

Momentous reunion – Schule macht Schule Newsletter September 2016

Dear supporter and friends of the Medical Centre School in Jharkot, dear pupils, parents and teachers of the Musisches Gymnasium,

To begin the newsletter, an image that hasn't left our minds:

Young Norbu fell asleep on the floor during Self Studies. Without being told to do so, Pema Wangchuk carefully turned him onto his back, lifted him up and carried him to his bed in the boys' room. Tsering Dharkey, who came along to open the doors, covered him up and these two older boys then returned to their studies ...

We've been back from Nepal for a good ten days now – five weeks in which a great deal happened, only some of which we will be able to share here.

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Self study time with volunteer Elias from Vorarlberg

1) The future has begun – a plot of land and professional advisers

Since the rooms at the monastery are too small and only makeshift repairs have been made since the earthquake, the need for a new building for the project has become even more serious. This new building will combine traditional building techniques with passive solar technology and earthquake protection – more on that in the future. This summer a great deal has happened:

- A plot of land roughly 4000 m² has been donated to the project by the village community, for long term use. Architect Namrata Maharjan from ASFN (Architecture Sans Frontières Nepal – Architects Without Borders Nepal) has made an inspection and measured it together with the villagers. As soon as the necessary documents have been produced, detailed planning can begin. The hillside plot lies above the public primary school and from there you have a view of the whole valley.
- ASFN has "adopted" us. Not just in that Namrata has helped us with the plot: the ASFN team will also be providing assistance with every issue, from cost planning to advising on questions of design and supervising construction. They will make no profit, charging only at cost. We are delighted to have local trustworthy experts on board.
- Beatrix Kovacs, a Hungarian-British architect who has been involved with the project for a long time, will be adapting her existing plans for a solar school in the Jharkot valley to suit the new conditions.

It could be that we will be able to start construction of the construction site access road as soon as this coming spring!



Measuring the plot: Namrata and villagers

2) Cooperation with the public school: positive developments and a question mark

For the very first time we have been teaching not just "our" children, but pupils from the public school too. Children who are eager to learn and in whom we can see just how much the children in the project profit from the support they receive from our full time staff and the volunteers.

The entire staff of the little public primary school in Jharkot has been changed. Together with our teachers and volunteers, there are now 8 people supervising and teaching the 30 school children, who are between 7 and 14 years of age. Such conditions sound like paradise, but it's not quite that simple: children being taught in the same school grade vary widely in their abilities and knowledge, depending on whether they are from our project, where two study sessions are held every day beyond standard school lessons, or they only attend the public school. The public school children have no support at home in their studies and often only attend school on an irregular basis.

We were able to observe all the teachers during lessons and were impressed at how things had changed compared to previous times. At the end of the first week there was a conference with the teachers and managers of the public school and Medical Centre School. Positive things to note were:

- There is generally an engaged and friendly learning atmosphere
- Teaching is tailored according to the children's abilities, ensuring that they are all challenged and all can succeed on their individual level.
- The classrooms are decorated with the children's work and the benches have been replaced

The public school committee will be financing a copier/printer (until now everything such as tests had to be written out by hand multiple times!), Schule macht Schule will be loaning a computer. At our suggestion, brief movement sessions have been established between lessons; for the children who have no learning support at home, the teachers offer support lessons. Time will tell to what extent the children take advantage of this.

And the question mark? The collaboration with the public school is at stake: for the first time the public schools in the mountain region will move to Pokhara for the winter, rather than closing for the season. The Medical Centre School has held this kind of „winter school“ for many years already. However the state winter school term dates are completely unsuited for our project. Due to the cooperation "our" children are registered as pupils of the public school and are in theory tied to this schedule. The question of further cooperation is now dependent on whether a solution can be found in discussion with the D.E.O. (District Education Office). Ending the cooperation would result in higher costs for the project and above all, the educational opportunities for the other children from the village would be severely impaired.



On the way from the monastery to the school



Sugan, one of the boys from the public school, learning how to use scissors



Memory, made with the children, as an educational game

3) The role of our volunteers and the English Box

When we arrived, we were welcomed by two volunteers from Austria: Carina Hochrainer from Tyrol and Elias Höck from Vorarlberg. These two had been with the Nepalese team for three months and taken care of – among other things – the English lessons. The children loved them both! Carina, a trained primary school teacher, established the "English Folder for Volunteers" to act as a baton to be passed on in the relay process of our volunteers. Together with the children, they also designed the "English Box", in which there are self-made learning materials – just waiting to be added to.

