

General Newsletter – 2015-2014

HIMALAYAN PROJECTS vzw
LEISELESTRAAT 138 B-8200 BRUGGE BELGIUM
☎ 00 32 (0)50 385704 - gsm: 0487 380 277
Projectrek.: BIC: BBRUBEBB-Iban: be14380010816783
himalayanprojects@gmail.com - www.himalayanprojects.org

Namaste dear donors, sponsors and sympathisers,

2014 came to a wonderful close: we carried out a lot of project work and many school actions and were pleased to welcome some new regular sponsors! Hence, we can meet the new challenges for 2015 with confidence, as we have a lot planned for this year:

- Our **benefit and info-evening** on 21 March in Evergem.
- **Official opening** of the second part of the secondary school in Chinnebas.
- Construction and finishing of the **boarding house for the deaf** in Syangja.
- **Working visit** of the Belgian doctor/dentists in Chitre
- **Water and a communal area** for Aggridanda
- Our nearly fully booked **journey to Nepal** mid-September to Mustang (trekking) and visiting our projects.

Himalayan Projects npo and Dr. Jan Dryhoel present: **Nepal in the spotlight.**

A presentation about our projects in Nepal and Dr. Jan Dryhoel's testimony about his work in our medical post, followed by a Nepalese meal and a film about trekking through the Himalaya.

When: Saturday 21 March 2015 from 19.00.
Where: Parochial Centre, Bibliotheekstraat 1, 9940 Evergem, Belgium - Price: €18 pp (excl. drinks), children €10

Reservations: himalayanprojects@gmail.com
+32 (0)50/385704 - (0)488/380 277 or Jan.dryhoel@skynet.be
+32 (0)476/49 732 - Payment via BE14 3800 1081 6783

Join us on an unforgettable trekking to the old Mustang Kingdom and visit several projects on the way. 22 or 25 days combining nature and culture with the opportunity to see solutions for the underprivileged in this poor but beautiful country.



Departure 9 and 12 September, return on 5 October.

After three days of exploring the cultural highlights of the Kathmandu valley, we will travel 200 km West to the headquarters. In Syangja we will visit our school and boarding house for deaf children and explore the touristic city of Pokhara and the lake.

Then we will hike into the Himalaya, visiting our first **school** and **medical post** in the Chitre heights and climbing the Pun Hill at 3100m to enjoy the views of the sunset over the Dhaulagiri and Annapurna massif.

Through the world's deepest gorge we travel onto Kagbeni, the gateway to **Mustang**, former kingdom on the Tibetan plateau. Here we will spend 10 days trekking through the trans-Himalayan primeval landscape until we reach the Tibetan border, visiting the (former) king in his palace on our way.

We will fly back to Pokhara and visit out new large school in **Chinnebas** for a party.

If you are interested in joining us, don't wait and feel free to contact us for more information.

In Chitre, people were constantly coming and going

First it was our secretary Nita Buduja's turn, who, together with our son, had not visited for two years. They were thus warmly welcomed by the local village and school committee.

After that, the chairman (Paul Vande Moortel) was responsible for preparing the annual doctor and dentist training camp. This is because Jan Dryhoul, a recently retired doctor-dentist (the perfect combination for our medical post), came to join me there for a two week camp that was extended for two days due to a success that noone had foreseen. People coming to the camp walking six hours by foot after ten hour working days - having no more than a soup for dinner - was no exception. More than 400 patients: unique for a small mountain village in the middle of the Himalaya. Amazingly done by Jan... and he already booked for October 2015. But I will let him tell you himself.



