

Gorkha District Health and Educational Development Scheme

Headquarters: Witches Ride, Whites Hill, Stock, Ingatestone, Essex, CM4 9QD, UK
Telephone: +44 (0)1277 840406 e-mail: info@leighton.org Web Site <http://www.nepal.co.uk/>
Trustees: Joy Leighton, Lloyd Davies, Neil Ferguson, Christine Marion, Michael Marion, Linda Mason

Registered Charity Number 1069611

Chairwoman's Report

This has been a year of consolidation and implementation of measures decided as a result of the visit to Gorkha by Chris Marion (medical adviser) and myself in October 1998. On our return, we appointed Suresh Shrestha as our co-ordinator in Nepal. A committee was set up in Gorkha comprising heads of local non-government organisations (NGOs), medical institutions and schools, in order to create a cohesive planning arrangement among all interested parties. This also enables them to liaise with us, and with each other on a more centralised basis.

Locally recruited volunteers and those volunteering through the web site have formed a valuable link with our friends in Nepal. They have worked with understanding and commitment in the schools, hospitals, and clinics, as well as with NGOs such as the Gorkha Women's Association, the Youth Movement for the Environment, and The Child First. All the volunteers not only pay their own expenses, but also raise money and take equipment with them to help in schools, hospitals and clinics. As the Nepalese people are so friendly and fun loving, the volunteers have a varied experience, and most of them express a wish to return. Once is not enough! They now hail from all over the world, including Canada, USA, Australia, France, Germany, Hungary and Thailand. We add our thanks to those of the Nepalese whom they have helped. I am in daily contact with potential and actual volunteers through Internet.

Some of our funds have been raised by Chris Marion, but we have been helped by Rotary and Lions Clubs, as well by members of W.I.'s, churches, smaller clubs and individuals. To all these we give our heartfelt thanks. Without their input we would not be able to give so much help. Our expenses are few, as the Trustees work without remuneration and bear most of the day-to-day expenses themselves.

I wish to thank all those who have helped us during the year, including Bryn Davies (publicity and free use of computer service to our Secretary) Kay Chapman (teaching and vocational recruitment) and Linda Mason (GWA and teaching) We are very pleased that Linda Mason has agreed to become a Trustee of the Charity, and welcome her as a new official member.

I would also like to thank Chelmerland Ltd who have provided me with stationery and office equipment, including computer and printer, as well as setting up and paying the initial expenses for Internet and Web Site. These have been of inestimable benefit to the Charity.

Finally, may I thank all my fellow trustees for their efforts to make this a viable and worthwhile Charity.

Joy Leighton
Chairwoman

HEALTH

1. £1200 has been given to the Youth for the Environment Group in Gorkha to fund six outreach clinics for a year. We will continue to provide this annual sum so long as the scheme is viable, and providing we have the funds.

2. A sum of £800 was given to the Child First, which no longer received funding from other sources. This will help them to continue some of their activities. These include the support of outreach clinics, handicapped children and their school sponsorship.

3. Gorkha Hospital

The water supply for the hospital, which was promoted by Chris Marion, and funded by a local Nepalese donor, is now in good working order. Three volunteer medical students recruited via the web site, have furthered Chris's efforts to improve hygiene at the hospital. These volunteers took out medical equipment and funds to help the hospital. They also helped The Child First with two special medical camps held in very remote areas. A teaching volunteer accompanied the medical students. Arrangements have been made for several more medical students, from the UK and elsewhere in the world, to visit Gorkha during the coming year. We hope more will join them so that we have a continuity of work, methods and ideas.

4. The Lions Club Ambulance

The Ambulance, belonging to the Lions Club, which was involved in an accident on the tortuous roads, is now under repair. Donations from local Lions Clubs contributed £200 towards the £800 bill. We have decided to give the remainder of the money. An ambulance is essential in an area where the nearest hospital, with full facilities, is over 60 miles away. We are hoping to raise funds to recover this sum.

5. Nursing Sponsorship

We agreed to sponsor Puja Aryal, a young girl from Gorkha, to take a nursing training course at the newly founded training school for community nursing in Gorkha. This facility provides for trainees to spend 15 months preparing to be community nurses to work specifically in the outlying regions of Gorkha District. This is where help is most needed. Puja's training will cost approximately £500, to include uniform and books. We hope to sponsor more girls to take up this training. They would then be able to return to their villages to look after the health of their communities.

6. Youth Movement Clinic

The Clinic, which we have agreed to build for the Youth Environment Movement, will be used as a centre for outreach clinics. It will also provide additional facilities for a clinic, where staff and volunteers will work in liaison with the hospital. The Youth Movement (which runs outreach clinics) has raised the money for the land, and £3000 has been offered by a building and surveyors' association in the UK, to be matched by our Charity to make up to the full amount of £6,500. An engineer, who works in Nepal, has offered, via the Web, to survey the area. This is with a view to the possibility of joining the water and sanitation system to serve houses in the surrounding area. Brian Lewis, the engineer, is going to Gorkha in January to make the survey. Lloyd Davies has drawn up the plans, and a builder has offered to oversee the work and give instruction to young Nepalese at all stages. Kay Chapman is arranging for help from engineering and building faculties in colleges to send volunteers to help with instruction and construction with the Nepalese trainees. They will also be taught how to build simple latrines and maintenance techniques suited to domestic and community buildings.

