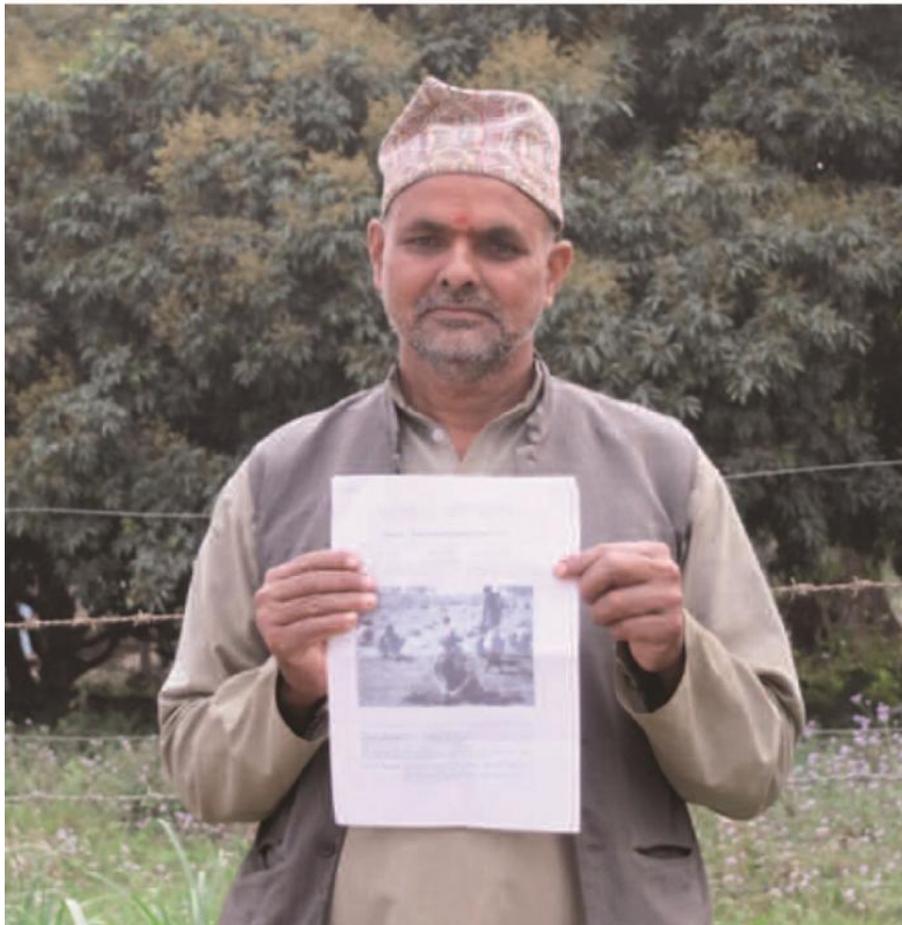


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2018

dnh brief



DEUTSCH-NEPALISCHE
HILFSGEMEINSCHAFT

DNH

GERMAN-NEPALESE
HELP ASSOCIATION

www.dnh-stuttgart.org

NAMASTE

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Dear Members and dear Friends of the GNHA,

We tend to complain if things in Nepal are not running again in the way we had intended. But there are also developments where waiting patiently for success is a prerequisite and ultimately pays off. This is undoubtedly applicable to a measure the GNHA played a key role in exactly 25 years ago. Good reason to take a closer look at this project. In 1993, the allocation, fencing and plantation planning took place in the steppe landscape between the Chitwan National Park and the settlement areas located in the surroundings.

If you are involved in an environmental and reforestation project that cannot be expected to produce any short-term results, you need to be absolutely convinced of its necessity and effectiveness. With its involvement during a very critical phase of the project, the GNHA enabled the first step to be taken in the then innovative buffer zone concept, a model that has since proven its worth.

