



Namaste dear donors, sponsors and sympathizers,

And then there was that earthquake on 25th of April, now called NEPALQUAKE.

As if Nepal hasn't any problems enough already. Till recently a feudal kingdom, then that early democratic catch-up movement with a civil war as a result. And now again the eternal power struggle between dozens of parties and interest groups. And meanwhile, after 7 years, there is still no constitution. But no, the final text is repeatedly stopped and even neighboring countries are invited to boycott by means of border blocks. As if a constitution can never be amended again. People have introduced democracy, but does anyone there know what that means and what it means? They try to maintain the old power systems and working methods with new titles, nothing more.

In the meantime, hundreds of thousands are still camping under a tent canvas (well, surviving) 10 months after the fatal earthquake and that in freezing temperatures at night. Relief supplies, foodstuffs and medicines hardly ever enter the border. Also hardly any petrol and cooking gas. Back to the Middle Ages then, because you can hardly speak of electricity or water supply with just a few hours a day, at best.

To become discouraged? The Nepalese have no choice and that is why it is up to us to give them a boost. With structural help such as building schools and medical posts, setting up medical and dental camps and also providing drinking water. As an example and inspiration, but just as much to show them that they are not alone. Bsure!

Greetings from Paul Vande Moortel, chairman Himalayan Projects.

In this report you will find:

Opening party in Chinnebas.



Visit Deaf-school in Syangja.



The 'NEPALQUAKE' revisited.



Relief and start reconstruction.



New projects in progress.



Silently working before a disaster hits Nepal.

When I traveled to Nepal in March, there didn't seem to be a speck of air. Yes, it is never easy to work, but we can now draw up our plan. We also received visits from some sponsors who visited our school in Chitre with their children. Immediately followed by the board of Kerun association, who, accompanied by a Grimberg ships, came specially for the opening of the new building of the Chinnebaschool. Thanks to the Kerun sponsors and grants from the Province of West Flanders, HE Space for children from the Netherlands and the municipal council of Grimbergen.

After 4 hours of off-roading, we received a warm welcome and also visited the neighboring village of Aggridanda, where we gave our approval for the construction of an association hall for the women. We also discussed the possibilities for a water project so that they no longer have to carry water hundreds of meters lower every day. A school in the area was also renovated and they also got computers. The school for the deaf in Syangja was visited and we donated extra educational material and computers. Since it was my last days in Nepal, the remaining budget of 500 euros was given to them to organize computer training for the deaf teachers.

And then, then fate struck and the earth trembled with thousands of dead and wounded, hundreds of thousands of destroyed houses. And now?



HE Space
children's foundation
"...to raise up an astronaut"

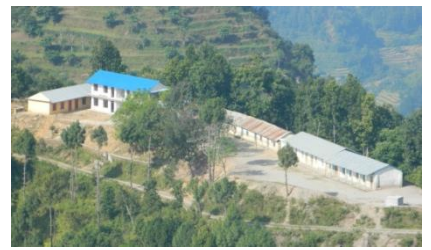
When disaster strikes your life changes forever.

Selections from Paul's diary:

4/25/15 NEPALQUAKE Day 1. Was this a bit of a shock yesterday afternoon.? No, really scary actually. The first reaction was that my (newly bought) washing machine broke down because I was standing next to it while it was spinning. Within seconds this got worse and I grabbed onto heavy concrete column nearby but finally ran out of the house because it intensified beyond any experience I ever had before. Imagine standing on a boat with rippling water below you. This was the feeling i had, standing in the garden and looking at the ground to see if I could actually see the waves. Window panes alternately going up and down, the water tanks on the roof dancing in discord. The panicky screams and rants of nearby people. I must admit that my heart was also racing and my stomach got so tangled that I almost had to throw up. We were 73 km from the epicenter.

After that, a lot of aftershocks, again serious, so that everyone stayed outside for the rest of the day and would even sleep outside at night. The adrenaline in the blood peaks. How many times awake tonight to walk back outside at 5 o'clock because another heavy aftershock. When will this stop, if ever?

7.9 on the Richter scale, now I really know the meaning. Immediately after that no electricity, congested telephone lines. Everyone tries to reach everyone. Hectic. Rumors plenty, true or not? The ground that was always so solid, steady is no more; anxiety 24 hrs a day. All certainties in life suddenly disappear. That uncertainty became too much for me and so I went to the local Red Cross where they were busy drawing up lists of the dead, the wounded missing, as well as the destroyed houses, schools and medical posts. Immediately friendly received and immediately informed of the current situation. Very professional and unfortunately our only experience in this way.



26/4/15 NEOPALQUAKE Day 2. Early Monday morning. Tv not working but the interne-sloowly- is. Facebook checking on my safety. Went to the Deaf school in Suangja, 1.5 hrs away. No traffic whatsoever. Friends and family asking why i go so far. Every body afraid, but i cannot sit still and do nothing.

I was well received in the school. No damage to our buildings. Oof! Hardly any children at the beginning of this new school year, a month of delay and in the epicenter: well there are simply no schools there anymore. Having animated conversations with all those involved about the future of the school.