The reports we receive from our volunteers are a valuable source of information regarding what's happening in the project, what progress has been made, what problems have arisen and what needs dealing with next. In October Leonie Salzmann and Constanze Kreuzberger from last year's 8m class from the Musisches Gymnasium will set off to Jharkot and continue the work where Carina and Elias (as well as Julie from the Netherlands who joined the project for a few weeks on the spur of the moment) have left off.

4) Accounts 2015: a difficult year managed well

In spite of the increased prices that followed the earthquake, as well as the dramatic rise in energy prices that followed the border blockade in September, our team in Nepal has managed to keep the project costs on budget:

The total project costs rose from 2,781,446 NPR (Nepalese Rupees) in 2014 to 3,085,884 NPR in 2015, an increase of 11%. An unexpectedly positive result – included in the increase are:

- Medical costs for the staff (up 85% from 2014)
- School materials, including for the first time those for the children from the public school too
- Building repairs and maintenance (up 1800% from 2013 due to the earthquake)
- Transport costs (+60% from 2014 due to the border blockade)

The fact that the total increase wasn't even greater is thanks in no small part to the children and the Tibetan teacher Tsering Dolkar. With the vegetable garden that they tend together, food costs have decreased by 8%! In contrast: the World Bank recorded an increase in consumer prices in Nepal of almost 9%.

5) New faces: found and still sought

Children:

Taking the places of Bhuchung and Lhakpa Chenzum (see 6), Norbu Tsering and Dolma Tsering (the second girl with this name!) have now joined us.

Norbu Tsering comes from Sangdak. He was born in 2007 (purportedly) and is a brother of Tsering Wangmo, who enrolled in 2014.

Dolma Tsering from Jharkot will be 6 in December. Since she is so young, she still sleeps at home with her parents, but spends the day from breakfast to dinner at the project. She always has her friend Lali Kumari in tow, who even comes along to the Self Study periods at the Medical Centre to study and do homework.

Staff:

Rishikesh, who cooked for everyone for eight years and took on any work and was a fatherly friend to the children, has left the project under pressure from his family. He is now working in Iraq(!) in security. We hope that he will earn as well as he is expecting to, and above all that he returns safe and sound. Fortunately, there is now a new, fantastic cook: Deumaya is just 19 years old and she masters the canteen kitchen wonderfully well. We miss her dal bhats and curries already.

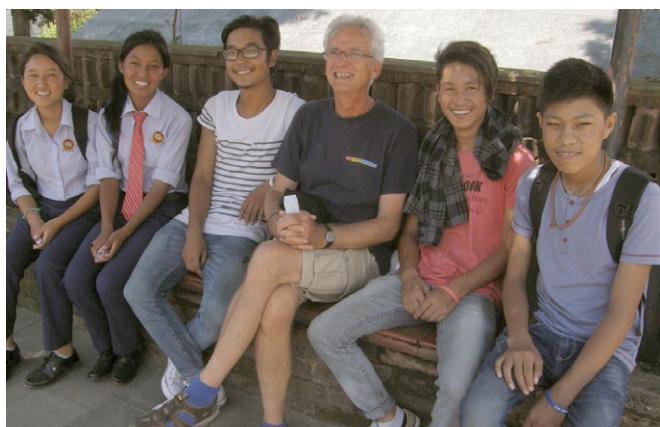
Lobsang Wangmo, the helping hand at the boarding school and teacher to the young children, has returned to her home village of Kingar in order to help her aging parent with their field and housework. We miss her and we hope to be able to find a replacement for her soon: Tsering Dolkar is in urgent need of help with her 24 hour day as Tibetan teacher and boarding school mother to 20 children.



Our new kids: above Dolma Tsering (left, with Lali Kumari), below Norbu Tsering, a real bon vivant



Meeting up with our former students: above in Pokhara, below in the Garden of Dreams in Kathmandu



6) “Old” faces seen again

We met three former Medical Centre School students in Pokhara: Bhuchung is doing an electrician's apprenticeship, Lhakpa Chenzom is training to become a cook – as we reported in April – and Ngawang Gyamtso is attending high school and has even jumped a year! All three will continue to be supported by the project on their path to independence, whether financially or in terms of advice and guidance. They are all capable and cheerful young people...