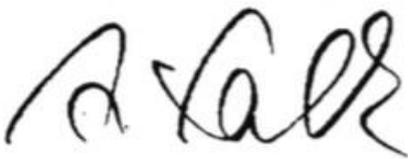
The theologian, Jörg Zink, once said, "There is a curious relationship between us humans and the trees". I see a certain analogy between the reforestation project which one has to devote special attention to, nurture, develop and protect, and our educational, MGML activities. I would be interested to know what we shall be able to say about this commitment in 25 years' time. Just as I was firmly convinced of the buffer zone concept back then, I am, today, convinced of the effectiveness and significance of our educational concept. We have now taken 25 more schools under our wings.

In this newsletter, we are introducing two of our members from the Dalit caste in an interview. Their background and careers with us are encouraging.

The school buildings are making good progress. Some of the reconstruction projects are illustrated here in the pictures and text.

All these contributions may show you how sustainable, environmentally conscious and socially innovative the GNHA's work is. We therefore thank you for your interest in our projects and your support, in whatever form.

In this spirit, I greet you here with a sincere "Namaste".



Andreas Falk, President

The picture on the front page shows Ram Dhungana with the "Nepal-Notizen" of 1994.

The forest buffer zone in Chitwan National Park celebrates its 25th Anniversary

A Nepalese success story with a significant involvement of the GNHA

By Sabine Pretsch

"Nice to meet you. But please tell me, how is Andreas? In the meantime, 25 years have passed. I am pleased to recall the financial support of the GNHA for the reforestation campaign, in particular for planting a forest as a buffer zone between the actual national park and the settlement and pasture areas in Dharampur."

I am at the office of the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC) in Sauraha, Chitwan and can hardly believe it. Ram Kumar Aryal, the responsible administrative official, personally accompanied the reforestation campaign in 1993 and still remembers each meeting he had with Andreas Falk, and the project financing by the GNHA. Such a long-term cooperation in an organisation is not only a rarity in Nepal.



*A steppe landscape in Chitwan National Park in 1993:
Planting trees in the future buffer zone*

"Dharampur is one of the districts of the Kumroj VDC, where the inhabitants live mainly from rice cultivation and livestock farming. The name, "Village Development Community" (VDC), is given to the administrative units in the rural areas of Nepal. As a rule, these areas comprise approximately nine districts (wards) and smaller towns. The Kumroj VDC comprises about 1,800 households," so Ram Kumar when reporting on the locations of the reforestation project.

Extract taken from the DNH Nepal-Notizen of July 1994, A. Falk:

"The commitment to an "environmental project" is something new for the GNHA. The project, "Restoration of an original natural space on the edge of the Royal Chitwan National Park - Dharampur Community Plantation" was made possible by a project sponsorship of four members, supporting it with DM 18,400.00. The actual project is not easy to find. It is located in the municipality of Dharampur near the border to the National Park. It can be reached on foot, by bike or on an elephant'.

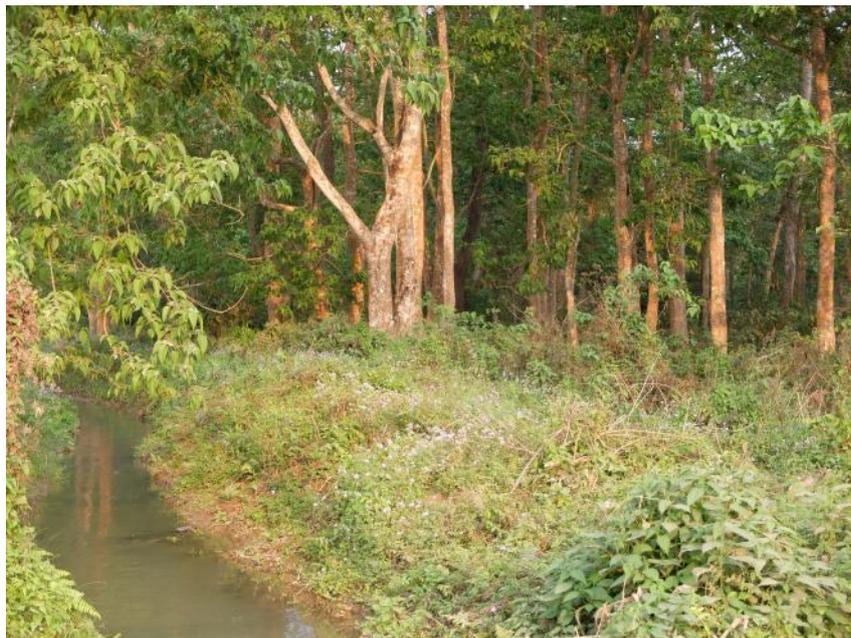
"Look, here was the first planting project in Dharampur." Rishi Subedi, who works as a forester for the BCC and is now accompanying me to the Kumroj Community Forest project, suddenly points to the right. Some time ago the fence was renewed, but the original fencing of the buffer zone is still clearly visible."

