

21

May 2021

# dnh brief



DEUTSCH-NEPALISCHE  
HILFSGEMEINSCHAFT

**DNH**

GERMAN-NEPALESE  
HELP ASSOCIATION

40 Jahre Hilfe in Nepal

## NAMASTE

# नमस्ते

Dear Members and dear friends of the GNHA,

The weekly newspaper "Die ZEIT" recently published an interview with the Federal President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Our Federal President grew up in a village of 800 citizens. From a family background under modest circumstances he has risen to the highest office of state. He recounts, "My primary school was a dwarf school where several grades were taught in one room. Two handfuls of younger pupils sat on the left, and on the right two handfuls of older ones, with the teacher hopping from one side to the other. When the teacher was on the other side, we had to work silently; interest in discussions was not encouraged very much.

Nevertheless, I really developed a passion for school. And it also continued!" Steinmeier emphasises the encouragement he and his parents received from his primary school teacher. Little Frank-Walter was the first in his family to go to grammar school. When looking back at his own educational biography and the very different starting conditions for children from socially disadvantaged, educationally deprived families and those with a migration background, he states, "School is the central place of society."

We are still under a Corona domination worldwide, and this has had a profound impact on all the areas of our work in Nepal and, sadly enough, in this country as well. Strict hygiene regulations have governed the organisation of an otherwise very successful Health Camp; a letter from the Tibetan settlement of Tashiling shows how the old people there were protected from infection, and two representatives from the large Children Nepal (CN) family report on their hardships and successes in the Corona Year.

In this dnh brief, however, space should also be devoted to our excellent school programme. The lockdown did not stop at the schools. Initially, they remained closed for a good three months. In order to allow classes to be held again last summer, the government drew up detailed guidelines, but their implementation left much to be desired, because the prerequisites were generally not met. Therefore, most of the schools remained closed until the autumn. By developing workable solutions based on the given guidelines, our team was able to send most of our students back to school again during this phase. How this was done is described in one of the reports.

Last year, the report on our engagement in the school sector was presented. We asked the experts involved in the evaluation to summarise their findings from the study and the resulting conclusions for Nepal's educational efforts. They consider our MGML initiative to be a very successful model and strongly support its further promotion. In their opinion, it is pedagogically well thought-out, and with an innovative approach, it significantly upgrades the much criticised quality in the community primary schools. Furthermore, they emphasise that in many respects this model is tailor-made for the conditions in Nepal.

At its own initiative, the team of EEC, one of our NGOs entrusted with the project implementation, produced a 13-minute documentary film about the MGML. It is in Nepali and thus only a few of us can follow it linguistically, but the pictures and statements speak for themselves and are worth watching on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/zdoYWpsug4o>.

Let yourself be inspired and encouraged by how our partners in Nepal are coping with the difficult situation and remain faithful to us. In this sense, stay healthy and steadfast.

With kind regards

Andreas Falk  
- President -

**MGML, Education Programme of GNHA – Evaluation Study 2019/2020**  
**- Conditions, experiences, findings -**  
**– Prepared by Prof. Bhimsen Devkota & Prof. Min B. Bista**

**Background:**

A particular challenge for the Government of Nepal is how to meet the educational needs of rural populations living in scattered, thinly populated, hilly and/or mountainous regions. Those schools in Nepal are characterized by low student enrollment, shortage of teachers, scarcity of educational resources, and poor teaching and learning quality. Student enrollment in Nepal's public schools operating in rural, mountainous areas is on the decline due to the demographic shifts, increasing trend of migration from rural to urban areas and growing popularity of private for-profit schools. A typical classroom, especially at the primary level, has a small number of students representing different age and grade levels. Often, it becomes financially unsustainable for the state to allocate teachers for every grade a school has and every subject in the curriculum it teaches.

In the above context, it is not surprising that a number of academic assessments, including the National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) studies, have repeatedly reported a low level of learning achievement and poor quality of education (MOEST, 2017). Without an appropriate educational strategy that can address both the access and quality challenges facing rural areas, Nepal cannot fulfil its constitutional commitment of providing free and compulsory basic education to all children. Nor can it meet its international commitment of ensuring 'inclusive, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning for all' as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal Four (SDG 4).



