

Newsletter 2024 with a full review of 2023



Himalayan Projects npo

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Namasté, dear sponsors, donors and sympathizers.

What a rollercoaster again in 2023. Some projects are difficult to get off the ground, our medical camp is first not going to start and then it will start anyway. The timing just didn't work out well for our projects and camp visits. Roads are being

(re)constructed (Dakar piste) because there are hardly any diversions. Orders for medical equipment went badly. And oh dear, our regular computer supplier got partially paralyzed. Our logo: '**Ripples in an ocean of mountains**' could be interpreted in various other ways this year.

And yet! Yet, determined as we are, we have achieved a lot of beautiful things in this distant and especially high corner of the world in 2023:

- Ghunsa Hospital in the far east is now fully equipped.
- The water project in Salangiri finally starts.
- Our 9th medical camp tour was successful after hesitation.
- Our sponsored schoolchildren received a lot of TLC.
- The Bhakimele school project is nicely completed and inaugurated.
- Almost all of the hostel children received were reunited with their families but continue to be monitored and supported.
- The Child, Family Care and Training Centre is in full construction.

Not bad for our small non-profit organization, isn't it? Obviously, we could only do this with your financial help. You, individuals and institutional sponsors, schools, clubs and partner organizations are our fuel. We drove more than 7,500 km in 4.5 months, 70% of which was off-road and an average speed of 30 km/hour! Our 4x4 pick-up suffers, as do the driver and passengers, but it is the perfect vehicle here. Strikingly more electric cars seem to be driving around here than in our country.

Please read on for all the details and more news because Nepal remains so surprising, compelling, astounding, inspiring, visually stimulating, profound, diverse and challenging. Because Nepal is never boring!



Kind regards from rapporteur Paul Vande Moortel, the BSure team with Dr. Jan Dryhoel, Jolanda Bijl from Nepali Children (NL) and the Nepalese Jana Hitaihi Foundation. Enjoy reading!

Note: This report is handmade, homegrown and 100% Chat GPT free!

Some covered topics:

Solemn inauguration of the Bhakimele Secondary School:



Ambika Secondary School:



Start Child, Family Care and Trainingscenter in Suikhet:



Just in time: Medical Camp:



Oxygen for Gunsha hospital:



Waterproject and more:

Project completed and ceremonial opening: Shree Bhakimele Secondary School.

Spread over many years and with many grants and donations from ten countries, this school can finally go its own way to provide quality education to rural schoolchildren. Through trial and error and perpetual budget deficits, there is now a fully-fledged and earthquake-resistant school building here with decent toilets and computer and science classes.

In our opening speech we firmly emphasized to the teachers and school committee that this infrastructure is just the basis (good) and that after all our efforts (including our sponsors) they have also made enormous efforts and have provided sufficient tools to improve the quality of education. Because that's what it's all about, right? Let the photo's talk now about the fun opening party with music, performances, dancing, food and drinks. Nice result!



The Ambika Secondary school continues to receive our attention.

We have been working on this for 8 years and are now focusing more on the substantive quality improvement of education. We also hope to send western volunteer teachers here in the future.

This year, thanks to a grant from the NATO Charity Bazaar, we were able to set up a real biology and science lab. The third grade can now receive up-to-date biology and science education here.

Due to the improvement in the quality of education in this school, the school has become more popular and has even doubled in number from 375 to 800 students. This now brings with it capacity problems that we must pay the necessary attention to. For example, the 1st year has now been split because, to be honest, 60 children in the class for that difficult year where they are only learning to read and write for the first time is impossible, also in Nepal.

Thanks to our individual sponsors, we continue to support students with additional study guidance, school materials and uniforms through our Study Fund. The poorest also receive clothing. There is also a dental check-up every six months. About 30 children are currently supported. This in collaboration with Nepali Children from the Netherlands and our Nepalese partner Jana Hitaischi Foundation.



School uniforms, school materials, prizes, warm clothing and after-school care. Some of the things we do for our sponsored school children.



Our sponsored children queue up for their dental check up with Dr. Jan and a local dentist.



NATO Charity Bazaar
a.s.b.l.

Nepali
Children

At the last minute: our 9th medical and dental care camp with Dr. Jan.

