



SHENPEN NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2015



Regrouping and Reaching Out

The Various Forms of Our Commitment to Nepal

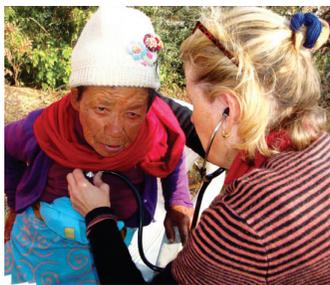
2015 has been a particularly difficult year for people of Nepal. On April 25, everyone trembled along with the earthquake. Almost 10,000 people died, countless were injured, and more than 200,000 had been displaced; they lost their homes and all their possessions.

To add to this national affliction, soon after the promulgation of the first democratic constitution on September 20th, Nepal and its people suffered from a non-official blockade which has had various consequences on the day to day life: impossibility to get petrol, which makes every trip difficult, from going to work to bringing a patient to hospital. Cooking gas is not available anymore, which implies that people have to cook on a wood fire or buy a cylinder which will cost five times the price – practically the entire monthly wage of a daily paid worker. But consequences are even worse in some cases. For example, hospitals are running out of medicine, which means that people cannot get treatment for simple problems.

Through the year, Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen put all its efforts toward helping the disadvantaged and poor of Nepal. Our six regular programs: street children, education, elderly, health, animal welfare, and skills have accomplished a lot. This special edition of the Shenpen Newsletter shows what nice work our team did.

To start off, Shenpen has achieved wonderful results benefitting people touched by the earthquake. In a communal effort with the monks of Na-Ling Shedrub Monastery, our volunteers and staff successfully reached and helped over 7000 people in different devastated areas. Reading the following articles about Shenpen's earthquake relief work and reconstruction, you will see how amazing the accomplished work was, and how interesting our new projects are.

Finally, even though the year has been rough on them, Nepalese still find the way to smile and move forward, which encourage us to keep working for the benefit of the most disadvantaged people of our community.



Anti-Rabies Campaign 2015

And the impact of the earthquake on dogs around Boudhanath

It was noon of April 26, in the middle of the anti-rabies campaign 2015, that the earthquake with the magnitude of 7.8 hit Nepal. Over 300 dogs had already been vaccinated by our partner, Street Dog Care (SDC), with several hundreds remaining. Luckily the team was on the street and no one got injured. Dogs and humans alike were shaken and moved onto a big field. Many strong aftershocks followed in the coming hours, days, and months. What is truly amazing is that some members of the team still continued on that very same day, and vaccinated another 308 dogs! Big compliments to these brave souls!

The coming days and weeks in Nepal were really tough. People slept outdoors, some had insufficient food and water, some had no shelter, and even though it was the dry season it rained every night. The electricity didn't work for many days and soon the batteries were empty. As the refrigerator stopped working, the remaining anti-rabies vaccines became unusable. Nevertheless, SDC was able to complete the anti-rabies vaccination of 808 dogs in Boudhanath and surrounding areas.

Some of the dogs were so scared that they just ran and ran. Later we found some of them many kilometers away. Because of this terror-running, the dog population got all mixed up, new dogs moved into the territory, old ones were gone. This also means that new, unvaccinated dogs are now in Boudhanath. In addition, even now, more than seven months later, we have many people living



outdoors in camps of tents and in tarp cities, which also include many children from earthquake hit areas. We need to make sure that the area is rabies-free, for the benefit of the children, and for the benefit of all the animals and adults. For both of these reasons, the mixing of the dog population and the many people nearly sleeping on the street, now more than ever it is important that we continue the anti-rabies campaign this coming Spring 2016. Please donate generously, Nepal needs your support!

To all of those who have donated and/or supported Shenpen's projects and everyone in Nepal with kind wishes, and especially to C.H.A.N.C.E. for Nepal (UK) who sponsored the anti-rabies campaign 2015, we extend our deepest, heartfelt thanks!



