

Newsletter 2022 with annual report 2021



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Namasté dear sponsors and well-wishers.

The 3th Corona year has started, we hope you are doing well. Nepal is experiencing its umpteenth disaster, although it takes a very long time for people who have no reserves or safety net. Fortunately, the vaccines are finally getting underway. Boosters only for healthcare personnel. The vaccination card is also being introduced, because here the risk of infection is clearly circulating among the young urban population. It is difficult for them to resist the blast stimuli any longer. There will also be local elections with all public meetings resulting in endless speeches and political party parades.



Last year I started this report with "Help! I'm stuck in Nepal..." and this year the situation reversed, as I could not travel back to Nepal in the fall due to visa restrictions. So, as we (should) already be used to in Belgium, telecommuting again from home. What is still 'normal' these days? The saying "The good old days" has meaning. Or am I getting old?

With a continuous stay in Nepal for 9 months in a row, the project work continued well into 2021. So, this newsletter reporting fits in seamlessly with our previous one. For example: we kept on supplying protective equipment to schools and maintaining running projects such as installing a drinking water filter system, buying a school bus and school uniforms.

Last year we wrote an article entitled: 'Well, their problems are now ours too, for once'. For us, the light at the end of the tunnel seemed in sight, were it not for the fact that the major economic powers seem to be catching up and are now punishing us financially for the economic malaise following the Corona crisis. This is not reflected in Nepal where people now sit in the mountains in the snow and warm themselves with wood fires. There are no central heating systems to be found here.

That said, where did your donation go to? Read further on what we have achieved. Nothing spectacular but essential nonetheless!



Kind regards from reporter Paul Vande Moortel, Nita Buduja Pun, Dr. Jan Dryhoel and the entire Bsurre team. Stay well and safe!

Bye the way, we have been helping Nepal now for 25 years running and our registered non-profit organization is now also 20 years old!

What this year brought:

A bus for Ambika School:



As well as school uniforms:



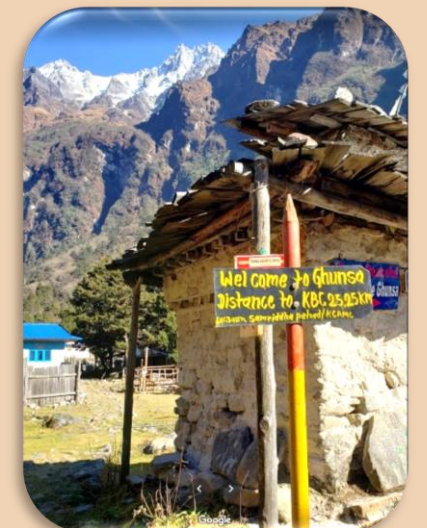
Corona protection:



Water filter for 7 villages:



New in the Far East:



Please continue reading:

Ambika: a very ambitious public school indeed.

With so many more interruptions here than with us back home, barely organized distance learning, school life is finally slowly getting back on track.

This is also the case in our Shree Ambika Secondary school in Suikhet (Hyangja), 15 km from the large tourist city of Pokhara in central Nepal.

Last year, with some effort, we were hampered to start using the newly installed computer class. This year it is running at full capacity, but again whilst writing this letter the new Omicron variant has also broken out here and the schools are closing once again for one month.

However, our ultimate goal of bringing quality education to this public school has certainly succeeded for these 580 usually impoverished schoolchildren. Due to the growing supply of solid infrastructure and quality education, more and more children, and from further afield, come to this public school. As such, we needed a school bus urgently. With the economic downfall, neither local budgets nor collections, we stepped in to solve this problem. We bought this bus with a bank loan, costing us €420 per month in down payments. First time we had to borrow money, but duly warranted, as we were able to safely, transport all registered schoolchildren to and from home in April at the start of this new school year.

Furthermore, this year there was no budget or local collection to provide the children with a school uniform. So, again we came to their rescue and provided each a gender-neutral jogging suit and T-shirt. In the future, we want to continue to do this for the poorest children half (about 300). Additionally, we want to finance hot meals for the primary. Hence, now every child can go to school regardless of income, gender or social caste

We also continued to supply contamination prevention materials such as masks, disinfectants and disinfectant soaps, as to many other schools.