The preparation for this camp didn't go smoothly this year. To go or not to go? After all, setting up a decent schedule requires a lot of planning and organization. Working in Nepal is no easy feat if you want to do it the Western way. This year it was already September before the green light came on. The oh-so-important Dashain and Tihar festivals were coming up and money for the budget had to be raised. Fortunately, an urgent appeal to our loyal sponsors provided some breathing space. The consequences of the monsoon and the condition of the roads also played a role. But we flew in with new courage and all hands on deck, because some promises had already been made and many patients were waiting for us. No excuses, the show had to go on!



So, on September 29, fully packed Dr. Jan Dryhoel arrived out of the Kathmandu airport terminal. We, our current and ex-nurse and myself, had also traveled - as you know by now at an average speed of 33 km per hour- from Pokhara, 200 km west, with a fully stocked pick-up. A cappuccino and sandwich later we started our annual tour of duty and immediately traveled to the northern **Langtang** Mountains where we set up camp for the first time in **Kyangjin** at the invitation of an old guide Tenzin Tamang, whom we had helped on a small scale many times over 25 years with his hostel children in the village and Kathmandu.

With a lot of patience and diplomatic conversations with the authorities of the national park, we were allowed to drive for free (little budget!) but unfortunately had to pay the full price on site at the tourist

hotel, which was very disappointing. Even for the local nurses eating with us and we were also charged the full amount for that. Shame.

Only to end up in the other other extreme with our next camp. Once

again we were guests in **Fulbari** near Durban in Myagdi, where it was difficult to get to and sleep and we had not been there anymore due to the Corona period and schedule difficulties. This time they were first on our list however. To our surprise and they were very well prepared. The local Sahaara Youth Club organized absolutely everything. A brand new lodge for us alone and with a welcome committee.

From the hotel in Durban center it was a 10-minute drive to Fulbari in a side valley where the road was barely manageable (fear of heights) due to a landslide with a large hole at the side of a 100m cliff! Everyone on foot except the driver (myself) of course. With guiding we barely managed our bigger than the local size jeeps.

There was a long queue at the school where we would work to get on the waiting list. They came from hours away in jeeps rented by the club! Perfect organization, what a relief!

Inside there was a closed entrance to allow patients to enter one small group at a time. The meeting room was tidy and dusted with partitions for patient privacy and extra electric sockets and lighting. Six young people helped empty the pick-up and drag everything upstairs. Signs and waste bins with plastic for hygiene were placed at the entrance to the school, stairs and work area. Never experienced before.



We treated hundreds of patients here for three days and an extra day. Tea and cookies on time and in the evening a crane was already on the way to repair it: especially for us! Meanwhile I was also shown around the village and surroundings where I was able to see their own WiFi installation (free for the entire village) and the construction of a small hydroelectric power installation. After all, down the road a Japanese company has constructed large tunnels for the drainage of a large power plant and these smart farmers are now making a small side tunnel to tap the same drainage water for a new installation of their own. Smart, very smart indeed.





During the hearty farewell, I paid our hotel and restaurant bill, after which I was promptly reprimanded that we did not have to pay them because we were a 'civilian team' and 'guests'. Wow, respect for those boys and girls. So apparently it can be perfectly organized and arranged in Nepal. Daandebadh (thank you), **Sahaara Youth Club of Durban, Myagdi district, Nepal!**

This was followed by a hopeless attempt to set up a camp for the first time in the **Mustang** area. While the Prime Minister was visiting and we would get in the way. Then a short trip to the Muktinath shrine at 3850m, but even for that we had to negotiate for an hour beforehand to get safe conduct. We were called every half hour to ask where we were.

Ok, then let's go early to our permanent spot at our own health post in **Chitre**. The Dashain festival was just starting so the turnout was less than expected, but that meant we were finally able to end the working day on time. We usually see about 50 patients per day, but that is very taxing for our doctor, who is 76 years old. Especially if you want to deliver good work.

On the other side of the world-famous Kali Gandaki valley (7000m altitude difference) on the flanks of the Dhaulagir (8472m) we were also guests for a second time in the birth village **Chimkola** of our nurse Sharmila. In the meantime, as chairman, I had to attend the official inauguration of the Bhakimele school (see page 2) higher up, so they came to pick up our Bsurre team with local jeeps. Once again well organized and the festival did not take priority over their health, so attendancy was high. Going to same places several times is very agreeable because the organization is much better. It remains a pleasant reunion as we can also follow up on previous patients.

