

Phalyak!

Schule macht Schule Newsletter July 2025



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Dear supporters and friends of the project, dear students, parents and teachers at the Musisches Gymnasium, so much has happened since our last report in December – where should we begin, what should we focus on?

At that point, the unintended building site in Phalyak had been prepared for winter (our use of the quarters at the monastery in Jharkot had been terminated), and now the house is finished and full of life. Let's hear straight from the mouths of the residents of Mustang House in Phalyak!

1. Two months in the new house

After the first two months in Phalyak, Tsering Dolkar (project manager and house mother) and Tsering Choedon (teacher and caretaker) report:

We all enjoy living and working here a lot.

The feeling of having our own building is – how to put it – it is something very special. We feel 100% free, especially since we always have the children around. As our building is a bit outside from Phalyak village our children can shout and play freely.

And it is quite peaceful here. We can see the beautiful snowcapped mountains like Nilgiri, Tilicho Peak and Dhaulagiri from our new building!

One big difference compared to Jharkot is that here it is very windy most of the time. The wind can be exhausting.

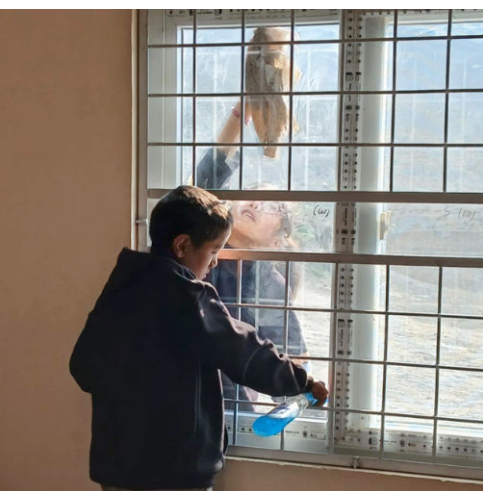
Another big difference is that here the connection with the village is really good. We already know a lot of the villagers, and they are always very helpful to us.

Above left: When moving in the first job was getting rid of the building dust. All the children were did their bit.

Above right: View of the 7061m-high Nilgiri mountain range from our property

Below: The lorry brings rice, oil, and gas bottles for the next few months. The villagers help unload and put everything into storage.

Below: Lessons with Tsering Choedon: when learning the complicated Nepalese letters, a "moving alphabet" is made.





We feel very fortunate to have this building. This is possible only because of you. So once again thank you, Schule macht Schule and every supporter, from all staff and children!

Tsering Yangdon from Phalyak, one of our project children and now in Class 11 at the SOS Hermann Gmeiner Higher Secondary School recently wrote to us:

I spent this long 3-month holiday after class 10 exam in my home in Phalyak and I got the chance to be with all the staff and students. They are all doing well.

Often I went there to teach. I told the younger students what I gained from this great school and it's my pleasure to help our school.

All the families in the village are doing so nice to our school; they bring vegetables and fruits and they helped us for all the work, so I am very happy for their kindness...



Tsering Yangdon with her mother and little sister during the holidays this year – and 12 years ago with us in Jharkot.



Top: Being able to help builds self-confidence!

Above: The Buddha statue for the house altar in the dining room is carried in a solemn procession from the village to Mustang House.



Above: The bare cement floors in the house are cold – so seat cushions are sewn, and everyone (girls as well as boys) is involved.

Left: The certificate award ceremony took place for the first time after the holidays in the new house. Many parents made the trip to attend.

2. From whence the building blocks came

And the two Tserings are right: this was all possible thanks to you – through your contributions great and small, whether expressly dedicated to the building, or a sponsor child, or simply donated to *Schule macht Schule* for the whole project.

Spotlight on:

Although Salzburg Province is operating an austerity programme, Schule macht Schule received substantial financial support for the building via „GO FAIR“.



A group of confirmants from Wals gave their support to the project for the fourth time with "Baking for a good cause" – and this time they equipped the kitchen.



