



Laxmi Secondary
School





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Gurkhas living their
lives with dignity

Registered Charity No. 1103669
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The Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT)

The Gurkha Welfare Trust has been working in Nepal since 1969 to “relieve poverty and distress among Gurkha veterans, their dependants and their communities”. As the lead charity for Gurkha welfare, the GWT provides financial, medical and development aid, primarily in Nepal. The Trust’s main priority is the provision of a monthly pension of 10,000 Nepalese Rupees (£71.50) to 5,798 retired Gurkha soldiers or their widows, who have little or no other form of income.

In addition to this, the Trust also offers:

- **Financial aid:** Hardship Grants and Disability Grants are available to those with additional needs. A Winter Fuel Allowance is also paid to all pensioners.
- **Rural Water and Sanitation Programme:** Over 2016/2017 we will be undertaking 81 rural water projects, providing clean water supplies and educating communities in effective sanitation. To date, we have installed systems in around 1,400 villages, benefitting over 320,000 Nepalis.
- **Schools Programme:** The Trust builds, extends and repairs schools in remote hillside villages. Since 1989, we have built 137 schools and improved a further 1,800, benefitting over 600,000 children.
- **Medical Care:** The Trust offers medical care to Gurkha pensioners and their dependants – at our Welfare Centres, in our pensioners’ homes and via funded hospital treatment for more serious cases. We also support wider communities through our eight annual Mobile Medical Camps.
- **Residential Homes:** Our two homes provide 24-hour care for 52 of our most vulnerable pensioners.

We have 21 Area Welfare Centres in Nepal, each responsible for ensuring community projects are run smoothly and that local veterans have access to welfare and medical support. A workforce of over 400 staff is managed from our headquarters in Pokhara which is, in turn, managed from our office in Salisbury, UK.

The Earthquakes

On 25 April 2015 the first of a series of earthquakes and aftershocks hit Nepal. At a magnitude of 7.8, it was the country’s largest natural disaster in over 80 years. On 12 May, there was an aftershock measuring 7.3, a magnitude so high that it was considered a second earthquake. In total, Nepal suffered over 500 aftershocks measuring a magnitude of 4+.

Over 8,900 people were killed and around 23,000 injured. Kathmandu and the surrounding areas suffered extensive damage to buildings and in the more rural areas, far from help of any kind, entire villages were completely levelled.



During the earthquakes, around 25,000 classrooms were destroyed

Following the earthquakes, The Gurkha Welfare Trust committed to an Earthquake Response Programme which is scheduled to run until 2020. Our programme is focusing on three main aspects: rebuilding Gurkha homes; supporting Gurkha communities by expanding our Medical Programme; and rebuilding schools and community centres destroyed during the earthquakes.

We have already rebuilt nine schools and almost 700 homes destroyed in the earthquakes. This year we are completing the remaining homes that need rebuilding or repair, building a further 13 schools and four community centres and expanding our Medical and Rural Water and Sanitation Programmes.



When the earthquakes hit, serving Gurkha soldiers helped with our relief effort. Many of our pensioners were left without homes, just like Motilal Thapa, who you can see standing outside his temporary home. The sustainability of our projects can be seen in the picture of our Water Project (top right), the only structure left standing in the rubble.

Our Schools Programme

The need

Nepal is the fourth most climate vulnerable country in the world, and the second poorest country in Asia. The lack of infrastructure means that it is common for children to walk for up to two hours each way to their nearest school and the journey can be arduous – even dangerous.

The series of devastating earthquakes and aftershocks which took place in 2015 destroyed an estimated 25,000 classrooms. The loss of rural schools makes attendance increasingly difficult for children who are unable to attend another school and are now expected to learn in temporary shelters like the one shown (above right). These corrugated iron shelters are hot in the summer; they let in the monsoon rains and they fail to keep out the cold in the winter.

With the loss of schools came the loss of resources, compounding the already momentous challenge of providing an adequate education for young people across Nepal.

Our schools

Our schools are built in the traditional Gurkha recruitment regions; these areas include the hills which are home to many villages which still have poor or no road access. The schools we build typically have a high percentage of children from Service families, families living in poverty and marginalised casts. By building in rural communities, our schools reach the demographic that has been shown to be worst affected by illiteracy, and where a significant positive impact can be made.



Children at Ahal Bhanjyang School which completed in June 2016



Many schools are still holding classes in temporary shelters after losing buildings and resources in the 2015 earthquakes

All school projects undertaken by the Trust have been requested by the local community via our Welfare Centres. Our staff trek to each village to assess the need before submitting a project proposal and recommendation to our HQ in Pokhara. Projects are prioritised in terms of need, our existing work programme and ability to meet costs. The Trust funds, plans and supervises all work done under the Schools Programme, with the local community contributing to the total project costs and construction.

