

# Fondazione Lama Gangchen Help in Action onlus

*Humanitarian aid for Himalayan communities*



## Report 2020

## GENERAL NEWS

2020 was a difficult year for everyone, in every part of the world. Lockdowns caused by the Covid emergency closed the borders of many countries, including Nepal. However, thanks to our contacts and the widespread network of local volunteers in Nepal, it has been possible for us to continue our activities and send aid, even if our visits from Italy were necessarily postponed.

Lockdown was imposed in Nepal at the beginning of March 2020, with the closure of all schools. Many families left the capital Kathmandu to travel to their villages of origin, for fear of contracting the virus in the overcrowded city and because there was no work. The Covid emergency, with the isolation of the country, has dealt a severe blow to tourism, one of the pillars of the country's economy, and to many other activities: handicrafts, hospitality, catering, construction. This has created desperate situations for those who survive on the income from daily jobs, making the situation of a large segment of the population that already lived in absolute poverty even more dramatic.

## EDUCATION GANGCHEN SAMLING SCHOOL

Thanks to the long-distance adoptions programme, the Foundation currently helps 330 poor students, from kindergarten to the 10th grade, in Gangchen Samling School in Kathmandu.



The final Secondary School Exam (SEE) due to take place in March 2020 was cancelled and students were given grades based on their coursework over the year and the results of previous term exams. As in previous years - in which the students completed the state exams - the grades were very high due to the high quality of the teaching. 14 of the 16 graduate students have gone on to further education.

In September, when the restrictions were partially relaxed, a short ceremony was held at the school to congratulate and celebrate the success of the students.



## REMOTE LEARNING



Fondazione Lama Gangchen  
Help in Action onlus



*How important has smart working and online learning been to you and your family during the pandemic?*

Nepal continues to be on lockdown. The government has requested schools to provide online classes for students but unfortunately many, especially from the poorest families, have no access to the devices they need to participate in the classes.

### Can you help?

The cheapest smartphone in Nepal costs approximately €40. Please think about making a donation, of any amount, so we can provide as many phones as possible to the students who need them. It is a really meaningful gift!

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paypal: helpinaction@gangchen.it

### REMOTE LEARNING:

*Helping the children in Nepal get back to their studies*



In September, after months of lockdown, the Nepalese government requested schools to provide online classes for students and provided low-cost internet packages for schools. However, most of our students lacked the necessary devices to access online classes.

The Foundation quickly launched a fundraiser to equip students of Gangchen School, and in particular the children of Jorpati orphanage, with smartphones, an essential aid for the continuation of their studies. Precedence was given to students studying for state exams, while for others sharing a phone with siblings or friends from other classes was inevitable.

Many parents and young children initially had some difficulties with this new technology, but slowly-slowly the online classes began to work well. We were able to receive directly from the school messages and photos of children engaged in remote lessons for their sponsors.