**LAND
SALZBURG**



Lions Club Salzburg
Wir helfen wo sonst keiner hilft

Lions Club Salzburg have also been just as generous again.

Our faithful German partners from Jharkot times "relocated" with us, and their significant contributions to ongoing project operations once again gave us scope for construction.

JHARKOT
Förderverein
Freundeskreis
Projekt e.

The Polish society has a longstanding relationship with Schule macht Schule; generous support for the building came from their club members!

**SCHOOLS
FARAWAY**
SZKOLY NA KOŃCU ŚWIATA

H.R.
E.+E.S.
H.L.G.
VS Oberalm
I.G.
C.P.
B.I.
A.R.
R.N.
R.B.
F.M.
A.S.
A.I.
B.K.
L.+A.N.
R.G.
G.R.
K.M.
Fa. S.
E.R.-F.
F.S.
E.L.
J.S.
D.+S.M.
B. L.-S.

Freundeskreis Christoph B.
Freundeskreis Sissy S.

... the initials here by no means cover all those who contributed either directly or indirectly to the construction of Mustang House Phalyak. Thank you to each and every one of you!



Together with her friends Marianna A. from Poland made possible the construction of 11 new bunk beds by a local carpenter.

Not everything is completely finished: work is still underway on the windbreak for the site, and some of the furnishings are still quite provisional. Final construction figures will be available in the next newsletter!

3. Pioneers ...

Can a 13-year-old work full time for the project? They can. Lorina Gahleitener is currently in Phalyak for six weeks with her mother, Monika. The two of them were really fired up when Lorina's big sister Linda returned full of enthusiasm from her deployment at the winter school. And now Linda's mother and younger sister are the first volunteers to observe, collaborate, teach and support in the new house in the new village. Monika's first report after a good week in Phalyak:



We're doing very well here. We've been very warmly welcomed. We've learned all the children's names now – they are very unusual to our ears of course: Dawa Lhazom, Tsewang Rabgyal, ...

The teachers/caretakers are ever so helpful, so we were able to settle in very quickly. And the cook Nyima does an excellent job of providing for us!

Lorina is doing valiantly, teaching her own class in seven 40-minute sessions a day, just like the adults. In the evenings, however, she's very young and plays with the children until their bedtime.

Every morning, I do yoga with the children. They all take part enthusiastically! And Lorina has

Lorina teaches the painting lesson on the roof ...

... and come nighttime, she gets up to mischief with the children.



Nyima cooks for 25-30 people three times a day.



nach oben >>

already taught them some songs, including the English version of the Austrian "Und jetzt gang i ans Petersbrünnele" (And So I Went To Peter's Pub).

We've sewn pencil cases with material from Lorina's grandmother. The older children were very creative and adapted my suggestion into bum bags and shoulder bags. Perhaps we'll have a fashion show when everyone has finished their pieces.

What most impresses me is the children's discipline. It's fascinating to see how consistently they complete the tasks assigned to them, how helpful they are, and yet they are still children, who sometimes don't follow instructions, have a lot of fun, and, above all, are very interested in everything. You don't hear any "I'm not in the mood" here.

The only thing we are both struggling with is falling asleep and staying asleep. This isn't usually a problem for either of us, but here we just can't seem to manage it.

Dear Monika and Lorina, we're sure that this will improve! It's down to the height above sea level: 3150 metres is a long way up. It takes a while until you're completely acclimatised.

4. ... who might give you the travel bug?

Does Monika's tale make you wish for adventure? Or do you know people who are looking for just such an opportunity?

Statistics on our volunteers from September 2008 – July 2025:

- a total of 74 project volunteers
- age range: 17 – 65
- 28 of 74 with ties to the Musisches Gymnasium
- various career backgrounds
- mostly from Austria, but also from Germany, Poland, Sweden, Hungary, Holland and the USA
- length of stay from 6 weeks to 6 months; 7 weeks on average

Of course, 13-year-olds can only come accompanied by an adult, but otherwise there are no restrictions – all engaged people with an adequate level of fitness are welcome. Experience with young children / adolescents is an advantage, A Level English or equivalent is required. *Schule macht Schule* does not charge any fees for the placement and support of volunteers.

