

Of coming and going, and building bridges

Schule macht Schule Newsletter July 2019

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

We'll be seeing our project children again in just three weeks! We – Wolf and Christina – spend several weeks on site every eighteen months, so as to observe how everything is going, to discuss further developments, to check the accounts and to gather new energy and motivation. What Lal Bahadur – a Nepalese student, who joined our teaching team for a while at the winter school – wrote is also motivating:

Dear ma'am, I want to be a teacher, because I am from rural development community, where they don't get good education. Now I am taking lot of enjoyment with medical centre students and staff. I think the medical centre students have their own goal, they'll make quite a difference in our society. They have a bright life at the centre and they are talented. They are studying hard. They are active and behave friendly towards each other. So, I never saw such types of students before.

Lal Bahadur's observations were a renewed confirmation for us that our work is meaningful. It's not just the children who are wonderful – the project couldn't operate without our engaged Nepalese colleagues on site. And Schule macht Schule couldn't continue the project without your help – which we need more than ever!

Here's what the latest newsletter holds:

1) A painful cut	1
2) We are so proud!	2
3) Our new children	2
4) Passing the baton: replacement sponsors needed urgently	3
5) Special days	3
6) Creative students on both sides	4
7) Tibetan graduation: Sonam Tsering celebrates his first degree	4
8) Volunteers on site: teaching English – playing – observing - reporting	5
9) How your laptop can have a new life	5
10) Thank you and please	5
Addendum: Our youngest sponsors. How children take on responsibility	6

1) A painful cut

Biogena generously supported Schule macht Schule for four years: their monthly donation of 1000 Euros was a great supplement to the sponsorships, grants, donations and campaigns from our supporters big and small. It made it possible to not just complete the growing number of tasks in the project, but to put aside reserves for the forthcoming new building too.

At the end of last year Biogena dissolved the Biogena hilft! organisation and ended support of all the projects involved. The company wishes to link their social activities more closely with their core business again. While it's a shame for Schule macht Schule, we must say:

A huge thank you to Biogena and in particular Dr. Schmiedbauer for the enormous help!



Our children are making great leaps ...



But the first step is through the monastery gate into the boarding school

2) We are so proud!

When our children leave the project school after 6 years (preschool and 5 years of primary school), Schule macht Schule enables them to keep attending school: two years at the Lekshed Tsal School in Jampaling, Pokhara and then at the **SOS Hermann Gmeiner School Pokhara** >>

Schule macht Schule finances their accommodation at these boarding schools and pays their school fees. Beyond that, our Nepalese colleagues continue to care for the students – they see everyone as belonging to a big family. And we are so proud of our children: their social behaviour and academic achievements regularly put them at the top of the class!

Who has made the change?

Dolma Gurung, Dolma Tsering and Tashi Dolma moved from Jharkot to Class 6 at the Lekshed Tsal School in April. We're looking forward to seeing them during our visit in August.

Lhakpa Wangmo, Tsering Lhamo and Palsang Lhamo are now attending the SOS school. Tsering Lhamo's message to us in February, when she found out that she would be able to continue her schooling, shows that this opportunity was not a given for the girls:

We got the news that we'll have the opportunities to continue our education in SOS Hermann Gmeiner School. I feel very happy and all we three girls want to thank you and our godparents from the bottom of our heart!



13-year-old Tsering Lhamo is delighted with her certificate for „Best girl of 2018/19“ at the Lekshed Tsal School

3) Our new children

The freed-up beds at the boarding school didn't stay empty for long. Mia and Janika from the Musisches Gymnasium worked in Jharkot for four months. In April they held the school maturity tests with boarding school mother and Tibetan teacher Tsedol. Here they describe the new children joining the school:

- **Karma Tarchin:** you can tell he's still very young, as he often looks to be close to us and needs a lot of attention and affection; he absolutely loves music. He's probably 5 years old and comes from Dagarzong, his parents are crofters.
- **Dickyi Dolkar** is 5 or 6 years old, the child of crofters from the village of Phaylak. She's a very open, cheerful girl, chatty, interested and witty.
- **Tsering Dawa:** an inquisitive, peaceful and precise boy, spending a long time for example doing puzzles. Doesn't get upset, is very pleasant and polite. 6 or 7 years old, from Jomsom. His parents are crofters too.
- **Choedup** is always moving, a joker (it was difficult to get a photo of him where he's not pulling a face). He loves playing with his friends and is seldom to be found alone. Maybe 6 years old, the son of a shepherd from the Dolpo region.

