

CHANCE

Charity Helping the Advancement
of Nepali Children's Education



Autumn Newsletter 2008

Dear Sponsors & Supporters,

Namaste from the Republic of Nepal!

In this newsletter we will talk about the current situation in Nepal including the political situation as well as the disaster in the Koshi district.

You can read about our successful partnership. We have teamed up with local organisation CWIN to improve the educational facilities for children in the Kaski district. Other new project initiatives include making education more accessible for child workers, with mobile classes, and supporting a transit centre for street children to receive rehabilitation and reintegration back to formal education.

Of course, running alongside these projects is the sponsorship programme where all the children are progressing with their studies.

On the run up to Christmas, please remember to think of us when buying presents, we have a stock of Nepali pashmina shawls & scarves, jewellery, leather belts & bags and lots of fun felting products for children. Please call Cheryl to order any presents on 01889 500653.

In the meantime, seasonal greetings!

Best regards,

The CHANCE Management Team

Autumn / Winter 2008 Calendar

Fund Raising Dates: Come and See us at:

- Anytime!, 35 The Meadows, Kingstone, Staffs
21st Nov. 6.30pm Kingstone Village Hall. Staffs
- 29th Nov. 10 am to 1pm Claverdon Church Hall, Warwickshire.
- 29th – 30th Nov, Appleby in Westmoorland
- 22nd -23rd Nov, Kendal Film Festival
- 27-29 March 2009, Great Outdoor Show NEC

Trek in the Himalaya with
The Responsible Travellers
and visit CHANCE.

24 Feb – 16 March Visit to Nepal

Join Trustee Cheryl Stacey & friends on a trip of a lifetime in the Himalayas. This trekking event includes:

- Trek to Annapurna Base Camp and Machhapuchhare Base Camp an area known as "The Sanctuary",
- Optional Day White Water Rafting
- Day trip with the families supported by CHANCE
- Free day for you to make home visits or see other projects.

If you would like to know more please contact either: Cheryl: 01889500653

Cheryl@chanceforchildren.org.uk or

Tina at info@theresponsibletravellers.com

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Registered Charity Number 1107201

CHANCE Newsletter

The New Republic of Nepal

This year has been a major milestone in the history books of Nepal. The country has emerged after a 12 years of insurgency as a democratic republic. The historic election was held on April 10th amidst much speculation and international media attention. The event was reported a success by the international monitors, however, there are many conflicting views as to how fair and free the voting system actually was. It is undisputed that there were murders of candidates and intimidation of voters in various parts of the country.

A majority was won by the Maoist communist party. It has taken four months since the election for the President (a non political role) and Prime Minister, leader of the country to be appointed. The monarchy has been abolished and the members of the royal family de-robed of their luxuries and powers of authority. However, they are still residing in Nepal and have not been exiled as some expected may happen.

Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias "Prachanda" was sworn in as Prime Minister on Friday 15th August, and the mixed cabinet took their oath for ministerial positions a week later.

Meanwhile, the aftermath of the insurgency years is still to be concluded. The UN are working to gain release of 3000 child soldiers still in the Maoist cantonments. The opposition is demanding the rehoming of 3000 displaced families due to insurgency & location for 157 still missing persons to be identified as well as property to be reclaimed by 1379 people who had their houses and land requisitioned during the war.

We now have to see if the government can unite the country and work towards peace & sustainable development.

Koshi Flood Disaster

In his first week as Prime Minister, Dahal had to face the biggest flood disaster in Nepal in recent times.

In the east of Nepal we have one of the largest hydro-electricity projects, on the Sapta Koshi river. This region of the Terai is prone to effects of the monsoon, but this year the impact has been unprecedented. As a result of the river breaching its embankment and flooding the region, there are 50,000 homeless refugees. The local populations are now marooned on the main east-west highway which is the only land now not submerged under water. With the river changing its course the number of villages affected are increasing by the day. The waters have not yet finished their devastation. This disaster brings not only the immediate social issues of homes and land being washed away, but there are also major infrastructure and long term economic impacts. The transmission tower supporting the line of transfer of power between India and Nepal has been hit by the flood and thus rendering the country with massive power shortages. The Nepal Electricity Authority has imposed up to 21 hours load shedding a week, which at this time of year is previously unknown.