Another serious aftershock is driving me back home. The car danced back and forth. When entering the city of Pokhara it has become a ghost town. The government had issued a warning and all stores promptly closed their doors. Just went to Lakeside, the tourist area and what never happened here: here almost everything is closed. Everyone fled to the shore of the lake to spend the night there. My old tent has been brought to our home: Camping Pun House. Nepal has become the largest tented camping site in the world. In the old part of the cities there is no place left on the street for walking (or driving). Everyone sleeps outside, without a tent. This would take days and meanwhile the capital Kathmandu is also emptying, because there too the havoc is immense and everyone wants to be safe or with families in there native villages. However, many also remain: local but also orphaned and homeless.

My friend Darsan, who managed the Chinnebas projects for us, called to report that he was going through the entire village to assess the damage. He will come tomorrow to discuss what we can do to help out. Soon back to the Red Cross with a few companions to also consult target villages in Kaski district.

27/4/15 NEPALQUAKE Day 3. The decision is made. I have a plan. Dr Jan Dryhoel and a nurse arrive and together with them we start off for far away Dhading district to visit remote villages in one of the worst affected areas. In collaboration with the Red Cross, we are now drawing up a list of medicines to be purchased and we are going to buy food, drink and blankets ourselves. Hedwig Racquet from the Kerun association and my wife send all available money and our savings along with Dr. Jan. Spontaneously many of our sponsors, friends and even long-time- no-see acquaintances start depositing relief donations and organizing benefits. Just fantastic. I am proud. And so we are going to rent trucks and a jeep and go to this area with tents and camping equipment. We are almost ready. Pokhara's stores bought empty.

2/05/15 NEPALQUAKE Day 8. The doctor and nurse finally arrived with some difficulties. Some problems because the nurse's passport was only valid for 5 months more but a (diplomatic) phone by our well connected local fixer Narayan solved that. The team was allowed to go to a separate 'FREE' visa counter.

In the meantime we heard that the famous Belgian Bfast team returned back home after all the troubles to get there because it turned out to be difficult to work. What did they expect in a devastated, under developed "poor" country? If two provinces were to fall in ruins in Belgium, would we just solve that with a few helicopter trips? Nice promotion of Beglian as super developped westerners with so much money and expertise. Even Nepalese start to comment on our 'achievements'! Not only Belgium by the way, days later at 38 ° I encountered a fully packed rescue corps of the French fire brigade that also could not go into the mountains because of it being too hot for their dogs! They were fro the south of France! An American Army rescue helicopter crashes in the unknown mountains looking for tourists an so, they all went back home. Bfast is therefore best called Bfast back-to-home. And so our Bsure-team was born, slower, less equipped and funded but more thoughtful sure what and how to do it. 23 years of experience in Nepal should accounts for something, no?



In the meantime, Darsan from Chinnebas, also came to visit us (4 hrs off-road with the motorcycle) presenting photos, damage-lists and official requests from the afflicted villages. We had given him permission to use the school budget for emergency aid for the time being, so that the entire area around the school was helped. We were the only ones there with help from further away from the epicenter and less spectacular. He brought all the bills and official letters of thanks from the Red Cross department and the municipality. I gave him a new advance to continue building our school and to help other remote villages. Darsan knows how to handle it and we are grateful to him, he has lived in Belgium for a long time and knows our way of working.

Saturday and I can't get through my paperwork. Mails, phones are pouring in. The trucks are not all found yet and very expensive. Have already ordered 100 blankets and 200 pillows that are now being sewn. A dozen rolls of foam to sleep on, 200 sturdy plastic bags to store food and clothes, 50 jerry cans, water disinfection, garden hoses, 100 buckets, water jugs, shovels, 100 kg rope, 50 head lamps, the list goes on and on. Then there is all the food as rice, beans, sugar, flour, tea, salt and medicines and most important of all: 800 sturdy metal roof plates. This is the preliminary order for our first trip to Darkha, Dhading, 180km away. And, why roofing sheets? Because everyone is giving plastic tarpaulins and with the monsoon rains and thunder- and hail storms coming within a few months. How long will these plastic covers last?

Today I also visited some hospitals with the doctor, but in the city here no help is needed, it is possible to do in the villages. We now also know that in Darkha just about everything is lying to the ground. We have something to expect. Hopefully our help will help to ease the pain because they also have many deaths to regret and missing, also a Belgian tourist by the way. Fortunately, our local fixer here, Narayan Pun, an old school friend of Nita, my wife who guides us and has so many contacts that it is even impossible to keep up with him. He doesn't want a cent, an angel to know. He will of course go with us, otherwise we may get lost (in bureaucracy as well!). And so there are plenty of quietly committed helpers who move mountains.

In Belgium meanwhile, my wife Nita tries to coordinate everything there while still running our household and our kid. Our son doesn't really understand that I'm not coming back home soon. Understandable if you weren't there that fatal day and felt like your life and the world ended".