*Joy of Learning*

To support Nepal in achieving its national and international educational commitment, the German Nepal Help Association (GNHA), together with its partner organizations, has been supporting the Ministry of Education (MOEST) to implement the Multigrade Multilevel (MGML) pedagogy in four districts of Bagmati Province, namely Dhading, Dolakha, Karve and Sindhupalchok. GNHA has been presently supporting 97 schools in four districts. The program aims to achieve sustainable improvement in the quality of teaching-learning in community schools at the basic level. It aims to promote a child-centred and individualized form of teaching that is innovative and creative for learning in rural areas' educational settings. The MGML method is widely adopted globally, and experts have well documented its cognitive and social benefits. Considering these realities, the Government of Nepal recognizes that the MGML pedagogy can be a viable policy option, and GNHA is one of the key leading partners in the development and promotion of this methodology.

### **Evaluation:**

This evaluation was undertaken in 2019/20 by an independent consultancy firm to assess the effectiveness of the MGML initiative and to find out whether and to what extent it contributed to improving teaching-learning in the participating schools. It also aimed to draw insights and lessons for possible mainstreaming of the MGML initiative into local and national education policies and strategies.

The study was conducted in Kavre, Sindhupalchok, and Dolakha districts. The sample comprised 13 MGML and 7 Non-MGML schools, the latter serving as a reference group for comparison. The study is not statistically representative. However it is representative in that MGML schools of different performance categories were selected: high, medium, and low performing schools.

The evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 MGML focal teachers and headteachers. Key informant interviews were carried out with four education focal persons and local representatives of Gaunpalika/Municipalities. FGDs were held with teachers, students, School Management Committee(SMC) members and Mothers' Groups. A total of 67 participants (25 male and 42 female) attended the FGDs. Likewise, an achievement test was administered among grade 3 students in 20 schools using a standard checklist designed by the Early Grade Reading Program, which the Ministry of Education used to assess students' reading level in Nepal. In addition, data on teaching-learning were collected through classroom observations undertaken in 13 MGML and 7 Non-MGML schools.

### **Main findings:**

The study attempted to assess the progress made by GNHA against its targets on many project interventions such as classroom set-up, equipment support, development of Teaching Learning Materials (TLM), regular supply of stationery materials and consumables, the formation of Mothers' Groups, etc. Data show that GNHA has achieved all of its planned quantitative targets. Its interventions included both school-based and community-based activities, which signifies that changing schools' learning conditions requires the mobilization of local communities, parents and local bodies. GNHA collaborated with local Municipalities in equipping classrooms with a set of resources, such as flooring and furniture, book corner, teaching materials. Local authorities were found highly enthusiastic about the initiative.

Data show a positive change in teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding the MGML pedagogy measured using several indicators. The program has had a favourable impact on teachers' professional development. Teachers felt better prepared to implement MGML pedagogy. Interestingly, no significant improvement was observed in school related administrative capacity, suggesting that more systematic efforts are needed to bring about changes in such schools' management.

The test of any educational initiative lies in its ability to improve students' performance. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) data revealed that the MGML pedagogy significantly boosted student performance. The overall mean score of the MGML students was statistically higher (68.78) as compared to the Non-MGML students (58.62) on all ten learning components ( $P=0.002$ ). The MGML students achieved significantly higher mean scores on picture description, separating the joint words, dictation, and calendar reading. Similarly, there was a positive impact of the program on student attendance, enrollment, grade promotion and dropout. The MGML schools showed better performance than the Non-MGML schools on all measures of comparison.



In education, one of the most difficult practices to change or reform is classroom practices. Teachers hold on to their age-old practices despite the training they attend. The GNHA demonstrated that it is possible to change classroom practices. The teachers

who had received training from GNHA translated the MGML strategies in the classrooms. They well understood the value of MGML. There was an impressive demonstration effect since the teachers without MGML training also were found to show appreciation for the MGML pedagogy and recognized its benefits. Learning conditions had significantly improved in classrooms according to the MGML procedures. Students in project schools were engaged in self-learning using the materials provided by GNHA. Compared to Non-MGML classrooms, MGML classrooms showed a favourable learning environment. Teacher motivation in MGML schools was found to be very high.

The project confirmed that local governments could be reliable partners in education reform. The cost-sharing arrangement established by the project ensured the sustainability of the program. Local communities, parents and Mothers' Groups were involved in school development, notably to support individual students educational paths.



MGML- Klasse before Corona

### Conclusion:

Overall, the project has demonstrated compelling results in enhancing teacher capacity, improving learning infrastructure, and increasing students' learning outcomes. The project schools had higher grade promotion and transition rates and lower student dropout rates than non-project schools. The project has demonstrated that it is possible to improve the learning conditions in rural schools and, above all, to increase the performance of the pupils with the targeted use of material resources, coherent teaching and learning materials, multi-level training of the teachers and temporary practical support.

