



Association for Poverty Alleviation, Education, Health & Livelihood in the Himalayas
(chay ya = tibetian for "let's do it")

Experience Report

Voluntary Work in the Livelihood Sector in the Terai Region

Duration: 3 months

Location: Attariya, Kailali, Far West

Volunteers: Viola Schausberger & Christian Haas

From January to March 2018 we stayed in the Far West Region of Nepal at the small town called Attariya at the project SuPA School. SuPa School is a school for disabled children. At the time we have been staying there, 29 children stayed at the accommodation facilities provided by the school. The children suffer from different forms of disability, starting with though heavy muscular dystrophy so those cannot walk and depend fully on wheelchairs and the help of others.

Our main task there was to build a playground for the children. During our stay of three months we began with supporting the gardener at the vegetable garden with his work and doing some caretaker work at the school building. We also spent a lot of time with the children to get them to know well so we are able to build a playground meeting their special needs. We also started to hold morning exercise with the children.

Our daily routine:

7 – 7:45 morning exercise

8 – 10 breakfast/cooking/leisure time

10 – 13 work for school/garden/playground

13 – 15 snack/lunch time

15 – 17 leisure time/games time with children

Work for the playground:

We started by sketching a lot of drafts for the playground and shared our ideas with the school administration.

Due to the fact that we were allowed to administer the budget for the playground we also had to compare prices of different materials (wood/iron). In the end we decided to build the playground items out of iron poles. We found one metal workshop which produced the constructions according to our wishes. Afterwards we assembled the constructions at the playground area. In total we were able to build two swings and one small house with a slide.

Seeing the children play at the items which we designed and set up for them was one of the best feelings. It was like a reward for our work and efforts. It was heartbreaking to see some of the children





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freak out only because of a swing. They were so happy and they cried (of happiness) during swinging like they are riding a rollercoaster. We will never forget their exhilarated faces.

Morning Exercise:

We also started to hold morning exercises from 7 to 8 am. With the time it became a daily routine for us and the children. Therefore, we divided the children into two groups - one group for the smaller and major disabled children and another for the taller and physically more active children. So we were able to meet their needs. After the first two or three days some of the children complained that they have muscle hangover but after the first holiday the children asked us for continuing morning exercises, which showed us that we are on the right way. We did different exercises starting with stretching, yoga poses, workout, running and different games. Besides giving the kids a funny time our focus lied on increasing the children's strength, coordination and mobility. We had the feeling that especially the disabled ones were very happy that we made special exercises for them and that we tried to answer all their special needs.

Health Care

Another of our tasks was to set up a first aid kit for the school. Soon we recognized that there is a structural problem with health care of the children. A lot of the children suffer from small infected wounds but nobody of the school's staff feels responsible for it. As one of us is a nurse it's obvious that we took responsibility. We found a very good pharmacy shop at Attariya Chowk and purchased a lot of material for caring infected wounds.

Leisure time with the children

A fixed point on our daily timetable was the leisure time with the children in the afternoon. Mainly from 3 to 6 pm we spent some time with the children, playing games, joking around and simply having fun. This was the best part of the day for us. There were times were we had no motivation and everything was just frustrating – but when we spent time with the children they made us smile and think positive again. They made us know for whom we actually build the playground and struggle through all the problems.

We also learned a lot of Nepali phrases from the children. Now we have serious skills in playing carom board and we can spend hours in playing a game with just five stones (games' name: Gothi). With most of the children we built up close relationships and trust.

Also on holidays (Saturdays and national/religious holidays) we often went there to spend time with the children. One special day we'd like to point out is HOLI festival. To be honest we went crazy for this day. We brought huge loads of different colors to the school and everybody freaked out by coloring each other, dancing and having fun. It was such a funny day for us as well as for the children. Even after four days you were able to see a light shimmer of color in Viola's face.





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Life in Attariya and Trips we made:

The SuPa School is situated in Attariya. Attariya is a small city which is situated at Mahendra/East West highway. A lot of buses pass this small city and we think that's one of the main economic reasons for growth. We stayed at a flat with two fabulous man named Shanker Singh Chaisir and Himmat Singh Chaisir. Shanker is the connection between Chay Ya and the school. Shanker and Himmat helped us a lot by translating and organizing everything around the report. But it was not all about business. Between us and our flat members soon a good friendship grew. We learned a lot of them about the Nepali language, Nepali culture and behavior. And we also learned a lot of tasty Nepali dishes to cook like butter milk soup, peanut soup, different types of vegetable curries and so on. As we shared cooking work we were able to practice a lot. Thanks to the fact that we lived together with Nepali people for three months we were able to deeply dive into the Nepali culture and manners which was a great experience for us.

Trips around Attariya:

We also like to share some impressions of trips we made around Attariya.

One day we visited Godawari Temple – a famous but small Hindu temple. There we visited small temples, cleaned our soul with holy water and got blessed by some Yogis.

Another great trip was the drive to Bedkot Lake. It was Christians' first time driving a bike on Nepal's streets. It worked quite well but as the road got more bumpy and off-road style it got quite challenging. The Bedcot lake itself has a very peaceful and nice scenery. After that we went on near Mahendranagar where we visited the biggest suspension bridge of Nepal. On the way we also stopped at some Holi festival ceremony of the Tharu culture.

After two months staying in Attariya we were looking for some time out. That time we went to Darchula District to Shanker's home. So far we came in touch with the Himalaya region and the Terai region – and now Hill region followed. For us it was an extraordinary great experience to visit such a remote area and join the life of Shanker's parents for some days. Everything they eat they've to farm themselves except salt and sugar which is very fascinating for us. We were allowed to help them during the process of making sugar out of sugar cane and they also showed us how they produce butter and butter milk.