And so we left for the worst affected areas deep in the mountains for a few days. At times we drove not only through but also on top of collapsed houses. Everyone is accosting us. Everywhere the destruction is almost complete. A disaster movie, but in real life. When we arrived at the capital of the Dhading district, we reported to the local authorities and were allowed to work for hours in the bureaucratic mill - almost crazy. The Red Cross here was also completely different from Pokhara. After a week continuously on the phone, only a simple servant knew who we were. So we were asked to repeat our story over and over as we were directed every time to a higher ranking officer in charge. In charge?

Apparantly, the closer you get to Kathmandu the worse it gets. Sorry, but this has to be done differently. So, we put our tents in a parking lot among other real displaced people to actually get on with it the very next day. First, a load of medicines was delivered at the local health ministry's depot asking whether the already overfilled shed contents will actually be distributed. A kind of yes with a grimace as a result. Another lesson learned here.



The next day: the road to the village is gone, but the villagers would meet us at noon at the closest possible point on the still drivable road: 400 men, women and children descending the mountain on foot and then everything back up the mountain drag: OMG, what a hassle.

During the unloading and sorting, there was the medical camp with Dr. Jan and nurse Lieve. Everyone also received a toothbrush and toothpaste. The women also received sanitary towels. Seems strange, but in this country there is still a lot of taboo around menstruation and in some parts of the country the women are locked in pens for a week because of the 'religious' pollution. The use of cloths that are difficult to handle and difficult to clean made this distribution an incredible success. Without a bathroom or any privacy, how long would we be able to "survive" in these circumstances?

It soon became clear that we had too little material with us, since an equally ravaged neighboring village got wind of our donation program and obviously came to ask a possible share. Thanks to our local super diplomatic and experienced political and social worker Narayan Pun together with a village leader Raj Kumar Tamang, who lost 3 family members, they have wonderfully managed to make a fair distribution so that every house was helped. What would happen with bureaucrats from the capital and the day before in the district offices, and perhaps never would. So it is possible.?

Suddenly an American arrived on foot who was completely dehydrated and asked for water. He was only 2 days in Nepal and only worked 8 months as a development worker in the Philippines. He was sent to see where they could distribute a whole zipper of food. That boy did not really know where he stood but did have a satellite phone whose batteries were unfortunately almost empty. Large INGO, who are we?

It was quite an effort to divide everything as it was 36 degrees and no shade anywhere. All the people had to drag the rice, oil, noodles, plastic bucket, water drums and cups, rope, spades, sugar, salt, soap, mattresses, blankets, pillows, sails and metal plates up on their back for 3 hours. In total 14 tons were distributed and around a hundred patients were cared for in one afternoon, many with untreated abrasions. We camped here to treat another 210 patients the next day, again in the blazing sun (38° C this day). I heard on the news that a whole team of doctors without borders do 40 patients a day and need a daily helicopter ride on and off.

Fortunately, we also met a number of tourists who were offered an alternative trekking through a trekking agency in Kathmandu, visiting a village that could be reached on foot and where they left food and sails behind. Great initiative. On the other hand: A large village received a helicopter flying over that dropped 2 bags of rice and 2 bags of beans, resulting in a 'stampede'. All chaotic, but ofcourse the magnitude of the disaster is humongous and a dysfunctional and corrupt administration therefore does not help much, does it?

In the meantime, as we could not get there and back in time, we have also seen the photos of the destruction in our target village, where not only all houses have been destroyed or irreparably damaged, the primary, secondary school and medical aid station has also been destroyed. Nobody is thinking about that now, but those children still have to go to school and the sick somewhere. So this is an ideal assignment for us to start on that too.

(Photos: on the road with the 4x4 trucks, Dharkha residents drag goods up the mountain, the distribution)



Later that evening a 2 month old, cute baby-girl was brought to our medical camp who was very malnourished. The mother had pulled her baby under her and crawled under a table when the whole house collapsed on her. After 7 hours they could take the baby out, unfortunately the mother had died. The daddy of 5 other daughters survives from agriculture and now also has no home. Well, and now. We had a lot of baby food with us preventively so it came in handy. They immediately wanted to hand the girl over to us for adoption, but in this complicated world it just doesn't work. Also because there are malicious brokers walking around with exactly that goal: food for the brothels in India. How cruel the world can be with innocent people after such a disaster.

After our first Dhading experience we repeated this scenario for some villages in the Gorkha district, the true epicenter, where our doctor stayed behind to trek on foot with porters and a tent camp. They hadn't seen a doctor there in the last 6 years and never a dentist. Incredible!

Dr. Jan reports:

April 25th, around noon, severe earthquake in Nepal. Immediately our thoughts go to Chitre and the other schools of Himalayan Projects vzw.

After busy telephone consultation with our chairman, Paul, who had stayed on, we, Dr. Jan Dryhoel and nurse Lieve Neirynck, flew to Kathmandu on May 30. Over weight with medical relief and some visa issues, we landed safely at Kathmandu airport. You immediately see the confrontation with the consequences of the earthquake when you cross the capital. Collapsed houses and tent camps in all possible areas. The drive to Pokhara free of traffic for a change. In Pokhara itself, there is little damage. Through the Red Cross we try to find out where the need is greatest and Dharka is assigned to us.