I sit in my jeep and am happy that nowadays I can drive to the project area. The vehicle shakes on its way along the bumpy track. The dense undergrowth of the jungle next to me is fascinating. The path is lined with miles of tropical forest with stately trees, lush bushes and countless grasses in all the greens of a colour palette. Deciduous green, moss green, grass green, fern green, pine green, olive green, brown-green, in alternation. A refreshment for the eyes. And a real blessing after all the dust and torn roads in and around Kathmandu, and along the route to Chitwan.

Suddenly something dazzling flashes through the tall grass - two female peacocks with long blue feathers. And while I am watching the brightly coloured birds, Rishi gives some more details about the project: "At the moment, no new trees are being planted. And the nursery which was established in 1988, is no longer in operation, either. Nowadays, all that matters is the management of the existing forest, the grasslands and the flood plain. This includes the care and protection of the entire area and livestock within the buffer zone, the upkeep of the existing forest roads and fire protection zones, and the maintenance of the fencing."

Extract taken from the DNH Nepal-Notizen of July 1994, A. Falk:

In October 1993, 55 hectares (550,000 square metres) of the steppe (former forested) area were re-planted with 142,000 trees. A barbed-wire fence of approximately 3 km was built, and a trench-like protection gap was dug out, to prevent the access of unwanted visitors (especially cattle and goats, but also rhinos) or make this more difficult.



Lush jungle in the buffer zone 2018

"The village community now cultivates more than 1,000 hectares of forest in the buffer zone. Every five years a new, administrative committee with a total of 45 members is elected on a voluntary basis, and a valid business plan is created, respectively, for that period. The sale of large trees is reserved for the project management. The villagers are only allowed to collect any scattered branches during the Dashain and Tihar festivities, and use them as firewood, free of charge. The NTNC, the former King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, and former co-initiator of the reforestation campaign in 1993 provides residents with technical support," so Rishi, as he continues his explanations.

Getting out of the vehicle, I then take pictures of this vast "sea of forest". Slowly, the sun begins to sink and nature is bathed in glistening light. Totally immersed in this enchanting landscape, a jungle jeep full of tourists unexpectedly emerges.

Rishi greets the driver of the jeep and reports on the ecotourism that has meanwhile become very well established: "The villages belonging to the Kumroj VDC are visited regularly as destinations for organised groups of visitors, as part of the eco-friendly travel programme. In terms of ecological tourism, jungle activities such as jungle trekking, elephant rides and boat trips are now also offered and take place today in these areas."

Extract taken from the DNH Nepal-Notizen of July 1994, A. Falk:

At the beginning of the project, part of the population was still resisting the fencing of forest pastures previously open to the general public, but this stopped when it turned out that these carefully cultivated areas brought more benefits to the users than the uncontrolled use of the forest pastures. As this knowledge spread, there was soon far more interest in planting wooded areas than there were resources available.

