

## The end of the search for shelter

*Schule macht Schule Newsletter December 2024*

Dear supporters and friends of the Medical Centre School in Jharkot, dear students, parents and teachers at the Musisches Gymnasium,

This newsletter has – aside from the piece about Groundhog Day – just one topic: the Jharkot project has become the Mustang House Phalyak!

Back in September, we wrote::

*“So we are on the lookout once more for a home for the summer school in the mountains; there is intense preparatory work and it may ultimately lead us away from Jharkot to another village in the region...”*

We were keeping things on the down low at that point – after the many failures in the months before, we didn't want to report more until the official steps in Nepal had actually been taken and the start of construction had really been confirmed.

And suddenly everything happened very quickly! What has happened, what is happening (and what is needed) we'll tell you now.

– and as always, happy reading!

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### 1. Back to square one

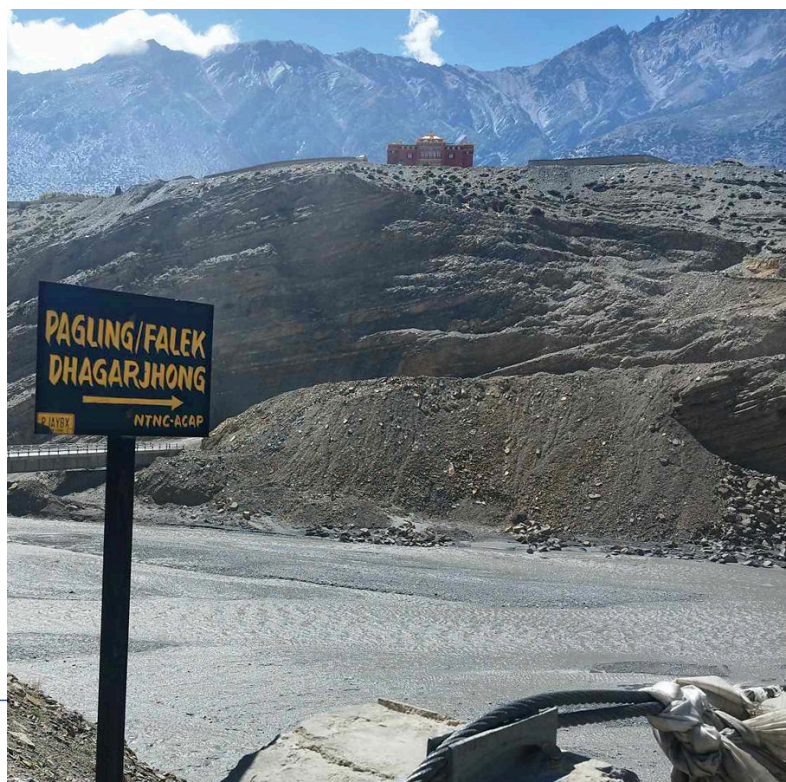
End of April 2024. We're back in the queue. No replacement rooms for the quarters we've lost in Jharkot (the monastery has terminated our agreement, and we won't get the rented classrooms again either), no luck with our search for replacement rooms or even a suitable plot of land there, or in the surrounding villages. The children aren't homeless, since they can remain in the winter school, but during the warmer months they should be closer to their families, in their native cultural environment! That's the whole concept of our project.

Then we remember a conversation from March, in Bhakunde: *My family has undeveloped land*, Ngawang Tsering had said. *In Phalyak. Should Jharkot come to nothing.* Ngawang Tsering is one of our grownup protégés: he studied Tangka painting and has long been self-



*Ngawang Tsering as a 10-year-old in 2008, in the courtyard of the Jharkot monastery. Now he's playing a big role in the project. Read on ...*

*Signpost to the village of Phalyak (Falek is an alternative spelling). The road bridge was only built recently, previously the settlement was only accessible via a suspension bridge over the Kali Gandaki river.*





employed and built himself a house in his home village. When he has free time, he helps out at his former school – as he was doing at the time of this conversation.

Ngawang Tsering remained true to his word; the Phalyak village community decided that the project shouldn't be a matter for an individual family, but instead the children's house should stand on community ground. Also good!

## 2. The village, the name, the plan

Phalyak lies to the west of the Kali Gandaki valley, a little lower than Jharkot, at 3150 m above sea level. The village has 150 inhabitants. There is a Buddhist monastery there, as well as a guesthouse (a simple hotel). Most people make their living from farming and, like everywhere in Nepal, many young people move away to the cities or go abroad. Ngawang Tsering has returned.

He is now the chairman of the newly founded society in Phalyak and most of the nine mandatory board members are parents or relatives of the twelve children from Phalyak who have been or are being cared for in our project.

