



Name of Volunteer:	Patricia Waldvogel
Project Sector:	Education
Project Name:	Karkibada Secondary School; Shree Shiva Primary School
Project Location:	Karkibada/Gamgadhi, Mugu District; Kerauja Besi, Gorkha District
Project Duration and time of stay:	6 th -26 th November 2019 10 th -26 th December 2019

Short Summary of Volunteering Project (project itself, location, specialties of the project, planned activities and goals)

In November and December 2019 I taught English at two schools in Nepal. The first school was the Karkibada Secondary School, located close to Gamgadhi, Mugu District. In December I was at the Shree Shiva Primary School in Kerauja Besi, Gorkha District.

Gamgadhi is the headquarter of Mugu District in northwestern Nepal, a very remote area. Officially around 300 students are enrolled at the school and 8 teachers employed. The school is in a very bad state. Chay Ya supports the school through volunteer English teachers.

Shree Shiva Primary School in Kerauja Besi, Gorkha District was destroyed in the 2015 earthquake. The subsequent reconstruction was supported by Chay Ya. The school is in a good condition. 44 students from Kerauja Besi and Lama Besi (the neighboring village) visit the school. 4 teachers work at the school. The school principal, Dipak Gurung, is employed by Chay Ya and it is also supported by volunteer English teachers.

Preparation Beforehand (mental, physical and medical preparations)

Through Karin Gasser (Chay Ya Switzerland) I learnt that Chay Ya is constantly looking for volunteers. Karin Gasser has provided me with a lot of information about Nepal and Chay Ya. Furthermore Magdalena Karnassnigg (Chay Ya Austria) has given me a lot of

information and I read Nadja Jaggis experience report, who has been at the same school in Mugu a few months previous. Some weeks prior to my departure I got a check up at the institute for travel medicine and relevant vaccinations.

Journey and Arrival in Nepal

Magdalena and Christoph from Chay Ya Austria picked me up at the airport in Kathmandu. They helped me get relevant things like a Nepali SIM-card and showed me the Chay Ya office in Kathmandu. Chay Ya handled the travel arrangements and meetings with the respective local hosts.

Project schedule and experiences on site (description of activities on site, description of daily routine, description of housing situation and catering, interaction with locals, leisure activities etc.)

School at both places was usually from 10 am – 4 pm, Sunday to Friday lunchtime. Both schools are in a beautiful countryside. I enjoyed going on hikes. From Gamgadhi I visited Rara Lake with Dipak, a local guide. Around Lama Besi there are beautiful hiking paths with fantastic views of the Himalayas. The local population was super friendly and interested in



what I was doing. During my stay in Gamgadhi I had the chance to experience a local festival.

Food & accommodation

In Gamgadhi I was staying with the family of Meen Bahadur Rawal. Around 25 minutes walk away from school. The family lives in a big house which was still under construction. While I was staying there they were adding sanitary utilities and

windows. There is a bakery/coffee place on the ground floor and the offices of „Hirysdec“, a local NGO, on the top floor. As there were lots of people coming and going I had the chance to meet people who were speaking English and they told me lots of interesting things about life in the area and about Nepali culture.

While I was teaching at the primary school in Kerauja Besi, I was staying in the neighboring village of Lama Besi, about a 45 minutes' walk from school. I was living with the family of Dipak Gurung, the school principal. The family lives in a simple house with a kitchen, a room where the family sleeps and a room where I slept. The daughter of the family sometimes shared the room with me. Running water was outside the house from a public fountain.

Both families had Dal Bhat (lentil soup with rice) for breakfast/lunch and dinner. Now and again I had Chowmein (a kind of chinese noodle dish) and omelets. Generally the food was nice, but not very varied.

Challenges & Successes

The school in Mugu is in a bad state. There is one toilet for all the pupils and teachers. The classrooms have only benches, no tables. The only light enters through the open door. It was hence cold and dark in the classrooms. As it was quite cold but sunny during my stay most of the lessons took place outside in the sun. The only English teacher at the school was not used to speaking English. Therefore communication with the other teachers was supported by hand and feet. There were quite some differences in the level of English within the classes as some students had visited a private school previously and had a much higher level of English. It was thus difficult to get all the students involved in the lessons, particularly in the beginning. I found the teaching material not useful, most of the texts in the books were quite complicated and not related to everyday situations and the reality of the students.

The school building in Kerauja Besi had a roof which let light pass through. There were benches and tables for the pupils as well as filtered water. Separate toilets for boys and girls were provided. There is even a separate toilet for the teachers, but the door was not working. Generally the school in Kerauja Besi was in a much better condition and I had the feeling the teachers were also more motivated. The school principal, who is employed by Chay Ya, did everything possible to make me feel at ease and at home. He was super supportive and his English was quite good. The students at this school also had a higher level of English.

Most students were very friendly and respectful. It was nice to see how motivated they were. In the beginning I was playing games like Pictionary to get them to talk and eventually some felt enough at ease to make more complex sentences and ask questions. It made me very happy.

Costs (a brief overview of the costs of travel, accommodation, meals, permits and leisure activities)

Travel	Gamgadhi:	Flight Nepalgunj to Talcha Airport: Jeep Airport to Gamgadhi	approx. 190 US-\$ approx. 3000 NPR
	Lama Besi:	Bus Kathmandu to Arughat Bus Arughat to Soti Jeep Soti to Machakhola	approx. 320 NPR approx. 50 NPR approx. 3000 NPR
Food & accommodation		approx. 560 NPR per day	
Leisure activities		Entrance Rara Lake National Park	approx. 30 US-\$
		Guesthouse at Rara Lake (for me & guide)	approx. 20 US-\$

Reflections, Comments & Recommendations for future Volunteers

I was glad I had enough books with me as in the evenings it usually got cold quite early and I was happy to be able to read or write in my warm sleeping bag. From one point of view I think it would be great to stay longer at one school so the students could get used to the new teacher and benefit more from this exchange. On the other hand I think it can be quite challenging to stay in a remote place "all by yourself" with only limited communication.

Nonetheless, the chance to volunteer for Chay Ya was an amazing possibility to get insight into a very different culture. I think it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to live with a local family and get in touch with the local population. The families were very welcoming and generally it was a fantastic experience that I can highly recommend. Thanks a lot to Chay Ya and the local people for making this such a great experience!

Impressions



Calisthenics in the morning before school; Karkibada Secondary School, Mugu District

Shree Shiva Primary School, Kerauja Besi, Gorkha District