The Terai is the "basket of Nepal" bringing crops to the rest of the country. With 30,000 head of cattle affected and 300million rupees (£2.5M) worth of crops ruined in the floods the affect will be felt nationwide. The main highway is blocked for transfer of goods and supplies and the country is at a stand still. The immediate disaster relief from the UN food programme has supplied food for the victims, with 5kg of rice and 1kg of lentils per person. This will not last long and the food impact both for the immediate term and long term are huge. Already this summer the country has seen a 25% increase on all foodstuffs due to rising transport costs, now there will be a weak harvest giving rise to shortages that will inevitably further increase the prices.

We have sent all donated clothes to the Koshi victims, some of whom are now wearing your jumpers and leftover fleeces & gears from trips in Nepal. Those of us in Nepal have also donated money & food and we hope for the continuous rains to stop to allow for remedial work to be undertaken and for the victims to have relief from the elements.

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Projects Update

Partnership with CWIN

We have started a new partnership with a local NGO – CWIN (Child Workers in Nepal) who are the biggest and oldest child rights organisation in Nepal. Our initial project with them has set up educational support for children in Kaski district. This programme is similar to our sponsorship programme and provides stationary, uniforms and support necessary for children from deprived backgrounds to attend school. We have so far put 15 children into school, which next school year we will extend further.

In addition, one school which is attended 90% by dalits (which are the untouchable caste) has received additional support with floorings for the classrooms, and we hope to set up an international school exchange programme with this school.

This project was helped with the aid of volunteer Julie Huynh who spent 5 days visiting all the families seeking support from us to collect the evaluation data and verify the neediness. Staying in local home stays and working along side the field officers we hope that she also got a good insight into the workings of the charity. Her help was invaluable in setting up the programme. Thanks Julie!

We hope to extend our partnership to support other projects such as a transit centre for street children and further school equipments.

Neil Johnson Memorial Fund

We are delighted to tell you that these funds were invested in a secondary school - Sri Buddha Lower Secondary School, Chhampi, Lalitpur, Nepal. The government has made a mandate that all schools should extend their facilities for secondary school, most of which are receiving no grants to undertake the necessary works. This school is one such case which was under threat of closure without the necessary classrooms and facilities to teach the additional grades. The school was selected as it has a very large catchment and the surrounding population is low caste, extremely poor and in the greatest need. Careful to ensure this was a sustainable project we worked with the village committee to review their contribution to the project. The locals provided:

1. Project coordinator
2. Funding for teaching staff ongoing
3. All members of the community gave 2 days volunteer labour for the building works – a considerable sacrifice given these people earn 100NRS (less then £1) a day working at quarries breaking stones and live very much hand to mouth.
4. Overall ownership and delivery of the project

The project was undertaken during the dry season and was helped by a group of Scottish volunteers visiting Nepal for a study tour with The Responsible Travellers. They worked for 5 days alongside the local community and stayed in the local homes for a cultural exchange programme.

Here is what the Principal: Mr Ragu Baniya had to say: "The students and the community are very happy as the school is able to continue and be upgraded to Lower Secondary. The work has created an incentive for the community to engage in improving facilities. We have been inspired also to build new toilets to relieve congestion, so the students have more and improved toilets. The school facilities are also now being used for adult education in out of school hours in the morning and evening for previous school drop outs aged between 15 and 45 years age. The catchment of the school includes 3 wards of Lele VDC, 2 wards of Chompi, and gravel worker immigrants mainly from poor districts of Nepal including Udaipur, Makwanpur and Ramechap".

Please see overleaf for photos.....

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Work on the school site – a great community atmosphere with visiting volunteers from Scotland working alongside the local members.