A society needs a name of course, and it should be shorter than the one from the Jharkot era (Shree Jharkot Traditional Medical Centre and School was quite a mouthful!), and it should cover the project's entire spectrum. Since our winter school within the Bhakunde Children's Village has already become the "Mustang House", everyone quickly agreed: Mustang House Phalyak!

Our piece of land is in an area at the edge of the village unsuitable for farming. Advised by architect Christoph Brandstätter and in agreement with our colleagues in Nepal, villagers and building engineer Rajendra Paudel, we have developed the room design and plans. The entire usable area 220m<sup>2</sup> for up to 30 people:

- 3 bedrooms for the 20 children; dual use for lessons
- 4 living spaces for personnel; dual use for office and lessons
- 1 guest room for volunteers
- Dining room; multi-use for prayer, assembly, lessons
- Kitchen and pantry
- 2 showers, 4 toilets
- Entrance hall with a roof lantern
- External storage building

*The idea: though built with cheap, modern materials, the building is to reflect traditional building design. A walled inner courtyard is to be built as protection from the almost constant strong winds.*



*Everyday life continues for the children meanwhile. Not entirely: Ines from Schule macht Schule has brought supplies for our tiny library*



*Phalyak. The traditional clay houses with flat clay rooves are not withstanding climate change any more. Those who can, rebuild.*

*View from the building site towards Kali Gandaki and the Annapurna massif*



The Amchi and his assistant will live at Mustang House too; the village will provide rooms for the provision of traditional Tibetan medicine that is part of our project.

Multi-purpose usage of rooms and the most cost-effective construction possible (single storey, structural frame made of double-T iron beams, infill with heat-insulating lightweight concrete for the outer walls, inexpensive concrete blocks for the interior) will keep costs low.





*Difficult tasks here too: in Nepal there are 3 terms each year, with written exams. For the little ones, they find that it's not as daunting as it may seem: In the background, volunteer Sigrid helps find the solution.*

### 3. The construction

We gave the green light for construction to start at the end of September – with a nervous stomach, since the registration of *Mustang House Phalyak* wasn't yet complete. The Nepalese bureaucracy is far more arduous than our own! The registration is now complete. As is the basic construction of the shell, including the window installation, plastering and paint work – in an unbelievable two months!

It's only been so fast because building engineer Rajendra Paudel is an organisational genius. And there has been additional help:

No cement lorry comes all the way up to Phalyak! Pouring concrete is manual labour, with the material mixed in batches in a small mixing machine. But the roof had to be made in one piece in order for it to be watertight.

So, our boarding school manager Tsedol asked for help from the parents. 23 fathers and mothers of project children came from sometimes distant villages to mix the concrete together with the workers, heave and distribute it. They managed it all in one day – meaning that the approaching onset of winter no longer spells catastrophe for us.

We're constantly adding the latest details and photos to the blog on our building website: [>> News from Phalyak: Stone by stone](#). The site is only in German, but Google Translate does a good job of translation.



*Early October: strip foundations and H-profile posts are set.*

### 4. The costs

The cost estimations drawn up by Rajendra Paudel total € 66,200 – for 220 m²! In addition to that we foresee furniture and equipment costs of € 8,000–10,000. As far as possible, we will of course continue to use items from Jharkot.

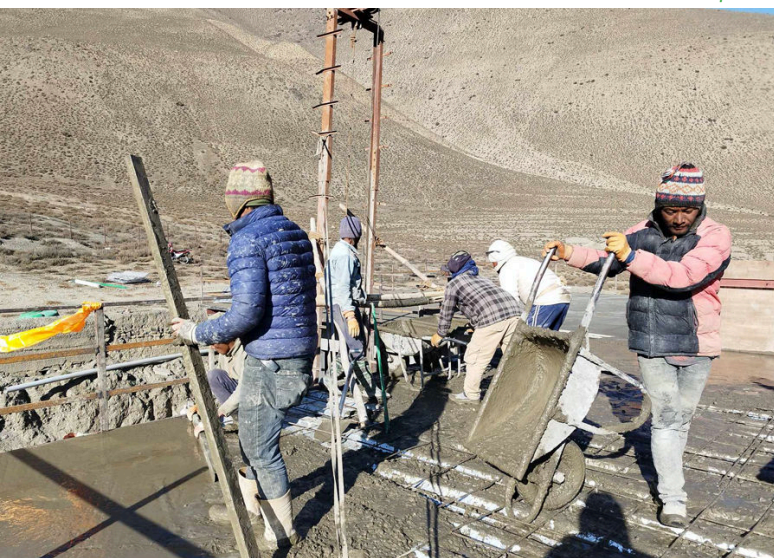
We hope to be able to keep roughly to these figures. We were able to with the winter school thanks to Rajendra: though up in the mountains there are forever unforeseen obstacles – for example when the generator stops working due to the thin air, replacement parts have to be brought in that are a day's travel away. And the public holidays keep getting in the way. (Austria: 13 public holidays; Nepal: 43).