What may seem as an oddity in donated relief. We handed out sanitary bandages as well. In Nepal there is still enormous trepidation and religious/cultural taboos around menstruation and due to lack of money, discomfort and shame, adolescent girls usually do not come to school for one week a month. By the way, some girls get locked up in a room our hut outside. They are also not allowed to attend parties. As a result, we ensure that many schools have their own stock to hand out to the girls for free. Sometimes it's in small but nevertheless crucial things we can help very effectively and it barely costs us: €0.27 per month, per child

We halted the painting of an unhealthy commercial add on the visible wall of a neighbor's house. We're looking out for an artistic painter instead.

This year we also want to inaugurate a new sanitary block and a drinking water filter so that this school also remains clean and hygienic.



Shree Ambika Sec.School.



Blessing of the new bus.



Donating school uniforms.



Protection materials.



Handing out laptops.





Prepping our handout.

Second year in a row: the 'C'ovid-19-story.

Since my extended stay, 2021 turned seamlessly into 2022 and we continued to protect dozens of schools. So we handed out masks and disinfection, and we stood up for urgent hospitalizations.

The very sociable people who mainly live outside and in company are hit hard in their social life. In Nepal, the comfort indoors is not much and if you are then almost locked up in often one-room accommodations without TV or radio. A hard life, indeed. Reluctantly they must undergo their fate. Can we complain then? Everything's relative to where you live.

In the meantime, we continued to distribute masks, soap, disinfectant products, visors, thermometers, and gloves to help prevent the spread. To finance this we especially thank the many sponsors and for an emergency aid grant from the Province of West Flanders and a local Lions Club. Thanks for that.

Due to the ever-extended Lock-downs, I prepared my suitcase every month for departure, just to receive a text message 3 days before that my flight had been postponed for a month. At the 4th time I didn't feel like preparing anymore and then ofcourse that flight went ahead. February thus became July. Luckily, my visa was extended every time without any problems, but I did exceed the maximum stay of 5 months and so was unable to return in the fall. For the first time in 30 years I missed Dashain.

To make distance learning possible for unfortunate children, we handed out laptops and installed internet connections. As a social worker I could drive around fairly smoothly. I could go wherever the need was greatest. For example, in Sauraha, at the Chitwan National Park, where even rhinoceroses took a walk through the village without tourists. How wonderful that wild animals get a breather and can also discover our civilized world for a change. Times are changing?



Gauri Shankar school.



A stroll down Town.

The Shree Jayanti Secondary School in Bhakimele, Myagdi.

Half a day's drive from Pokhara, our headquarters, a firm stretch of it on a rough mountain path steeply uphill, we were solemnly received for our annual visit during which we discussed past infrastructure works and puzzled through their archaic accounting system. A cozy get-together with the children who, as always conjured up a special dance program for which we

are grateful. Later this year the retired teachers Nadine and Annie will come here to give crea workshops Cut & Naad for the 3rd grade and also the mother committee. Finally we can once again perform volunteer work.



Administration!



Speeches à volonté.



Dance performance on the roof of the school (world).

A brand new project: a medical post in Ghunsa at 3600m!

New!

Staying continuously in the Himalayas for nine months brings new contacts and ideas. In 2021 upon my arrival and visa problems I helped an American doctor to get into the country as well. Later, when he had left for home, he contacted me with a request to help the medical post where he had volunteered.

Since we had collected some surplus material over the years and brought it back from Belgium, this was the perfect excuse to explore the Far East (of Nepal) and to achieve something there too. We started the multi-day trip with an unemployed friend, hotel manager from Chitwan. The largest part went along the East-West National highway (read: dangerous 'fast accident' road with Swiss cheese holes) in the flat south. Then we could start the furthest northward mountain trek to Taplejung, the district capital, where the highways end at the foot of Kangchenjunga (8,586m). There we meet a delegation from Ghunsa who came especially for a first acquaintance. These very hospitable Sherpas were delighted with our donation of lab material, 100 glasses, medicines and, among other things, a portable oxygen case. They still had to be dragged up the mountain on their backs and on foot.