Then back to our headquarters in **Pokhara** to find new interested places during these busy holidays. **Saittighatta**, where a number of years ago, welcomed us back with a stay in a fish farm. Every day rainbow trout, a most welcome change in our dalbhat-noodle soup-mo:mo's menu.

Finally, we held camp at the new **Child, Family Care and**

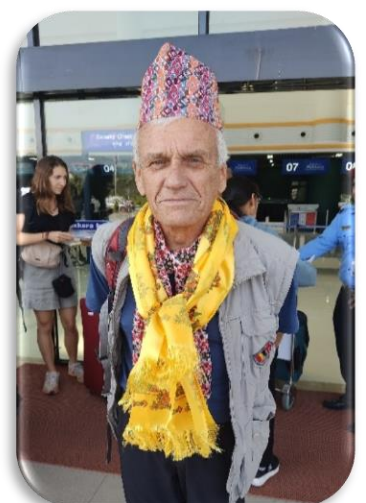


Training Center in Suikhet where we also treated all our sponsored school children from the Ambika school. This in collaboration with a local dentist who will later come to work regularly in the center. More of this in our next chapter further on.

Unfortunately, a number of mandatory rest days during the **Dashain/Tihar festival** proved to be too much for our doctor and he decided unexpectedly and feeling homesick to return home. Too bad, but understandable if the planning and circumstances cannot meet our Western ways and expectations. Nepal remains a country with a completely diverse but different culture and work ethic than we are used to. Our perfect periods are not necessarily theirs. The difficult travel, living conditions, weather, daily schedules and leave periods are many factors that we rarely have control over, but we are happy to deal with in our 'developed' countries.

Nevertheless, a sincere thank you and congratulations to **Doctor Jan Dryhoel** for making a difference again for around 2000 patients who would otherwise receive little or no help, and this has been the case since 2014. Also many thanks to **Sasina Purja** and **Sharmila Pun** who gave everything for this short but still successful campaign and last but not least our **sponsors**.

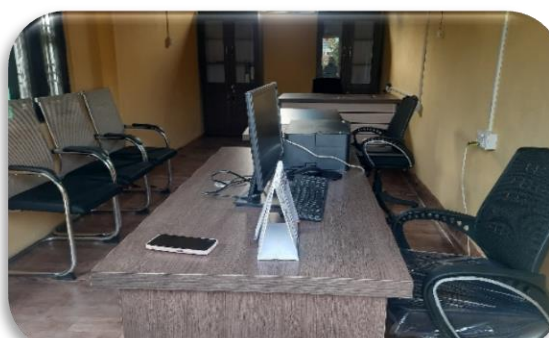
Note: in the last 2 years the health budget has halved in Nepal and we are therefore still desperately needed.



New collaborations with many challenges.

Working together makes us more goal-expanding, more focused and more efficient. Mutual consultation with other perspectives and expertise gives so much more possibilities. With Jolanda Bijl and the board of Nepali Children, we feel strengthened to continue our commitment to the ancient cultures of the Himalayas. Ripples in an ocean of mountains!

Before, during and after our medical camp, I spent a lot of time here setting up this high-impact project. Most children found their way back



to their families by now where they receive continued support and guidance. A social assistant visits them weekly and the children come to the hostel for tutoring before and after school. Before leaving, some receive a hot meal during this transition period as well.

Thanks to a grant from the Province of West Flanders and the 4th Pillar (small initiatives for development) of 11.11.11 (Belgian NGO comity), we are transforming this hostel into a Child & Family Care and Training Center for the Hemja valley, about 15 km from Pokhara.

We set up an office in the former sleeping and study areas and a room was transformed into a full-fledged dentist's cabinet where first aid can also be provided.

There is an information and meeting room and soon there will be a consultation room, childcare and residence room for urgent and short-term care of children and families. Some supported families also learn agricultural techniques in the garden and can now grow their own food.

Later we hope to add a large floor to organize larger events, mainly with civil society groups such as the neighborhood mother committees.

In the meantime, even more partners jumped on board and we welcomed the Nepal Foundation and 'Wilde Ganzen' from the Netherlands, who mainly help finance the substantive and practical activities. After all, there are currently 4 employees; being a CEO, Program Manager, Social and Financial Assistants hired which greatly increased operating costs. A psychosocial assistant has also yet to be found. Entire families now need to be helped and monitored, so more partners were involved. The biggest challenge now, however, is to streamline and align our own internal working methods, objectives, restrictions and reporting. No sinecure. Read Jolanda's story next.