Each secondary school we construct is built to earthquake resistant standards and benefits from a minimum of 6 classrooms, toilets, washbasins, waste disposal units, furniture and a library. We also ensure that each school has a water supply. When funding permits, we are able to provide playgrounds, science labs, and perimeter fencing.

The Trust benefits from extensive experience, having completed nearly 2,000 school projects in the last 26 years. The quality of our work is demonstrated by the fact that during the earthquakes, all of the schools built by the GWT remained standing.

Laxmi Secondary School

Location: Manjyang, Lamjung district
 Head Teacher: Mr Bhishm Kanta Adhikari
 Catchment Area: 16 wards, 500 households
 Nearest Trust Welfare Centre: Lamjung

Background:

Laxmi Secondary School was founded in 1955 as a primary school approximately 1km away from its current location. The school gradually expanded, eventually teaching up to secondary level by 1978. With funding from the Nepali government and additional fundraising by the local community, two blocks containing twelve classrooms were built to support these additional students.

Class	Nursery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Number of Students	15	13	16	14	19	21	32	35	39	24	24	0	0	252

Evidence of Need

During the earthquakes in 2015, the school's buildings were seriously damaged and left unsafe to use. Some of the young children are being taught in temporary shelters made out of corrugated iron which fail to protect the young children who attend the school from the cold, rain and heat of the summer months. Others are being taught inside the damaged building.

The government of Nepal has agreed to build a six classroom building, and the Nepal Red Cross has agreed to retrofit some of the damaged buildings. The school does, however, need an additional building to provide further classroom space. Additionally, they have not yet received support to build any additional facilities such as a library, office or science lab.





Impact

Our Schools Programme is putting children who are learning out of temporary shelters back into purpose built classrooms, providing shelter from the elements and an environment conducive to learning. In addition to work in earthquake affected areas, we rebuild two schools each year in other communities that request our help due to their school's dilapidated condition. Across our Schools Programme, we are finding the following:

Improved health:

Our classrooms are clean and we have seen a reduction in respiratory problems due to the cleaner air children breathe.

Open defecation is common in Nepal and it is known to cause serious diseases. All of our schools come with toilet facilities, and subsequently children are taught to use toilets from an early age. The health and hygiene education that children receive at school is in turn passed on to others, including the children's parents. Villages that have an understanding of hygiene and access to clean water are seeing a 90% reduction in waterborne diseases.

Increased attendance:

Our schools provide a safe and clean environment for children. The knowledge that our schools are built to earthquake resilient standards encourages parents to send their children to school.

"After GWT built the school, our pupils didn't have to sit outside on the dusty ground to study like they used to have to. The classrooms have meant that the children aren't exposed to dust-borne diseases, so absenteeism has also gone down....the pass rate has gone up too".

**- Gangabahadur Pun,
Headmaster of Kalika School**

Attendance of girls has increased due to the gender separate toilet blocks provided as part of our schools package. As girls get older, their need for privacy increases. The absence of school toilets is cause for many secondary age school girls to drop out of education.

Improved health means that both children and teachers take less time off with illness, improving education for children as well as their future prospects.

Safety:

Nepal does not have a health and safety culture as we know it in the UK, but by providing fencing, footpaths and smooth steps, we increase the safety of our schools.

Opportunities for sport:

By landscaping and providing playgrounds, children have more opportunities to participate in sport.

Improved quality of education:

Our clean and structurally sound buildings promote a positive working environment and the excellent reputation of our schools attracts better quality, qualified teachers. Consequently, many schools are reporting an improvement in student exam pass rates.

Community involvement:

We encourage the local community to contribute to the building of our schools through the donation of labour, gifts in kind or cash. It ensures that the community are invested in the school and promotes a desire to work continuously towards the improvement of their community. Our projects empower people to work together as a community to shape the future of their village.



Case Study: Ahal Bhanyanj School

Situated in the hills of the Gorkha region is Thalajung, a remote village accessible via a seasonal dirt road. The local school, Ahal Bhanyanj, provides an education to 198 children ranging from nursery to year 10.

Pre-Earthquake

Ahal Bhanyanj was established as a primary level school in 1953, with support from the Indian Soldier Board. In 1968 it was expanded to a lower secondary school and has offered places to secondary school children since 1980. Prior to the earthquake in April 2015, the school was in need of renovation and had requested support from the GWT.



Damage to the school building

The Earthquake

During the earthquake of 25 April 2015, most of the infrastructure, including classrooms and toilets, collapsed or were badly damaged. The buildings left standing were all too dangerous to enter.

The school set up shelters made out of corrugated iron, which were useful as a temporary measure, but which let in the cold and rain and failed to provide the hygienic, warm and well-equipped setting critical to a conducive learning environment. There was a desperate need for a modern, structurally safe school with the facilities to deliver a good standard of education.

