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Welcome to Issue 13 of the GDS Newsletter

Message from the Chair

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic globally has clearly impacted on every person no matter what their circumstances. As the UK and much of Europe has struggled with high infection rates and tragedy, then the real figures in developing countries cannot be quantified due costs and access to testing.

We at GDS have plans to continue our programmes in Gorkha and the first step has been to DOUBLE the number of children sponsored as they have recently returned to school after 9 months without education as detailed later. Our future fundraising may be more challenging, but every penny will be even more valuable and gratefully received and we thank you for all you can do.

Linda Blunt - Chair

COVID-19 in Gorkha - update

With global lockdowns all countries have managed the situation differently, but with many families especially those in poorer rural areas having no access to technology including TV and radio, the possibility of home schooling was only an option for few. Though the government considered options for government schools there is no infrastructure to support alternatives so little education took place from March to December. Children have recently returned to school but with unknown infection rates there is concern for a surge in infection rates and the limitations this may bring.

Vaccinations Underway

As members of BRANNGO, we receive monthly updates from Kathmandu and there is some good news to report. One million vaccines have been delivered from India (Oxford-Astra Zeneca) with 300,000 promised from China and 2.25 million via WHO by the end of February. Clearly a long way to go but vaccinations have taken place in Gorkha.

Projects update – 124 Children Sponsored

Since the start of the pandemic there has been little opportunity for any projects to be developed. However, as schools have just returned then Laxman Acharya and members of GDHEDS have done a brilliant job in working with 14 schools for sponsorship nominations and we have **DOUBLED** the number available this year to support 124 children. Many of the schools are in remote areas and includes the nearby Deaf School which several GDS trustees have visited and we hope to work with in the future.



The Gorkha committee have worked hard to gather all the equipment for distribute to each child and this year moved to a sports style uniform and to our great surprise have incorporated the GDS logo on the jackets



Would you like to sponsor a child?

See our website and contact us

£30 pays for full uniform and stationery

£60 pays for tuition for classes 11/12 (sixth form)

£150 pays for year tuition on BSc level course at the local Campus.

We are hoping Teacher Training programmes to offer support to teachers will resume soon.

If you would like to contact us, please visit our website www.nepal.co.uk or email info@gdspnepal@gmail.com

Reminiscences of Gorkha – Geeta

We are currently preparing an update of our website and came across a copy of the original website created in 1997. GDS Trustee Geeta was a young woman living in Gorkha at this time and was already involved in Charity work to include painting hospital walls, attending health programs organized by Gorkha Lions Club, monthly mother and baby clinics run by the Youth Movement Club funded through GDS, as well as working full time for Save the Children running a US funded project. Geeta had so much drive and energy and when the Gorkha Women's Association (GWA) was formed, then Geeta was soon heavily involved and became Secretary. She worked hard with the community during the first GWA project which was to install water for a standing tap in Phinam through Water Aid. Until this time, ladies were carrying water long distances often causing back problems. A more local supply made a massive difference to their livelihood and was seen by all as a highly successful programme.

Geeta recalls all the exciting things happening at this time, "women's groups in both Phinam and Syauli villages were established and ran classes funded through GDS. Literacy classes were held in the evenings as none of the women had ever attended school. The groups were really productive with lots of enthusiastic women meeting up frequently and making things together. I really enjoyed working with them"



Geeta with Linda in Syauli Bazaar 1998

Fundraising update

Even though this has been recognised as a difficult year for all charities, GDS are happy to be able to report that we have managed to maintain funds through continued support of donors who have made annual or monthly payments to us. We have also received several generous donations - for

example £400 from Bamford church in the Peak District via former volunteer Fiona, £200 from Steve in Burnham and many more sponsors. In addition, some fundraising activity has been held such as Lin's Wreath making raised £700, as well as jam/chutney and plant sales through the year. Sadly COVID-19 has meant no talks to clubs and the cancellation of the 2021 quiz night our main annual fundraising event. In addition, with no volunteers able to travel to Nepal then the income from their fundraising and donations to projects has also disappeared.

Shopping online can support GDS



If you shop online, then you can help fundraise for GDS with nearly every item you purchase – at no additional cost to you. Just add Easyfundraising and /or Amazon Smile to your toolbar and each time you shop a donation is made to the charity – It works like a loyalty card and there is no cost to you.

See www.nepal.co.uk under fundraising for more

Mr Hook Our long-term supporter has again been very generous in sponsoring 19 children in school/ college. In November he celebrated 100th birthday with a telegram from the Queen. GDS presented him with a photo book of Gorkha and the people he has helped over many years but never met even though he maintains such enthusiasm and genuine interest for our work he and his wife Isobel have in fact never travelled to Nepal.



GDS Trustees.

Olivia Power who travelled to Nepal as a volunteer through GDS in 2015 has decided to step down from her role as Trustee. Olivia was Quiz Master for our fundraising event for several years at Writtle and will be missed so we thank her for her work.

Zoom! The new norm has in fact made our meetings easier to arrange as we are a small but disparate committee, so an evening ZOOM enables us to keep in touch but of course we are all looking forward to meeting up and sampling Amir's fabulous Nepali food again!

If you would like to contact us, please visit our website www.nepal.co.uk or email info@gdsnepal@gmail.com