After days of negotiating, purchasing relief goods, finding and filling 4x4 trucks, we drove to Lapang via Dhading Besi. A horrible 5 hour drive on unpaved rocky mountain roads, through devastated areas. A crowd of people from Dharkha 4 hours away was already waiting for us. While Paul and Naran coordinated the unloading of the trucks, we set up a medical spot where we treated a 100 patients. After camping overnight with after shocks at night, we treated 210 patients the next day. Some minor injuries unattended, but patients, we had to go back as the trucks had to leave for other work.

After a rest day with replenishment of the medical supply, we left for a 2-day camp to Lumre and Saikighata, near Pokhara. There we also started with dental treatments, although that usually consists of removing rotten molars.

Meanwhile a trekking guide Mane who lost relatives in his native village and where no help came contacted us. On May 12 we left with 2 jeeps and 9 sherpa's to Laprak, at an altitude of 2600m in Gorkha district, the earthquake epicenter. Via Darpak we walked 2 days to Laprak. The destruction was total. Destroyed villages, collapsed schools, people camping on the rubble, sometimes with 10 or more under a tarp, cooking, while there are still dead under the rubble. We treated 250 patients for all kinds of diseases, wounds, and also dental problems. 6 years after a previous dentist. On May 17 we descended to Mandele, where we treated about 50 patients.

After 3 weeks we flew back to Belgium. Our chairman stayed for a while to realize all kinds of emergency aid. You could see that his knowledge of Nepalese and Nepalese customs opened many doors. The heat, working in primitive conditions, the helpless population, the view of "How is that going to recover here? What if the monsoon comes?" have given this trip a special cachet. It was indeed a much needed ripple in a trembling ocean of mountains.

Yours truly, Jan Dryhoel.



Later we sent corrugated iron to 6 schools in Myagdi district, one in Parbat to build temporary classes. We repaired all the houses of the poor around our project school in Chinnebas and also in Nuwakot, near Kathmandu, we delivered a van food and visited the collapsed school. A temporary school was built in Manbu, Gorkha district. Near the collapsed shrine of Manakamana, an entire village of 45 houses was rebuilt with our emergency aid. With the action "Leuven helps Nepal" came a delegation from the World Magar Federation from Leuven, an association of Nepalese living in Belgium, with whom we now also work. For example, help could also be sent to the Everest area where there is also a lot of damage and an entire village was provided with emergency aid. (Photos: Food for village near Nuwakot, temporary school rebuilt in Manbu, Ghorka district)



And so we continue steadily because we now have a local Nepalese volunteer team who follow up the current projects and look at and visit new project applications. The list is endless, KE GARNE (what to do) they usually say in Nepal, for centuries.

Finally reunited with wife and son. But our mission continious.

Back in Belgium, but with our heart and mind remaining in Nepal, we started numerous benefits and raised funds for the reconstruction. Only two days at home and already in Leuven to give an explanation to their mayor. Numerous schools are also visited and information stands are held at numerous events. We received grants from the Province of West Flanders, the municipalities of Beveren, Evergem, Grimbergen, Sleidinge, the Bruges Fund for Development and Cooperation, the HE Space Foundation for Children's Education (the Netherlands), the Ghent International Fund (Rotary Clubs Ghent and Knokke-East Coast) and the UK Himalayan Educational Lifeline Programme NGO (HELP).



Because emergency aid is no more than that and very temporary. Media attention quickly fades, but the real work has yet to begin. We will be flying in again from September. Also Dr. Jan will join us and some volunteers. First of course the planned group trip with some sponsors to the Mustang area on the border with Tibet, but now with additional visits to our permanent and new projects.



What would we like to do later on in Nepal:

- Build emergency schools / aid stations with equipment, as well as a mobile educational suitcase.
- Build an example school in sustainable local materials with earthquake-resistant techniques.
- Purchase of folding tent, mobile dental cabinet and generator for the visiting dentists.
- Purchase medicines and organize medical camps.
- Emergency help for urgent cases: especially medical help such as hospitalization.
- But we should not neglect our other current and upcoming projects, of course!

With the funds collected from private sponsors, school promotions, workshops, benefits we are already ready for it. After all, all help is more than necessary and therefore welcome. Our general management costs in Belgium amounted to 0.79% in 2015, so the money collected is certainly used to maximum effect in Nepal in structural aid.

Thanks also to all individual sponsors - anonymous but not unloved - and in particular: the Kerun association Grimbergen, Nepali Child Support vzw from Aalter, ROB Bornem, the schools VBS De Komme, SBS Triangel and SBS Sint-Michiels, Op Stap Freinetschool, Kitanda vzw and Plan Int'l working group; all from Bruges, Bimesa vzw Tremelo, PA Red Cross Grimbergen, VBS De Leeuw Zedelgem, VBS De Mosaic Roosbeek, GBS Eikenlaar-Reet from Rumst, Leuven Helps Nepal association, Parish fund OLV from Schilde, Parent association GBS Merchtem, RK Parochie Sint-Jan De Baptist from the Netherlands, Sint-Lievenscollege Antwerp, VPW Dekenaat St.-Martinus Meise, SOS Kids Int'l Gent, VB Ranst-GVBS Annuncia from Ranst, World Magar Federation Belgium from Leuven and the Zusters Heilig Hart from Hoegaarden. Don't forget the great promotion FILIKOBBEPIJNEGEM GOES NEPAL in Asse. Thank you all and our sincere apologies for any omissions.

