

Gorkha Development Scheme

Health & Education in Gorkha, Nepal

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Welcome to Issue 16 of the GDS Newsletter

Message from the Chair

2022 ended on a sad note for GDS and our sister charity in Nepal with the loss of our Founder, Patron, and dear friend Joy Leighton. Joy was nearly 97 and though frail for some time, discussions about Nepal always brought out the spark in her as she recalled the colours, smells, her love of the people and the friendships she made



since her first visit to Gorkha in 1987. Joy has left the legacy of GDS which remains a small charity working towards the same goals of linking with a community to offer support.

As you will see in this Newsletter, women in Gorkha continue to gain from health projects, children are given opportunity through sponsorship, rural Teachers are supported through training programmes, past and future volunteers continue to gain from the immense experience of being part of the community. and our committees work closely together to support those most in need.

All of this thanks to Joy's inspirational efforts.

Much loved and much missed. *Thank You Joy*

Linda Blunt

Joy Leighton – GDS Founder and Patron

After 25 years as a Teacher at Stock Primary School near Chelmsford in Essex. Joy retired in 1986 and travelled to Nepal where her adventurous trekking holiday took her through the Gorkha region. On route Joy met Purushottam Aryal who was headmaster of a rural School where she was welcomed into the school and family and saw first-hand the limited resources for the children and teachers. She wanted to help.

This was the start of a special relationship with the Gorkhali people spanning over 30 years. Joy founded the UK charity and returned to Gorkha in 1988 taking funds she had raised. Her desire was to make health and education more accessible to the people of Gorkha and the surrounding villages, aiming to work with local NGOs in order to achieve this.

Joy's early projects included: -

- Mother and baby clinics in 5 rural villages – now all undertaken at the hospital.
- Literacy classes for ladies who had never attended school which also encouraged them to send their children to school.



- Buying uniforms for the poorest children enabling them to attend school.
- Encouraging volunteers to visit Gorkha and share their skills to include medical students.
- Income generation schemes for local women such as sewing classes, vegetable production, incense.



Joy remained an active chairwoman of the UK charity for more than 20 years and worked to enhance the prospect of the people of Gorkha through facilitating projects and encouraging volunteers to become involved in the charity. Though no longer a Trustee, Joy remained Patron and the inspiration for all we do. A sad loss to us all.

If you would like to contact us, please visit our website or email lindagdsnepal@gmail.com

Volunteer Primary School Teacher.

Experienced teacher from Burnham on Crouch, Megan Sadler became our first volunteer in Gorkha for 3 years due to Covid limitations. She was welcomed in Gorkha where she settled into life at the Bal Mandir school working with a range of teaching staff and classes. Megs focus was to develop teachers' skills and confidence in participative learning through planning classes and encouraging children to be involved in the learning process through questions and group discussion. Though resources available are very limited, simple techniques soon led to noisy and fun classes and lots of learning taking place.



Looked after by her host family Lila and Sarita the experience was tough and often emotional but proved to be an invaluable experience for everyone involved.

Women's Hygiene

During her stay Meg travelled with members of the GWA and the Gynaecologist from Gorkha hospital to witness another GDS funded project in a rural village. The doctor explained the importance of women's health to the large group of ladies gathered, especially prolapse which is common, but a little understood problem. The women shared in the open discussion which was so important and following such a successful day more programmes are planned.



Teacher Training

From her experience Meg was able to contribute to the brilliant Teacher Training provided for 40 teaching staff in Gorkha. The two-day course was funded through GDS and supported by Teacher Trainers in Gorkha including Chair of GDHEDS and organiser Laxman plus Ram Chandra.



Wonderful – Meg raised her target of £1,000.

Through our online fundraising Wonderful.org Megs friends and family donated and offered gift aid bringing the total to an amazing £1200. WOW!

THANK YOU

To all our supporters who give monthly or annual, or one off donations to GDS and enable our grass root projects to continue. Remember -

ALL MONEY GOES TO GORKHA

To see ways in which you might donate, set up a monthly donation, or help in some way see our fundraising page at :-<http://www.nepal.co.uk>

Children's Winter Jackets

As in previous years we were asked to donate to a group of children in need of warm winter clothes. Our Gorkha committee requested funds of



£600 to purchase warm jackets for 54 children at the Bal Mandir hostel to include many orphans. Winter evenings are cold in Gorkha with temperatures not much above freezing and NO access to heating for any residents. We were of course pleased to help.

School sponsorship

In Nepal the academic year begins in April and so shortly we will expect an application to support a number of children in school as we have done for over 30 years! If you would like to sponsor a child, then see our website for details or just send an email to lindagdsnepal@gmail.com

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