"Look, I planted the small tree seedlings over there myself. I have supported the project from the very beginning and found it particularly good that we, as residents, were to be directly involved. Most of the settlers were very skeptical. They did not even give the workers of the NTNC, who came to help us with the planting, any water to drink."



Now I am standing next to Sadhu Ram Dhunganga who has joined us, and is introduced to me by Rishi, as a villager of Dharampur. The enthusiasm about the project is written in Sadhu's face.

In this context, he excitedly tells us of the further support that the residents have received through the Community Forest Project and a cooperation of national and international organisations. In order to conserve the forest resources, improve the local livelihoods, and minimize the risks to humans of animals when collecting firewood and using the forest as a toilet, the Kumroj VDC was declared in 2013 as the first model management area with biogas plants.

"All the households in the VDC have now got their own biogas plant with a toilet. Although some villagers have had to sell some of their cattle due to limited pasture resources, and thus have little manure to operate the biogas plant, our standard of living has considerably improved with the toilet and plant," so Sadhu, as he informs us about the benefits resulting from the biogas project.

To record the meeting with Sadhu who has been actively involved in the reforestation work since the very beginning, and is still involved in today's cultivation of the forest, I quickly took a photo of Sadhu holding the Nepal-Notizen of 1994.



Extract taken from the DNH Nepal-Notizen of July 1994, A. Falk:

What is so special and innovative about this project?

It is based on the argument that isolated national parks and the species living in this habitat only have a chance of survival in the long term, if the population settling in their marginal areas finds it meaningful to preserve them. Environmental degradation, such as here, e.g. the illegal tree felling, the destruction of the habitat by overgrazing, the poaching and killing of rare animals, is a consequence of the poverty of the local population. The project is based on the hypothesis that these people can play an active role in the protection of these natural areas, if they get tangible economic benefits.

Since this huge forest area has, in the meantime, become the home of numerous wild animals, such as rhinos, deer and roebucks, I would like to see one of them. Allegedly, even a tiger roams through the buffer zone.

I then ask Rishi if it is possible to drive even deeper into the jungle. Since it is already quite late and the dusk is slowly setting in, this proposal is too dangerous. Subsequently, we then set off on our return trip and I inquired about what happens to the revenue from the environmentally friendly tourism.

"The benefits generated by ecotourism directly benefit the community forest project and the village community, and contribute to independent and autonomous administration and management. In addition, 50% of the revenue generated by the compulsory Chitwan National Park entry fee are invested in the projects. Last year, the Kumroj project was able to record an income of 6.5 million Nepalese rupees (approximately EUR 50,000.00 at an exchange rate of EUR 1 = 125 NPR). Financial support is no longer required from outside. Following the success story of the first Community Forest Project in the Kumroj district, there is now a total of 60 of these self-supporting projects," so Rishi.

Back in Sauraha I thank Ram Kumar and Rishi for their time and detailed insight into this project.

Now, dear readers, I do hope that with this report I have also been able to take you with me to the scene of our activities, and that you have gained an insight into the successful GNHA project that has been relatively unknown, however, until now.

Two members of the GNHA in a conversation with Amrei Vogel

Please introduce yourselves and tell us something about your family and caste background.

I am Kedar Dyola. I was born in an economically poor Dyola family in Bhaktapur. Those belonging to the Newar Dyola caste collect and dispose of waste and garbage from the homes and streets. My father and grandfather used to weave baskets from the bamboo peels, which is another traditional way the Dyolas made a living. My mother and grandmother were housewives and sometimes they used to do labour work. My family's life was very hard and poor, where basic needs were hardly fulfilled. There are 1,249 families in my locality, these all belonging to the Dyola caste. I came into contact with people from other castes when I was enrolled at school. I was 7 years old when I started my schooling. I felt very uneasy due to the caste and language difference.

