

Plan Nepal visit

During our three months stay in Nepal we had the opportunity to see and observe many Plan programs and projects in different districts and communities.

Newsletter for our Friends and Sponsors

January 2012

Kamalari Project

I was glad to join a German donor group trip to the two new Kamalari districts in southwestern Nepal. The Kamalari project is sponsored by our foundation and it is important for us to know the achievements and progress.

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New School Build

The Sundaridevi school construction will be finished early March. Opening ceremony for April scheduled.

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Volunteering for Plan

We had the dream to work as volunteers for Plan and got this opportunity finally in the Plan Program Unit Makwanpur south of Kathmandu. The PU has actual more than 8870 sponsored foster child's, 2825 sponsored from Germany.

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Field Trip Stories

Various field trips gave us a much deeper insight how Plan and



their local partners are working day by day.

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Model School

You can see a difference in education in areas Plan is active. Close to Hetauda Plan developed one school as the role model in the district Makwanpur. Learn without fear is a established key program.

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Health Camp

A Plan partner held a



free health camp for a poor village affected by a landslide. 110 kids got free health checks.

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A new experience

Doing some social work by volunteering for a aid and development organization was a goal we wanted to achieve during our long term stay in Nepal.

In our last Nepal visit we wanted to do more than just a usual tourist program and intended to stay multiple months. Three objectives we had in mind we intended to achieve. We wanted to go up to the Top of the World by doing the classic 27 day Jiri to Mt. Everest Base Camp trek. The other one was related to our foundation commitment to financially support the Kamalari Program and the current school build in Makwanpur. For both projects we desired to get a much better insights to be shared with our foundation donors and supporters back home. The third was our wish that we both liked to volunteer in Nepal and wanted to share our long year working experiences, skills, know how we have gained over the years in the various special fields. Our absolute preference was to provide our skills for the Plan International Organization and therefor the children. With Plan International we work since many years, first with child sponsorships



We are very glad that we got the support from the local Plan organization to work as volunteers for Plan in Nepal. During our assignment we had a lot of opportunities to see Plans work for Nepali children in need.

and since 2010 we support Plan projects with our established Monika and Michael Hug Foundation. Plan is an international child-centered community development organization without political or religious affiliation. Plan works in Nepal since 1978 and throughout this time they have reached thousands of children at risk through their direct programs as well as through partner organization.

German donor group visit in Nepal

During our Nepal trip planning back home we realized that at the same time a German donor group was visiting Nepal as well. I was lucky to be

able to join them during their two and a half day visit of the two new Kamalari districts before I headed to the EBC trek. Due to the time overlap with our trekking schedule we could not join the district Makwanpur visit part.

Our volunteer assignment in Plan Nepal

We started our activity in the Plan country headquarter in Lalitpur. The first three days we went through reading material such as Plan Nepal's strategic five years plan, Plan Annual reports, Assessment papers, Program description details, etc.. We got a security briefing and a intro for our assignment location, the district program unit PU Makwanpur. In 1996 Plan began working in Makwanpur with the district capital Hetauda. Plan covers 29 out of 42 village development



committees (VDC) in there. Plan has six development units Health and Nutrition, Water and Environmental Sanitation, Child development and Learning, Household Economic Security, Child protection and participation and Building relationship.

During our stay with them we had the chance to see many projects initiated and implemented by this development groups in the district.

— Michael Hug



Two new Kamalari districts

I was glad having the opportunity to partly join the Plan Germany organized donor group trip to Nepal in early October 2011 — Michael Hug

Plan extended the successful Kamalari Abolition Project of Dang District into Kailali and Kanchanpu Districts in the Far-West Development Region. This just happened one year ago. I was curious to see the current situation with my German travel companions.