Education in Nepal

This year Shenpen gave the gift of knowledge to 31 children

Nepal's educational organizations have tried to effect many positive changes over the past fifteen years. The increase in private schools, and the rise in tuition, has challenged the educational system as a whole. The standard of education has been raised, but the ability of many families to afford a quality education for their children has been affected.

Children's education is the basis for a nation's prosperity in the future. Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world and urgently needs to invest in children's education. To this day many children in Nepal are not attending school regularly, or at all. Even though parents don't have to pay tuition for their children in public schools, the cost of required school uniforms, stationary and books is a burden for many families, and often not affordable at all. Especially in rural areas children are required to work in the household and farms to support the

family household and they have to walk a long way to go to school. Many families are facing this situation, and they frequently choose the wrong response by not sending their children to attend school on a regular basis. However, education not only changes a nation or community, it also changes individual lives.

To help alleviate this situation and to provide access to adequate schooling, Shenpen facilitates sponsorship of individual children for their school fees, as well as educational supplies for children in rural government (public) schools. Shenpen Education is committed to providing educational opportunities to the poor and needy children of Nepal, and to develop an awareness of alternative styles of education.

This year, Shenpen sponsored the schooling for 31



children. We believe that the more we help children get a good education, the brighter the future, not only for them, but for Nepal as a whole. Give the gift of knowledge this holiday season.



New School for Rupesh

Here is a story from Rupesh Khadka who is new to our School Sponsorship Program, and is a victim of the mega earthquake of April, 25th 2015.

A sixth grader at a local school, Rupesh Khadka, who used to be the best student in his class, had to move around with his parents from village to village looking for a safe place to stay, and thus was unable to go to the school which has reopened after the devastating earthquake. Rupesh said that the April 25 earthquake had created several cracks on the land, and the monsoon rains caused them to break apart, triggering landslides. "When it rains several landslides occur at a time. We didn't feel safe there," He is one of our new sponsored students from Dolakha District, which is one of the mega earthquake-hit area. During the earthquake, he lost his house and is now living in Kathmandu on rented property. He has one brother and one sister along with parents. Now, he is studying in class six at The City Academy Baneshwor.

Agriculture and Enterprise Training for Women



Agriculture and Enterprise Training for women

Shenpen has been helping with skills development training through the Women's Cooperative Society (WCS) for several years. The main purpose of providing skills training is to uplift the livelihoods and living conditions of poor women living in agricultural communities. WCS has been providing training in different sectors including elementary and advance-seasonal and off-season vegetable farming, entrepreneur training for women, and cost management training.

Agricultural skills and training

"Elementary seasonal and off-season vegetable farming" is a basic training course provided by WCS on the cultivation of high value unseasonal vegetables. All the trainers were from the local communities, but working in Nepal's Ministry of Agriculture. The purpose of selecting local trainers is that they know more about local communities and the most suitable plants and crops for different areas and this increases the effectiveness of the training. The training includes both theoretical and practical aspects

wherein trainers share their knowledge and experiences of the diseases and bacteria that affect vegetables and the various ways to control them. They want to make sure that by the end of the training, trainees will be able to prepare fertile soil suitable for good vegetable growth and seed preservation right in their own home gardens. Furthermore, that participants will be able to make organic compost by using locally available materials, and apply appropriate techniques for using this fertilizer.

The training provided by WCS is very effective and helps improve livelihoods and life choices for families in many ways. As Shenpen always monitors the outcomes of its projects, we interviewed training participants from different areas, and their responses were similar: the training was very good but should have been longer and more frequent. Further, most women wanted to receive advanced cultivation training. After receiving the training, they expressed a deep desire to cultivate different kinds of vegetables and have now requested WCS to help further by providing quality seeds. 2016 promises to be a productive year!