Volunteers are enormously important for the children, for their English and their communication and social skills. Volunteers bring with them new subjects and unexpected viewpoints, they enable the untiring local team to take a break and help us to follow developments in the project up close. Two volunteers can work in the project at the same time.

From mid-September we will always have at least one place free – please share this with anyone who may be interested ...

Those who wish to find out more can send an email to team@schule-macht-schule.at or call: +43 680 220 9956 (Wolf Pichlmüller)

Everything the volunteers offer in terms of activities is welcome.
Photos from top to bottom:

Daily morning yoga with Monika

Sonam and Kunga sewing: it teaches concentration and fine motor skills and gives the experience of making something useful themselves.

The fashion show with music and an imaginary catwalk has now taken place!



To the top >>

5. New children – new (replacement) sponsors?

We postponed the holidays this time due to the new building in Phalyak and didn't begin the new school year until the middle of May. In addition to Sonam Wangchen, who previously joined the pre-school class at the Children's Village in Bhakunde, but lived with us at the boarding school, **Tsewang Rabgyal** and young **Chimey** now attend our first class.

Chimey's sponsors were already waiting for her: Class 1i from the Musisches Gymnasium decided last November to take on a sponsorship – and were delighted to take on Chimey in April.

We're still looking for sponsors for six-year-old Tsewang Rabgyal from Phalyak. His parents are farmers in Phalyak and his sister is part of our project family, now in Class 7 at the Mount Kailash School.

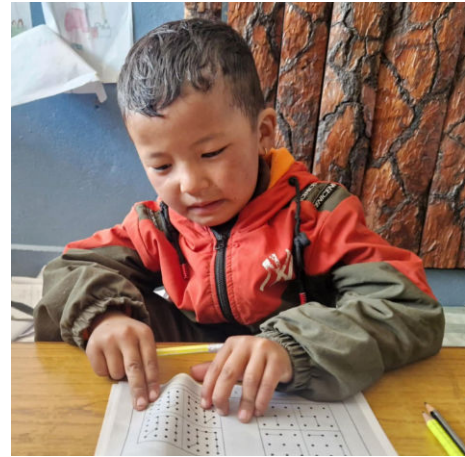


Chimey is already Class 1i's sponsor child.

Tsewang Rabgyal is looking forward to gaining his own sponsors



Pema Dolkar, left, and Tsering Bhutik (in festive traditional dress). The sponsors for both girls have dropped out, so we're looking for someone to take over.



Pema Dolkar joined the school only at the age of 11. Since she was somewhat older than the others, she has always taken on a lot of responsibility at the boarding school. Through consistency and hard work, despite her late start, she is now able to complete Class 8 at the SOS Hermann Gmeiner Higher Secondary School in Pokhara without ever repeating a year. Her sponsors, Class 8e (A Level 2024), have now scattered to the four winds, and we are urgently looking for successors who can secure Pema Dolkar's final years of school.

Tsering Bhutik, 13 years old, is a clever and lively girl, who has been in the care of *Schule macht Schule* since 2021. She has just moved to the Mount Kailash School, where she is in Class 6. Her sponsors have dropped out due to health problems, so we are hoping to find someone to step in here too.

For €50 per month, *Schule macht Schule* sponsors make it possible for the child to live and learn first at Mustang House Phalyak, then at the Mount Kailash School and finally at SOS Hermann Gmeiner Higher Secondary School. The contribution fully covers the child's direct personal needs and also contributes to the costs for staff, energy, etc. Sponsors can be individuals, family, groups of friends, school classes or groups of students. *Schule macht Schule* organises contact by letter twice a year, and at Christmas there is the opportunity to send small gifts.

If you would like to know more about sponsorship, you'll find detailed [information on our website](#). If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please send us an [email](#).



