



HAUS DER HOFFNUNG – HILFE FÜR NEPAL e.V.

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Vorsitzende: Ellen Dietrich, Kurt-Schumacher-Str. 241, D-73529 Schwäbisch Gmünd,

Tel. 07171/ 89607, Fax. 07171-9973355, e-mail: info@hausderhoffnung-nepal.de

Schriftführerin: Toni Maria Lang, Sandweg 13, 73527 Schwäbisch Gmünd, Tel. 07171-64594

Schatzmeister: Joachim Müller, Schechinger Str. 9, 73572 Heuchlingen, Tel. 07174-8044147

Kreissparkasse Ostalb, IBAN im SEPA-Verfahren: DE 44 6145 0050 1000 0511 51

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Newsletter No. 38

Dear friends,

the first of our young people stand now on their own feet—or are about to. This newsletter focuses on them as well as the educational system itself. Ganga and Beni were among the first children in the organization's newly established house back in 2002. Srijana joined in 2007 when Navaraj took over a second group of children. Kedar as well as two brothers named Dinesh and Prakash were among the so-called external beneficiaries who never lived with us and whose parents defrayed some of their costs. Also, in connection with an article that appeared in the German weekly paper, ZEIT ONLINE magazine, on September 15th 2016, this newsletter addresses the vital importance to us of our foreign volunteers.



Ganga was the first of our children to graduate and find employment. After class 12 which equates to high school graduation, she completed a one year teacher training course and has for two years enthusiastically taught children up to class 6 in a Nepali “English Medium” School. Her training focused on replacement of the common teacher-centered teaching with lively interactive methods. Teacher training in Nepal has usually consisted of mere training in the actual subject matter rather than any sort of pedagogical training. Teachers in kindergarten and the lower classes can be hired to teach directly following their completion of class 10 respectively class 12 though their salary is accordingly low.

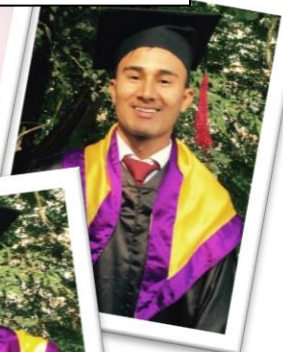
Teachers with Ganga's training are in high demand these days and get a relatively high salary. Ganga's first job in Bhaktapur earned her a monthly salary of around 160 US dollars. However, having to cover the costs of rent for her small room with kitchenette and bathroom as well as utilities, food, toiletries etc. leave her with only about 15 dollars for other things such as doctor visits and reserve assets for retirement. In contrast to Germany, there is no such thing as health insurance and pension funds in Nepal. Now she has found a better paid position in Kathmandu and is able to live in our girls' apartment with her financial contribution.

Srijana, Navaraj's sister, completed the same training a year later and teaches at our childrens' school. She and Ganga are studying at the same time at their own expense to achieve a Bachelor degrees.

A few weeks ago, Beni and Dinesh participated in graduation ceremonies in connection with their Bachelor degrees in hotel management. Beni wants to seek employment abroad, while Dinesh wants to stay in Nepal for now. Certainly, both men will find well-paid appropriate positions in good hotels thanks to their excellent education.



Above: Srijana
Below: Beni



Dinesh



Kedar



Prakash

Kedar joined us after class 10. He studied science in order to become a civil engineer, and his father even sold property to be able to pay the high tuition fees. Shelter and food were covered by our organization as Kedar's family, which consisted of him, his parents and his two sisters, would otherwise not have been able to make ends meet. With no transit connections, Kedar had to leave his home village for class 11 already and rent a room in the city to be able to complete his studies.

Kedar completed his last exams in September 2014. Even though he was told that he had passed, he did not receive his diploma until spring 2016 (!). The common waiting time for a diploma is in fact six to twelve months; however due to the earthquake and petrol embargo, Kedar had to wait an additional six months for his. Without his diploma, he could of course not find any suitable work and had to move from job to job to make ends meet. His employers took advantage of his circumstances and, while profiting from his knowledge and skills, only paid him the salary of a common laborer. Our organization was able to provide him with a key opportunity in giving him the responsibility to rebuild his own village as well as Gokul's village (see Newsletters 36 and 37). Since June of this year, Kedar, now 26, has been hired to help deal with the central water supply in Eastern Nepal which was partly wrecked by the earthquake. New water supply projects have since then emerged, and because it is a government job (though unfortunately temporary), the salary is good and he is able to save funds toward study for a Master's degree.