From the diary of a volunteer doctor in Chitre, Nepal

The first day break colours the tops of the Daulaghiri (8178m) a golden yellow. The early light pours into the cold room. Crows start their morning ritual, their loud screeching resonating in these motionless and quiet surroundings. The monotonous drone of the plane destined for Jomosom breaks the silence. High in the sky, the first rays of sun come out. Like clockwork, they are flying up and down from Jomosom to Pokhara until around 10/11 o' clock. After that, the wind in the narrow valley of the Kapi Ghandaki is too strong for them land safely. The lodge slowly comes to life. The fire is kindled, the first tea is made. Carriers and Sherpa's have started packing the luggage. Outside, the bells of the first convoying its way to Ghorepani are ringing, the supervisors' sharp whistles reverberating. At the fire, I warm myself with a cup of tea. The sun climbs higher in the sky and soon the entire mountain range will be a virgin white, drenched in the early sunlight. The kitchen is increasingly busy. Truckers want an early breakfast, so that they can be on their way. Nevertheless, the cook finds the time to make me a bowl of oatmeal.



At 8 am, the first patients are already waiting at the gate of the medical post. Some have travelled for hours, and will usually have stayed the night in the neighbourhood. The Nepalese are very hospitable. Everybody knows somebody, whether or not it's family. It is a custom to offer a cup of tea, and to keep on chatting and laughing.

After a few hours, the waiting room is already fully packed. People usually come with their family, and it will not bother anyone if children or neighbours walk into the consultation unsolicited and cast a curious eye on what the strange doctor is doing. My workspace alternates between the consultation room and the dentist chair. Administering an injection to remove a rotten tooth, and then hurrying back to the examination table. The nurse will have already measured blood pressure, weight and possibly the patient's temperature and can now start translating several symptoms, as if the patients have saved up all their diseases for this moment. Examining the patients, giving them some explanation and supplying the necessary medicines. Everything is noted down in precise detail. Meanwhile, the patient in the chair is already chatting away with a friend or other patient. Open their mouth, examine and ask what hurts the most. Usually they point to the left, right, upwards and downwards, but I must necessarily limit myself to the most urgent of conditions. With the nurse giving them some more explanation, I can motivate them to keep themselves healthy, and they can return for the necessary fillings. Usually they accept it. I can understand how they feel, seeing that people travel for hours to get here.

In the event of an electricity outage, our work is severely disrupted. Thankfully there is the main lamp, allowing me to pull a tooth. In the meantime, it is already late in the afternoon when my loyal guide comes strolling in with a noodle soup. Pfew, half an hour's break. And that is how the consultations continue to proceed throughout the rest of the day. The flood of patients keeps on increasing, because of which I have to let some people down. They will be helped first the next day. They accept this with a smile, after which they start looking for a place to sleep.



Occasionally, a Western or Japanese hiker with acute problems comes by for a consultation. This is because the medical post is located on the famous Annapurna hiking route and is deemed to provide aid to hikers.



When darkness falls at 6 o' clock, most of the work is done. The day is discussed over a cup of 'Black-tea'. A detailed record is kept of the number of diseased and diseases, extracted teeth and fillings. The medication supply is checked and, if necessary, refilled. The schedule is made for the minor procedures to be carried out the next day. And then the nurse is left to clean the treatment room and clean and sterilise the equipment and sterilise for the next day. Through the pitch-black night, I walk back to the sparingly lit lodge.

A beer, a 'dal-bath' (daily rice meal) and another day has passed. With some luck, there will be power, so I can read a little. Sometimes I can send a message to my family, but sending an e-mail is hopeless. But, with a feeling of satisfaction that I was able to be of some assistance, I crawl into my sleeping bag in my cold room and think to myself indeed it is just a drop in an ocean of mountains.

Jan Dryhoel.

New school uniformsfor Chitre

In the meantime we also introduced a new style of school uniforms.Speaking of gender-equality: no separate trousers and skirts, but the same practical track suit for girls and boys. Every year, we give the children two sets, to keep them neat, yet comfortable, adjusted to the life in this mountain village.

In addition to the purchase of new educational material, a laptop and the presence of some English teachers, we strive to be the best school in the district. An example to stimulate others.