6. Introducing...

Sometimes someone who has worked in Nepal stays permanently involved. That's how it was for **Inge Goercke** from Hagenbüchach near Nuremberg, who was a project volunteer in 2019 and 2023. Aside from her great involvement in environmental education, she took over management of *Schule macht Schule* sponsorships in May handling correspondence and Christmas arrangements, and acting as a point of contact. Thank you, Inge!

Karma Choesang is our new Amchi (= doctor of traditional Tibetan medicine) in Phalyak. We've known him since he was a child, as he spent the first

Sponsorship supervisor Inge during her visit in 2019, with the project children in the monastery courtyard in Jharkot



six years of school in the project, and then completed his training as an Amchi with support from schoolsfaraway.org in Poland. He's now building a surgery for traditional medicine for the project in Phalyak, which is open to locals and tourists (as it was in Jharkot). Treatment costs are levied on a graduated basis according to the patient's economic situation. Karma reports:

In May I have set up our small simple clinic. Now people got to know that there is an Amchi in Phalyak, so they come for medicine and I also go to other villages to give treatment, to Jhong, Chongur, Khinga and so on. It's going well and I have asked Amchi Rigdol (note: Karma's predecessor) to send other important medicines which in his experience are needed most in this area.

Left: The treatment room

Right: Karma Choesang as a young boy in 2008 and now, during pulse diagnosis.



New blood! **Pema Yangdon** from Upper Mustang, who grew up in the project just like Karma and has her *Schule macht Schule* sponsor to thank for her training as an Amchi, is taking a short career break:

My husband is from Upper Mustang too. He works in France and we got married in 2023 June as he came for 3 months holiday. It wasn't in our plan to have baby so early. But it was in God's plan. I am enjoying my motherhood journey and I have got so supportive family and in laws. I have got maximum seven months of leave from our Rinpoche (note: High Monk and Head of the Training Institute), after that I will continue my Amchi career.

Right: 13-year-old Pema Yangdon at our winter school in 2013, and now as a new mother with little Pema Wangyal



7. Thank you and please: very specifically



Please:

In 2024, we paid a total of €480 in account management fees for the Volksbank donations account from membership fees (not donations)! It would be great if the bank could accommodate us here so that we could use more of the membership fees directly for the project; so far, our requests have fallen on deaf ears. Do you perhaps know someone with good contacts at Volksbank? Could you perhaps help us change the terms and conditions?



Please:

The magnificent landscape around Phalyak is barren, the soil prone to erosion, and water is precious. We would like to plant trees and ground cover in the courtyard, as well as around the house and on the sloping terrain on the west side in order to stabilise the soil. This requires a small budget. Can you help?



Above: For the project's own vegetable garden, which is under construction, the children were allowed to collect valuable goat dung in the village to use as fertiliser.

Left: There are strict regulations about who gets how much water from the community reservoir and when. Our supply line to the vegetable garden is still improvised for now.



Your donation could make the following possible:

- €2 for a sack of fertiliser (goat manure is only available for the vegetables.)
- €5-10 each for pre-grown native trees, which naturally fulfil their task more quickly than, for example, free willow cuttings.
- €10 covers 20 pre-grown seedlings for shrubs and ground cover; we'll need a lot!
- €15 per 50m of hose for watering during the growing phase.



Left: Tsering Dolkar and the older children prepare the ground for the vegetable garden; our colleagues in Nepal want the school to teach not just theory, but practical life skills too.

Right: In the courtyard, the children plant seedlings of a low-growing cedar, the branches of which are traditionally burned during ceremonies.

And now, as always: thank you!

Your interest and trust in the project delight us, as does your feedback on the newsletter. For that and all financial gestures of support, we say thank you on behalf of the children and everyone involved in the project!

Kind regards

Wolf Pichlmüller

Christina Klaffinger

PS: From time to time, we hear that our newsletter has landed in the spam folder. This won't happen if you add our address to your address book or whitelist.



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