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Nutrition and gifts for young burns victims

Burn-related injuries in Nepal are on the rise, with young children at risk due to lack of awareness, hazardous living conditions and poor education.

The two children in above photo were badly burnt when a propane gas cylinder exploded in their home. They lost their mother and a younger sibling in this horrific accident, but the saddest thing about this is that there are countless other children across Nepal who suffer varying degrees of burns due to conditions beyond their control. Propane gas explosions, open fires into which unattended babies crawl, kerosene lanterns left around young children, boiling water, tea, butter, and feed for animals left on stove tops, as well as

exposed electrical wiring, are all causes of burns in Nepal.

Shenpen distributes nutrition baskets twice a month for children like these in the Burns Ward, to help them obtain the nutrition needed to heal from their burns.

In addition, Shenpen also distributes gift bags to each child in the ward to offer some diversion from their suffering.

Parbati Karki (in green gown) is the mother of Niraj Karki, age nine, in the photo. Niraj has received the Shenpen nutrition basket twice, and Parbati expresses deep gratitude for this.

She says: "The hospital bills for medicine and surgeries are a big burden

for a family like ours who are daily-wage earners. So we are very thankful for the nutrition baskets, as they help Niraj a lot."

Funding for both the gift bags and nutrition baskets come solely from C.H.A.N.C.E. for Nepal (UK).

"Hospital bills are a big burden for daily-wage earners like us, so we're very thankful for the nutrition baskets."

Mother of burns victim



Left, a mother adds batteries to a hand-held game, an important part of Shenpen's gift bags, for her son. Below, Rumi and Prathana, from Burns Violence Survivors, arrange the nutrition baskets they will give to children in the Burns Ward of Kanti Children's Hospital.

The nutritional packages contain a high protein diet to give bodies the strength to fight such extreme injuries.



Painful but rewarding - Two BVS staff share their experiences

We caught up with Rumi and Prathana, both from Burns Violence Survivors, organizing the nutrition baskets they will give to the eight children in the Burns Ward of Kanti Children's Hospital. Children from all over Nepal come to Kanti Children's Hospital for treatment for their burns, which could cover anywhere from 5 percent to 25 percent of their bodies.

Prathana says that her time at Kanti helps her learn how to deal with people from different walks of life. She says, "When I see people who have witnessed negative and painful situations, I ask myself whether I can be patient and express positivity towards life? This job has given me an

opportunity to share a very pure and auspicious bond called humanity."

Rumi adds: "It's really painful to see such small children suffering from burns. But the experience is also making my heart stronger, and I'm committed to bring a smile to their face. Let's act wisely to prevent children from burns, as it not only burns them physically but also their future."

"It's really painful to see such small children suffering from burns."

Rumi Rajbhandari

A welcome break - Hot milk for Tri-Ratna's young students

Every day the 90 students at Tri-Ratna Pre-Primary School receive a cup of hot milk. There are three nursery and three lower-kindergarten classes in this section of the school, which is located near the Swayambhu Stupa. The school is run by a Buddhist monk, Rev. Kondan Lama.

In September, a visiting professor from Boston College, John Makransky, visited the school, along with others from Boudha, to distribute milk. These visitors wanted to see firsthand how this milk program, which began in June 2012, works.

Professor Makransky says, "I was struck by the dedication and dynamism of Lama Kondan, the principal and guiding hand of the school, and the feeling of loving relationship between teachers and children. And as in my other site visits with Shenpen, I was impressed by the level of commitment and competence of the organizations that Shenpen supports."

Rev. Kondan Lama says, "Children are the blooming flowers of the garden and are the nation's builders. Whenever I see these lovely children taking their hot milk and see their smiling faces and greetings welcoming me, I feel so honored. One day a child came to me and said, 'Sir, thank you for the cup of milk'. Then, I heartily remembered all the supporters involved in this noble work."

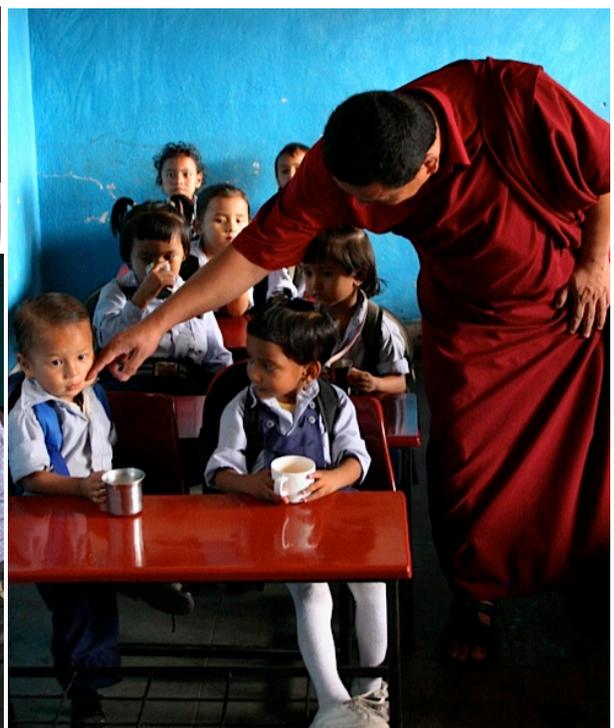
"Children are the blooming flowers of the garden and the nation's builders. "

Rev. Kondan Lama, founder/principal

This project is fully supported by funds from C.H.A.N.C.E. for Nepal (UK), who is also funding a separate project initiated in August 2012 that offers educational supplies to these 6 classrooms in the pre-primary section of this school.