In a nutshell, all indicators point out that this has been a "very successful" initiative. Therefore, for continued effectiveness, visible impact and sustainability, the study recommends that Ministry of Education formulate a national MGML policy with clear strategies for scaling up the initiative across Nepal's rural settings. It is also crucial that MOEST and GNHA collaborate to work out a dissemination strategy to share the best practices and lessons learnt from this initiative among the provincial and local governments across the country.

### School lessons during Corona - by Chandra Kumar Shrestha

The colourful hustle and bustle in the lovingly designed classrooms, with laughing and inquisitive children, was abruptly interrupted in Nepal as well last summer by the spread of the Corona virus.



*Lessons in small groups*

On the one hand, the increasing infections in the population, and on the other hand, a strict lockdown with school closures, made regular classes impossible.

The Nepalese Government had issued guidelines for alternative teaching methods at an early stage, and provided appropriate tools such as free TV channels, You-Tube videos, self-study material, and so on, to ensure the knowledge transfer.

However, the exact implementation of these methods was left to the local authorities and schools. And it was precisely here that our staff in Nepal provided assistance and guidance.

After a thorough analysis of the local school situations, the following three teaching methods were developed for the 116 schools we supervised with 5662 affected school children, and agreed upon with the local school authorities and schools. In particular, the occurrence of infections and the technical equipment of the schools, teachers and pupils were taken into account:

#### 1. Hello Learning

This programme was intended for high infection levels that did not allow for face-to-face teaching and took place mainly in areas where teachers, schools and schoolchildren only had a rudimentary access to computers and the Internet.

The schoolchildren were provided with working materials by the GNHA. The teachers phoned the children several times a week to ask about their progress in the respective subjects and to provide assistance.

In so doing, it was essential to involve the parents, in order to encourage the children to learn. Almost all the parents were supportive in an exemplary manner and were very grateful for this learning opportunity.

#### 2. Small Learning Community (SLC)

Here, face-to-face teaching was to take place in small learning units in alternating lessons, while adhering to hygiene measures. However, this method could only be implemented if the number of infections was manageable.

For this purpose, the GNHA financed and distributed hygiene kits in the respective schools so that risk-minimised learning was possible. These hygiene sets consisted of face masks, soap, disinfectant and infrared thermometers.

At this point, we would like to express our gratitude once again to the extremely generous donors.



### 3. School Early Resuming (SER)

This method provided for a return to face-to-face teaching. However, this was very much dependent upon the infection situation.

In this case, too, it was absolutely necessary for the GNHA to distribute hygiene kits to the schoolchildren and teachers. These measures will certainly accompany us for the next few months.

Depending on the situation, the schools also used all 3 methods in parallel.

The methods 2 (SLR) and 3 (SER) were the methods initially preferred by the teachers and schools, as these were the most in line with their previous teaching methods. However, these two methods could not be sustained with the increase in the number of infections and the school closures ordered by the authorities.



However, with a lot of methodological and technical support from the GNHA, the 1st method (Hello Learning) became more popular in the course of time. After the initial conversion difficulties, it turned out that this was the best method for teaching the pupils in the rural village schools in the infected areas.

The cooperation of our staff with the authorities who have also adopted the GNHA-developed system in the other MGML schools not supervised by the GNHA, was very gratifying. This will also help us to cooperate in this field in the future, and hopefully also to achieve joint financing.

### Conclusion:

Since the pupils in the schools with the MGML methodology are used to working independently on their learning content, it is much easier for these schools to convey the learning content of the curriculum to the pupils using alternative teaching methods, as well. Even under pandemic conditions, the MGML methodology has been shown to have many advantages for all the parties involved.



## The Dalits and their fates

– by Claudia Kurz

For many years, we have been working closely with "Children Nepal" in Pokhara, a very successful, independent institution that shows the poorest people a way out of their hopeless situation. At "Children Nepal" we are currently supporting 260 girls from the lowest caste (Dalit) in their school education and vocational training. During the Corona crisis, we set up an emergency fund from which, among other things, food packages could also be provided to the families.

Through a cooperative that we set up (Suryamukhi), the parents of these children have the opportunity to realise their dream of an independent, better life by being able to obtain loans for their micro-enterprise.

The following reports vividly show the impact of the programme on the girls concerned.