Burgerinitiatieven voor Internationale Solidariteit

STICHTING NEPAL

Looking back at 2023: a report by Jolanda Bijl.



The past year has been a special year to be able to do development work in Nepal. The country is facing major problems and these appear to be getting worse. For example, we currently see that more than 80% of young people are moving abroad to study or to earn money. The same applies to people who would like to receive a higher salary than the low wages paid in Nepal.



The consequences are great. On the one hand, we see that money flows from abroad have become the most important source of income in Nepal. Many families depend on the money that their relative sends every month. Unfortunately, this encourages the Nepalese people to no longer be active in finding work or contributing to building up their local community.

On the other hand, we also see that the economy is being disrupted. In Nepal you see more and more women left behind with their children and people who are too old to have an affordable job. More and more, knowledge from recent graduates is also not used in the country but deployed abroad.



The question therefore arises as to how we can best continue with development aid. Himalayan Projects and Nepali Children looked for a solution together during 2023.

We are very aware that those left behind have a difficult life. We have therefore thought about a way in which we can break the cycle for them.



We call the plan we have devised for this purpose Family service: supporting families to improve their situation.

What matters is that they rediscover their own strengths and what their possibilities are. They can use their own strengths to achieve what they want.

Important questions are:

What can I do? What do I have?

What I know? What do I want?

Family service is therefore a tailor-made solution. A solution in which the family members themselves have to take action and in which Himalayan Projects and Nepali Children support to ensure that they keep going, do not give up and can save themselves.

Various programs have been set up for parents who brought their children to the hostel:

- Trainings to consciously deal with personal hygiene, hygiene in the living environment, learn to save, responsible meals, etc.;
- Opening bank accounts and providing guidance on management, savings, etc.;
- Looking for work so that there is weekly income; educations...;
- Medical support and information;
- Study guidance for all children in the family.



These programs are currently being expanded to more people in the Hemja village for mutual benefit.



The positive result is that the children from the hostel were able to return to their families. This is very important for the personal development of children. They had a very good time in the hostel because here they learned how to deal with peace, regularity and cleanliness. They received good nutrition and went to school every day. However, deep down, they all missed their families.

But also, the other way around: the family members missed their child. As well. It is terrible that you see an empty chair during every meal because your son or daughter has been forced to leave home. The parents were very happy that there was support so that the children could return.

Therefore, it has been agreed that the support will last three years and that the families will receive all the help they need during this period. All costs continue paid by you, our faithful sponsors! Our local partner organization Jana Hitaishi Foundation continues to provide practical tailor-made solutions and support.

This is not the only thing we have done. Himalayan Projects and Nepali Children have also set up a dental practice. Himalayan Projects arranged the entire furnishings and Nepali Children mainly helped to set up the project. At the beginning of 2024, the first dental treatments will be provided free of charge for whom no medical care is affordable.



More: Nepali Children has been supporting children at the Ambika government school for years. We found out that Himalayan Projects also supports children at the same school. Ok, our help was different and the criteria for whether or not to help children also differed.

When we discovered this, we had several conversations to sort this out. The implementing organization for this is Jana Hitaishi Foundation. She coordinates that the sponsorship funds are spent on the right children. Currently, 30 children are being helped in this way. The parents are completely exempt from any contribution, but goodwill. We are eagerly awaiting what more 2024 will bring us. We will look for more intensive cooperation. Together we are strong.



In any case, we know that we will be doing a major sponsorship program at a school in the Netherlands in March. The proceeds from this will be fully spent on the dental project to ensure that in the coming years there are sufficient financial resources to allow many people in Hemja to undergo a dental check-up and to provide basic dental care.

Paul and I will be together in Nepal for a few months to provide support to people who need it, who are in danger of being left out and therefore remain or end up in a negative spiral.

Oxygen for Gunsha hospital!

Far, far away in the extreme eastern corner of Nepal. In the shadow of the Kanchenjunga Mountains there is a medical post at 3589m. Here, near Sikkim (India) and Tibet (China), mainly Sherpas and Tibetans live. Most Sherpas try to make a living from mountain tourism, the Tibetans live in a refugee settlement and are mainly shepherds and remote high passes border trade.