Looking for: Volunteers to teach our lower-secondary and primary school for deaf children, as well as doctors and dentists for our medical post

Syangja School & Boarding House for the deaf

A difficult project! Not only due to the difficult communication, with the deaf, but also with the school board, which is still developing, with the necessary growing pains. Seeing that this used to be a de facto one man operation, the mother of one of the - now matured - deaf children being assigned as teacher, the construction of an own school and boarding house lead to an enlargement of the board of directors, which has attracted a lot of interest groups seeking a position on the board.

A complicated balancing act, in which we must continue to focus on the actual support of deaf children and everything else comes in second. Thankfully we now have a delegate on site representing our interests and supporting and following the further expansion of the boarding house. This means we are permanently in contact and know how everything evolves.

We thank our large sponsors, such as the Province of Western-Flanders, but also Birgit and Tine who contributed significantly to the quasi-finishing of the infrastructure of this project. Through the Bruges Fund we also received a contribution for the purchase of pc's, which enabled us to start working on the actual content, which in the end is the most important thing.

At the moment the construction is in its final stage and the toilets and showers are being built. During our visit in April we will consider what equipment is necessary and look to install the computers, as well as a water filter for drinking water.

Therefore, i.e. reasons, we make an important call for infrastructure is a first step, but as can be read on the previous page, the government pays only one teacher. The other four only receive a small living allowance through local donations. Also, the children still need teaching material and uniforms and their boarding house requires mattresses, blankets, wardrobes, tables, chairs, etc.

For this, we seek your help. Who would and could sponsor one of these children? As you receive this newsletter, chances are that you are already sponsoring a child and cannot sponsor another one. No worries, perhaps you could contact someone else who would be willing to help a deaf child.

Further down (p. 8) you will find pictures of these children, which you can choose from. We retain a target price of €15 for school fees and, together with living allowances, €30 for the boarding house. Everyone is free to choose an amount, as we want to help all the deaf children and, thus, divide all the collected money from one pot to all. That way, no one is left out, sponsored or not.

A warm call, because a steady source of income is of the utmost importance for the guaranteed on-going success of this project for the deaf. Any help is welcome.

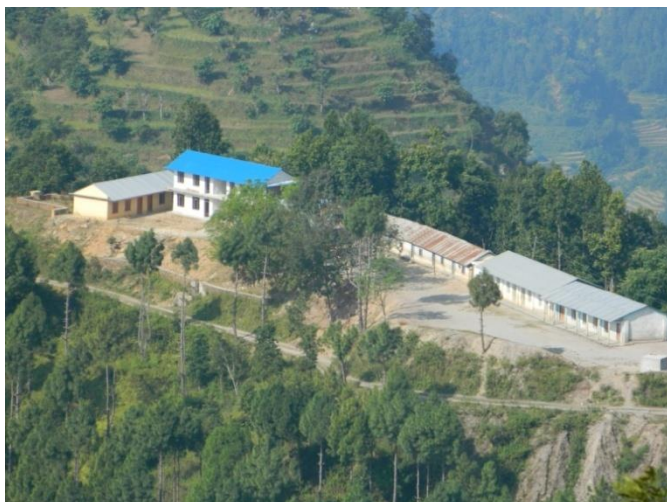


Only 1 officially assigned teacher and 4 unpaid deaf teachers. Here you can help give these dedicated teachers a **dignified income**.

Pics. f.l.t.r.: The mother (Aama) who started the school and runs the boarding house, her deaf daughter Sarita Thapa, who is now an official teacher, and the other deaf 'volunteer' teachers Sanjeep Arial, Rajendra Dhakal, Redmaya Thapa and Sabitri Shoarma, for whom we seek sponsorship.



Chinnebas is developing



From pre-school to secondary school: this is our largest project so far. Whereas, like many times before, it was the Province of Western-Flanders whose subsidies paved the way. Even more progress could be made thanks to the collaboration with the Kerun organization from Grimbergen, led by Hedwig Racquet and Eddy Goemans, which will allow us to expand and complete this school. Furthermore, HE Space from the Netherlands has granted us an allowance for computers, which will enable us to really get to work in this area too: quality education in the central mountains of Nepal. The English ngo Help tries to recruit volunteers that will also help improve their English, which is in fact their second language (of course Belgian volunteers are also welcome). We would also like to thank Rotary Club Meise-Wolvertem and the children from the Open Primary School "De Mozaïek" vzw from Roosbeek for the proceeds from their Three Kings-action.