The Kamalari Project was the first project we supported with our foundation after establishment in March 2010. We want to contribute with our support to help the young Tharu girls that this bad, historic tradition will be totally abolished.

south west Nepal, is everyday life. At the age of six years, they have to work as domestic servants for wealthy families or landlords. Their work day is 16 to 18 hours and they are unprotected and often exposed to violence and abuse. Plan advocates the abolition of this practice and has been rid of thousands of girls from her employment. The rescued girls are encouraged to return to their families to start or continue their education. For older girls and young woman Plan provides job training

The first district Dang is already Kamalari free and we could see now in the two new districts many activities Plan is pursuing to repeat this success. The learning in the past are considered and therefor the progress right now is much faster than previous. In several villages we met hundreds of former Kamalari girls. They shared with us their past and now their new life either getting a school education or just started their own small business. We have seen activities how Plan helps families to increase their income to avoid sending their little girls for annual 50 \$ to foreign people. One of the visit highlights was a small ceremony to celebrate with a group of about 25 girls their successful completion of grade 10. Surprisingly all of them decided to continue their education till grade 13 and some aim to go for a nurse, doctor or journalist study. From the girls I have seen a lot of pride, self confidence, drive and energy, which I guess is different to the past. At the end of the day we all summarized that the money from our foundations changed something sustainable.

We missed to see personally the new Sundaridevi School build

Due to our fix parallel Everest Base Camp trekking schedule we unfortunately could not attend the second part of the German donor group travel program in the district Makwanpur. Beside other projects the group visited the build of the Sundaridevi school. The investment is shared between the community and the Plan fund out of the project donations which includes as well our



support out of our foundation. We heard later that the build is on track

and will be finished beginning of March 2012. The children can use the new extended school in summer-time. The attached hostel for girls will be ready too. The visit was framed by a great dance and music performance. More than 2000 locals welcomed the donor group which is a strong sign of gratitude.

Huge progress with the Plan Kamalari project. The Dang district is already Kamalari free and gives hope for the unfree Kamalari girls in the other two new program districts.

Although child labor in Nepal is officially banned since 2000, the exploitation of many girls of the Tharu, a landless ethnic group in

and gives them support for business start-ups such as tea stalls or shops.

INTRO TO OUR VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT

During our Plan Nepal volunteer assignment we had a lot of opportunities to join the Plan Makwanpur PU team to see and review the various program activities in the district villages. This first hand information gave us a much better understanding how Plan works in the field with their own staff and the collaborative support of the communities, government agencies and local NGO partners. These are complex relationships with clear roles and responsibilities. We observed that audit proven business controls are in place and could see as well how careful our financial program support is used for the beneficial changes for the kids, their families and communities. An additional outcome was that we could gather information on the base which we can share with our donors of our "Monika and Michael Hug Foundation" which supports directly some Plan projects in Nepal.

Plan puts the children at the center of their work. They call their approach child centered community development. Key focus areas are: Improve health, particularly that of mothers and newborns, the disabled, and address HIV/AIDS, Increase access to and improve the quality of basic education (up to grade 8), Increase household income, Promote child protection and participation.



Michael Hug

Makwanpur district map



Woman empowerment program WEP

My first field trip took me to the village of Padampokhari which is not far from the Makwanpur district capital Hetauda. Plan initiated a media interview to raise awareness of this extraordinary achievement and program success.

The trip was related to the **Plan Women empowerment program WEP** in the community Padampokhari. Here a Plan initiated media interview took place with Laxmi, the leader of a the Mahila Milan Saving & Credit Co-operative which was recently rated as the best micro-finance organization in Nepal.



This woman co-operative was established 10 years ago with a lot of initial financial and training support from Plan. The co-operative is owned by many community women who own the shares of the banking co-operative.

The meeting took place in her office building in Padampokhari. This new building was build and financed by the woman co-operative and needed these days little support from Plan. The bank



switch wall is covered by many awards and recognitions and the interior looks nice and clean like in European banks. I had as well the opportunity to exchange with some women who run and manage the co-operative. It was visible that they understand their business and know what they are talking about. I was told by Plan host Anil that these empowered women faced a major transformation since the start and today in terms of independence, self-confidence, pride and educational business background.

The interview was held in Nepali so I couldn't follow the conversation.

Plan Training for community volunteers

The next trip took us for two days to the Palung area, a three hours jeep drive north of Hetauda. Here I could observe multiple program activities Plan is forcing in this region.