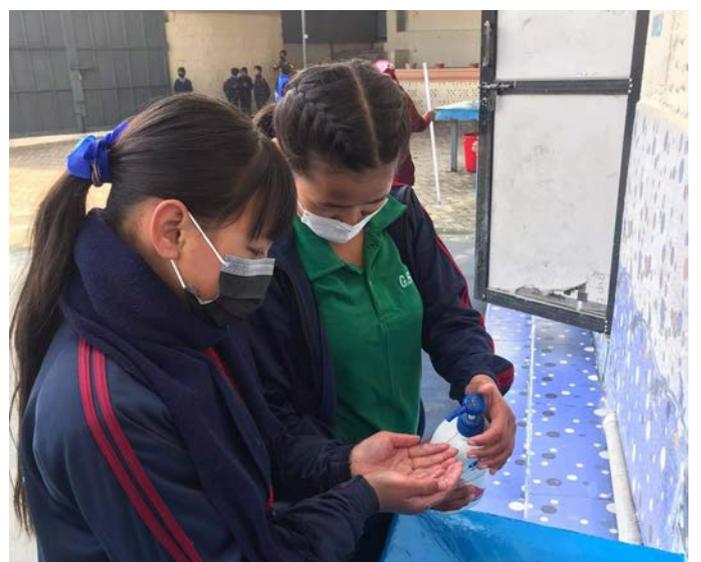
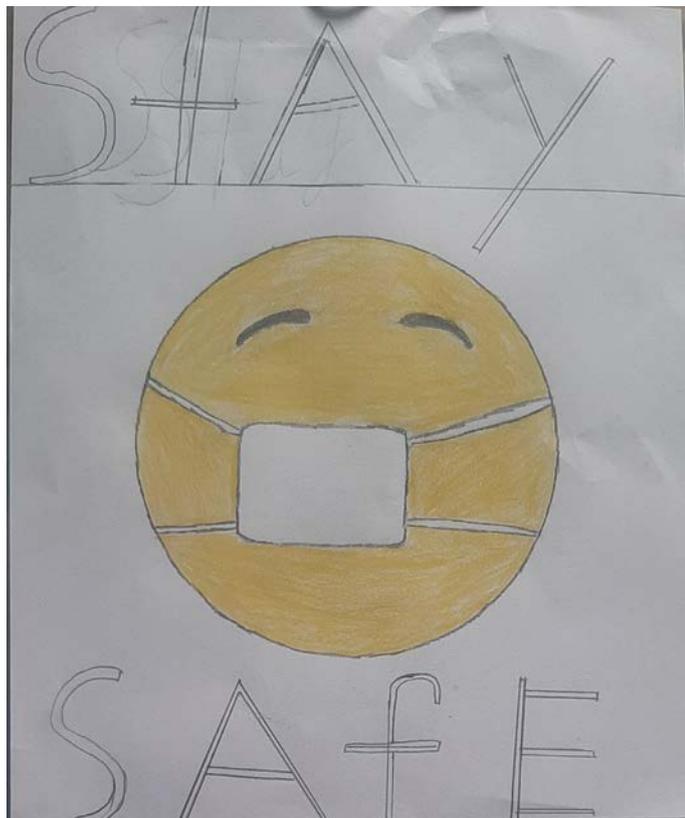
The school also managed to continue dance, music and art lessons online.

After months of isolation, the children were delighted to attend online classes, although many told their sponsors that it wasn't quite the same as attending school!

A class 6 student wrote the following message to his sponsor:

*Dear sponsor, I hope you and your family are doing well and keeping safe from this dangerous virus (COVID 19). Even me and my family are doing our best to stay away from this virus. I love my school and missing too. Which has not open because of the virus. How is the situation there? In Nepal it becoming worse day by day as the cases are increasing rapidly. We are studying through our online classes and it is going good. I really miss the school environment. I would like to thank you for supporting me even during this pandemic. Me and my parents are very thankful towards you. Please take care of yourself and your family and stay safe. I will pray to God for you and your family's good health. I would like to thank you once again for the support you have showered upon me. Your loving son*

*Class : 6 'A'*



In January 2021 the schools were reopened for a short period but, unfortunately, they had to close again due to the arrival of the new Covid variant from neighbouring India.