*Mid-November: The concrete is taken up to the roof in wheelbarrows via a simple lift.*

*Left: By the end of October, the walls are up – insulating lightweight concrete for the external walls, inexpensive concrete blocks for the inside.*

*Roof finished! Many of the parents who helped have a long journey home.*



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*Schule macht Schule* has (shrunk) reserves for ongoing project management, but these shouldn't be used up for the building! So we're placing our hope in you once more – every Euro counts!

**What costs what – what can your donation do?** Some examples:

- Sack of cement 50 kg € 6 each
- Window (x 20) € 80 each
- Internal door (x 16) € 113 each
- Bunk bed (x 10) € 250 each
- Water tank € 350 each
- Emergency power supply € 500
- External staircase € 590
- Warm water solar array € 950
- Sanitary installations and equipment € 2600
- Roof construction and covering € 16,500

We have applied to the Development Policy Advisory Board of the State of Salzburg for project funding for 2025 – which in the best case could be € 20,000. We're hoping for *this* best!

## 5. Christmas is approaching: Gifting and helping!

Every donation that comes to us marked for Mustang House will be directed to the building. Every donation is a gift for the children of *Schule macht Schule*!

You'll find the >> [accountdetails](#) at the end of the newsletter.

**Or would you like to give a gift and help connect even more?**

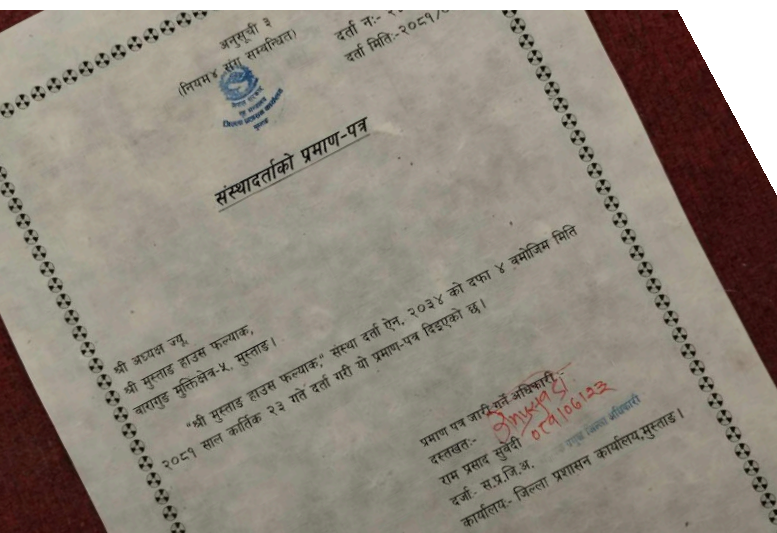
### Lisa's grandma

Our niece from Lannach in Styria has turned her Willhaben.at marketplace profile into a virtual Christmas market stand for *Schule macht Schule*:

*"My grandma Justina, who turned 90 this year, has knitted and crocheted for as long as I can remember for the protégés of Schule macht Schule: without a doubt she has sold many hundreds of pairs of socks, caps and scarves – you name it – and has always donated every single Euro. There's a good reason why this project in particular is so important to her ..."*

Curious for more? [Here >>](#) is Lisa's presentation of Justina's knitted items. The two of them have already earned several hundred Euros for the Mustang House in the last few weeks. But there are

*Mid-November, this important piece is complete too: the registration certificate for our new partner NGO Mustang House Phalyak*



Above: The windows being fitted.

Below: The external staircase leading to the roof being welded



Lisa, her grandma and a look at their "Christmas market stand"



Ganz besondere, handgestrickte Wollsocken Gr. 39-40 (So21) € 15 [PayLivery](#)



Warme, handgestrickte Wollsocken Gr. 39-40 (So21) € 15 [PayLivery](#)



Handgestrickte Kinderwollsocken Gr. 28-29 € 15 [PayLivery](#)



still a lot of beautiful hand-knitted socks, scarves, slippers, blankets  
... All unique pieces!

## ARTificial building blocks

– are pictures and objects donated by both up and coming and established artists: creatives with and without a link to the Musisches Gymnasium, active and retired art teachers, and students ...

Every supporter who donates €100 or more can pick one of these ARTificial building blocks as a thank you, to keep and enjoy or give as a gift.