A refresher Training was held by Plan sponsorship coordinator Sangita Thapa for local community facilitators. This is a small part of the **Community Managed Sponsorship** program. The Training



was all about how to efficiently gather the Sponsorship information from the families about the sponsored child which will later be translated

and transmitted to the sponsor of the child by letter. These local facilitators are recruited out of PEACE, Society for Poverty Elimination and Empowerment, one of the local NGO's here. They all are volunteers, take their assignment serious and have the potential to be future community leaders. Totally they collect the information for more than 500 sponsored children. The Training took place in their local office which has as well a Radio Broadcasting studio for children. Their Radio program will be produced and recorded



here and later handed over to the nearby local FM station for broadcasting. The children talk about their themes like child rights, school situation, sanitation, about Plans work or water usage. Plan supported this setup with training for the children how to produce Radio streams and financed part of the studio audio mixer.

Finance education for Plan field staff

On many occasions we observed how serious and careful Plan employees use the sponsor money in their daily work. Appropriate business controls are in place to ensure no waste of a single dollar spend.

To efficiently use the time program reviews often happened in parallel. I partly joined a **financial orientation program** with sharing points to the



Community based leaders and local Plan staffs how to implement controls and measures for funded plan projects to ensure full, audit proven traceability of the investments. Plans PU Finance Coordinator Shreedhar Bhandar has shared 15 Points and discussed them with the attendances.

The finance coordinator reported in the evening about a supported start up review which runs under the program **Start to improve your business, SIYB**. He looked at a new Photo studio run by a woman who got finance support for a small photo printer. Her business is one year old and is improving day by day. She also has a Plan sponsored child.

In the afternoon he also was interviewed by the local radio station about Plan's work, activities and programs. In the evening the half an hour interview was broadcasted by the FM station.

Business Trips sometimes add fun

Next morning on the way to another review place we passed the Daman view tower on a 2433 meter pass in the central Makwanpur mountains. I asked for a sightseeing stop for some minutes. From here you have a beautiful view on the **Himalaya range of Lang Tang.**



Agricultural Business Training

To help the families to increase the household income is a major aim of Plan. The program is called Livelihood and targets woman, the landless, disadvantaged households including Dalits. Various sub-programs are vegetable farming, agro-forestry, fishery, livestock and microfinance.

Our next destination was a government nursery where a Plan sponsored training took place on **Agricultural Business**. Training content was mainly related from an agricultural business point of view with questions like How to expand the agricultural business? Which kind of other possibilities do exist? How to bring the goods to the customers? This was as well a showcase how Plan collaborative works with a local partner NGO. The NGO has the expertise and provides the training in this case and Plan funds the initiative.



BLOP Program Review from Management

Plan has as well field staff who lives in the development communities. Frequent reviews by PU management or formal Plan audits ensures that the Program and/or Projects are aligned and kept on plan and target as defined.



The next stop was in the Bajrabarahi village for a purely internal Plan review. This is a frequent, formal **BLOP program** (better life option program) review with the local Branch officer and Development Coordinators DC's, which live close to the supported communities. Random samplings on Balance sheets, bill checks, book keeping, audit reports and program review documents took place. In addition PU Management gave guidelines how to improve current work and bookkeeping practice. Even here the direction goes towards paperless offices with future balance sheets in Excel and electronic data transfer to PU office for consolidation, check and review.



Plan Branch office visit in Markhu

In the 2426 sq.km district Makwanpur Plan has three BO branch offices Markhu, Bhimpedi and Manahari. Out of every BO multiple development communities VDC's, with several projects each, are supported.

Our last stop before we returned back to the Plan Program Unit headquarter in Hetauda was one of the three Branch Offices in Markhu. Out of this Branch Office eleven Village Development Communities VDC's are supported. Markhu is nicely located on a big reservoir with the biggest hydropower plant (60 MW) in Makwanpur. In this village Plan sponsored the school, the health center and the initial setup of the woman's cooperative. In a local small restaurant and tea stall I met the proprietress. She used as well a 10.000 Rupees (~100 Euro) loan from the woman cooperative's micro finance program to expand their business and therefor the family income.



Meet again with Manjil

Manjil was our foster child for eleven years. He is now older than eighteen years where the official relationship with the Plan sponsorship ends. He and his family lives in a village close to Hetauda, the Program Unit headquarter.