Where has the time gone when we walked and carried everything on foot? On the way back, we visited the endless tea fields of Ilam, unknown to us but as only 30 km further across the border Darjeeling, India which lies merely 30 km from the border nearby and where the famous tea comes from. It tastes just the same! Unknown is unloved. Almost all tea here crosses the border and receives a 'Darjeeling' quality stamp with extra yield for the Indies. Beautiful roads here though. Surprising too, along the winding roads everywhere construction works of tube laying for telephony and internet. Modern times coming to the simple towns and houses with front gardens lined with local flowers. Poor in money maybe, but certainly not in beauty.

After the handover of our medical supplies in Taplejung, the regions HQ deeper into the mountains we drove back by a so-called 'possible' alternative new route to the flat south. After first crossing a pass of 3800m after losing our way, countless times we could actually park ourselves between the Yak's (famous mountain cows). No other people or habitation in sight. Blessed, but with some guilt that we did this by jeep.

Days later we received pictures of the goods delivery at the medical and village meeting whilst we were already going through their wish lists to install essential basic facilities in this medical post in the near future. Presently, sick people have to go 3 days for a dentist or serious hospital visit. We also hope to provide a mobile X-ray as Ghunsa (meaning 'Winter Place' in Tibetan), which is located at a crossroads of mountain passes to Sikkim (India) and Tibet (China) and the base camps of the 3 Kangchenjunga peaks.

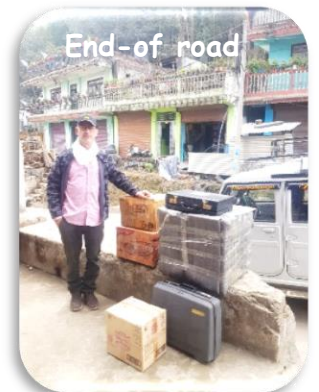
Note: Two weeks after delivery of the oxygen kit, it saved a young man's life (photo below). Luckily just in time. A nice story to end this chapter and which will certainly be continued in the coming years. Our Bsurre-team with western doctors and dentist will be camping here as well soon as possible. After all, we couldn't hold medical camps for two years in a row now. Time to rub our achilles and go for it (on foot!).



Ilam thee pastures



Typical houses



End-of road



Carrying loads



Een jong leven gered



Official handover ceremony tot the village comity of Ghunsa.

Nepalquake April 25 2015: Our reconstruction work has not finished.



Since mid-2015 we continue to help the villages affected by that terrible earthquake.

At that time, in Siling, near the epicenter, we provided emergency shelters and provided medical assistance with our Bsurre team.



Later on, we installed a completely new well water pipe of 1450 m and pumped it to new tanks with a total capacity of almost 100,000 litres. This water is now shared with the neighboring municipalities, but it still had to be made drinkable. After all, the spring water is polluted from the river alongside, especially in the wet season.

Partly thanks to a grant from the City of Bruges, we installed a new professional 6-stage filter and chlorine. After all, in Nepal, there is no water in the houses and it still has to be pumped onto the roof for pressure.

Because of our long stay we were able to get acquainted here extensively and that also included fun evenings without television but with singing, dancing and 'rakshi' (something local!).

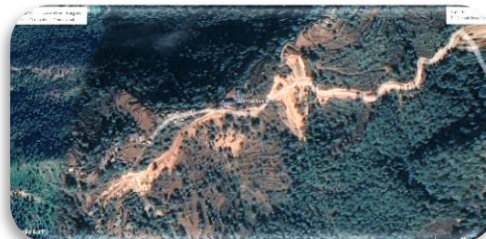


Nearby: Salanggiri, another village lacking water.

New

Already 7 years after the earthquake of 7.8 in this area, many remote villages remain deprived of essential basic services. The exception being the numerous commercial GSM masts and hastily constructed but unpaved roads. Nevertheless, these villages are the most hospitable and grateful for some essential aid such as drinking water, schools and medical aid. We will therefore continue to strive for sustainable structural aid and improvements.

In 2019 we stayed in Salanggiri, in central Nepal, with our Bsurre team for a two-day medical camp. We kept in touch and visited them again during these Lockdowns to see their broken water supply. Quite a journey: 2 ½ h on asphalt and then 1 ½ h off-road on dirt roads into the hills until we arrived on a ridge in an impoverished region. Long ago, a water tank was built here which has been leaking empty for years now due to concrete rot. But water is our first basic need! So we're going to do something about that.