After the monsoon rains we are back with a group of sponsors in September.

First there was the planned Nepal trip with ten sponsors. A wonderful trek through the transhimalaya in the former Mustang kingdom. Here, too, the former royal palace has been severely damaged and is no longer accessible. The ex-king is staying in Kathmandu. Too bad. A wonderful company by the way, partly old-timers and some new ones. After the draw, we also visited the rebuilt Siling village, attended the official opening of the new building in the Chinnebas secondary school and also visited the deaf school cum boarding school in Putali Bazar, Syangja. More news about this further on.



Note: A personal report of by our sponsor Rita should have followed but unfortunately she is now in Gambia for another project. Her story will be sent later on through our e-mail contacts.

Following the group's departure, doctor Jan actually retired for his 2nd tour this year. A so-called engineer from Bruges also came along, but he soon stopped and went para-gliding. Siling is still waiting for "their" engineer and the Chitre school received € 500 worth of electricity that now only attracts dust there. Anyway, with accumulated diesel supplies we could still go back into the mountains to visit distant villages. Still mostly temporary tented camps, not much has changed. Down in the valley are giant tents of the World Food Organization (WFP) with dozens of diesel-powered tractors across the road. While winter is coming soon now. Frustrating at the very least. No doubt worse for the local residents. **Please read Dr. Jan's next report:**



Nepalquake: our second medical mission this year.

In September I will be back in Nepal for 5 weeks. Due to the fuel supply issues, I had to fly to Pokhara, so I didn't notice much from Kathmandu and the consequences of the earthquake. On October 1 I left in one day, with two porters, and a heavy load of medication and dental supplies to Chitre.

The first patients arrived at 2-10 at 8 am. In twelve days time, despite the repeated power cuts and problems with the installation, I was able to relieve a considerable number of patients from their dental and other medical suffering.

In the meantime I received a message that the generator, which was donated to us by Honda Belgium, had arrived at our headquarters in Pokhara with great revolutions. Back in Pokhara, doing the necessary shopping, preparing equipment for the medical camps and meeting Freek, a Belgian technical engineer whom I promptly promoted to my assistant.



Despite the ongoing fuel problems, we have nevertheless managed to provide medical and dental care to a number of villages in the earthquake zone. In Siling, where we already helped build temporary houses, we stayed for two days and we also visited Pokartar. But especially in Laprak we have set up a big mission there. People remembered our previous mission and were very happy to be back there. The consequences of the earthquake are still very visible; the houses have been rebuilt here and there with what was left, so they certainly cannot withstand the next shock. Electricity is also a big problem, but thanks to the donated Honda generator we were able to do a good job.



Back in Pokhara we did a few more missions, including in an elder's home for abandoned oldies, in a slum and in a home for abandoned boys.



Despite the inadequate and expensive transport problems, we still managed to obtain our goals. And despite all the misery of cooking on wood, no transport, no supply of medication and those people stay clean and cheerful. We could take an example here in the west, where people whine if they have to wait too long somewhere, if the post is delayed, if the traffic jam is too long All in all, it remains "Ripples in an ocean of mountains", but when we don't do anything, nothing happens.



Greetings and thanks for all the support, Dr. J. Dryhoel

As Dr. Jan just told us. Due to lack of diesel we had to look around our headquarters in Pokhara where we could help. However, here too demand is high and we had to select quickly. We already started setting up a medical camp in our garden and were able to invite all our neighbors to a free check-up. In 2005 we also provided water supply for this poor neighborhood.

Long term sponsors may also remember our school that we built on the edge of a slum in Sarangkot next to Pokhara city. This school is doing fine but the slum residents can barely afford medical and dental care. We also stayed here for a day. Then we went to the Sahara Club (what's in a name?). A shelter for boys who also receive extensive football training (here they also dream of an international career as an escape) and who have to have flawless teeth. Nearby we also spent a day in a rest home for abandoned orphaned and poor old people.



And what about our regular and older running projects?

Of course there was no intention to neglect our long-running projects - although we suddenly saw so many problems, we had to continue our regular long term work as well

First we made a school tour with Barbara Porter. She works at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and is responsible for sending teachers to schools across the Himalayas. Their Himalayan Educational Lifeline Programme (HELP) NGO has been sending teachers to our schools for years now. Together we visited 4 different schools in 3 days.

Despite the expensive rented jeep with driver for transport, it proved to be a useful excursion. In our first school in Chitre, her first visit here, she was warmly welcomed and after a distribution of new school materials and a mine-made frame for waste incineration, we held a school meeting. Since we all talked the local language, which is Nepalese, Barbara taught the children an English song. Please observe also our new unisex uniforms. Handy in the mountains and equal for all. Safe for the girls too.



