

The state of affairs of the corona virus in Nepal and in the Children's Home specifically

First we can give you the great news that all children and employees are healthy!

Since March 24th Nepal has been in »lockdown«, which means a total curfew in the entire country. Only two days before this lockdown was enacted it was announced that all shops would be closed and the population barely had time to stock up on essentials. Police and military patrol the streets to enforce the curfew.

Nepal closed the border to Tibet/China very early on. So far, only nine cases of infection have been reported. Although Nepali citizens express themselves hardly ever with physical contact (like shaking hands and hugging), the number of infections might be greatly underreported. Only a few tests can currently be carried out locally and there are hardly any laboratories that can reliably evaluate them.



As for the immediate future an ample supply of food has been secured for everyone in our Home. The stocks had been replenished in time and in case the curfew might last longer, our disaster emergency stocks can come to the rescue.



The exams at the end of the school year have, because of the Corona crisis, been brought forward three weeks with the result that the children are now on holiday. It is still unclear whether the schools will reopen on April 14 after the Nepali New Year on the 13th. During the end-of-year holidays the children do not have to do any holiday homework, and we usually organize a wide range of activities for them during this time of year. Popular are especially all the games we gave the children these last few years. We slightly extended the allotted time for watching television and the computer room has also been made available more frequently.



All children help two hours a day in the garden, in which there is always a lot of work to do. Sports activities are on the program for young and old. In addition, the comprehensive spring house cleaning is on the cards again.



While the little ones like to run around and play, the older children know how to use brushes and paints and creatively paint the outside of the farmers barn cum solar building. We can only hope that the curfew will not last too long, and that the corona crisis will not worsen, so that the common group excursions will soon be possible again.



A number of significant events have occurred these past few months, besides the lockdown caused by the corona virus.

A major event happened in January when eight of our 'senior girls' gave a resounding dance performance in front of a crowd of 2,000 people in Kathmandu. They were very nervous, but their performance was well received by the onlookers. The girls greatly enjoyed the trip to the capital and even more performing for such a large audience. Consequently, their self-confidence was greatly boosted.



Also in January, we organized workshops for both the younger and the older children, with the support of therapists from the NGO "Nepal House Kaski". The main focus of the exercises being trained was on recognizing, perceiving and expressing feelings as well as dealing with anger and wrath. For purposes of relaxation, yoga exercises were taught. Singing was a significant part of the training and the music teacher also taught the children how to play the guitar.



Later on in February, our Children's Home hosted a large meeting with 42 children - from difficult family backgrounds - supported by the organization »Children Nepal«. In this meeting the focus was on the children communicating about their everyday life, their situation in school, problems with family members, and on specific career aspirations they have. The children were very happy about exchanging views with kids of their own age and expressed a wish to repeat meetings like this.



The children love to celebrate the traditional Hindu festivals. In addition to Holi, the festival of colors, »Shiva Ratri« was recently celebrated, with a large bonfire. To create the bonfire, the children took sugar cane stalks [planted by themselves earlier on], heated them in the fire and then bashed the stalks with a loud bang. The smashed sugar canes were then chewed with relish.



After a large part of the vegetable crops had been destroyed by heavy hailstorms last spring, unfortunately this scenario repeated itself in early March of this year. This year's damage was less serious, though, as later on last the year we had built two new greenhouses. As climate change is clearly noticeable in Nepal too, we will prepare hail nets and install them to protect next year's spring crops.



The four older boys from the hostel acquired much experience digging out our new fish pond. At the beginning of the digging last summer, we still needed to dig with them. During their college holiday, however, the boys showed great enthusiasm to increasing their pocket money through their digging activities. At the end of February the thick bottom film was laid and the pond filled with water. As soon as the shops reopen, we will buy young Tilapias fish at a regional, state fish farm. A small compressor will ensure oxygen levels in the water. And we hope that in about four months' time, the first self-farmed fish will enrich the children's menu. With farming fish ourselves we hope to further improve the self-sufficiency of our Home.



Due to the corona pandemic, it is unclear whether, as planned, we can travel to Nepal in August and continue our work in the Home. We hope that by summer internationally the situation will have relaxed and that travel will be possible again. As an alternative we are, however, considering visiting the propitious Basel autumn fair first and only afterwards fly to Nepal.

We are already looking forward to the moment we arrive in the Children's Home - whenever that moment might be - and meeting the children and staff again, and to spending lots of time with them.

With our qualified management team and all the well-trained employees, we have, in the latter past years, made great progress in benefitting the less well-off children in Nepal. We have only been able to achieve this with your extraordinary help, and we thank all our sponsors from the depth of our hearts for their support!

We wish you good health, a lot of patience and confidence and send you our deepest regards

Barbara Rentsch und Peter Vecker



Children Welfare Association Schweiz – official recognized non-profit association, Grenzacherweg 155 in 4125 Riehen, Switzerland
Post-Konto Nr. 60-182081-3, IBAN CH12 0900 0000 6018 2081 3, info@kinderheim-nepal.ch, kinderheim-nepal.ch.