The newcomers in the last newsletter all found sponsors very quickly. We hope the same will be the case for Dickyi, Karma, Tsering and Choedup. If you're interested in sponsorship, you'll find all the important information [here](#) >>



Right, from top:

Karma Tarchin

Dickyi Dolkar

And below Dickyi Dolkar romps around with Pasang Choedon, who has been with us for several years

Far left: Tsering Dawa

Left: Choedup



[back to top >>](#)



Dolma Tsering (top.), Dolma Gurung

4) Passing the baton: replacement sponsors needed urgently

With Biogena having ceased their donations, we feel the effect more than ever before when a sponsor ends their support. In addition to the newcomers, we need help with the following children too:

Dolma Tsering has been with us since May 2016; her sponsoring class and family ended their sponsorship once they'd graduated from school after taking the Matura exams. She's now entering Class 3 of primary school. She's a very clever little princess, unbeatable at the memory game and linguistically talented. She can also be a rascal ... It would be great if she could once more find sponsors who like writing and receiving letters.

Dolma Gurung comes from Manang. She knows what she's going to be when she grows up: a teacher. Perhaps at our school ...? Dolma completed her 5 year primary school education in March and is now attending the Lekshed Tsal School for two years. Her sponsoring class completed their Matura exams this year too and so we need new supporters for her. The Lekshed Tsal School is supported by the exiled Tibetan government and thus the sponsorship costs are lower than in Jharkot: 35 Euros per month.

Pema Yangdon has been training as an Amchi since April 2015 (doctor in traditional Tibetan medicine) at the Traditional Sowa Rigpa Training Center in Boudha, Kathmandu. The W family from Salzburg pays half the costs and the other half was borne by *Biogena hilft!* until the end of 2018. Who can take on this half now? We're looking for a contribution of 55 Euros per month so that Pema Yangdon can continue to learn the skills required for her dream job.



Pema Yangdon

Perhaps you can come on board as a sponsor in one of these cases – perhaps with friends? Dolma Gurung and Pema Yangdon are a bit older and so sponsorship could be undertaken without the need for personal contact if that would be preferable.

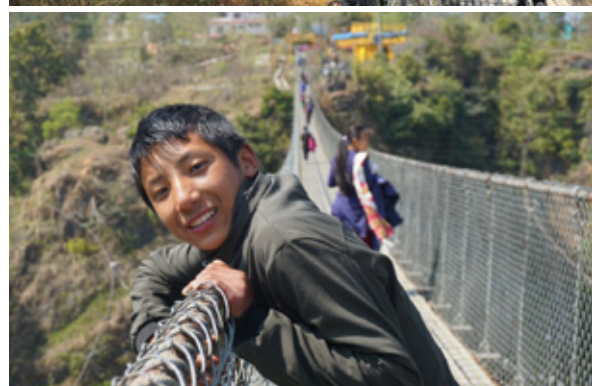
5) Special days

School is often hard work, especially for the little children, and so special days are especially enjoyable: time to really have fun, to relax, fool around and recharge your batteries.

For example, there was the visit to a fairground for the Maghe Sankranti festival. This festival was originally the day after the solstice, but over the course of centuries it has moved to mid-January thanks to the peculiarities of the Nepalese calendar.

There was also the excursion to the longest and highest rope bridge in Nepal at Kushma Bazar.

Or ...