Our final afternoon in Kathmandu was spent with another five of our young people: Sonam Wangdu, Ngawang Tsering and Sonam Wangyal, who are graduating as Thangka painters and the two students of traditional Tibetan medicine, Kar-chung Lhamo and Pema Yangdon. We asked them what they thought about their time at the Jharkot school and what they thought could be done differently or

**Big Band des Musischen Gymnasiums
Vokalensemble Hohes C
Trio Jazzcream**



BIG-BAND-BRUNCH
Benefiz für Nepal

Sonntag 2. Oktober 2016
11.00 Uhr, Ziegelstadt Hallein



better. Nothing, they said, it was all perfect. Perhaps ... a little more space would be good, yes. So when we then told them about the planned new building, they were beaming and full of questions: Where? When? How?

7) Big Band Brunch: first the vote, then the treat

Big plans need support – and that's what the BBB will offer on Election Sunday in October – it's not clear if the Presidential Election was deliberately scheduled for the same day as our concert ...

Big Band Brunch on Sunday 2nd October 2016 at 11am, at the Ziegelstadt in Hallein

- Big Band des Musikgymnasiums (Musikzweig am Musischen Gymnasium)
- Vokalensemble Hohes C
- Trio Jazzcream

Alongside aural treats will be tasty treats too: from Nepalese delicacies to homemade cakes...

Tickets (15€/10€): Musisches Gymnasium Salzburg, Brillen Binder Hallein, Farbencenter Holzer Hallein, Ritzberger-Der wahre Genuss Oberalm

Ticket reservation: +43 664/1414941. Info flyer for download: [BBB >>](#)
Please spread this news, come along and bring your friends and family too!

8) Miscellaneous: Ngodup, online shopping as support, massage. And a request to Facebook users

Ngodup, Mohan's young son, who suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (as we reported in April), has continued with conventional treatment, which cannot stop the illness, only alleviate the symptoms. It has unfortunately not been possible to begin the new therapy that is coupled with Ayurveda elements, for which Ngodup and his parents are waiting – and for which we asked for your support. We are keeping the money donated for this purpose (which already totals about 900 Euros – **thank you** to the donors!) in the donation account until the therapy begins and the bills are received.

shop2help: Do you shop online? Then **bookmark the link** to our portal on shop2help:

[www.shop2help.net/schulemachtsschule >>](http://www.shop2help.net/schulemachtsschule)

When you visit and buy from online shops via this portal, Schule macht Schule receives 2-10% of the item value depending on the retailer! It really works: since May the monthly shop2help contributions to our project have risen from 8 to 30 EUR. That's not nothing – but perhaps we can do even better?

Example of online shops available through shop2help: Amazon, hotels.com, A1, buch.de, Emirates, Humanic, intimissimi, Lego, Microsoft, muscload, Otto, Viking, Street One, Zotter... and many more!

Our Amchi Ngawang, the project's doctor practising traditional Tibetan medicine is also proficient in **Tibetan Ku-Nye-massage** (mmm!). During the trekking season in the autumn, he will be offering this service to tourists for the first time in nearby Ranipauwa, Muktinath. A large part of the profit will be fed back into the project.

Our **Facebook** page is going well: we've just passed 300 likes. If you use Facebook, please **share** our news and encourage your Facebook friends to **like** the page too. When the new build really gets going, we'll need to establish a broad reach. Help us to achieve this!



Tibetan teacher and boarding school mother, Tsering Dolkar is the most important attachment figure for the children

Pema Tsing and Dolma from Manang ride home for the holidays across the Thorung La Pass, 5420m above sea level



9) Seeking sponsors!

Perhaps you would enjoy financially supporting one of our children and keeping in occasional contact with them – maybe in collaboration with other people? The five children on this page are still without sponsors and would be delighted to have a sponsor family or class. We ask sponsors for a monthly contribution of 50€. You can find out more about becoming a sponsor and what is involved on our website under „How can I help?“ or [click here >>](#)



Tenzin Tsewang

Please and thank you

On behalf of the children and everyone involved in the project, we say a big thank you for your interest and support – and hope that it long continues!

Christina Klaffinger

Wolf Pichlmüller



Tsering Wangmo

www.schule-macht-schule.at  www.facebook.com/schulemachtschule

Donation account at the Volksbank Salzburg:

Schule macht Schule | IBAN: AT09 4501 0000 0811 1486 | BIC: VBOEATWW



Pema Tsering



The view from the new plot of the village and the Jharkot monastery



Dolma Tsering



Norbu Tsering

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