By the way, at the moment there has also been a Swedish teacher here for a month, together with Georges Cappelle, a retired and passionate teacher from Torhout who has been teaching new teaching methods to our teachers for three months now with adapted teaching materials. This is partly possible thanks to an allowance from the Province of West Flanders. For sustainable use of the purchases, we will make an educational suitcase with which this material including beamer and laptop can also be lent to other schools.



The next day we visited the Phalate school nearby where we already send teachers and promised a new laptop, because the old one was broken by lightning. Another hour down we had an appointment with the board of the big high school in Sikkha school, which we helped rebuild in the civil war and installed a computer class. This well-developed school with a library full of extremely difficult English books (Barbara pointed out to me that there was nothing suitable for children) could use a few teachers, this was the purpose of this evaluation visit.



In the meantime, there has already been an American for 2 months and this was a good start for more. After all, building schools is only a step towards much more important quality education.

After another two hours of walking we came on the "regular" road (read sand and gravel road) and our jeep and fixer Narayan Pun was waiting to drive us to a small primary school in Sudari, Dhoban VDC. There is a threat to be washed away by the river after a major landslide as a after effect of the earthquake. Here we made a plan to rebuild the school across the valley and above. (Photo: building at the top left on the new abyss of the shifted river)



A state of affairs at our Chinnebas secondary school.

Here too, although interrupted by the earthquake, the construction works are progressing steadily. Just before the 'Nepalquake' we had a delegation from the Kerun association and the ships Paul Hermans van Grimbergen here with an exuberant party as a welcome and in October followed the official opening of the new main building in the presence of our sponsor group with actually a even bigger party. A real entrance gate has also been built so that the school is now completely fenced. An example project indeed, but earthquake-proofing works are now also urgent here.

Barbara was a member of the U.K. Help NGO last year. have already visited here and in early January came the first volunteers, an English couple Heather & Andy, who stayed with a local family for 3 months and had a wonderful time, they say. In this way, the school finally receives much-needed substantive support and we also provide educational material and computers.

After the border blockade has finally stopped, people are now busy demolishing the last old classes and we can finish the final piece. In addition, the first building for the preschoolers and three other classes must be additionally secured so that the roof cannot collapse, we will have another earthquake; So there is still a lot of work to be done.

In April of 2016 a delegation will be visiting again to assess further needs.

Partner KERUN SCHOOL PROJECTS NEPAL reports:

After ten years of operation in Nepal, from our towns in Grimbergen and Tielt-Winge, which resulted in the construction of a village school in the hills of Solo-Kumbu, we were looking for a stable partner to transfer the remaining funds.

Knowing that vzw Himalayan projects ngo did a very good job in our beloved Nepal, nothing seemed to stand in the way of cooperation. The village school of Chinnebas (Syangi district) was on the waiting list for an up-grade. Both material and (infra-) structural.

More years, more classes. In 2010 we went on a working visit for the first time and three years later a lot of structural work has already been completed. We could not believe our eyes and confirmed our cooperation with the non-profit organization Himalayan Projects.

However, the spring 2015 earthquake is calling everything into question. Budgets were given other (temporary) destinations. Emergency aid was a priority. Himalayan Projects vzw was on site from day one with actual and efficient help.

During a visit in the fall of 2015, it was found that the region where the school is located was less damaged and after the delivery of mainly roof plates for damaged houses of the poorest, the further development of Chinnebas Secondary school could continue. The finishing of the new building is completed and the renovation of the dilapidated classes can be started.

We can contribute to the completion of a community house for women in the neighborhood and the construction of a new community house in Aggridada, a hamlet of Chinnebas. The first is as good as finished and the shell of the second is raised.

The development of the school remains our first objective, because we remain convinced that education is the basis of progress and prosperity. Thanks to all who have supported Kerun School Projects and through which Himalayan projects vzw can participate very specifically in the development of Nepal.

Thanks, Hedwig Racquet and Eddy Goemans



Nearby: a Mother's Committee Hall in Aggriddanda.

Hedwig and Eddy mentioned it in their contribution. With their support and a grant from the Province of West Flanders, we have started building a community house for women. Now men and young people may also be able to go there, but it is a priority for women and will also be run and maintained by them.

Local parent committees are the most important in Nepal and perhaps among the few initiatives, organizations that run well and correctly in the social fabric. That is why we like to pay attention to their requests for support after schools and medical facilities. So important is this "own place" for the local women that they gave it priority over our proposed idea of providing permanent water supplies, which they now have to carry up the mountain in jerry cans every day during the dry season. This way you can see what is the priority for them. Now postponed but definitely not cancelled, drinking water will also be coming.

And so the construction of the community house has already started and the first structural work is finished. Work has been done in an appropriate way to make the house earthquake resistant. For example, extra horizontal and vertical struts were incorporated into the walls so that the walls fall into three parts when collapsed and the roof remains upright.

