

## The year so far!

This year is proving to be as difficult as last year with funding levels showing no real increase on the previous years painful reaction to the global financial downturn. All of this at the time our funding stream for the HIV halfway house was coming to an end. So this year is very much about consolidation and planning how we move forward over the next few years. We have sadly had to make some cut backs but are hoping to reinstate those situations by the end of the year subject to increased funds coming in.

After three years we have had to temporarily close down the HIV half way house, the building has been taken over by the HIV Crisis centre and the team there are trying to support the work of the half way house as best as possible but the situation will clearly cut down the number of women benefiting from the service.

I expect you are all being battered by charities in similar situations and understand that making a donation of any kind is more than ever likely to mean people going without some planned little extra, but if you can help in anyway to help us re-open this important service please act now! With thanks for your continuing support, best wishes,

## Shakti Kendra – the refuge.

In closing down the HIV halfway house it meant a role change for the coordinator Sabina Darshandhari. Fortunately she did not go far and has taken on the role of case officer at Shakti Kendra our refuge for victims of trafficking and sexual abuse. Sabina is being funded in post by the Swiss organisation Terre des Homme.

We are excited to announce that the Japanese government has agreed to fund the building of a new home for Shakti Kendra, the funding is on the basis that we continue to fund the running costs and infrastructure. Shakti Kendra is also six months into an infrastructure and management review being carried out by Terre des Homme with Asha Nepal and the leading expert on counter trafficking in SE Asia, John Frederick.



Case Officer Sabina Darshandhari (centre) with Dance and Motion Therapist Nilufer and staff members Laxmi (Job Coordinator) and Riti (Children's home Manager)

The two year long program will look at every activity in the refuge and create Shakti Kendra as a centre of best practice as a model for use throughout SE Asia.

## The Children's Home

We had planned to move to bigger premises this year but to-date efforts to raise funds have failed, we are also still running the home from emergency funds and hope to gain sponsorships for the children by the end of this year along with increased funding for the home. This will allow us to increase the intake to 30 residents.

## Sponsoring a child

Each child urgently needs a sponsor, you can sponsor from as little as .50p a day. Unlike some organisations we encourage contact with the children, we have found that interaction with visiting volunteers helps in the development of self confidence and self awareness as well as broadening their horizon and understanding of the wider world out there. An online sponsorship page should be up and running in the next two weeks but for any info in the meantime please contact Peter at [peter@asha-nepal.org](mailto:peter@asha-nepal.org), tel 01234 714089. E hope to hear from you soon!

## Volunteers

We have benefited from growing number of volunteers from students to doctors, skilled trades people to therapists. WE have been advised to charge a fee for volunteers but other than a US\$100 (payable locally) per month to cover food etc. we have never made a charge. We believe that we would not have benefited from the wonderful volunteers who we have worked with over the last two three years if we had joined a volunteer scheme and charged a fee. So no change there!



Volunteers Jean (back row third from right) and Jon (back row first left) with some of the children

Many thanks to everyone who has been out to Nepal, from your feed back we know you have had a great time and your impact on the girls and the children is surely greater than you may ever understand. This hit home last month when I discovered that the girls and children had got together and voted for their favourite volunteer over the last twelve months. The winners were Jean and John, no prize I'm afraid but I know from our correspondence that you loved your time in Kathmandu. I informed them both of what had happened last week, they had just scaled an active volcano some where in Indonesia, but were overjoyed to get the news!

## The Political situation

Political indecision and feuding between political parties continues to disrupt Nepal. Most damaged by strikes, high inflation, lack of basic commodities (including water!) are the poor and disenfranchised. Women rescued from trafficking and sexual violence, along with their dependants fall into this category. The AN staff team along with those of our partner organisations have regularly turned up for work during the bunds (politically motivated strikes) regardless of the danger of violent retribution so at least the women and children in our care have not been affected by lack of service.

The failure to finalise the new constitution, it has been delayed for a further year, may sound unimportant however it means further misery for countless women and children as changes in law that could have advantaged their lives will not take place. Corruption and disregard for law by both the police and judiciary will continue, meaning many perpetrators of trafficking, false



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imprisonment, rape and torture will either go unpunished or receive inappropriately short sentences. Corruption and discrimination against women and the lower castes is rife in all levels of Nepalese society, the majority of politicians have no interest in their country only in power and the opportunity for greater levels of corruption that power will bring. The previous British government paid tacit support for the new Nepalese government rather than using the opportunity to include genuine changes in the implementation of human rights in exchange for support. As long as the International community turns a blind eye to corruption and the abuse of human rights little is likely to change for the thousands of women and children who fall victim to trafficking and sexual abuse.

We really need your help to bring comfort and relief to those victims and help them to make a full and economically self sufficient return to safety and give them a safe and meaningful future.

Peter Bashford  
Asha Nepal