### We are happy! - Sharma Pariyar

*"It was not always like this. When I came to Pokhara from the mountains 6 years ago with my husband and 3 daughters, we had hopes of finding work and accommodation here. My husband worked as a day-labourer and had been drinking, the children were about to drop out of school. Hunger was a constant companion.*

*Fortunately, I came into contact with Sharada, the Director of Children Nepal. Our conversations inspired me and gave me courage.*

*I became a member of the Suryamukhi cooperative and took out a loan of about 1,000 EUR 11 months ago, which I now pay off with 40 EUR every month. With this money, I was able to rent a shop with 4 sewing machines, and I prepared the rooms and bought the necessary materials.*

*My husband now also works in the tailor shop and skilfully cuts the fabrics from which I then sew beautiful sarees and kurtas for my customers. The business is running very well.*

*During the lockdown, however, we also had to close our shop and subsequently we could not afford anything to eat. We were very grateful for the food supplies we had been receiving from "Children Nepal". Sharada from Children Nepal showed us during her visits how to protect ourselves from the virus; she distributed masks and soap and always had encouraging words for us, which helped us a lot.*

*During this time, the schools were also closed and I used this time to teach my daughter Swastika how to sew. In the meantime, she has completed the 12th form examination and I am very proud.*

*Our family is on the right track and today I am confident that our daughters will also follow a good path."*



Sharada (left) and Sharma Pariyar



Sharma Pariyar in her sewing room

## **I am a Dalit and want to become a businesswoman! – Sangita BK**

*"I have already successfully completed my first year of studies at the Janapriya Multiple College in Pokhara. My goal is to successfully complete my bachelor degree in "Business Studies" in three years.*

*In order that I can also continue my studies at home during the Corona pandemic, "Children Nepal" has organised Internet access for me, as well as the provision of books, exercise books and learning materials. Thanks to online courses, I have direct contact with my teachers.*

*At home I take care of the household, cook and help my two younger brothers with their homework.*

*My parents work together in their small iron repair workshop. They were able to expand this with the help of a loan from the Suryamukhi cooperative, and we are very happy that we had this chance. During the lockdown, the food aid and hygiene items from "Children Nepal" helped us a lot.*

*Every evening we reflect on the day together, so that we can see what we will still have to do the next day, and we are very happy that we can live together as a family, as this is not a matter of course.*

*When we came to Pokhara 22 years ago from a small village, my father was a day labourer and my mother did cleaning work whenever she had the opportunity. My grandparents also had to be taken care of. My parents could barely feed us and could not take care of us, either. My father began to drink and every evening our parents quarreled.*

*Since we belong to the Dalit caste and were poor, our neighbours in Pokhara also hated us, which made life even more difficult. The family's salvation came when my mother met Sharada from "Children Nepal". Sharada then took over the care of our school education and provided us with assistance. She also showed my mother the possibility of self-employment with the help of the cooperative.*

*Today we are happy when our neighbours ask my mother to play the drum for them at their family celebrations, because she is really good at it and makes everyone feel very happy. Thank you Children Nepal!"*



*Sangita outside her College*

## Help to elder tibetan citizens

Losar, the Tibetan New Year, always takes place in February. In our New Year wishes, we asked how the old people in the settlement were doing and how they were being protected from infection. We received the following lines from the head of the Tibetan settlement in Tashiling, Mr. Tenzin Kunga,

*"Thank you very much for your warm wishes for our Tibetan New Year.*

*Corona has had an impact on the lives of millions of people around the world. This is also the case in Nepal. But if you look at the whole country, our community has fared better in terms of Corona prevention. We did not have a single death in our community. The elders were advised to stay indoors and the younger ones were asked to wear masks and take the necessary precautions when venturing outside. There was no outbreak of covid in our settlement. The settlement was sealed off from the outside by us on 24th March and this continued for a few months. Necessary precautions are still being taken. A special prevention committee consisting of three nurses and a Tibetan doctor was formed and they are still carrying out their work. Vitamins and Tibetan herbal medicine were also distributed to prevent the disease, instead of the actual medicine itself, which has yet to be developed. Corona awareness programmes were conducted whereby all the necessary precautions were taken. Every week, a hypochlorite solution is sprayed in all the nooks and crannies of the settlement. When people from outside Pokhara come to the settlement, they are quarantined for a few days and a PCR test is done to check whether they can be allowed into the settlement or not."*



*Tibetan Camp*

## Health Camp in Corona times - by Dr. Richard Storkenmaier

Since the earthquakes in 2015, the GNHA has been conducting Health Camps about 3-4 times a year and lasting several days, at its school locations in the remote mountain villages. Unfortunately, the Corona pandemic and the lockdown in Nepal have forced us to take a break as from spring 2020.



