

Sonam Sherpa
Hile Nigale Sherpa Social Service Centre Jiri-07
Hile Dolakha Nepal
Report 3: August to October 2020



As a community volunteer, I feel responsible for every step in the work of the community project. This includes keeping an eye on the community education center and coordinating with the sponsors. Previously, I worked as a tourist and trekking guide for 12 years. However, I lost my job earlier this year owing to the covid-19 pandemic. This calamity has greatly affected the people whose subsistence depends on wages derived from daily toiling. At the same time, I was suffering from sciatica, requiring hospitalization and prolonged physiotherapy. Even though the situation is very difficult, I keep up my efforts to support the community center, including an additional educational project to promote social change and opportunities for children to fully realize their potential in the future.

← new music classes

Currently running activities at the community center:

1. Computer classes
2. Math and Science classes
3. Montessori classes
4. Music classes
5. Drinking water supply project
6. Environmental education

1. Computer classes

Following a long process, we were able to obtain four laptops for the community education center. The villagers were questioning the importance of everyone's acquiring computer skills! Yes, I said, it is important that people, especially the younger generations, avail themselves of the technology and prepare for the digital age. Every child has the right to learn as part of their human rights! Our aim is to provide basic knowledge of computer science. Teaching our students simple computer skills will help prepare them for work in the digital age and enable them to help shape the world of the future.

As an example of added benefits, some farmers have been using social media to sell their organic vegetables directly to the consumers (avoiding the markups charged by deceitful middlemen) thereby obtaining a better price for their products.



2. Math and Science classes

The quality of teaching is generally poor in public primary schools, as primary school teachers are often not sufficiently qualified to teach math and science. These problems lead to poor learning outcomes and leave students who enter secondary school unprepared for the higher-level educational demands there. Many students end up dropping out, particularly those from village school populations who are poorly prepared in math and science. To address these challenges, we have started tuition sessions in the community education center for 7 to 10 graders. Luckily, we have been able to secure the services of a local teacher who usually teaches math and science in a private institution in Kathmandu, but now has returned home because of the lockdown. We hope this will better prepare our students to succeed, remain in school and eventually reach the university level.

3. Montessori classes

It was important to introduce Montessori classes at the center because they offer a foundation for the children's future formal learning which is not available anywhere in the region's public schools.



Principal Pemba Sherpa (right) and Teachers Migmar Lama Bhuti



Music teacher Dilraj_Rai

4. Music classes

Of course, music is an important part of human life. Music helps us overcome negative feelings and provides relief in stressful times. Learning about music in all its aspects is particularly important for children and promotes better brain development. Unfortunately, there is little music education available in rural areas. The children and adolescents are proud to have music classes in our community center and greatly appreciate the generosity of those whose support provides us with music education and instruments.



5. Progress on drinking water supply

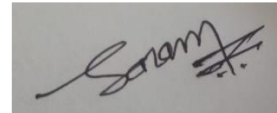
The availability of water is vitally important for the community center. We have been supplying drinking water for the community center from a nearby center until now. However, due to the global climate crisis, it has become increasingly difficult over the years to secure a consistent water supply. This means that the community lacks sufficient drinking water for sanitization and hygiene purposes, particularly at a time when covid-19 protocols calls for increased handwashing, etc. We were able to locate a small source of water only 600 meters away from the center, but we lacked the funds to install a connecting water pipeline. Repeated requests for government assistance to obtain water pipes, cement and tanks for a pipeline led nowhere. Fortunately, the Swiss project of Doris Kuhn and her friends provided the funds for building the water project, which is currently under construction. After a work delay caused by monsoon rains, we are now finishing the pipeline project. Soon the community center will have enough potable water.

6. Environmental education

Public awareness of environmental issues is important for our society, especially the need to reduce plastic waste, minimize open fires and indiscriminate tree cutting. Many people know little about climate change and how it affects our world, although they are aware of gradually increasing temperatures and unusual weather patterns (heavy rainfalls at times, less snowfall in the mountains - even in winter, sometimes very dry weather conditions and reduced spring water flow in the rivers). That is why the community education center offers information to raise environmental awareness and sensitivity among children and parents to instill environmentally sensitive habits, such as avoiding plastic-wrapped food, cutting down trees for heating purposes, and using environmentally sustainable building materials instead of concrete. As a result of the information provided to the community, people are more inclined to recycle plastic, some have begun to cook with gas, and many are planting new trees! Indeed, a positive sign for the next generation.

Hile Nigale, October 16, 2020

signature

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Hile Nigale'.