

FIELD REPORT

about Nadia Jaggi's work as a volunteer at Mugu, April 2019

Introduction

In January, I decided spontaneously to contact Karin whom I know since a couple of years to ask for a possibility to work as a volunteer for Chay Ya. With my background as a teacher we thought working as a teacher would be great. Sabine and Kamal agreed immediately and proposed a school in the far west of Nepal, in Mugu. Magdalena informed me about my duties and responsibilities and what I could expect from Chay Ya.

I already organised an event on June 28, at which I will show pictures from my stay in Nepal. The donations which I will get from the participants will be sent to Chay Ya on behalf of different projects in Mugu (Blind Hostel, Schoolproject with Unicef, Rooftop for the School).

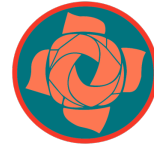
To work together with the Chay Ya Nepal Team was a great experience. Everything was well organised, and they took care of me for every second. Thank you so much for this big effort!

Start of the voluntary work

In April 2019 I stayed for three weeks in West Region of Nepal in a village called Gamgadhi. My main task was to work and support the teacher and the students from classes 5 and 6 at the local public school near Gamgadhi. During my stay there was no official school time. Nevertheless, every morning around 20 to 30 students have been waiting for me on the walking way to the school. The school is situated half an hour walking time away from Gamgadhi. Actually 300 students are registered at the school. Most of the students live in small and poor villages around the school. Their parents are farmers and belong to a so-called low cast such as Dalit. Especially for women it is very hard to get out of this system. If one family has some money left, they will send their boys to a private or boarding school. But they didn't take the money for the girls because of their early marriage. This is the reason why more girls staying at these schools.



On the way to explain a game



Chay Ya Schweiz

Work and support with teachers and students

In the first meeting with the teachers and the principal, we discussed my daily duties and our expectations relating to my stay at the school for the next few weeks. We agreed, that I would focus on working with classes from five to six grade, with the focus on speaking English and playing different games.

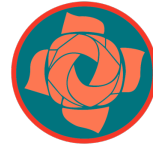


Some School Members

At the school is only one English Teacher with a limited English vocabulary. He isn't used to speak English. Therefore, we had to use hands and feet for the conversation. Subsequently, the students are also not used to speak English. Most of them know a few English words, but not more. The textbook of the school is concentrating on the written language and the topics are far away from what they need to know in their daily life. In my classes it wasn't possible to work with the textbook. The used English in the books are far away, from what the students understand. Therefore, I focused on speaking and also sensitizing them for the English language. A first challenge was to explain them some games and methods in English and a second barrier was to get them to speak English. The students were mostly shy and afraid to use and speak English. We did a lot of questions-answers-exercises. At the end of my work most of the students could ask and response some basic questions.



Sport makes happy!



Chay Ya Schweiz

A very big challenge was the teaching environment. On rainy days there was even water inside the classrooms. Everything was getting wet. There is no electricity in the classroom (only in the staff room). So, the students have only day light from the door because there are no windows. The rooms are very small and cold without chairs and tables. Only four small benches are situated inside. I did very often a sitting circle on the dirty floor. For group activities I had to go outside. There is not enough space and light in the classroom.

Health Care

I recognized that a lot of the children suffer from small infected wounds because the kids are often playing with metal sticks and they aren't afraid about anything. Nobody feels responsible for it. I cleaned almost every day some infected wounds. In Gamgadhi I found a good Pharmacy shop and I purchased a lot of material for treating infected wounds.

In addition, I was washing every day my hands together with the children. At the school there were four new water-taps built from UNICEF in 2018. But the new toilet was already destroyed from the rain. So, there is actually only one toilet for 300 students and 6 teachers.

Leisure time with the children at different villages

After lunchtime I spent normally time with the children from the villages around the school. We were mostly playing some games and having fun. We laughed a lot and they made me smile and think positive every day. I also learned a lot of Nepali phrases and games from them.



Drawing with some children from the village

Life in and around Gamgadhi

I had the possibility to stay for three weeks in Gamgadhi, District Mugu, West Nepal. In this rural part, life is very simple. Since some years there is a road from Nepalgunj to Gamgadhi. For this trip you'll need two days. Otherwise you can take the airplane to the newer airport «Rara» which is situated in Talcha, a village near the Rara Lake. Gamgadhi has no attraction for tourists.

During this three week I saw only a few other white people. Rara Lake – the biggest lake in Nepal – is the only tourist attraction in this region. A lot of local tourists are visiting every year the Rara National Park which is situated on 2990 Meter. I was three times there, once with the whole guest family.



Chay Ya Schweiz



On Murmatop @ Rara Lake with Sandip

My homestay was in the house of the local NGO Partner «Hyrystec» from Chay Ya Nepal. I stayed in the flat from Meen Rauwls family with his son Sandip, his wife Bashanti, Sandip's Teacher Sadiksha and Meens Mother. The flat has only two rooms and a kitchen. They gave me one room, in the other room was the rest of the family. The toilet and the washing station are situated outside. The kitchen with the oven is the meeting point of the daily family life. Every day there were a lot of visitors hanging, eating and laughing in the kitchen.

Between me and the other flat members soon a good friendship grew.



Playing games with the guest family

I learned a lot of them about the Nepali rural life, the Nepali language and the Nepali culture and behaviour. I also learned to cook momos, different types of curries, chutneys and roti (local bread).



On the way to prepare vegetable momos



Chay Ya Schweiz

Dipak, one of the guys from Hyrysdec, helped me a lot with translating and organizing everything at school. He was the only one speaking English, because he was working for some years in India. Several times Dipak, his wife and the two kids invited me in their flat for lunch. We were sitting, eating, playing games, joking and laughing all together sitting on the floor ground. Normally there were a lot of other kids from the village in the small kitchen without space. But it was always very homely! To join the life of Meen's and Dipak's family was an extraordinary experience. Thanks to the fact I lived together with Nepali people I was able to deeply dive into the Nepali culture and manners which was an unforgettable experience for me.



Some children with new clothes from Switzerland

Conclusions and Recommendations

The voluntary work itself was an amazing time for me with thousands of unforgettable situations. The students are mostly very eager to learn. Some of them were very smart and clever even they never left their village. After the English lessons I did normally different sport exercises and games. Every day we had a lot of fun together. I will never forget the faces of all these happy students. In my opinion the main success of my work was, that the students are more confident in speaking English.

A success was also for me to show the teachers some new or different teaching methods. They were very thankful about some materials and new ideas which I gave them as a gift for using at the school. But most of the teachers were a little bit lazy. Unfortunately, they hadn't a big effort to try some new methods.

I had the possibility to see behind the curtain and to live a rural Nepali life. The life in Gamgadhi is very different to the life and work in Switzerland. I'm used to the fact that every student has a chair and a table and there will be enough light and space in every classroom. One first changing point at the school in Gamgadhi could be a new roof for the classrooms and some more toilets. A second step would be more space and light in the classrooms. I'm not sure if there will be a possibility for electricity in every classroom. The municipality has to pay the electricity.

To introduce the teachers in health care is also very important. They should know how to wash the hands and clean the wounds. A big problem is the material: There was no soap and no material for treating infected wounds, but this could be organised without a big budget.