This new project is in its early stages, so we will share more information on this project in future newsletters.

Bottom, Professor John Makransky helps distribute milk. Far right, Rev. Kondan Lama says hello to one of the students.





Left, Ranjana Thapa in her tomato field, and below, another tomato farmer is pleased with the results of her labor. Shenpen has been supporting actual skills training for these farmers so they can get a better yield.



Tomato boom - Women farmers reap benefits of training

In September, a Shenpen team caught up with four women who have taken training in tomato farming from WCS.

Ranjana Thapa has a fairly large piece of land where she grows her tomatoes. She sells her tomatoes and cow's milk in markets near her home, where she has gained a reputation for good quality products at fair prices. She sells around five kilos of tomatoes every day. Depending on the quality of her tomatoes, she can earn between 35 to 60 rupees per kg (43 to 73 cents). She told us that she can grow tomatoes for 5-6 months of the year.

Last year, Ranjana Thapa took skills training with the Womens Cooperative Society (WCS), an organization which aims to provide support to

women in and around Kathmandu valley engaged in small businesses. Since then, she has improved the quality of her crops and increased her profits. Ranjana told us, "WCS has really helped us. It is my dream to learn even more so I can offer my children a better education. I work hard and WCS works hard to support people like me."

WCS was established in 1995 by a group of prominent women in Nepal to form a special financial institution that would provide easy credit to women. In 2009, Shenpen Skills stepped in to offer a new component to what WCS was offering, which was actual skills training to women in areas of farming, candle and flower making, and, up until recently, animal husbandry.

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Three of the four women, including Ranjana, have already made a good profit from their crops and have been able to meet their deadlines in repaying the loans they took from WCS to buy seeds, and to build 'tunnels' of plastic, where they grow these popular vegetables.

The fourth woman we visited, Goma Dhahal, says that she has more luck growing another popular vegetable here in Nepal, called *raio* than she does with tomatoes. This could be due to inadequate irrigation in her farm. However, she is doing well with *raio* and also cauliflower.

Goma is hoping to be able to improve her land with better irrigation so she can grow tomatoes, which she knows is a good profit-making business. Goma told Shenpen: "I hope I can dig a well on my farm so I can irrigate my crops and have better production. I think I could sell more vegetables and make a good profit, from which I could provide a good education for my children."

Goma took a loan from WCS for 80,000 rupees (US\$ 975). She told us that she

"I hope I can dig a well on my farm so I can irrigate my crops and have better production."

Goma Dhahal, farmer

makes a profit now of around 50,000 rupees (US\$600) a year. She sells her vegetables in the local market.

Funding for the skills training undertaken by Goma and the other women comes totally from C.H.A.N.C.E. for Nepal (UK).

MSMBS MELA

Another micro-finance initiative supported by Shenpen, Mahila Sahayatra Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha (MSMBS), held a *mela*, or gathering, at Patan Doka in October. It provided a forum for women to meet and share their skills and products. MSMBS supports women all over Nepal, providing them with loans to begin a small business. Women sold food items, beauty supplies, saris, home-spun cotton items, hand-woven baskets and jute floor covers, as well as beaded jewelry, and more, at the *mela*.

Goma hopes better irrigation will help her grow more marketable crops. Far right, women share their skills and products at the MSMBS *mela*.





Rheumatoid-stricken Phul Maya has made a remarkable recovery with the help of acupuncture and Tibetan medicine at Vajra Varahi Health Centre.

From rheumatoid to recovery - Phul Maya's story

Phul Maya (meaning 'Flower of Love') is 10 years old. She was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis in 2010, at the age of eight, and was treated with conventional Western medicine (corticosteroids) for a year until her family ran out of money. Her parents both work as day laborers, working wherever they can find work, earning 200-300 rupees (US\$ 2.50-3.50) per day. They were forced to leave their daughter lying on a mat in her bedroom each day, while her two sisters went to school and her parents to work. She had frequent high fever and found it difficult to hold on

to things or to even walk. Finally, her family brought her to Vajra Varahi Health Center, where she was given acupuncture treatments to help lessen the pain in her swollen joints which, along with physio-therapy, helped get Phul Maya moving again. However, these treatments were not enough to get Phul Maya on a clear road to health.

In January 2012 the Tibetan doctor at the center, Dr. Namgyal, began his treatment of Phul Maya with the use of herbal Tibetan medicine, and within one month Phul Maya was showing some good results. Her feet and

arms became more flexible and Phul Maya was now able to walk the 30 minutes to school each day.

C.H.A.N.C.E. for Nepal (UK) has funded the Tibetan medicine that Phul Maya needed for her treatment, as well as covering her bus fare to the clinic.

Dr. Namgyal expects continued treatment with Tibetan medicine to cure her fevers and for Phul Maya to be able to continue with her schooling and lead the normal life of a 10 year old girl.