has specifically dealt with the school sponsorship of these girls (currently 180) and the further education of the older girls (currently 30). The costs for the school admission fees, school uniforms, teaching materials and medical care are covered by the GNHA. The girls are also looked after by full-time social workers who visit the parental homes regularly, stay in contact with the teachers and provide extra tuition in rented rooms. Today, some of the girls themselves are social workers, nurses or have even managed to advise and support disadvantaged girls and mothers as lawyers. For some time now, CN has also been offering the mothers courses alongside their profession and has launched a cooperative microcredit programme. With the support of Children Nepal, we pursue the approach of keeping underprivileged girls in their families and supporting them there, instead of taking them away from families and accommodating them in homes. Over the years we have come to realise that this is the more sustainable approach.



Sewing room from Children Nepal



In the Tibetan refugee camps in Pokhara and Patan, the GNHA supports approximately 90 elderly Tibetans who can no longer provide for their own livelihood, due to illness or frailty. They receive a small monthly "pension". This support began in 1989 and has continued until today.



Tibetercamp in Pokhara

## Medical Care

Measures for improving medical care in Nepal have been a focal point of the GNHA's activity since the very beginning. Initially, individual measures were mainly taken for financing or supplying medical devices and instruments. These included high-quality sonography and X-ray equipment and expensive surgical instruments for various clinics and also for ambulances and vehicles for transporting hospital staff.

In the following years, the Nepal Orthopaedic Hospital, as well as the department for the treatment of severely burned patients at Bir Hospital were supported.

In Nepal, as in every other country in the world, there are people with kidney failure who can only survive with the aid of dialysis (blood purification therapy). GNHA members and committed Nepalese friends who are largely involved in the care of patients with kidney disease in Germany, have helped in promoting technical and professional support for several dialysis centres in Nepal, by soliciting donations in kind and by donating money and providing expert assistance in numerous operations. By means of the regular aid supplies, the centres were expanded and constantly improved in terms of equipment and the medical standard.

In Bhaktapur there is a centre for the mentally ill, Aasha-Deep, which was founded by the United States-based association Mary Knoll, where these people benefit from treatment or therapy as part of a day-care service. In addition to the day-care service, the care programme has developed equally



Medical service during a Health Camp

successfully at the families' homes. Dedicated employees go to the homes of the needy to support them by giving advice and assistance. This facility has been supported for a long time with the GNHA project funds.

In 2002, the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Center, a facility for the rehabilitation of patients with severe spinal-cord injuries and paraplegia, was founded. Since 2005, this rehabilitation centre has been supported by the GNHA, initially through a grant for equipment, and later through an annual financial grant to fund the treatment of destitute patients.

Not to be left unmentioned is the Margot Busak Clinic which was opened by our founding chairman in 1990. It is a practice for general medicine in which younger and older patients from the surrounding villages have been treated free of charge for many years.

A project that has been supported by the GNHA from the very beginning, is the Dispensary at BIR Hospital in Kathmandu. It goes back to the initiative of Christine Hoffmann. She worked as a volunteer at BIR Hospital from 1980 to 1993 and mainly treated severely burned patients. Since only a part of the population in Nepal has a health insurance, most of the patients have to pay for their own treatment. Once again, the poorest are those who are affected. For this reason Christine set up a Poor People's Dispensary (Christine's Dispensary), where evidently destitute patients receive medicines free of charge. In 1993, Sister Christine ended her work in Nepal. The Dispensary has since been run by the

GNHA. Subsequently, approximately 30,000 destitute patients in Kathmandu are provided with drugs and dressing material every year. Since 2007, Nepalhilfe Beilngries has generously been making significant contributions to the budget of the Poor People's Dispensary. In recent years, we have increasingly been networking the activity of the Dispensary with our educational commitment in remote villages. Since the severe earthquake in 2015, our Dispensary Team has been conducting mobile health camps on a regular basis together with the Nepali doctors, at our school locations. The



Health Camp: Patients in the queue

camps usually last 3 days, during which time approximately 1,000 patients are given medical, dental and gynaecological treatment close to their homes, and provided with medication. Health education and a training course in hygiene adapted to Nepalese conditions, have not only become an important integral part of these health camps; they also take place at the regular meetings of the mothers' groups, as well as in the school lessons themselves.