We met Manjil our Nepalese foster child the first time face to face in April 2009. The one day visit at his home was so hearty and we will never forget this extraordinary day we spent with his family. So it was very important for us to meet him and his mother Mandira again being so close to his home. Now he is above eighteen and therefor graduated from the Plan sponsorship program. We are glad to see how well he has developed. Now he joins the MMC college in Hetauda and drives back a long way home every day. Since the Plan sponsorship letter transfer discontinued we exchanged e-mail addresses so we can stay directly in touch for many more years.





Plan makes a difference

We have seen schools with and without Plan engagement and support.

A school in a rural area Plan is not present with their education program support



The illiteracy rate in Nepal is very high in remote rural areas. Despite free primary schools, many children do not attend school. Due to lack of money, many families are dependent on the assistance of their children on the field or in the house. Boys are preferred for the education before the girls. On many occasions we saw schools in Nepal under really bad conditions. Small and dark classrooms, roofs with holes, no furniture are typical. No toilets and no water access leads to open defecation and health problems. Corporal punishment, bullying and sexual violence is a widespread practice.

➔ A huge deficit in the quality of child friendly education and in the development of capacity.



We visited a Plan sponsored school near Hetauda which is perceived as a model school for the 253 children, teachers, community and government officials. A community volunteer and the head teacher told us the development steps of the school and Plans support. We learned that the school board shares their best in class approach with other communities as well. We have been impressed by the nice learning setup for children up to grade 5. The children are contributing with their child club on school matters and they even have the duty to clean the toilets and playground.

Small classrooms with holes in the roof which is a real issue in the monsoon season.



On country level Plan has the goal that children, especially marginalized girls, realize their right to education in an appropriate, good-quality learning environment that is safe, sound and child-friendly. This goal has led to following examples of results and achievements in 2010 only: In collaboration with district education offices, public schools and its partners, Plan helped to build 36 new school buildings, repair 31 schools and construct toilets in three schools. Nearly 8,000 additional students got the chance to study in well constructed classrooms, and 89 schools got new furniture. 46,850 children received scholarships from Plan so that they could continue their education. The scholarship covers the cost of the school fee, stationary, books and uniforms.



No sanitation infrastructure keeps many children away from school, especially girls.



Through local partners Plan oriented and worked with school management committees, relevant line agencies, teachers, and school children to implement the School Health, Hygiene and Sanitation Program. Plan partners provided technical support and facilitated the implementation of the program in the schools and early childhood and care centers. These institutions constructed or upgraded gender-, child- and disabled-friendly toilets and hand washing facilities, safe water supply facilities and school gardens. Plan runs the second year the campaign Learn Without Fear with a remarkable impact on raising awareness about and taking actions against school violence. They urge the the government to take decisive actions to change this common practice.



At the same time Monika did as well field trips with other Plan staff to different places and different project focuses in this district area.



The Baise health post, a positive example

Makwanpur villages are very distributed. Easier access to health services is a important goal for the Program unit. Establishing health post is one of many strategies.

The first stop was at the Plan sponsored **Health Post** in the Baise village. Monika was impressed about the actual state of the center. Good equipment and very well managed by the health worker and the two midwives who share this duty. They have generously premises for a health check room, a delivery room with 2 places for newborns, separate rooms to store materials, one to store medicine and an office room. For patients they have a small, special room for wound dressing. In addition they have a relaxation room to be used for 24 hours for mother and the newborn. During our visit time a woman was in the delivery room and the place for the coming newborn was very well prepared. This center is very well organized and careful handling could be observed. The equipment for the newborn first aid is very good. To deliver in such a nice center is the best insurance for a successful delivery with fewer problems. The government contribution is the handout of free medicaments to all patients.

BLOP support

Income increase and maintenance especially for extremely disadvantaged ethnic groups is as well a focus of the program unit.

We did a short stop at a project for young woman. Out of the 4 sewing machines they got two from Plan to support their business startup. One is a special one with interlock capabilities. This small sewing business sells as well some fashion



accessories. The monthly income is between 700 and 1000 Rupees for each of the 4 woman (about 7 - 10 Euro), which is a good income in comparison.

In short I saw as well a new Plan agriculture pilot project in this area. They supported the build of a new kind of livestock stable for feeding and collecting the dung more efficiently. The fluid dung will be diluted and later be used as biological insect killer in the fields.

Water project in the village Nibuwaan

Clean Water delivery is elemental for better health and living conditions. Plan helps the communities to constantly improve this basic need.