Some of the villagers gathered for photos with the volunteers



Some of the local girls !!



Reality! Stone chipperrrs workng by the riverside to earn enough for a rice meal.



Opening Ceremony with flower garlands and Tikkas to celebrate the school building!

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Child Updates

It is a sorry fact of success that there are too many children to now give detailed individual updates in the general newsletter. We will however, send separately a news update to all sponsors of the children. Here we would like to share with you some of the news of families who have experienced some changes in the last few months. The progress reports are mixed with some families moving onwards and upwards and others struggling to make ends meet.

Firstly we welcome Kesu, Pasang, & Choyti all of whom are sherpa children, Suman Tamang and Durga Pun Magar who are newly enrolled this year.

Smritee Lama has this year enrolled in boarding at her school as her mother joined the many thousands of Nepali migrant workers heading to the Middle East. Her departure was a very emotional time for us all here as we knew she was forced into the decision due to the poverty in which she was living. A chance to earn better money abroad is very appealing, but of course comes with risk of exploitation. These decisions are for the family to consider and make their own choices. We are not here to tell them what they can and can't do, but hopefully provide neutral support and advice during difficult times. We ensured that Roshini was registered with the Nepali consulate in Beirut and we are delighted to have heard that she is placed in a nice home where she is working as a maid. In the meanwhile, we see Smritee as often as possible on her day off on Saturdays. Although separated she is able to provide for her daughter in a way that she was unable to do here in Nepal and in the long term we hope that their prospects will be improved.

The Magar family continue to struggle with basic necessities of every day life. The father once attempted suicide and since then the children are afraid to stay with him. The children are missing classes due to illness and so we have decided to move them to a school nearer their home so they do not need to travel by bus. This should make some improvement.

Lhakpa and Lama sherpa are continuing to do well at school. However, the family has lost their maternal grandmother recently. She died in the village where the children's family originate, and Sera, their father travelled back to help with the rituals of the cremation. Mum had to stay home to care for the girls. Lamu and Tsering Dolka continue to be best of friends at school and Tsering Dolkar is a top performer coming 1st in class and also getting an award for for general politeness and cleanliness.

Meanwhile the other sherpas are doing well. Choyti and Nangpuri are developing and making good progress. Hindu and Choo Gyaltzen are themselves continuing to develop personalities and becoming stronger young boys, however their academic performance is not so good as they are less gifted.

Aditya and Anjan Moktan are still living in the same room. Their mother Sanu works very hard to support them. Anjan we hope will scrape through his exams, a very late starter, our highest hope is for a pass. His younger brother Aditya is much stronger academically, helped with his early enrollment.

Urgen, Sange Dhorje, Tsering Dolkar and Karma Muscan are continuing at the Wilson Academy. Urgen is a great performer with the teachers all very proud of her performance, the other 3 are struggling and are now taking extra classes after school to catch up on their studies.

Sanju Rai has now moved away from her home nearby to Raijen Rai and Prabesh Gautam to a new home in Kopan. Her guardian Kedar now has a new house full of children and relatives and has found new cases to help. Meanwhile Prabesh and Raijen miss their old play mate they remain in the community they know well. Raijen is performing very well, and Prabesh needs to concentrate on his studies as he is easily distracted.

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CHANCE Fundraising Autumn 2008

Profits for the charity made last month from sales of Nepali goods is over £4000. Two magnificent sale venues broke all records!

The first sale was at the invitation of The Ryleys School at Alderly Edge in Cheshire. They elected CHANCE to be the recipient of their Harvest Festival gifting. Cheryl went to talk about Nepal to the school boys and at the Harvest Festival she spoke about CHANCE to the parents. The school hall was set up with all the sales stock. Our goods were very well received and raised over £1800 profit.

Our thanks to Ann Balderson, one of our child sponsors, for inviting us and to the parents and staff who purchased their Christmas cards and gifts.