Above: On the rope bridge at Kushma Bazar

Far left: Our cook Deumaya took the children to the fairground – a first for many of them

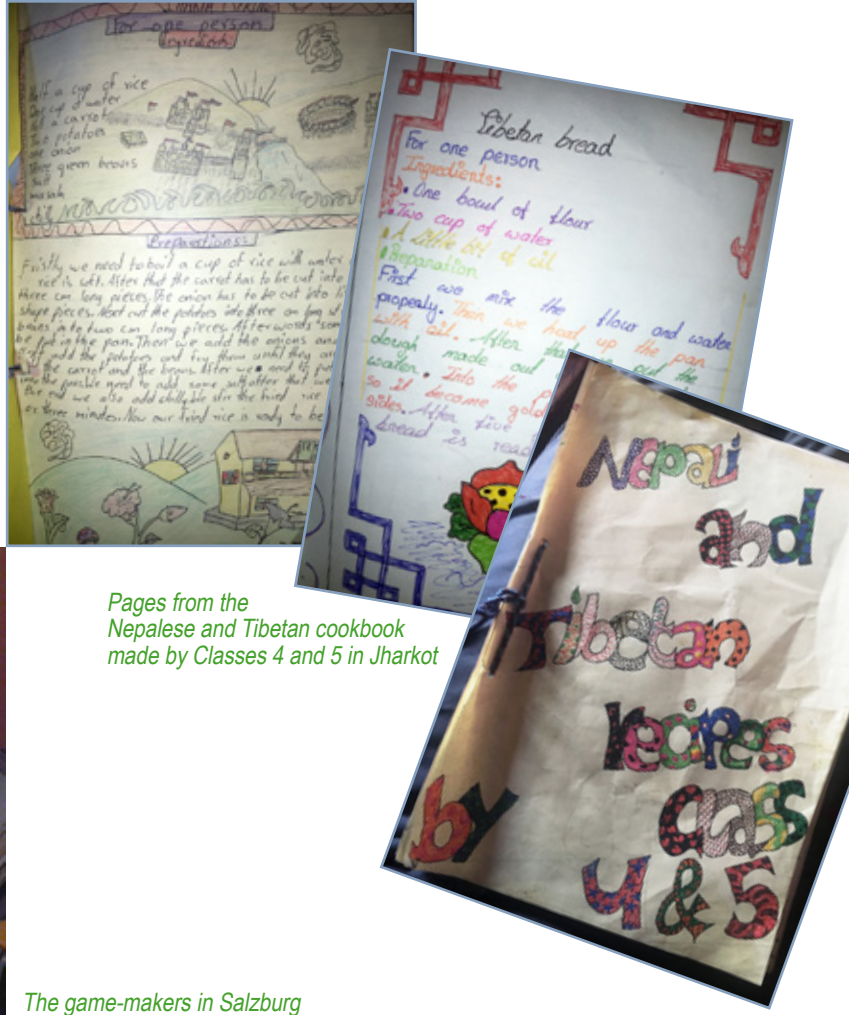
Left: Role playing

6) Creative students on both sides

Cultural education and English lesson in one: the volunteers (delegates) Lena and Carolina made cookbooks with the children in Jharkot – with Nepalese and Tibetan dishes. The contribution from Austria: Kaiserschmarrn!

####Fotos bereits im Bilderfolder

A mixed aged group of students from the Musisches Gymnasium once more used two days in the last week of school to create educational games for the partner school. We can't wait to try them out with the kids!



7) Tibetan graduation: Sonam Tsering celebrates his first degree

Sonam Tsering, a particularly talented young man, attended our project school from 2009 to 2013. The Polish organisation schoolsfaraway.org assumed the costs of his Amchi training (Practitioner of Traditional Tibetan Medicine).

Like all former students, Sonam Tsering is still very connected to his Jharkot school family and so shared his success with us:

Hello Mrs Christina, how are you and Mr Wolf? Yesterday was my graduation ceremony of 6-years course completed and it was very meaningful. My mother was there and all the friends and Rinpoche together. I felt very lucky...*

Thank you very much for the support and love!

Yours, Sonam Tsering

*(*Rinpoche: spiritual head of the monastery, to which the training institution is connected)*



Sonam Tsering at the ceremony at the Yungdrung Bon Academy of Higher Studies Tritten Norbutse.