Giving the gift of sight

Shenpen's Semi Annual Eye Camp

The last Free Eye camp Shenpen organized was in Dakshin Dhoka, about 10 km from Boudhanath. This full day event has been jointly organized by Nepal Scouts, Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen, and Manakamana Higher Secondary school. Members of the team of ophthalmologist from Tilganga Eye Hospital generously gave of the time to contribute to the success of this event. The slogan of this campaign was "A willingness to ensure positive and quality eye care to the under privileged".

In this single eye camp, over 500 patients benefited from the expertise of the doctor. Out of this number, forty five patients suffered from cataracts and needed intervention surgery. They all got the surgery with intra-ocular lens implantation at no cost at the Tilganga Eye Hospital few days after.

Shenpen would like to thank all our volunteers from Nepal Scouts, Shenpen and Manakamana School for providing premises for the camp. Special thanks go to the Merritt and Welsh families for their generous donation to make this eye camp successful.



Erica Merritt talking with scouts volunteers

A few words from a donor who supported the eye camp, Erica Merritt

"I have been living in Nepal studying at Rangjung Yeshe Institute for three and a half years. The last two years I gave a donation to Shenpen towards the Eye camps for the elderly in my name, my two niece's names' and my godchild Jack's name. For me, it felt like the possibility of giving the gift of sight and I wanted to share that with them for their Christmas gift. This year I gave a donation in the name of all my family members, nieces and god-child, and we were able to sponsor an entire eye camp that was just held on the 20th of December 2014. I was very kindly invited to come and, as I was in Kathmandu, I was very grateful to be able to go. It was a really lovely and heartwarming experience. There were so many young boys and girls from the school and from the scouts volunteering on their day off. They were so welcoming, so enthusiastic, and so attentive to the people coming for the eye checkups. There was always a young person ushering the next person along in line, to registration, to preliminary checks outside and into the rooms for the eye checks and out again. It was so well managed. The lines moved along seamlessly. I was really grateful to be able to be there and to see how eye camp works. And, as I was standing in the room for the people who were identified to get cataract surgery, I was also grateful the room was dark so that no one could see me crying. Before that moment they were just words for me, 'giving the gift of sight', but standing in that room it became very real for me and it was a bit overwhelming. I am very grateful that there are people in the world doing such good work, and by doing so, they made it so easy for me to give a little bit of money that then had the capacity, through all their combined efforts, to do so much good. On the day, 500 people had eye checks and 45 people will be having the eye surgery starting in the next few days.

Thank YOU so much Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen, Nepal Scouts, Manakamana Higher Secondary school and the expert team of ophthalmologist from Tilganga Eye Hospital!



Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide. In Nepal, a country where people already have so little, the gift of restored vision can mean the gift of life as well. The villages in Nepal can be isolated with no proper roads and can only be accessed on foot, which brings often insurmountable challenges for those with impaired vision. The simple surgery not only restores sight, but also gives independence and dignity.

Annual eye camps are held in remote areas and patients are seen for eye problems and screened for cataracts. The volunteer doctors and support staff perform cataract surgeries implanting an intra-ocular lens to help restore vision. Each patient is examined the following day before being discharged and is given post-operative medication and dark goggles. All this is offered for free to those suffering from cataract induced blindness. The benefits of this are immeasurable. One recipient said "I am so happy to see my grandchildren."

It is through the generous support of donors and caring individuals that over 1,000 people are seen each year at the annual eye camps.

Help Feed Elderly Mothers in Need

In early 2013, Shenpen started a project with Mata Tirtha Old Age Home. Since that time, we are supporting them on a monthly basis. Mata Tirtha Old Age Home is a resource for elderly women who do not have families to look after them. There are currently 23 elderly women from ages 65 to 101 living in this home.