In April, a delegation from Grimbergen will be joining us at an opening ceremony for the second objective, namely four brand new classrooms for the higher secondary education. Also it will be Nepalese New Year (2072) that day, which means we have two reasons to celebrate. In the meantime, the five dilapidated classrooms were broken down and three large new rooms are being re-built.

We will be visiting them with members of our sponsor-group hiking with us to Mustang at the end of September. See page 1 for more information, because you can join us! We are expecting a warm-hearted welcome. On the pictures, you can see the entire complex, of which the left part has already been completely restored: the ever-warm reception when we visit; the four brand new classrooms for the higher secondary education and the newly-built toilets with a septic tank: this also means less direct discharge into the surface water.



Other necessities in the area

During my visit I was briefly taken to another village. A wonderful authentic village on a hill side, **Aggridanda**, and apparently I was the first 'white man' to visit it. At first, the village seemed abandoned, which is normal seeing that the people are usually busy working the fields during the day. However by the time I reached the village centre, dozens of villagers appeared from everywhere and busily started to take pictures of me using smartphones (yes indeed!). Normally this is the 'tourist's' privilege. A meeting was spontaneously held out in the sun, where everyone introduced himself or herself. Home grown oranges and fresh milk were offered. A relaxed and friendly occasion, as is usually the case in the villages of the Himalaya.

The fact is that the social fabric of these villages is largely maintained by the mother committees. However, these women that also want to work the fields and take care of the children and their husband have no meeting place and we want to help them with this. A community centre would really support their committee life. This is their wish. Our wish, on the other hand, would be that during the dry season they do not have to descend over 100 metres down the mountain after which they have to carry full water jugs uphill, due to this beautiful village not having any water!



We would like to thank the following organisations, schools...

From **Rotary Club Gent** we received an important contribution to our Health Camp in Citre, which was complemented by many donations from friends of doctor Jan's. Thank you, and of course we would also like to thank all our longstanding as well as new sponsors. Also **Rotary Club Meise-Wolvertem** and **He Space** from the Netherlands provide funding for IT in Chinnebas and like every year, the **Province of Western-Flanders** has provided a subsidy for the school for the deaf, supplemented by a subsidy from the **Bruges Fund for Development and Cooperation (BFOS)**. Furthermore, support was received from various schools, such as **Sint-Rembert** from Torhout, **SBS Sint-Michiels**, **Sint-Andreas** from Sint-Truiden and **De Leeuw** from Zedelgem, as well as the **Kerun association** from Grimbergen and their sympathisers. Recently we also received a financial contribution from **NRN Leuven** (the local Nepalese community).

How can you support us?

By means of a donation or regular (monthly) sponsor order to bank account no.: BE14 3800 1081 6783.

By means of a **standing debit order** you can also enter a monthly, quarterly or other order, guaranteeing that the school and/or accommodation expenses of a school child are covered. A child attending primary school will typically cost around €15 a month, or €30 including boarding school, but any amount is welcome.

You can also help us in two ways in your **testamentary** will: By making our children and projects **coheir**. For this purpose, it is sufficient to have the following entered in your **testament**: **"I bequeath the amount of euro to Himalayan Projects npo, Leiselestraat 138, B-8200 Sint-Michiels."**

But also the technique of the **"dual legacy"** can offer fiscal advantages if you, as a testator, want to leave something to someone who will have to pay high inheritance taxes. By means of a dual legacy, the testator leaves a part of his property to a charity and the other part to his or her heirs. This way you can relieve your heir of all inheritance taxes, on the condition that our association covers the inheritance taxes.

Your notary can make a simulation for you. For more information on this topic, please see: <http://www.testament.be/nl/Duo-legaat> or our website: himalayanprojects.org/Steunons.