Prakash has always been among the most skilled of his peers. After receiving his Bachelor's degree in trophology (diet and nutrition), he is also still waiting for his diploma. It is of particular concern to him that despite his intellect and education level he is not able to find an adequate position. Adding to his personal disappointment, his poor family, mostly illiterate and living in the village, cannot understand how someone doesn't get offered a highly-paid job after 15 years of advanced education and training. Prakash would love to work toward a Master's degree, but our organization is unable to cover the related costs. There are too many needy children who deserve the chance of basic education before contributing to further one individual's education at higher or even the highest academic level. We just hope that Prakash won't be discouraged but will keep trying until he succeeds, even when it means to work in low-paid and simple jobs.

Training and university studies in Nepal—just like basic education—come with a lot of costs. Additionally, apprenticeships and on-the-job training are not compensated, and

even for internships support is not provided for work clothing, food or transit. Most training programs and university studies programs come with fees often between 30 and 180 US dollars per month. Additionally, there are supplementary charges for school or training uniforms, books, notebooks, writing utensils, fares, as well as hidden costs (such as the fees for an application form that can cost between 8 and 14 US dollars). So overall there are additional monthly costs of 30 to 60 US dollars associated with academic or vocational training.

For me as a German these high costs for education are stunning, almost shocking, because in Germany education is free even at university level. Education has increasingly become a lucrative and important business sector in Nepal. Of course, there are the additional costs of rent, utilities, and living expenses which amount to about 160 dollars per month.

ZEIT ONLINE magazine published an article about orphanages in Nepal and the help of foreign volunteers. As everyone, who is familiar with our organization, knows that we always have volunteers on site, we feel it necessary to comment on the article which pillories what it refers to as dubious volunteers in fake orphanages. Please refer to our Newsletter 33 from July 2014 in which we specifically discussed how we conduct our program in our home that we intentionally refer to as a home for needy children, not an orphanage. In response to the ZEIT ONLINE article and its opposition to volunteering in Nepali orphanages, we need to strongly state how indispensable our helpers are. Our local leadership appreciates their help, and we could not do without them.

Our volunteers' day starts early, about 6 a.m. All school periods except for study of Nepali are taught in English. Therefore, our volunteers engage in individual study with some of the children who are either new in our home or have never or only been to school a brief time before their arrival, even though they are already 10 or 13 years old. Tutoring in Nepali is done by our own young people. Not all children are equally skilled, and the volunteers also study with those who have been with us for a longer time but still struggle in school.

About 7:30 a.m. our volunteers do some exercises and children's songs and rhymes which our children immensely enjoy. When the children come home from school in the afternoon, everything (study time, exercises) is repeated. Because of this individual training involving our dedicated volunteers, many children were even able to skip a class, and weaker students are at least able to successfully complete their grade.

On top of that, the volunteers use their hobbies and talents to plan leisure activities. Our boys have virtually become soccer and basketball pros, and the girls enjoy acrobatics and contemporary dances. Because our volunteers are able to provide such activities, many children have formed their own "groups" and rehearse new performances themselves which they present during the "family afternoon" on Saturday. The volunteers have also taught some of our children to play the



Our current volunteers:
Back: Sunil, Robert, Jakob, Charlotte, Sarah, Nora, Gwen,
Anna-Marleen, Tessa
Front: Ben, Anton, Anna, Caro, Anna, Jan, Franka, Lea

flute, the guitar, and the piano, with continuity of these skills insured through the weekly visit of a Nepali music teacher. Our children can broaden their horizons—they have heard their first aria, have seen ballet, and can practice contemporary Western as well as traditional Nepali dances. They learn songs in different languages, act in small dramas, draw, do handicrafts, learn about Western festivals and customs such as Halloween and Christmas, but of course also celebrate their own Nepali festivals as well. Such meaningful activities strengthen the personalities of the children and serve as a bulwark against the shiny yet false illusions of Bollywood movies. They are able to engage rather than passively sitting around and ultimately develop appreciation for intercultural encounters.

The scope of our free time activities can be viewed in a five-minute video on YouTube that a Nepali man who has been living in Germany for two years filmed during one of our Saturday family afternoons. The interviews and narration are in German: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iu5z6yBTA48>
(tag words: „Haus der Hoffnung – Nepal“, Salve Weltkanal)

Our children of course develop close relationships to our volunteers, and when volunteers return home, tears are shed on both sides. Often close pen pal relationships develop.

If you live in the U.S. and want to support this organization, you can do so by sending a check to the following American organization that is kind enough to transfer your contribution to our account in Nepal and to issue a tax refund slip to you.

Nepal Hope
38112 Young Dr
Fremont CA 94536.

You can also make a contribution by using their web page www.nepalhope.org.

Please specify our organization by stating „for SHN“ in both cases. „SHN“ stands for Self Help Nepal, the name of my organization in Nepal.

On behalf of our children, I thank you for your payers and valuable support. Please maintain your loyalty to us. We need you more than ever in continuing our work.

We wish you a happy holiday season

Ellen Dietrich