With a grant from the Province of West Flanders, we are going to build a new water tank here, lay pipes and at the same time connect it to a complete filtering system to provide safe drinking water for about sixty mainly 'survival farming families'.



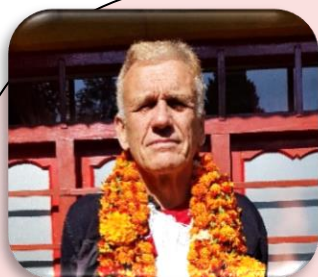


Our Medical post running 15 yr.

Our medical post in Chitre has continued to run with the Corona with mainly ambulatory operation at the home of the sick. Our nurse Sasina Purja has meanwhile found a permanent government job in the medical post in Dhoba, a little further away where we also have a medical camp. Fortunately, Sasina herself offered a successor from the same

village: Sharmila Pun, who has already been well trained. After Ganga, Shanta, Sasina, our 4th nurse since 2006 who gets every opportunity here for experience and training.

In the meantime, the virus has already made its appearance here and we have to be extra careful with the older population and no nearby hospitals. No crowds here, so isolating is fairly easy. In the photo you see our new nurse on the left, our ex-nurse on the right. We wish them both the best of luck in their new job.



Report from Dr. Jan Dryhoel: Nepal in Corona-times

A pandemic, so Nepal is also suffering. For one of the poorest countries in Asia region, the health infrastructure is also correspondingly there. And yet, with its population now growing to +30 million, Nepal only had an infection rate of 1 million (Belgium 3). The number of Corona deaths is currently 12,000 (Belgium = 30,000).

Of course, one can ask questions about these figures, but even if half can multiply these numbers, this is still a not so bad situation for this country. It is also a fact that most infections and deaths occurred in the heavily populated Kathmandu Valley. Infections mainly come from returning workers from abroad, who enter the country through the border posts with India. It is not very clear what the situation is in the mountain villages, but people there live less closely together, more outdoors and less mobile. The very strict Lock-down in the spring and again at the beginning of this year has certainly limited the number of infections. Although the number of registered infections cannot be verified, Nepal does have a young population. Barely 5.7% of the population is +65 (B=20%) and that is where most deaths occur. The economic situation is less rosy. Income from tourism has virtually disappeared. No tourists, no guides, hotel stays, therefore no jobs, and no trade. The border is open again, but even with relaxed rules, tourism has yet to bounce back. However, mandatory PCR testing and quarantines remain the rule. At present, only the Nepalese diaspora seems to be finding their way back to Nepal.

As for the vaccinations. Nepal must count on support from western countries and from China. It regularly receives vaccines, but the biggest problem remains of course the storage and distribution. In a country with an inadequate power supply, this is a problem. Currently about 45% of the population is fully vaccinated, and we are talking about getting two vaccinations; with the exception of the healthcare staff, there is no offer of booster shots yet. In addition, just like with us in Belgium, there is also constant squabbling between scientists and politics. There are a number of excellent virologists in Kathmandu, who are not inferior to those from the rest of the world.

Of course, the infrastructure cannot be compared to ours. Most private hospitals are closed due to lack of staff. Moreover, in public hospitals, too, the staff is dropping out and there is a lack of sufficient material. However, the biggest victims are the low skilled, who depend on jobs in the primary sector. There is no social safety net for them.

That is why we still count on our generous sponsors here. A small contribution here makes a big difference to those who are deprived of the most basic services such as water, medical aid, food and schools; for our eighth round. **Greetings, Doctor. Jan.**



Short news of some of our other projectsn.

- **Chitre, Myagdi: Youth Club:** During the Lock down, an extra toilet was also built next to the youth club. Originally built in 2013, the infrastructure is now completely finished and maintenance is up-to-date. Re-opening soon?
- **Chitre, Shree Lali Gurans Primary School.** Bad news is that our very first school is temporarily closed due to lack of children. The nearby school in Phalate, which we also support, takes care of them. This valley is becoming so depopulated that rational decisions were imposed. Our teachers are now relocated to other schools nearby. It will take getting used to after 22 years.
- **Many other schools** we handed over some sports equipment such as football, basket and volleyball; as well as materials and medicines at aid stations



➤ Starting again this year we can send **volunteer teachers, doctors and dentists** to our various projects. They are the **Bsure-team**. We hope we can get back to normal or 'new' normal.