My name is Dipak Rokka. I am also from a family with a weak economic situation. I grew up in an illiterate family with a poor economic background. My father is a farmer and my mother is a housewife. I was born as the fifth child and only son, and have 5 sisters. Now I am married and have a son. Traditionally, I am a cobbler which is a typical handicraft for the Dalit caste in my community, but we work as farmers, and our main sources of income are agricultural products. I faced lots of challenges during my childhood due to the caste system and our poor economic background. Unlike Kedar, I grew up with a mixed group of people and came into contact with other castes in my neighborhood

Are you the first generation in your family to go to school? On whose initiative did you enrol at school and later continue your primary, secondary and higher education?

Kedar: I was the first to complete my schooling. My father left school when he was in grade 3. My elder brother and sister left school when they were in grade 4. I am the only member of the family who completed the higher education. My father and mother were aware of the importance of schooling and education and inspired me to complete it.

Dipak: It was different in my family. My four elder sisters inspired me to go to school and also to complete my school education. In my family, my father's generation did not go to school. They are illiterate.



What kind of support did you get during your schooling?

Dipak: My parents inspired me to complete my higher education. During this time, I was also granted a scholarship from an organisation, the Dalit Welfare Council, which is engaged in creating and encouraging awareness to uplift the Dalit caste.

Kedar: My father and mother played an important role for me, too. They are my main sources of encouragement. They did not let me feel underprivileged, because I did not have the things which are needed in my education such as pencils, pens, books, etc.. But they could not pay for my higher education, so I was unable to fulfil my aim which was to complete my education in the technical field. Technical education is very expensive in Nepal.

You have quite a lot in common as regards your professional biographies, such as teaching at community schools and your association with the Rato Bangala Foundation and the GNHA. How did you manage to get your different teaching posts?

Kedar: I wanted to be a model teacher. During my teaching career I faced the problem of some students being unable to understand what I taught. Then I started to explore new resources/techniques for being able to teach better. I then decided to enrol in an RBF teachers' training course. I completed the training with a 50% scholarship at the RBF. I think my sincerity, dedication and ability helped me to join the RBF. The GNHA got to know me when I was training at the Rato Bangala Foundation.

Dipak: Once I had completed my higher education, I started teaching maths at a primary school that was supported by the GNHA. The GNHA helped me and supported my training at the Rato Bangala Foundation. Then I joined the Rato Bangala Foundation and took on the big responsibility as a training coordinator. The President of the GNHA advised me to take on this job in Gulmi and assured me that this would qualify me for a higher job with the GNHA.

Although all citizens are equal under Nepalese law, it is basically a Hindu society where some castes such as yours are still discriminated. Do your education and employment in highly reputed organisations protect you from discrimination?

Dipak: Yes, that's true, all the citizens in Nepal are considered equal under the law, but it is difficult to get a job if you come from a lower caste. In recent jobs, I have not felt any pain due to discrimination by my colleagues - they all work very professionally - but the work done with the community does give rise to a certain amount of pain due to discrimination..

Kedar: I agree. On the professional level I do not feel any discrimination, but on the cultural-activities level, this discrimination is strongly practiced and felt.



Dipak Rokka

How do you assess your achievement with respect to your social background? Do you consider yourselves to be part of the educated strata with a special responsibility?

Dipak: I have a special position within my community. I was the first person in our Dalit community who completed the SLC. Then, together with some of my close friends, I voluntarily started "Awareness" programmes in my region. The people then expected more involvement, but I was unable to devote them the time. I was unable do any of the things they expected, so I was not fully satisfied with my achievement and success.

Kedar: For me it's similar. When I completed the SLC in the first division, I was the pride of the Dyola Community, because there were very few people - maybe less than 5 - who had completed the secondary level of education. Then I could see the hidden expectation that I would do something for the community. But I could not fulfil this expectation. There were many obstacles. Nowadays, however, the Dyola people accept me as a successful man, because I do a well-paid job on a higher level. But I still have the feeling that I have to do even more for the Dalit community.

Are your wives from the same caste as you are? Are they educated and do they have an appropriate job?