Annemie Hermans and Dinesh Khadka reporting on Project Aasha

From 28 August until 1 September 2014 Dinesh and Nisha set out to investigate the possibilities for **a new project**. Through a local Pokhara guide we were introduced to the village of Dagam. We were told that they could use some help over there.

First a 7-hour bus drive, followed by an hour in a very rickety local bus, and then a 3-hour walk. When they arrived, it indeed turned out to be a village that would welcome any help. There is no school or medical post present, there are problems with the drinking water and of course, the village is very hard to reach. There was, however, a well-organised and wonderful **community** in place.

An application for a drinking water project is on-going, so we will not get involved there.

In agreement with the local people, we decided to support the community. That way they themselves can decide how the collected funds are to be spent depending on where the needs are the greatest.

How do we go about this?

The few **beehives** that they already have produce delicious honey that can be sold in Pokhara (the nearest city) and surrounding villages. A good source of income that project aasha wishes to support.

On 21 November Dinesh went back to Dagam to **buy and transport 58 beehives**, 50 of which are for the community and 4 per two families (the poorest families in the village that are having difficulties making ends meet).

The management of the 50 hives and sale of the **honey** are arranged in the community. With the proceedings of the honey sale, 60% of the purchase price of the hives is repaid to project aasha. The remaining **40% is a donation from the project**.

With what is earned afterwards, the village itself can undertake action (medical care, purchase or more hives, ...)

The two families that received private hives are responsible for their hives and hopefully the proceeds of the honey will aid them in providing for themselves. Also these families pay back part of the purchase price little by little.

On 22 December Dinesh and Nisha went back to visit Dagam to see if all the bee hives had been installed and were functioning. About five beehives were empty. The supplier of the hives will make sure that these will be filled with a new swarm of bees. Now we just have to wait for the first honey. Normally there are two "harvests" a year.

Secondly, we are looking for new sponsors. This is the story:

Our neighbours (in Dadhikot) rent out a part of their house. Currently, 3 poor families live together in this part of the house. A six-year-old girl with a handicap is a member of one of these families residing there. She cannot walk, sit, talk or even drink or eat by herself. The girl's mother came knocking at our door in despair, asking us if we could help her. She would prefer having day care for the girl, so she can go out to work. Currently she takes the girl with her to work (construction works and making bricks), where the girl lies on a mat all day. The father of the family (not the biological father of the girl) also goes out to work, but does not take on the care of the child at all. Because the income of this man alone is insufficient to get by, extra support for the woman and/or care for the child is desperately needed.

Before starting to sponsor them, we would like to gather more information on the background of the family, the history of this girl and her mother. We will keep you updated about any further progress.

Dinesh & Annemie project aasha, Dadhikot-7 (Shikaritar) Bhaktapur, Bagmati Nepal

Finally, one last thing:

These days our agenda is again fully booked, with a lot of school actions, workshops, info and cooking stands and a fund-raiser, but this way we guarantee the continuation of our project. Please visit our website www.himalayanprojects.org or our Facebook-page for more information, or leave your e-mail address and receive our four-monthly update.

Some dates have been set:

- 21 March: our fund-raiser in Evergem
- 14 May: info stand at Sfinks Mundial in Boechout
- 30 May: cooking stand at Den Bruul in Leuven
- 21 June: info stand at Ubuntu festival in Boom
- 27 June: info/cooking stand, Minnewaterpark, Bruges
- 12 July: info and cooking stand in Middelkerke Casino

Attached you will also find our updated folder, which you can pass on to an interested party if so desired.

To conclude, it may only be a few drops in the ocean, or as we like to put it: **ripples in an ocean of mountains**

Thank you for your much needed support and hopefully you will remain members of a small, yet effective club. **Namaste!**

And to finish, a quote from a wise inspirer, the Dalai Lama:
What surprised me most about the Western man is that he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived.

Also the deaf should attend school: please cut me out and take care of me.