To ensure minimal health access, we have made a significant upgrade with important medical equipment here. Oxygen generators in particular are very important and a significant improvement compared to the heavy, cumbersome oxygen bottles that also take 2 weeks to be refilled. Furthermore, crutches, stretchers, masks and gloves, stethoscopes,



sterilization equipment, glucose and oximeters, medical toilets and a lot of plaster and bandage materials and some small items were neatly left behind in a hotel in Taplejung.

A tent, mattresses, headlamps, warm clothing and hot water bottles were also included for the nurses who sometimes had to trek very high to visit the injured and sick in the alpine meadows and summer hamlets to provide some basic comfort.

Not only the **Gunsha hospital** but also those in the higher situated **Tibetan hamlet of Foley (refugee camp)** will receive their long-awaited bucket list of medical equipment.

In mid-December, after another lengthy but beautiful journey of just under 1000 km, we arrived at the district main town where we handed everything over to the



local journalist. Our regular contact man just got married that day and was close to the border with Tibet where his wife comes from. We hope to see everything at work in the medical posts here next year. Extra: along the way we were able to view the beautiful tea fields of Ilam. Now all this equipment still has to be carried to Gunsha on the backs of porters (Sherpas) for 2 days after the winter shutt down.



Short news of our medical health post in Chitre.



Since 2006 we have been continuously running our own proper Health post with our own nurse on duty; now Sharmila Pun. Before, we reached or supplied it walking by foot for more than a day. We are now merely 4 ½ hours away from Pokhara by jeep. Yet the exodus of the permanent population continues to accelerate here and all medical posts in the neighborhood are underutilized.

That is why we have asked the local government to staff the small posts alternately in order to distribute the staff more and give a meaningful

workload. Apart from our busy medical and dental care camp, not enough people come here. A sustainable common solution is required. Since we have a mobile dental cabinet, we decided to transfer our permanent dental equipment to the **Training Centre in Suikhet** where it can now be used much more usefully (see also art. on page 6).



Better late than never: the Salangiri waterproject.

Another difficult birth, this project. Disputes over a few square meters of land, denied access for tractors and bulldozers over private land, temporarily improper use of a large advance for private purposes, inflation and the fluctuating exchange rate. Arguments about the choice of materials, prices, harvest time, festivals and endless road works without a diversion: my teeth were grinding at times.

A total of 8 times we drove back and forth for 8 hours, sometimes at night without breakfast to be able to attend a meeting in time before the farmers worked in their fields and strict wording was also necessary to finally get this project started. And who washes the car every time?

It remains a completely different culture and philosophy to work in and just as challenging after 30 years. The only rich and high-caste resident with his own water source at the top of the village refuses passage unless there is something in it for him, also because the village has not given his son a large 'too expensive' contract for the construction of the road to the village. village made me very uncomfortable. The local 'Magar' culture wants to copy that, ultimately with the phrase: **"Do you want money or water?"** Drastic, I know. Those responsible, partly due to pressure from the entire population, got out of their seats and, I must honestly admit, flew in. Disaster avoided and now on the right track.

Above the school, the classrooms have leveled an entire area by hand and removed heavy stones. With the local committee

and a contractor who also supervised our water project in Siling (2016-19) a little further away, we measured and listed everything again (a few km's of water pipes, taps, 5000 liter water tanks, fencing, cement, sand, gravel and what else) and then place the order together with a distributor an hour's drive away. **Volunteering is real work too!**

In the meantime, almost everything has been delivered and the works are in full progress. Fingers crossed: next year we hope to show you the results: 51 families with their own water tap as well as water access in the fields!

With thanks to our sponsor: the Province of West Flanders.

Provincie
West-Vlaanderen
Door mensen gedreven



Meanwhile with us in Belgium.

Back in the old country, the fund needs to be filled again and fortunately, in addition to our regular sponsors. There are also some schools that help realize our dreams. Equally important however, is raising awareness and sensitization among our population and especially youth about our world with its diversity and its problems. Worldwide we use the same water and breath the same air, why not the same opportunities?

This year we could once again count on the generous support of the Sint-Rembert Institute in Torhout and the Technical school VTI in Bruges. We were also allowed to set up an info stand at the GROS festivals in Oostkamp, Boom and Bruges.



News from our joint venture: Aasha Project in Thimi.

They help with education, microcredits and emergency aid. Extensive news at: www.project-aasha.webnode.nl.