Kedar: My wife is also from the same Dyola caste as I am. She also completed her higher education. She is from Kathmandu and she is now teaching at a school in Kathmandu.

Dipak: Yes, my wife is also from the same caste and she works as a teacher at a community school.

Many thanks for answering my questions. I wish you and your families every success for the future.



Kedar Dyola

School buildings - a review

By Andreas Falk

Exactly 3 years ago, the earthquake in 2015 devastated our project region. And it also affected the schools. We, as the GNHA, suddenly had the responsibility of rebuilding and / or repairing buildings at 40 school locations. We found ourselves facing a gigantic task as regards the planning, organisation, financing and logistics. However, the help and cooperation that we were able to experience over the course of these 3 years is also amazing..

After a thorough analysis of the types of buildings that had fallen victim to shock waves, and why, we opted for a simple model for our village primary schools, consisting of a two-room module partly made up of prefabricated steel elements and, depending on the extent of the remaining structure, differing masonry. For most of the locations and the given number of students, this type of building met the new, stringent safety requirements and the pedagogical concept we had introduced in these schools.

Our goal was always to maintain at least 4 spacious classrooms. Where necessary, 2 modules were built at one location, which, despite covering 6 grades (kindergarten, classes 1 - 5), are completely sufficient for the MGML concept, because pupils in different grades and age-groups are taught collectively in fewer rooms.

The approval procedure for this building type was an ordeal both for us and the school communities. After the final official approval, we were at last able to get started. In the meantime, these buildings are in operation at most locations.

One of our aims was to make us independent of transport costs, to dispense with the waste of energy and air pollution caused by burning bricks, and instead to rely on specially shaped, mud bricks. Using a hand-operated machine imported from Thailand, 5 parts of clay, 3 parts of sand and 1 part of cement are pressed into compact, externally shaped bricks, which then air dry for 4 weeks. It took a frustratingly long time before this ground-breaking construction material was approved for schools. But we definitely wanted to use this technology in order to exemplify an alternative for private house reconstruction.

By showing a few pictures of different buildings we would like to emphasize what has been said here. One picture shows the interior of a clay brick MGML classroom at the Binayak Bal School. Here windows and door elements could be reused from the previously destroyed building. The craftsmen are busy building a wall of clay bricks - model LEGO stone - with additional iron reinforcement.



Binayak Bal School in Badalgaon, Kavre district

Very remote, and for transportation the most difficult to reach, was the monastic complex of Bigu Gumba in the Dolakha district, which was razed to the ground. It is the oldest monastery for nuns in Nepal. In addition to Buddhist teachings, the novices have to pursue a completely normal secular schooling. In Bigu we have built two of our building modules with the financial help of the Tibethaus Frankfurt and the Nepalhilfe Aachen.



Bigu Gumba School in the Dolakha district

Lilakali has over 400 pupils. In addition to a standard module financed by us, a massive, two-story building with 8 rooms is nearing completion with funding from the Kindermissionswerk, "Die Sternsinger". The construction project was planned and tendered by us and awarded to a construction company.

An American help organisation got to know about our educational approach in Sindhupalchok. Impressed by this, "All Hands and Hearts" wanted to work for the reconstruction of a school where the MGML concept would continue to be pursued after building completion. Kalikasaran was chosen. The topography of the site and the space requirements spoke out against the construction of 2 modules. We therefore agreed to a different type of building and handed over material, worth 2 standard modules, to the volunteers of "All Hands and Hearts", as well as the construction work. The inauguration took place exactly 3 years after the first earthquake.

This brief overview shows our pragmatic approach. Ideologically we are not fixed and cooperate with offering partners and adapt ourselves very effectively to the circumstances.

The main thing is, our MGML concept can be implemented.