We also hope to set an example for new construction. We have come up with a very simple and inexpensive solution for existing buildings: connect vertical beams to the roof in the corners of the rooms. This creates a frame on the inside that can protect the residents. We will also apply this solution in our existing infrastructure, such as our various schools, the deaf boarding school and the medical post in Chitre. Small adjustments that can save many lives.

Below are also some photos showing how to acquire sand and gravel "manually" over there and to drag it from the river to the construction site with great effort.



Joint-ventures: Aasha Project by Annemie Hermans.

Project Aasha has had a turbulent year, and the project has grown strongly. Until April 25, 2015, project Aasha was involved in sponsoring some schoolchildren and providing microcredit for quails and bees.

Then there were the earthquakes in Nepal (April 25 and May 12) and we were flooded with questions, concerns and, not least, money. Many people from Belgium and neighboring countries showed their compassion and all kinds of activities were launched for fundraising. In total, almost € 50,000 was entrusted to us. We helped the local people of Dadhikot and Banakhu to fill the initial needs and more financial support for the rebuilding of their houses.

More on this further on.





Fifteen volunteers also volunteered and in this way practical help was also provided. All people with a big heart who came to work in Nepal.

In 2016, we will continue to pay the school fees to the children and we will closely monitor the reconstruction of Dadhikot and Banakhu. There is still a lot of work. Due to monsoon, holidays, harvest season and especially lack of money, many families were not yet able to rebuild.

They currently live in temporary shelters (mostly "barracks" constructed from corrugated iron). The families selected to receive financial support, which are not currently building, asked us to keep the money in the project. This is not the case for other things and they can now save. When the time comes, and they start building their home, the project will contribute through the purchase of building materials. Because Aasha project grew so fast in a short time, it already demands enough of our time and energy, so that we now do not plan additional actions.

Volunteer trip October-November 2015



After our last newsletter we had another trip for volunteers. From October 27 to November 9, 10 volunteers came to Dadhikot. Some arrived a little earlier or stayed longer, and during these 14 days together everyone worked hard. The prevailing fuel crisis made the transportation of construction materials virtually impossible. The other reasons mentioned above (harvest season, lack of money, ...) also made many families want to wait to build. Demolition work was (is) enough, so we turned our attention to the demolition of destroyed houses.



Materials were recovered as much as possible, so that a lot of work was involved. Stones were loosened one by one and passed from hand to hand for subsequent stacking. Wood, windows and doors were carefully broken out for later use. Under the hot sun and thick clouds of dust, toiling was done in Dadhikot and Banakhu. During 5 days the team went through an adventurous ride and beautiful walk to Banakhu and back.

In total 5 families were helped in breaking down their old houses.

Activities



I would like to thank the Sint-Jan Berchmans Institute from Puurs, which donates part of the proceeds of their fast journey, as well as the primary school Heilig Hart from Deurne, who organize a benefit-breakfast.

With project Aasha we were at the farmers market in Ranst and the Christmas market in Wommelgem (thanks volunteers!) And it was a success! On February 6 we organized the fourth edition of "A Taste of Nepal" in the CC De Luchtbal in Antwerp, where you could enjoy a Nepalese meal. The proceeds of this day will go entirely to the project. Payment can be made to account number: BE 70 9792 2478 9825 in the name of Annemie Hermans - Inès Ducès, stating: project Aasha-earthquake (no tax certificate possible)

If you do want a tax document for tax deduction, you can deposit it into the account of Himalayan Projects vzw, account no.: BE14 3800 1081 6783 with notice: project Aasha-earthquake. Please also include your official name in the notice if it differs from the title on the bank transfer.

**Thank you from Project Aasha, www.project-aasha.webnode.nl
tel. +977-1-66.39.671 gsm +977-9818 04 83 29**



Himalayan Projects ngo: our future plans.

Now in March we still have some school promotions and then we leave for Nepal with a lot of money and especially a lot of plans:

- Van Dorine Van Daele, independent representative for the company DVD Technology a.c.k. aqua concept Benelux from Evergem, we have just received a professional water purifier and with that we are going to build drinking water reservoirs in Agriddanda or Siling, we are not yet sure. What a pity that we have to make these difficult choices, because there is still so much need for basic basic facilities.
- In Pokartar (35 houses), a school has to be built because the village has been completely wiped off the map.
- In Chinnebas we rebuild three classes and buy educational material.
- A school in Rakhu, Myagdi district requested computers for their secondary school.
- We start the construction of a new school in Sudari, where the old one threatens to wash away.
- Finishing parent committee house in Aggridanda.
- Purchase and compile educational suitcase for loan to schools.
- We are examining the possibility of rebuilding the schools in Dharka (where we were first with emergency aid after the earthquake) and Nuwakot where we previously also used to drop emergency food.
- Dr. Jan is again coming for a tour and medical camps in our medical post in Chitre, as well as the schools of Chinnebas and school for the deaf of Putali Bazar, Syangja.
- Other volunteers such as teachers are also sought and sent to the different schools.
- Adjusting the earthquake resistance infrastructure we have built in the past.
- To ensure the functioning of our local projects in the future, we will also set up an NGO in Nepal with local people. After all, we are getting a day older and it is better now that we are still fit and capable of establishing a local network that can later work independently. With a national permit, we can then work in a structured way much more easily and we do not have to constantly renegotiate, approach politicians and apply for individual permits for all our actions. Some administration will be added, but that is no better in Belgium. Fortunately, we have also found a number of Nepalese volunteers who also want to work for themselves. They will also be able to raise their own funds so that they are not 100% dependent on Himalayan Projects vzw. Not that we are going to commit less now, but "better safe than sorry".