EDUCATION

1. Appointment

Dr Neil Ferguson has been appointed Adviser for the Drabya Shah Campus, and is currently helping the Campus Chief, Mohan Shrestha in this capacity.

2. Sponsorship

So far, over 100 children have been sponsored to attend school by our contacts in the UK. This includes 31 by the Chelmer Bridge Rotary Club (who are giving £300 annually) 18 by ladies from Dorset W.I.'s (a new class has been formed) and the rest by volunteers and other individuals . The Charity is sponsoring a number of children through The Child First, which is also monitoring the scheme for us.

3. Books

Michael Marion collected books from The Chelmsford College suitable for use in the Campus, and Lloyd Davies and Joy Leighton collected books suitable for both Campus and schools from various sources. These are now ready for despatch. It will cost approximately £230 to ship over a ton of books to Calcutta, and we will help fund transport overland to Gorkha. We will also arrange for bookshelves to be made in Gorkha for the schools. It is very difficult to transport goods to Nepal, as it is a land-locked country, and therefore no help can be obtained from other charities (even the Ranfurley Library) as they have the same difficulties. If any of our readers have suggestions regarding free, or low cost transportation, we would be very grateful for the information. With most other goods and materials, we prefer, if possible, to buy them in Nepal, as they are cheaper, and also it helps the local economy.

Harry Robertson, the Manager of the Essex County Council School Library Service, has offered to go to Gorkha next year to help teach staff and students in the Campus and schools how to use their mini libraries, and perhaps inspire more interest in reading.

4. Volunteers

Volunteers have been teaching in schools in Gorkha throughout the year. They have all raised funds, and have either bought, or taken materials with them, as well as sponsoring children to attend school. Others, including students, teachers and some with a variety of specialist skills, have already committed themselves to give help from November through to next year. All our volunteers, both medical and educational, take an active interest in other projects, such as the Youth Movement and the Gorkha Women's Association. Like us, they find that no project can be seen in isolation, and our Nepalese friends are eager for them to join in with their activities.

5. Gorkha Women's Association

The water scheme at Phinam village is up and running, despite difficulties. Geeta Shrestha, the Secretary, resolved these by paying for children of the village to receive schoolbooks and stationery. She gave £200 from the GWA funds for this, which we privately reimbursed. The charity has also given £200 for a womens' literacy scheme. Thus there are now members enrolled from two new villages.

There are now three new pieces of land in use around Gorkha for growing vegetables, and a savings scheme has been set up. Linda Mason raised money for materials for women in the second village to build a meeting house. This can also be used for as a clinic, as well as for holding literacy and handcraft classes. The handcraft scheme has been running for some time, the women embroidering T-shirts and making dolls. Other crafts are being projected. We are making application to the ACWW for funds to cover this as a training scheme for a viable commercial venture. The women need help with quality control and finding regular buyers. Geeta and her committee have made great efforts with the GWA to ensure its success.

FUNDRAISING

Some of the funds this year have been raised by talks given mainly by Chris. After one to the Talking Newspaper, people from a small town in Germany, which is twinned with Brentwood, sent her £450. She also had a very successful Art Day where tuition was given by Phil Hinde, raising £300. Mr & Mrs English organised an enjoyable Ceilidh which raised £500. A plant sale run by Joy and Linda raised £480, and Douglas Green, a Writtle farmer, sold a tractor and gave the proceeds to the Charity through the Chelmer Rotary Club, which with additional money for child sponsorship, came to £1000. Donations were received from other Rotary and Lions

Clubs as well as from private individuals. In all we have raised £3,700 so far this year. On November 20th, Chris is running a Quiz Night at the United Reform Church, Ingatestone.

We wish to thank all who have helped us in any way to further the cause of our Charity. We especially value the support of the following:- The Rotary Clubs of Chelmer Bridge, Hutton & Shenfield, and Ingatestone, also Billericay and Southend Lions Clubs and the URC Church in Ingatestone, as well as all those who have supported our Charity events.

If anyone wishes to offer further assistance, we would be most grateful for sponsorship for very poor children to be able to attend school. We have two schemes which have been running successfully for several years, and which are monitored in a responsible way.

For £25 a year, a very low caste child can be taught in a special class, and be at an advantage when he or she joins an integrated school. This means the child will not have to do hard and menial work from the age of 5. The child will have a greater chance to be educated in the same way as those of higher caste and in a school where he or she will not be ostracised. The children receive a uniform as well as books and stationery. The fee also covers the teacher's salary and use of schoolroom.

For £10 a year, a disadvantaged child can attend a Government school and continue after the age of 10, (when many have to leave) and receive books, stationery, and uniform.

On the medical side, it costs £20 to run an outreach clinic for one month. This pays for a Health Worker, medication and immunisation for babies. Mothers and older children are also treated.

If you are interested to help any of these schemes, please contact Joy Leighton who will give further details. Phone 01277 840406, e-mail Joy@Leighton.org