So, what is in store for Nepal in 2024?

- Completion and official opening of the **water project** for 51 families in **Salangiri**.
- The '**Child, Community & Family Hive Center**' will be further expanded into a fully-fledged multifunctional center. Family guidance, savings programs, information campaigns, medical and dental care are core tasks that we offer with various partners for all of Hemja's needs. This in collaboration with the Jana Hitaishi Foundation in Nepal.
- Together with Nepalese local dentists, we will offer free **dental check-ups and treatment** in the new community centre to various schools in the Hemja/Suikhet area.
- Postponed: we still hope to have computers in the **Rolpa** area in the Shree Saraswati Secondary School. Our regular computer supplier and repairer **Krishna Raï** unfortunately suffered some brain trauma and we helped him to recover. We also couldn't take away his income and join his competitors. He still has difficulty walking, speaking and typing, but with therapy, patience and some luck we hope for his recovery.
- Our **medical post** in Chitre, Myagdi receives government support to ensure its future.
- Together with **Jolanda Bijl** from Nepali Children, we are checking out various new project options with a preference for marginal remote villages and communities. Unfortunately, this Dutch foundation will stop sometime during 2024. Luckily, three board members will join us to continue their and our projects together. That is why Paul and Jolanda will visit some communities in May to prospect for improving the quality of life there.
- We will further support their sponsored children through our **Study Fund**.
- We want to set up an affordable **dental practice/medical centre** in Pokhara. To cover the operating costs for this, we will be busy looking for new sponsors.
- We hope to find some **volunteers** to strengthen our educational and medical work.



Plans in Belgium and now also in the Netherlands in 2024.

- Various Flemish and now a Dutch school from Rotterdam are organizing support where we will also provide presentations and workshops. On June 29 we will be at Bruges and elsewhere with our information stand.
- Networking and collaboration becomes more important. E.g.: the 4th Pillar meeting on 11.11.11 in Brussels with workshops and an explanation from Radboud University, which also visited our project with an analyses of development work of small initiatives in Nepal. Plenty of food for thought. Measuring is knowing.
- In Belgium, the Ministry of Finance is harassing us to oblige us to provide national register numbers of our sponsors from 2024 onwards. What with the European privacy rules and the hacking and phishing warnings? We are investigating this through the 4th Pillar network and the large NGO Federations in Belgium.

This way, we work together to build a better, more fairly distributed world.

How your support can make all this possible:

Financial support by donating to BE14 3800 1081 6783, BIC: BBRUBEBB. Tax certificate starting from €40,00/year.

Plenty of choice and can be combined:

Sponsor a school child. Preferably from €25.00/month.

Sponsor our annual medical camps and aid station. Good for everyone's health.

But volunteers are also welcome in our schools, medical post or at medical camp. Teachers, doctors and dentists. We, or better They need You.

Are you already a sponsor? Help us with word-of-mouth advertising or pass on our newsletter because we do not do paid advertising!

Would you like our folder or educational/workshop brochure for schools or events? We will be happy to send it to you. ?

Email us at himalayanprojects@gmail.com.

More info: www.himalayanprojects.org & www.facebook.com/HimalayanProjectsVZW.

By demand of the Ministry of Finance: provide us with your national register number and/or date of birth. This can be done by phone, post or e-mail.

One-off donations help provide our Emergency Fund for mostly urgent medical assistance.

If you are organizing a benefit or special birthday party: with this you can also use our Study Fund for educational materials, school uniforms and books for schools, but also, for example, sanitary towels for school

And what afterwards? Make us heirs. Our eternal thanks.

Want to see us in Nepal? Welcome, contact us.

Strong in numbers.



Only with your support can we hope to make a difference somewhere. Voluntarily without interests beyond the welfare of children and their families. Stay with us and strengthen us in our ideals. Even drops make ripples in an ocean of mountains!

Greetings from Paul, Nita, Jolanda, Niels, Bhod Raj, Ohm, Jan & the Bsurre team including Sasina and Sharmila and wish you all good health and good luck. Namasté.



For our 'regular' sponsors:

There's nothing more annoying than asking your boss for a raise. As we are a charity it feels similar.

And thus, reluctantly but very necessary we would like to make a friendly but urgent request to our donors to reconsider their fixed transfer, which has sometimes lasted for years, and to upgrade it - preferably upwards.

Thanks in advance.

We remain extremely grateful.