Lilakali School in the Dhading district



Kalikasaran School in the Sindhupalchok district

We would like to express our thanks

to our outstanding members, Christel Graf and Emmy Zehnle, in Sasbachwalden. Every December, they spend 4 weeks at the Christmas market selling their handicraft products, and hand over the proceeds to the GNHA. At a two-day crockery bazaar in Achern, tablecloths are donated which they both sort, measure and sell. On other occasions, the sewing machine is put to use, to make something new out of something old, as part of the "Sasbachwalden blüht auf" (in bloom) initiative. And as if this was not already enough, there is also a fundraising concert held at the local Kurhaus in favour of the GNHA. Thus five-figure sums are raised over the winter. Wow!!

With a project proposal elaborated by us under the leadership of Robert Schönmayr, 4 Rotary clubs from Wiesbaden (RC Wiesbaden, RC Wiesbaden-Rheingau, RC Wiesbaden-Kochbrunnen and RC Wiesbaden-Nassau) and the RC Kasthamandap from Kathmandu have secured the support of the Rotarian Global Grants, New York. With the help of this international funding, we are adding 12 more schools to our MGML programme.

Internationally, we were also supported by the Lions who financed the school building made of clay bricks. Here, the clubs have teamed up under the leadership of Klaus Pusch from the LC Kappeln, Germany with the LC Brevik, Norway, the LC Falkenberg, Sweden and the LC Faaborg-Broby, Denmark.

In November, our loyal friend in Thüringen, Ulrike Drasdo, succumbed to her leukemia disease. Over the years she has raised funds for the poor people's Dispensary - this even up until recently despite her dwindling strength. In addition, Ulrike has made the GNHA the heir to her beloved house in Hohenfelden. The proceeds of the house are shared by the GNHA and the beneficiary. We bow in affection and grateful memory before this so cheerful, amiable artist and her life's achievement.

We would also like to mention those who have been in action since our last dnh-brief came out, and have been collecting donations for the GNHA through special fund-raising campaigns.

Special thanks go to the Melissantes Grammar School in Arnstadt for the sale of homemade advent wreaths.

Roland Adlich, Helga Heckel, Roland Mannschreck and Friedhelm Nunnemann held lectures and Mr. and Mrs. Rohrer and Manfred Bauer organised concerts.

We thank all those who wished to go without presents on either a happy or sad occasion or requested donations for the GNHA instead.

Our thanks here go to Werner Lang and Thomas Wiegand for donations on the occasion of their birthdays.

Furthermore, we received donations upon the death of Gudrun Gissel; here too, we would like to express our thanks and heartfelt condolences to her relatives.

Another thank you for its great support goes to the children's mission "Die Sternsinger e.V." in Aachen and to the company Trelleborg in Stuttgart.

And our special thanks are also due to our partner organisations, the Nepalhilfe Beilngries and the Nepalhilfe Aachen which continue their long-term support for our programmes.

The successes we have achieved until now have been achieved jointly and would not have been possible without your help.

Special dates and latest information

For the latest information on special dates and our projects, please see our Homepage or Facebook page:

www.dnh-stuttgart.org

[www.fb.com/Deutsch-Nepalische-Hilfsgemeinschaft-117494788313902/](https://www.facebook.com/Deutsch-Nepalische-Hilfsgemeinschaft-117494788313902/)

09.06.2018: GNHA Annual General Meeting commencing at 10 a.m.

Place: Restaurant at the Allianzstadion, Heißbrühlstr. 10, 70565 Stuttgart

10.06.2018: GNHA hike, commencing at 10 a.m.

Meeting point: Stuttgart-Uhlbach, Uhlbacher Platz outside the Weinbaumuseum (see also the special dates on our website)

09.09.2018: 4. Open-Air-Benefizjazz in Backnang, 2 - 5 p.m.

Place: Backnanger Waldheim, Wilhelm-Erlenbusch-Str. 1, 71522 Backnang

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The GNHA is a recognised, non-profit organisation.

Donations are tax-deductible. Donation receipts are issued at the end of the year, but also beforehand upon special request.

Last Notice of Exemption 27.03.2018