## School and Education

One of the elementary prerequisites for outgrowing the much cited poverty trap is education. Of course, schools play a prominent role here. Already in the 80's, the GNHA began to provide targeted support to schools. This involved equipment and payment for the teachers, in response to the inability of the state to provide sufficient teachers for all the grades. The Tibetan Atisha School in Jawalakhel, the Dyola School for street sweepers' children in Bhaktapur and the Monju School for Sherpa children have been partially funded by us for over two decades. In the course of time, more schools have been added, mostly as an extension of our village commitment and the realisation that the schools there were in a sorry state.

A qualitative leap took place when, in cooperation with the Rato Bangla Foundation, a private body committed to the common good, "our" teachers were imparted a basic knowledge in education and a child-oriented manner of teaching. The training courses lasted up to a year and some of these graduates form our Education Team today.

The films "Better Village Schools in Nepal" and "Terra Artistica" were created in order to demonstrate to a broader public what it takes to enable children to receive a good education.

It is an established as well as a sad fact, that the state Nepalese school system is far from providing its schoolchildren with a good education. Those who can afford it, send their child to a private institution. The school authorities are looking for ways to improve their teaching. This is where MGML comes in; this system was developed in India and is widely used in some federal states. Our team members were present at a presentation in Nepal (2009) by the Rishi Valley Institute for Educational Resources (RIVER). They were very impressed by the educational approach of the MGML system and have since been strongly promoting it. Today, the GNHA is the most important contact point for the education authorities as regards the further development of teaching and learning materials up to Form 5. The respective materials are jointly developed, tested, reproduced and made available to the schools that decide on the MGML system. The teachers' training is just as important as the materials. It is carried out theoretically and practically at our own training centre and, at least as important, locally.



Student in front of learning ladder

The MGML system begins with changes in the classroom structure. School desks and benches, as well as the teacher's desk are done away with, and the textbooks disappear. Instead, four learning "islands" and a self-service learning desk are set up. The learning ladder, which rather reminds us of a board game, is the central control tool. It teaches the children how to navigate through their learning material. This is found on learning cards that are differentiated by symbols, colours, etc. and their content, and are kept on the learning desk. The teacher does not stand in front of the class but next to each individual schoolchild, as it were, in order to provide him or her with learning support.

This method enables individualised learning at the respective, child-appropriate pace. It is the self-initiative, driven by curiosity and thirst for knowledge, as well as the group-dynamic processes, that spur on their learning enthusiasm and bring about their learning success.

At present, the GNHA provides support for more than 100 schools that have introduced the MGML educational system. Encouragingly, more and more municipalities want to turn their schools into MGML educational institutions.

### **We would like to express our thanks**

to all of you who give us your trust and support.

Our thanks go to the 'birthday children' Richard Steimer and Karin Seidenglanz who requested donations for the GNHA instead of gifts.

We would also like to thank Matthias and Kerstin Wöhrle who gave us numerous donations as part of a family celebration.

Christel Graf and Emmi Zehnle have again brought us numerous donations in the past few months. How they manage to do this time and time again remains a mystery to us, and our joy and our gratitude remain unchanged.

Helga Heckel, Bernd Irion and Friedhelm Nunnemann have once again given us donations gained in the course of their lectures, and Charly Kutasi has again organised a wonderful jazz concert. We also say "thank you" to them with all our hearts.

Another big 'thank you' for their generous support goes to Trelleborg, the Lions Club Neckargemünd and to the children's mission, "Die Sternsinger" in Aachen.

Looking back over the past 40 years, we are very happy and also somewhat proud.

Everything that we have achieved is our mutual success and was only possible with your help.

We are immensely grateful that you have accompanied us along this path so far and are confident that you will continue to do so over the next few years.

### **Dates and News**

#### **23./24.11.2019: Grand Nepal Bazaar**

Saturday, 23<sup>th</sup> November 2019: 10am -6 pm

Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019: 11 am- 5 pm

Fa.Trelleborg, Schockenriedstr. 1

70565 Stuttgart-Vaihingen

#### **06.04.- 17.04.2020: GNHA Project Trip to Nepal**

See details on our homepage: [www.dnh-stuttgart.org](http://www.dnh-stuttgart.org)



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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 18.06.2019**