Our next visit stop was the Nibuwaan **water project**. Plan sponsored in the catchment area 4 water tanks in different sizes up to 10.000 liter distributed over a wide area and the water pipes. The water tanks are distributing the water to 44 households with tap water. The maintenance of the whole system is done by community volunteers and every 3 months analyzed for sterility. They showed me in detail how they do this check to ensure save water to the community.



During the stay Monika met two girls with sponsorships from UK and Canada. Another 13 year old girl was insured on her head. After my wound check we advised her to show up in the Baise health post for the right treatment.

I met as well a 16 year old girl who recently participated in the first Plan initiated information event in this community about HIV infection and the risks. Additional events are planned for next year to raise more awareness for many more people in other communities.

Woman and Pregnant Group Sisneri

The neonatal mortality rate is still to high and has not positively changed in recent years. To address this issue is within Plan Nepal at high priority and addressed in the country strategy.

After a long and sometimes rough jeep drive we visited the **Woman and Pregnant Group** from Sisneri. This was a bigger event with many more participants. Two health coordinators from the local NGO partner organization CCDN branch office in Hetauda, Plans Sisneri community volunteer Lolita Vaskota, a doctor from Hetauda, two Nurses/Midwives in charge and the Plan PU Technical Coordinator for Health Chandra Mani.

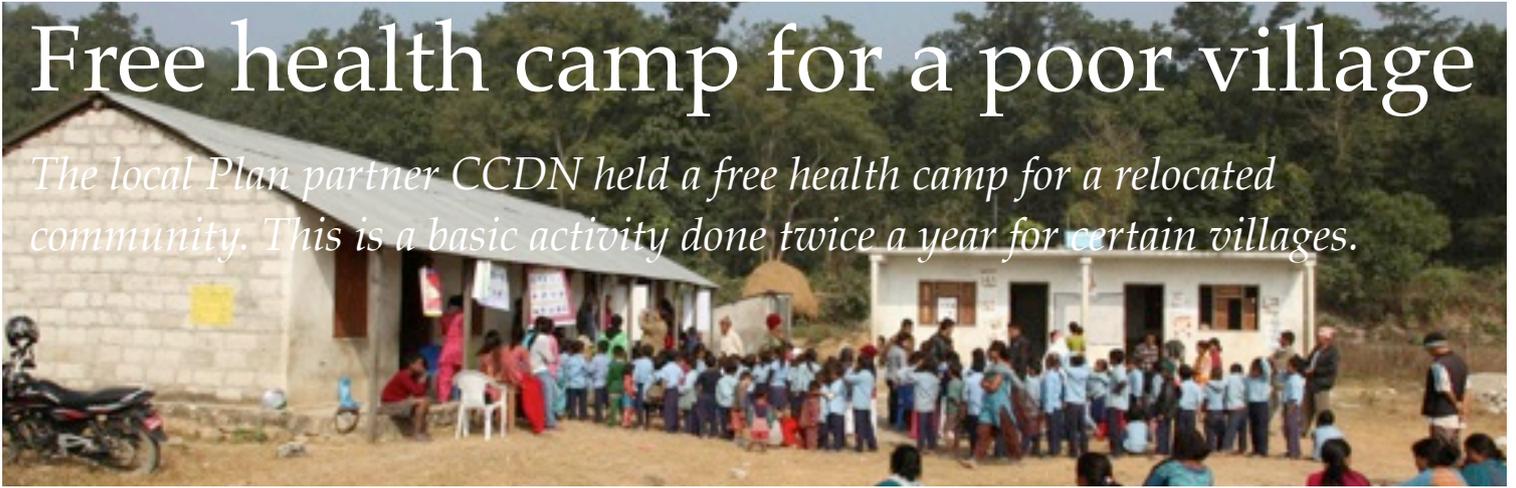


At first we inspected the infirmary which was not at the level I have seen in Baise. The premises and equipment is very basic, lacks important things and needs more improvements. Plan concluded this already and they have planned to invest in the coming year. In the last three months they had 11 deliveries in the health center. One newborn did on jaundice. For more than three hours the health coordinators and doctor held an educational info meeting for the present woman of the Woman and Pregnant group about pregnancy, the related risks and dangers for the newborn. They got as well education on nursing, vaccinations during babyhood. In the last five years the neonatal mortality couldn't be reduced, she is still at 33 out of 1000 births. This is the reason to strengthen the awareness through trainings and to improve the infrastructure and methods before and after the delivery.