Sonam's success is a dream comes true for his mother, who, as the daughter of a crofter, did not have the opportunity of a school education.

8) Volunteers on site: teaching English – playing – observing - reporting

We've all seen the reports of fraudulent "aid projects", where money is elicited from well-meaning donors for a supposed orphanage. The orphanage perhaps doesn't even exist and is perhaps just improvised with children from the community for the occasional visit from sponsors...

That can't happen here! Aside from our regular monitoring visits, it's our delegates, our volunteers, who make sure of that. There are one or two in Jharkot year-round. They stay for 6 weeks to 6 months, teaching English and bringing their special interests and abilities to bear in helping shape the kids' recreation time: music, sport, meditation, technology... some of them arrive straight after completing their Matura exams, some are taking a career break, others are entering retirement. The children are curious and open and always warm to them very quickly.

While the work with the children is of course the main focus, the delegates' reports are important: we hear different perspectives on where the strengths of the project lie, where there are difficulties and where solutions must be found as a matter of urgency.

Delegate placements are currently fully allocated up to the end of November 2019. From December there is one slot and from April 2020 both slots are free. Involvement with Schule macht Schule is by no means volunteer tourism and there are no commission fees. Volunteers are fully briefed by us and travel within Nepal on their own responsibility.

Do you know anybody who would be interested in being involved? Interested parties can contact us at team@schule-macht-schule.at for further information.



Great friends: Delegate Janika and little Dicky Dolkar



Computer lessons in the tent at the winter school

9) How your laptop can have a new life

Labdoo lesson! Even though starting up the somewhat decrepit machines can be a bit of a test of patience, the children love it when they can work on the computers in small groups. Four used laptops have been available since 2017, all with the Ubuntu operating system educational software, Open Office and the British Offline Wikipedia for Schools. The machines and software come thanks to Frank Bubek of the organisation Labdoo (www.labdoo.org), which adapts used laptops for lessons in charity projects such as Schule macht Schule, monitors their use and provides an appropriate means of disposal when the machines no longer function.

We would love to have another two computers for the school in Jharkot. If you have a laptop you can donate, please let us know. The machine should be no more than 10 years old, the battery needs to last at least an hour – and with that, your old machine has a new life!

10) Thank you and please

On behalf of the children and everyone involved in the project, we say a very big thank you for your interest and all your support. If you feel we are doing meaningful work, please make use of our donation account – and spread the word!

Kind regards,

Christina Klaffinger

Wolf Pichlmüller

PS: Far away so close

... 10 years ago. On 19th April 2009 under the title *weit weg ganz nah* students from the Musisches Gymnasium played and sang with Hubert von Goisern at the republic in Salzburg. It was a colourful programme in aid of the Jharkot project, performed in front of more than 600 people. Unforgettable!

[Read more >>](#)

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

Donation account at Volksbank:

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

Addendum: Our youngest sponsors. How children take on responsibility

To finish this time, an experience on the Austrian side of the project – solidarity is not just a word.

Felicia from Class 1a at the Musisches Gymnasium came to us in November; the living conditions of the Nepalese crofters' children had really affected her. She told her schoolmates about the project school in Jharkot and wrote a letter to their parents:

Dear 1a classmates and parents!

The Musisches Gymnasium has long supported a school in Nepal, because the people there are so poor. The place is called Jharkot. The school in Jharkot can only manage when they receive donations, because they have so little money.

About 20 children are being taught at the school at the moment. Children from particularly poor families from the surrounding area can live and study there.

I thought that we could sponsor and support ONE CHILD from this school as a group, or as Class 1a. That would mean raising 50 Euros per month for our sponsored child.

Take a look at our world: we have so much, an amount of which we don't even need. When you look at photos of Nepal, you see how poor these people are and how little they have. We could make these people there so happy by sending just a small amount of our money to Jharkot.

Who would like to join in for at least a year? Please come to me and put your name on the list!

18 children were persuaded and this group from Class 1a became our youngest sponsor group. As of December, their sponsored child is young Tashi Pasang from Phaylak.



Class 1a's sponsored child, Tashi Pasang, shows in his drawing how he and his family live.