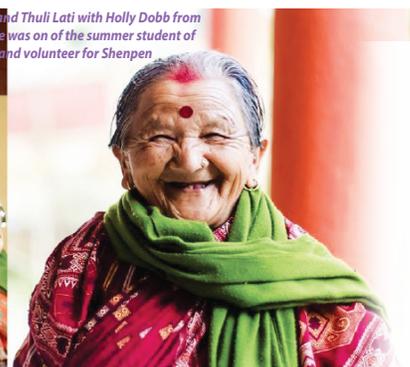
Shenpen is considering raising funds to support this home, which is one of only two old people's homes in the entire Kathmandu valley that offers free care.

It has never been easy for the team at Mata Tirtha Old Age Home to have enough funding

to feed these elderly women. So far, the main source of donation has been the community residing in the Patan area – A volunteer collects one hand full of rice from each household each day and brings it to the Old Age Home. In addition to this, sometimes people feed these elderly mothers on the occasion of their birthdays and some festivals which cost just \$20 for vegetarian meals and \$35 for non-vegetarian meal. Having Shenpen helping on a monthly basis contributes to offer better care and food to these ladies.



Lati Kanchi and Thuli Lati with Holly Dobb from Canada, she was on of the summer student of RYI and volunteer for Shenpen



Supporting the Children of Papa's Home

We began this busy year with support for our one Street Children project; C.H.A.N.C.E. for Nepal (UK) eagerly approved our proposal to provide nutritious meals for the twenty-two children of Papa's Home. In addition to meals, the children also enjoy one special activity each month of the year, for example going to the cinema, the public swimming pool, picnic or sharing sweets and treats for the special Nepalese festival of Dashain in late September. Given the success of this year of funding for Papa's Home, we hope to negotiate the same level of support from C.H.A.N.C.E. for Nepal (UK) again in 2016.

As is well known to Shenpen's supporters, a major earthquake struck forty kilometers from Kathmandu on April 25 followed by a number of strong aftershocks. Papa's Home itself and the children living there were all safe, though even now, they continue to recover from the shock. After a break from school this summer following the quakes, the children are now back in their routine feeling settled and safe.

Early this fall, the Street Children and Health sections of Shenpen collaborated to assess the physical well-being of the children at Papa's Home. We have now conducted two rounds of checkups, collecting weights, blood test results, and tuberculosis tests and will treat and support the children according to their results. After adding more nutritious food to support iron levels and weight gain, we will check again in three or four months to gauge improvement.

We continue the search for another project to add to those we support through the Street Children committee. We hope to work with an organization that is applying a well-researched approach, addressing issues of addiction and eventual reintegration of children into society. Please be in touch with us if you are aware of



Papa's Home Children on a tour

such an organization whose mission involves an attempt at addressing root causes of children living on the street.

Activities at Children's Hospital

The greatest number of childhood burns is caused by scalding liquids occurring in kitchens and bathrooms. Infants and toddlers younger than 3 years of age are the most at risk.

Being hospitalized can be a stressful time for anyone especially children. Shenpen has created a bright room for the children at Kanti Hospital burns ward to help make their hospital stay a bit more cheerful. Children's pain can be reduced if they are distracted. We provide 'goodie bags' (soft toys, bubbles, stickers, a tooth brush, tooth paste, a flashlight, and a knitted doll from the UK and other small toys) twice monthly for the children at Kanti. You can also help by bringing a blanket, a stuffed animal or a small toy from home.

Shenpen also organizes special fun days in the playroom where volunteers arrange entertainment, games, and art activities for the pediatric patients on this ward.



'Season of Giving'

On December 18th, Christine (Kristy) Walter Lasell College's Director of Athletics and her friends from Boston distributed items to each patient at the burns unit. They gave diapers, puzzles, crayons, baby wipes and lotion, soft toys and blankets to the children at Kanti Hospital. They also added more children's books, puzzles and other toys to the burn ward's play room. Kristy and her friends are in Nepal for winter vacation and to trek at Everest Base Camp. We would like to thank Kristy and her friends for their support!