— Monika Hug

Free health camp for a poor village

The local Plan partner CCDN held a free health camp for a relocated community. This is a basic activity done twice a year for certain villages.



Dentist check for more than 100 kids



On another day we both had the chance to participate in a one day Health Camp which is provided by NGO's to communities in rural areas. We joined the local branch staff from the Center for Community Development Nepal, CCDN which is as well a partner Plan is working in several development programs across the country. We drove 33 km south of Hetauda to visit the village Manhari Ramantar which was established 5 years ago after the villagers lost their previous village in a huge landslide. These landless people are very poor and require all basic development efforts and help. Their three classroom school was used for this day as a health center. Three doctors from Hetauda hospital provided a dental and general health checkup in parallel to shorten the long waiting line.

General health check for all residents



One special room was setup to check the disables only and one room was used to hand out the medicine with the appropriate usage instructions. It seems all people from the community showed up, from the small child till the oldest in the age of 88. 110 children fewer than eighteen, out of the total 235 patients, have been checked. Almost all kids have dental problems due to the lack of knowledge of dental care. I was told that they started already with a special education program in the school to educate the children as well on sanitation to prevent this health issue in the future. Many volunteers from the community, Plan staff and Monika supported the organizing CCDN staff and the doctors to make this a successful and very helpful day for all the present.

Clean water is key for a better health



All health services are free for the people including the medicine which was handed out.

The people often showed their gratitude which was very heartwarming for us.

Disabled get special awareness

Another health program visit from Monika has led to the community Bhimpheedi. Here a Plan program is in place for **adult disables** in cooperation with the local partner CCDN. She did a short visit in the community health post which is a primary health center with a full-time doctor and a health worker. The young doctor voluntarily works for two years in this health post. She had no chance to have a closer look to the health post condition due to our hurry to the event for the handicapped. The event took place in the previous Plan Makwanpur PU office before they moved to Hetauda. After the usual intro rounds and speeches Dr. Sen, the PU Program Unit Manager, personally handed over different kind of crutches to 4 disabled community members. To two blind persons he provided blind stocks. Monika could see how lucky all these handicapped people went for the support they got and the lightening of her difficult life.



There is a lot to explore in Nepal

Being in Nepal provides you a lot of different opportunities beside a social engagement. Sightseeing a number of UNESCO world heritage sites in the Kathmandu valley, mountain trekking are activities you should not miss.



Newsletter for our Friends and Sponsors

January 2012

A hearty Thank You to Plan Nepal

A special thank you to all Plan employees in Nepal who hosted us so nicely that we always felt like being in a family. It was very hard and emotional to say goodbye after our three months stay in Nepal and our rewarding volunteer assignment with Plan. We want to mention five individuals who provided us special support. Shree Ram K.C. and Krishna Ghimire from the Plan Nepal headquarter in Lalitpur for our Volunteer assignment approval and introduction in Plan Nepal. Dr. Chandra Kumar Sen, Anil Deoja and Chandra Mani Dhungana from the Makwanpur Program Office for hosting us so nicely and made our stay in Hetauda comfortable and feel like home.



All Plan team members made it happen that we could see a very broad number of projects and activities Plan Nepal is engaged in. Our assignment gave us the opportunity to have

a much more detailed view how Plan is working and cooperating in the field. Last not least we saw what Plan has achieved so far there all of the employees can be proud of. We saw as well how this is perceived by the Nepalese people and how they showed their gratitude. Many things we only have known from paper we have seen now in reality and got a much better understanding. This is far more we have known before through our foster child visits in different countries. To have this information's is very helpful for us to share and spread this to our friends and donors and even to the public who don't know about the work of Plan International. We have definitely the prove that all the financial fund we provide through our foundation to the Nepal Plan projects are in good hands. It is carefully used to initialize positive change and child focused developments in the communities. We have seen how the people in need contribute and benefit, especially the children.

We hope we will meet again and wish you all the best supporting the children in Nepal.

Foundation CEO

Michael Hug
Monika Hug

Donation Account

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