Pick your own thank you [here >>](#)



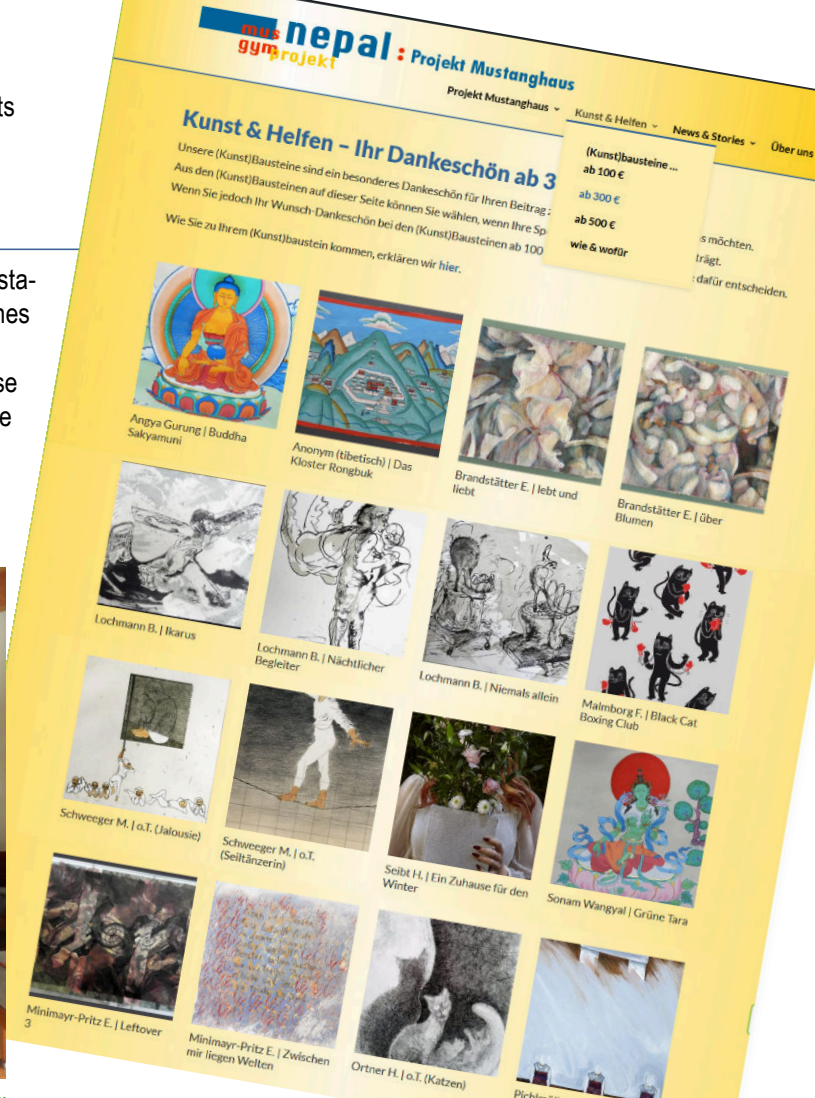
*The Lang family with their ARTificial building block:  
Night flight, 2018 by Günter Minimayr*

### Mural by Luka Leben

A special delicacy: for a donation of € 500 or more, Salzburg artist Luka Leben will design a wall mural as a commissioned work of up to 2x2 m for you.

This very special ARTificial building block is absolutely a one-off!  
We can put you in **contact** >>

*Luka Leben often works together with her brother Sigfried, as with the work on the right, which was brought to life on the roof of a house in Salzburg.*



When Ngawang Tsering and the children paint a house tree on the wall again, just like they did in the winter school (see our [September newsletter](#)), there will be a leaf dedicated to every supporter.





## 6. Caught in the Groundhog Day of tax: another appeal for help

After a number of postponements, the tax adviser who had offered to take over registration and processing of tax relief as a favour to *Schule macht Schule* has finally dropped out for health reasons.

We're now urgently **looking for a tax advisor with a big heart!** Someone who can take care of this for *Schule macht Schule* pro bono, or at least at a very reduced rate. We want to spend as little of the donations as possible on administration.

We're very sorry that we keep having to make you wait on this matter! If you know someone to whom we could turn or you can even open a door for us: **please let us know!**

*The photo on the left suits the trials and tribulations of bureaucracy, in which we sometimes find ourselves up to our necks. (Dawa Sangmo from Class 3 on a trip during our last visit in the spring. No worries, the little actress is fine!)*

### Thank you and please

The building site is now closed for a good two months – things will kick off again in spring, and the doors should open for the children at the beginning of May, after their long six-week holiday.

Your trust and interest in the project delight us and as always on behalf of the children and everyone involved in the project, we say a huge thank you for your support in any form!

With our kind regards and the hope that the supposedly quiet time may actually bring us all a little soothing silence.



Wolf Pichlmüller

Christina Klaffinger



[www.bau.schule-macht-schule.at](http://www.bau.schule-macht-schule.at)  [www.schule-macht-schule.at](http://www.schule-macht-schule.at)

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