Providing gift of Love

In the picture, Samir Neupane is happily receiving a toy mobile phone included in the contents of the 'Goody bags'. He was burned when playing nearby where his mother was boiling eggs. The boiling water accidentally spilled on him and caused first and second degree burns (10% of the total body surface). He is from the earthquake affected area and has been in the hospital for 5 days.

Samir says "I like the phone because I can say hello to my mom!"



The impacts of the April 25 earthquakes on Nepal

And how Shenpen has adapted its work to benefit to the victims

When the earth shook on April 25th, 2015, it brought terror and devastation to the length and breadth of Nepal. No person or organization in the country was prepared to fully respond to the challenging results of such a shocking event. Nevertheless, looking back on the response that Shenpen and the brave monks of Ka-Nying Shedrup Ling offered to a widespread community in extreme need yields a clear view; a huge amount of lives have been saved and improved by the rapid response and compassionate actions of individuals committed to healing the suffering of a devastated population.

Shenpen's litany of success begins only days after the first earthquake. As citizens of Kathmandu poured into our home monastery seeking safe refuge in a ceaseless stream, our teams of monks and volunteers were already abandoning their own concerns in order to prepare relief supplies of food and temporary shelter to outlying communities. The earth had not stopped shaking 5 days later, but Shenpen was already delivering vital care packages and rations well outside the city. Since that time, the earth has slowly settled, but our relief work has not waned. Working with the monks of Ka-Nying Shedrup Ling, many of whom are from the very villages receiving Shenpen relief, we are consistently able to communicate directly and assess community needs in a very thorough manner. Navigating a foreign culture is tricky to say the least, but working with monks who are

from the earthquake afflicted areas is an invaluable tool when searching out the areas of greatest need, and anticipating the pleas of villagers before our relief goods even arrive on-site.

To date, over 55 Shenpen projects have brought relief to communities, both within Kathmandu and Nepal's distant border-region districts. Since April 30th, 2015, Shenpen has devoted over 21,000,000 NRS to earthquake relief efforts. Nearly 1,000 large stacks of tin sheeting as well as thousands of tarpaulins have brought temporary shelter to earthquake refugees. More than 3,600,000 NRS has been used to purchase vital food supplies and rations for the populace at large. 95,000 NRS in medical supplies, more than 200,000 NRS worth of clothing and blankets, and 366,000 NRS of school supplies have been delivered. Beyond material goods which have been delivered by hand, Shenpen has also given over 4,000,000 NRS in direct donations for repairing homes which were dangerously in need of repair.

Such a long list of success clearly reflects Shenpen's goals: to harness the resources which will benefit those in need through the power of ceaseless compassion.



Earthquake Relief Expenditures
May 1 to December 31, 2015

Principle items	Amount in NRS	Amount in USD
Tarpaulin	2,980,500	27,734
School supplies	416,946	3,880
Donations	5,021,000	46,725
Food	3,903,579	36,325
Medicine	95,600	900
Clothing	461,999	4,300
Transportation	2,731,195	25,415
Total	15,610,819	145,280

As part of its relief efforts, Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen distributed some of the most needed supplies to people from all over Nepal, who often have lost everything. Shenpen gave around 2,000 tarpaulins, which benefited over 19,000 people by protecting them from the heavy rains that followed the massive earthquake of April 25. With the tin sheets we distributed, we estimate that almost 300 households have been able to install a roof on their new houses. Finally, with the food donations Shenpen made, we evaluate that over 500 people were fed for 9 months.

In the coming months, Shenpen will continue its relief work because too many people still live in unacceptable conditions and need their basic needs to be met (being warm, eating every day, etc.). But, at the same time, Shenpen will move further into the reconstruction phase. We hope that you will follow us in this adventure!

Acquiring Skills Yields Success

Over the years Shenpen's skills training outreach programs have served established communities and individuals following traditional vocations. Learning a new trade and getting specialized training to grow various crops are two examples of such programs. However, since the 2015 earthquakes, many people, and even entire communities, have been displaced from their traditional lands, most frequently as a result of destroyed homes or landslides.