The Rebuild

Construction on the new school, a nine room, double-storey building, started in December 2015 and completed in June 2016. The building was designed in compliance with the National Building Code of Nepal, and local labour and resources were used wherever appropriate to make the project cost-effective. Like all of our schools, Ahal Bhanyanj is built to a high, earthquake resilient standard and demonstrates sound engineering and construction principles.

The school has been fitted with electrical wiring and plug sockets and a false ceiling has been installed to reduce heat. Both the inside and outside of the school have been painted, and the waste disposal incinerator and toilet facilities have been renovated.



Construction underway earlier this year

The Impact

The school is once again able to offer a suitable learning environment and the full range of curricular subjects, which are vital to preparing children for life after school. Thanks to the electric wiring, the school can once again offer ICT as a compulsory subject from year 6.

The headmaster, Bishnu Prasad Bhatta, told us, “*The TLCs [temporary classrooms] had various problems from being hot and humid to leaking when it rained. Fortunately, shortly after, The Gurkha Welfare Trust came to build us an 8-classroom building in our time of crisis. I, as the Headmaster of the school, would like to say a huge thank you to The Gurkha Welfare Trust for building us a new earthquake resistant school block*”.



The new school building completed in June 2016

Rough Design of a Four Classroom Project



The Cost

Over the financial year running from 1 July 2017-30 June 2018, we will be building 13 schools at a cost of between £75,000 and £108,404. The total estimated cost for our school programme for the year comes to around £1,000,000. A breakdown of the typical cost of our various school builds is below.

Item	4 Classrooms	6 Classrooms	8 Classrooms	10 Classrooms
School building (Stone & CGI Roof)	£22,590	£49,096	£62,108	£72,291
Toilet block (3 room rebuild/repair)	£ 2,858	£4,286	£4,286	£ 5,714
Combo furniture (50 pairs)	£1,072	£1,786	£1,786	£2,142
Incinerator	£178	£178	£178	£178
Library books and wooden racks	£ 1,072	£1,428	£1,428	£1,428
Science Lab	£-	£1,643	£1,643	£1,786
Playground levelling	£ 1,072	£1,072	£1,072	£1,072
Compound fencing-stone/barbed/chain link	£2,142	£3,214	£4,286	£5,357
Staff cost - (6 to 12 months)	£4,289	£5,853	£6,636	£8,578
SUB TOTAL	£35,272	£68,558	£83,423	£98,549
Contingency + 10%	£3,527	£6,855	£8,342	£5,855
TOTAL	£38,800	£75,414	£91,766	£108,404

All totals are an estimate and before village contribution has been deducted. *Based on a conversion rate of NPR 140/£

Our Finances

In 2015/16 we had an income of £20,361,000 and expenditure of £19,848,000 with our main source of income being charitable donations, legacies and government grants.

We anticipate increased expenditure and reduced income over the coming year as we anticipate that the income that we receive from legacies will drop by approximately £1 million. Furthermore, our finances are particularly sensitive to the exchange rate of NPR to GBP and since June 2016 the value of the pound has dropped significantly.

The Trust has a long-term constructive obligation, as defined by SORP 2005, in respect of its Welfare Pensions. This takes into account the level of benefit agreed for welfare pensions for the year taking into account the inflation rate, an estimation of 5,798 pensioners with an average age of 78.82 and that on the death of an ex-Gurkha the pension will be transferred to a surviving widow. There are also ex- Gurkhas and servicemen from the British and Indian Armies who are not in receipt of a service pension who may apply for a Welfare Pension.

Nepal is a volatile and unpredictable country where there are not only geophysical dangers such as earthquakes, but also political, social and economic uncertainties. The Trustees have decided that it is prudent to keep one year's expenditure as reserves in order to prepare for these risks; we currently have 45% of the recommended level of reserves.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The GWT monitors its projects to ensure that each one is completed efficiently and effectively and will have a sustainable impact on society. The Trust is very experienced in this line of work, having completed many projects in the past, and has an intimate understanding of Nepal. We produce progress and completion reports for all of our projects. After the build has finished, we maintain contact with the school to monitor the state of the building and assess the quality and level of maintenance.

The Trust has significant connections and relationships with central and local government and civil society. At a national level, all our projects are sanctioned by the Brigade of Gurkhas' Welfare Coordination Committee (BGWCC) at an annual meeting chaired by Nepal's Defence Secretary and attended by the Secretariats of various Nepal Government Ministries.

Our community projects are certified and endorsed by the Village Development Committees (VDC) and District Development Committees (DDC) prior to commencement. Schools projects are also agreed with the School Management Committees (SMC). All projects are then included in the District Development Plan (DDP). Our staff attend meetings of the DDC. Once a project is completed, it is handed over to the VDC at an official ceremony attended by representatives of the various committees. We also work in partnership with other NGOs, most notably the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association and the CAIRN Trust.



Prava Secondary School, Gorkha