The second sale was an Open House Day at Cheryl's Kingstone home. Her friends and village continue to support the charity with unflinching loyalty. They come back time and again to buy presents and cards. We are so grateful for their continued enthusiasm and last month alone their purchases raised over £2200 profit.

CHANCE must here extend grateful thanks to

The Responsible Travellers who gift a vast number of our sales items, thereby enabling me to make 100% profit on those sales.

House parties are a very good way of raising money for CHANCE. Our products vary from beautiful pashmina articles, leather goods, jewellery

and felt items. The pre Christmas season when everyone is buying presents is the best time.

Do think about hosting a sale either in your home, your school or women's club. Our prices are extremely favourable as we have no middle men.

Cheryl Stacey

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Anyone for a challenge???.....

..... Here's the story of two of CHANCE's supporters

Last year my partner and I decided to cycle from 'house to house'. Let me explain. My house is in Pateley Bridge, North Yorkshire, and my partner Stephen's house is near Bressuire, Poitou -Charentes in France, so it seemed a reasonable challenge and adventure to cycle from one to the other...over 500 miles.

You have to understand first that neither of us are cyclists. We'd done short pottering bike rides locally in the Dales and one other ride a couple of years previously, but nothing major. The exercise bike in the gym had seen more of our bottoms than our bicycles had.

Training was not easy since it had to be fitted in around full time work and part time studying for a Masters degree and a teenage daughter but we did what we thought was going to be enough.

Eventually the day arrived, training was done, B+B's were booked, ferry organised, panniers packed, granddad turned up to 'babysit' and we were off.

The sense of adventure was fantastic as we cycled out of our training area, down off the Dales to then skirt the Pennines as we travelled south to Portsmouth, trying to notice things of interest for recording later. Everything from road kill, architecture, motorists (good, bad and appalling), canals and beautiful countryside. Our stops on the England side were: near Doncaster (long day, awful pub), Nottingham (short day, because we were visiting Stephen's daughter), Leicester (noisy neighbour in room next door), Oxford (great Youth Hostel, nice Indian meal), Whitchurch (comfiest bed ever) and then a visit to the museum to see the Victory before boarding the ferry in Portsmouth.

Cycling off the ferry was fun because suddenly we are on the wrong side of the road! We had a fair idea of where we were supposed to be but hadn't reckoned on road works and a diversion! After a little while we worked out where we were and navigated our way out of town.

On the French side, we had no accommodation arranged and decided to just take pot luck. This was even more exciting! We spent the first night in France in a small town with a ruined castle and a lovely walk around a fishing lake. The hotel we found had the most awful old fashioned décor and a toilet beside the bed! The next day proved long, hot and hard. By late afternoon we began to seek accommodation, but nothing was materialising. It was getting later and legs were getting tired. I really began to think that we'd be sleeping under a hedge in our waterproofs, which would have been a laugh, but I really wanted a shower more than anything. Stephen asked in numerous places but nothing...just try at the next town.

Eventually we came to a small town where there were two hotels on the main street. Hopes soared, only to be dashed as one was shut and the other had closed down! A wonderfully nice young man in a bar had details of 2 chambre d'hotes and even offered to ring them for us as well! Bingo. 2 kilometres away, past a beautiful chateau, was my new best friend Nellie, who fussed around us, provided a hot shower, a squashy bed and delicious breakfast for not much money.



The last day of the journey was fabulous. It was sunny, there was no rush (since we knew where we'd be staying...at the house) and we were approaching familiar ground. Funny though how your mind forgets the steep climb out of town and that nasty little hill just before you get to the house where we eventually arrived, all smiles and no blisters.

Of course a little snap shot like this cannot begin to describe all the laughs along the way, but I simply want to encourage anyone who has a fancy for an adventure, to do something 'en velo'... and go for it, no matter how big or small the challenge. It was so worth it, not only because we had a great time together, but because we raised £681.50 for CHANCE in the process.

Perhaps we should consider organising a big CHANCE challenge in the future? Sue and Stephen. x