When a disaster drives large groups to relocate from spacious rural areas to cramped temporary housing in the city, the need for new skills and ideas is never more apparent. One of Shenpen's current projects involves working with a group of thangka painters and traditional carpet weavers displaced from Yolmo District. Their story provides a testament to their willingness to acquire new skills and their remarkable resourcefulness.

Since the earthquake, the group has: moved to a city location, organised over 150 people to function with just a single tiny kitchen, found work for able-bodied craftsmen and women, placed every school aged child in school, founded the Samyevajra Himalaya Society (SHS), weathered the monsoon and cold season and found new land on which to permanently settle.

This success has been achieved in very trying circumstances, but the skills of the community have adapted well to the new situation. Currently, with Shenpen's help, the SHS is planning to build a factory to make thangkas and carpets.



Logistical arrangements related to setting up living quarters and sanitation on the new land are currently being addressed. As soon as the community relocates to the new land, Shenpen will donate materials to build a workshop and set up the large looms needed for traditional weaving. Shenpen will also provide advice on marketing the finely designed and expertly-crafted carpets in order to help establish a sustainable and profitable business.

Though we plan to primarily focus on earthquake relief reconstruction projects, due to the long term sustainable benefit to receiving communities, SHS is a prime example of how skills-building and earthquake relief projects have been taken forward in a difficult year.

Thank you to all our supporters and Friends of Shenpen!



If Shenpen can accomplish its work, it is because of your generosity; financial, material, and time. This year again, we collected and redistributed amongst the poorest of the poor much more than we anticipated. Shenpen provided through the year immediate assistance to people who are in great need, such as child burn victims, but also worked to help people in a sustainable manner, ensuring that they could benefit from Shenpen's commitment now and for the year to come. The gift of knowledge given either to children from poor families or women involved in small businesses are the best examples. Shenpen believes that these gifts can change an individual's life as well as the society they live in.

In the season of generosity, our special thanks go to the Friends of Shenpen who commit to support our day to day work by giving us a monthly donation. Those donations ensure Shenpen has the ability to respond to the needy without hesitation, and allows us to develop long term projects.

A special thank you to the Friends of Shenpen

Thelma McKay, Wendy Luu, Dirk Metko, Elizabeth Hoke, Johannes Kern, Leonie Luterman, Michele Larocque, Maarit Kreus, Morten Øvrebø, Tine Høisgaard Jørgensen, Arlene Reiss, Patrick Deason, Deborah Berry Shepherd, Steve Gamble, John Mills, Angela Carley, Line Toft, Poul-Erik Juhl, Joshna Maharjan, Alexis Brook, Paulo Minervino, Gregory Whiteside, Joost Palenstijn, Tara Sellberg, Lise Mauritz, Amrita Viagens, Sara Fryer, Andreas Hertwig, Tara Connell

Shenpen also has the privilege to work with highly committed organizations from Europe : Tashi Delek (Germany) and C.H.A.N.C.E. for Nepal (UK). The Shenpen's team wants here to show its gratitude and recognition to them and thank them for their wonderful work in their community. By the fund you successfully raised year after year, you help thousands of people in Nepal to get a better life.

This year, Mrs. Ulli Gocknitzer in Austria has done wonderful work for Shenpen and the entire community of Nepal. In the aftermath of the earthquakes, she successfully brought Nepal under the media spotlight and raised an incredibly helpful amount of money. Mrs. Gocknitzer, Shenpen would like to express to you our deepest gratitude.

But giving money is not everything, and Shenpen also wants to express its gratitude to each and every person who gave of their precious time to make this year possible. Some of you went to the field to meet and help others, others raised money and awareness, some of you shared knowledge and expertise for the sake of the organization and all sentient beings. Those were incommensurable gifts and, for that, Shenpen wants to thank to all of you!



To join Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen

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