In Belgium we have school promotions and we are going to a number of festivals with our info and/or cooking stand.

Already confirmed: cooking stand at the "Wereldfeest" at "Den Bruul" park in Leuven on May 28, info and cooking stand at the "Feest in 't Park" in the "Minnewaterpark" in Bruges on Saturday June 25 and info on July 9 at the Casino of Middelkerke. There is also "Dubrising", a music workshop and performance at Youth House Comma in Bruges. All welcome.

On Saturday, June 11, we will also have our own party at "Ons Huis" in the Goudsbloemstraat in Leuven with the recent travel film by Marc Deckers, lectures and of course an authentic Nepalese meal. And who knows? A Nepalese dance?. An invitation will be sent at the end of May, interested parties can already book by e-mail.



How could you help?

With a **donation** on BE14 3800 1081 6783 for which you (tax payers in Belgium) receive a tax certificate from 40 euros per year as we are a recognized development organization.

A regular **sponsorship** - preferably monthly - is the best way to support our activities, as we can then make an annual forecast and thus guarantee the regular operation of our school and medical projects. Most choose €15 per month, but another amount is also possible at their own choice and ability.

Benefit and collection campaigns: with a school, association or friends, acquaintances, even among colleagues at work, something can certainly be organized. We have didactic and decorative material. A Nepalese meal and/or workshops is also possible. E.g. we just received a message from Sten, the Swedish volunteer, that in his village Örnköldsvik on Feb. 24 a concert "The soundtrack of my Life" was held where teachers and students played a sponsored wish list of songs and the proceeds go to our Chitre school. Such one-time income serves for additional investment and purchase of additional educational and medical equipment, but is also used to feed our **Emergency and Education Fund**.

And of course **volunteers** are more than welcome. In Nepal we have an unsaturated need for doctors, dentists and teachers are of course also welcome. In Belgium we are looking for an IT coordinator. Translators also welcome.

If you are already a sponsor, you can help us a lot further by also making some "advertising" for us. Leaflets and newsletters are available on request. Paid advertising, we prefer not to spend sponsor money on that.

CONCLUSION: 2015 was clearly a disaster year for Nepal. First the devastating earthquake and then the ignorance and/or unwillingness of the Nepalese government to act. The earthquake should have shaken them up; after all, there is no shortage of "foreign" aid. Meanwhile, after 7 years, a constitution was finally voted and - as I feared at the time - after 2 days of partying it was again contested resulting in border blockades and even some deaths.

And so: of the 125 representatives of the southern border residents, 11 are against it and then decided - with eager, covered political help from India - to close the border, thus blocking all petrol, cooking gas and goods (including medicines) for 5 months. There was a smuggling route with up to 5x double prizes for the richest, but ordinary people are already victims. Not to mention the tens of thousands of mountain dwellers who live in a tent and barely get their promised emergency food because of no transport. Also, the government does not want to transfer the promised money for the reconstruction of the destroyed houses and so hardly anyone starts because they may lose their entitlement to it.

To become discouraged? For hundreds of thousands of young Nepalese, YES. That is why more are now fleeing abroad, they no longer like it and even want to become modern slaves for it. Young women also take the risky jobs abroad where many are abused. When does it stop? Unfortunately, they can only do little about it. I think it is time to get up, but protest is often accompanied by violence and death, what is that good for?

And that is how it started during our sponsor journey: barely any petrol and the little reconstruction work is almost coming to a halt. Except for the local village people who have been trying to draw up their plans anyway for centuries. The temples in Kathmandu are quickly being rebuilt for the tourists with their cameras and prestige. Luckily, in Belgium we can watch TV programs such as "The Sky is the limit". Should have been a slogan for our projects, but unfortunately it remains: **"Ripples in an ocean of mountains"**.

Finally, a special thank you to a number of people for their enormous efforts: **Hedwig Racquet** and **Eddy Goemans** of the **Kerun** association, **Dr. Jan Dryhoel**, nurse **Lieve Neirynck** and **Bert Vandenbussche**. Manager **Dev Shrestha** and guides **Manosh** and **Mane** from **Eastern Light Trek** from Pokhara, **Narayan Pun**, our "fixer", my in-laws in Nepal. Special thanks also to my wife **Nita Buduja Pun** and my son **Ohm** for their - not only help - but also a lot of patience and understanding because it was difficult to choose between family and victims. And last but not least you, readers for your support, now and hopefully in the future. Please also stand behind us and together we can move mountains. **NAMASTE (good day) from the entire Bsurre team!**