*The arduous road to the Health Camp*

The low Corona infection figures in Nepal since the beginning of this year have finally encouraged us to venture into running a Health Camp again. Our dispensary team set about developing a sophisticated concept to examine and treat hundreds of patients daily under hygienically safe conditions.

To name just a few of the most important measures:- all the patients were equipped with surgical masks, and all the staff with FFP2 masks.

A strict spatial distance between the patients was ensured, e.g. by markings on the floor, and the staff strictly monitored its compliance. Only as many people as absolutely necessary were allowed in the treatment rooms, and health classes were only held in small groups.

The focus was on hygiene rules to combat the Corona pandemic. What we call the AHA rules in Germany, are the SMS rules (**S**anitation, **M**ask, **S**ocial distancing) in Nepal.

Thus, our staff were able to conduct a hygienically safe and successful three-day camp from 23-25.2.21 in the Sindhupalchowk district. The numbers alone are impressive. A total of 1,773 patients were seen in 3 days. There were 101 ultrasound examinations, 548 eye examinations, 632 general medical examinations and 220 gynaecological examinations. The dentist saw 373 patients and extracted a total of 134 teeth.

In addition to health education, medication and treatment on site, the identification of patients in need of further treatment is also an important task of the Health Camps. Our cooperation partners, Retina Support Nepal and Om Chabil Dental, not only provide the Health Camps with their specialist staff, free of charge, but also enable low-cost, further treatment in their clinics. Cataract operations are always free of charge.

Internal medicine and gynaecology patients are referred to the appropriate specialist clinics. If necessary further treatment exceeds the financial resources of the patients, our Poor Patient Fund is used to provide financial support.

Fortunately, not a single one of the 1,773 patients was clinically suspected of having a Corona infection during the Health Camp. This is consistent with the very low number of cases in Nepal in February. One can only hope that the new wave of infection currently building up in India (as of the end of March) will not spread too widely to Nepal. COVID vaccinations have also been taking place in Nepal for a few weeks, thanks to vaccine donations mainly from India and China. As of 13.4.21, 5.5 vaccine doses per 100 inhabitants have been administered in Nepal (in comparison with 23.1/100 in Germany at the same point in time).

## **We express our thanks**

**to all of you who accompany and support us so faithfully and have stood by our side so reliably, also especially in the previous challenging months.**

Our special thanks go to Maria Krinner who asked for donations for the GNHA instead of receiving gifts on the occasion of her birthday, as well as to the grandchildren of the Vonhoff family for foregoing Christmas and birthday gifts for the benefit of the Dalit girls at Children Nepal.

The pupils of the Melissantes-Gymnasium (grammar school) in Arnstadt/Thuringia have again sold home-made Advent wreaths in support of the GNHA. We are delighted and would like to thank them warmly.

Christel Graf and Emmi Zehnle unfortunately had to forego their Christmas markets last year due to Corona. Nevertheless, they managed to collect donations amounting to a four-digit sum solely with their hand-sewn masks. This great success is followed by a big THANK YOU from our part.

Also, Dr. Christine Reuter and Peter Schöderlein were again able to attract numerous donors through their presentations, thus providing valuable support for our Dispensary and our Health Camps. We thank them very much indeed.

**With your help, we can and will also master the upcoming challenges.**

## **GNHA membership fees**

The membership fees were due and debited in March, where a SEPA mandate had been submitted to us.

Fee for individual members:- 24,- EUR/year

Fee for family members:- 36,- EUR/year

We would like to thank the many members who have made an additional donation to the membership fee, which has been very low for many years.

For all the members who have not yet submitted us a SEPA mandate:-

Please help us to save administrative costs and submit us a direct debit mandate. You can find the form on our website under "Downloads". You are also welcome to contact us by telephone.

## **Dates and news**

For news on dates and about our projects, please visit our homepage: [www.dnh-stuttgart.org](http://www.dnh-stuttgart.org)

### **Contact with the GNHA**

Deutsch-Nepalische Hilfsgemeinschaft e.V. Schulze-Delitzsch-Straße 22, 70565 Stuttgart

Tel.: +49 (0)711 45 96-488

Fax: +49 (0)711 99 77-96 58

Mail: [buero@dnh-stuttgart.org](mailto:buero@dnh-stuttgart.org)

**DONATION ACCOUNT:** Commerzbank Stuttgart

IBAN: DE 03 6008 0000 0182 4971 00, BIC: DRESDEFF600

The association is recognised as a non-profit organisation. Donations are tax deductible. Donation receipts are issued after the end of the year, and on special request also beforehand. Last notice of exemption 18.06.2019