➤ Additionally, we also work together with **HELP NGO (Himalayan Education Lifeline Programme)** to recruit English-speaking volunteers. Go to: <https://www.help-education.org/>



News of our joint venture: Aasha Project in Thimi, Kathmandu-valley.

- They help in **education, microfinancing, and emergency relief**. Visit them at www.project-aasha.webnode.nl.

In short what we are planning to do Nepal during 2022:

- **Computer classroom setup** for the school in Bhamikele, Myagdi district.
- **Construction of a sanitary block and water purification** in our Shree Ambika Secondary School in Hyangja, Kaski district where we provide school uniforms and offer a hot meal for the primary.
- **Our 8th tour with the Bsure team led by Dr. Jan Dryhoel for medical camps.** We also get reinforcements from doctor Lieven and Nurse Marie-Anne from Oostkamp.
- **In the east in Ghunsa, at 3595m** where we want to expand the medical post and have camp there.
- **Building a water tank and filter installation** in Salanggiri, a poor village in the earthquake zone.
- **In the Shree Bhumiswor primary school, Hyangja** we want to provide many educational materials.
- **The Shree Gauri Shankar Secondary school in Hyangja** wants computers, a printer and chairs.
- **An almost eponymous school higher up in the mountains** needs a drinking water purification installation.
- **Our medical post continues to work in prevention, detection, treatment and referral.**
- **Help sponsored students and those in need** through our Study and Emergency Fund.
- **Some retired teachers and doctors (as well as from the UK and the U.S.)** come to volunteer in our schools or to reinforce our Bsure team in the mobile camps and medical posts of Chitre and Ghunsa.



Plans in Belgium during 2022.

We hope that we can do some school actions, booths on festivals and workshops again this year. Wish us luck because planning has become the hardest thing these days. Keep your fingers crossed that the viruses give us some more breathing room.

How you can make all this possible:

Financial support is possible provided that with a deposit to BE14 3800 1081 6783 for which you receive a tax certificate.

- Regular **sponsorship** - preferably **monthly** - is the ideal way to support our permanent activities. E.g.: €25.00.
- A one-time **donation** helps us to buy extra school and medical supplies. E.g.: a toothbrush/paste set costs just €0.25 to hand out to children during our **mobile health camps**. A school uniform costs €11,00, sanitary towels €0.27.
- **Benefits** and collection **campaigns**: Do you want to organize something with your school, association or friends, acquaintances or work colleagues? Maybe your **employer/company** can help us out? We have a lot of didactic and decoration material. A Nepalese meal and/or workshops are possible. On our website, you can view and download our educational folder. This income we use to feed our **Emergency Fund** for urgent aid and **Study Fund** for higher education.
- Make us **beneficiary** in your will. Contact your solicitor.
- Become a **volunteer!** In Nepal, we have a great need for **doctors, dentists and teachers**.

Already a sponsor? Help us with mouth to mouth advertising. After all, we don't spend your money on paid advertising. In 2021 we spent just 3% on general management costs!

Feel free to request additional brochures and newsletters.

More information can be found at www.himalayanprojects.org and www.facebook.com/HimalayanProjectsVZW.

Can we keep you motivated? Despite all recent setbacks, we are just barely able to realize our projects on a continuing basis.

However, reserves being used up help us to create more equality in this unbalanced world.

No one chooses where he is born, but we all deserve a minimum of chances and protection. Together with you, we do make a difference.

RIPPLES IN A OCEAN OF MOUNTAINS!

What more can i say to you?



Telling too much or too little? With this newsletter, we hope to provide you, sponsors, with solid information about the destination of your donations. We were able to distribute a lot of prevention material, installed water filters, and looked after schoolchildren with a bus and school uniforms. Sick and orphans helped.

Paul, Nita & Ohm, Jan & the Bsurre team and volunteers wish you all good health and good luck. A lot is possible together. Daandebhat (thank you)!

25 years your help counts!



For Sale: Nepalese handmade bamboo chairs. Ideal for classroom, youth association, childcare or at home. Price: €10.00 to €20.00.



P.S.: This newsletter 'Read and approved'?. Please do not throw me away yet. Think of the environment and us and pass me on to someone else. Yours sincerely.