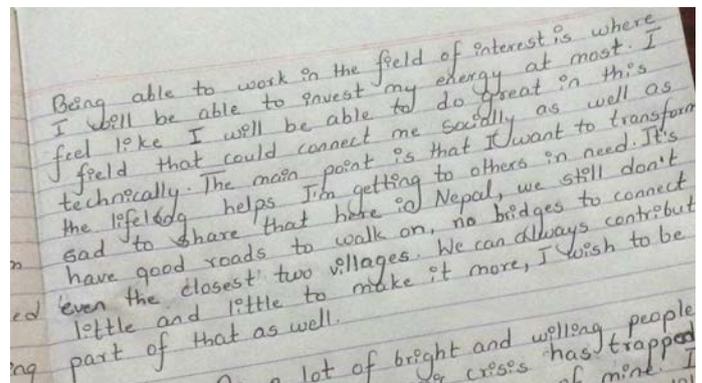
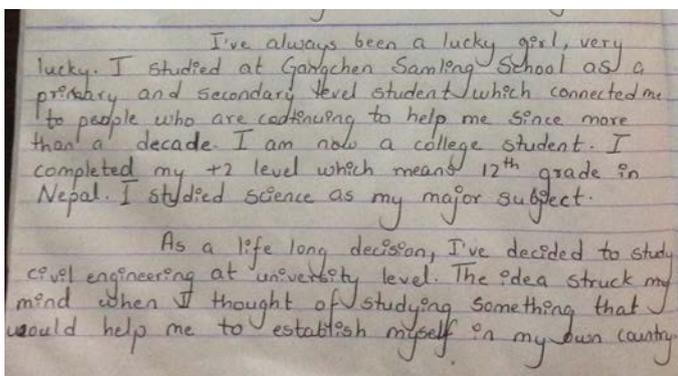
The support of the Foundation allowed Gangchen School to continue to pay staff during the pandemic (about 43 people including teachers, collaborators and administrators). This meant they could organise in the best way possible online lessons for the students in every class. Many children from other schools - especially elementary and middle schools - were unfortunately not so lucky, and for them their studies were abruptly interrupted. The school staff did an amazing job of keeping in touch with as many students and families as possible, making sure of their safety and organising help for those in need.

## FURTHER EDUCATION

For the academic year 2020-2021 we are supporting 70 students in further education.

Many of these young adults have gone through great difficulties to reach this level of education, and most of them choose courses that they hope will lead to employment: business studies, social work, hotel management, teaching... some even have the dream of becoming an engineer or lawyer, but these university courses are much more expensive.

This year the help of the Foundation, for the course fees for these students, reached directly the colleges where they are enrolled, allowing them to continue their studies.



## After the orphanage...

Three of our students, who were previously living in an orphanage, having reached the age of majority, have now started their life outside the structure. Thanks to the generous help of their sponsors and of the local Help in Action and orphanage staff, we were able to help them in this delicate transition. Two are now in a student hostel, the third has a room in shared accommodation. They are coping well with the change and are supported by our local volunteers.



## EMERGENCY FUND

Thanks to our friends in Nepal and the generosity of sponsors, this year the Foundation's help also reached a number of particularly vulnerable people: the elderly, the infirm, the disabled, who were alone and in extremely difficult conditions due to the pandemic.





## MONASTERIES

The exciting news of 2020 was the start of the construction of a new school building at Sed Gyued Monastery in Kathmandu, thanks to the approval of the project by the 8x1000 of the Italian Buddhist Union. The building work began in October, at the end of the monsoon period. The Monastery continues to accept requests for admission from orphaned children or from families who cannot care for their sons: there are now 95 young monks under the age of 16 and there is a desperate need for new classrooms. The construction of another building, to be used as a hostel, is still to begin at Phelgyeling Monastery, which is home to around 50 children from difficult circumstances.

All the details of the project can be seen on our website: <http://www.helpinaction.net/en/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/MONASTERY-PUB-EN.pdf>



Once again in 2020, the long distance adoption of young monks has allowed the monasteries to cover the costs for some of their basic needs and education. About 80 children are adopted in Sed Gyued and Phelgyeling monasteries in Kathmandu, and in that of Serpom in South India.



*Con il contributo 8x1000  
dell'unione buddhista italiana*

*This project is co-financed (70%) by the Italian Buddhist Union, the Foundation is raising funds for the remaining 30% of the costs.*

## WATER PROJECT CHAPAKHORI VILLAGE NEPAL

The water fountains in the village are dry, especially after the earthquake that hit Nepal in 2015. To collect water the villagers have to make a steep descent to reach a small spring, and then go up again carrying the heavy water cans on their shoulders.

In 2019, new water points were identified and drilled at the base of the hill on which the village stands. Early in 2020, the purchases in Italy of the machinery necessary for the second phase of the project were made - the pumping system that will send the water up to the village. The shipment arrived in Nepal in early March, fortunately just days before the lockdown.



For now it is not possible to travel to Nepal due to the lockdown. For the installation of the pumps we are waiting until our engineer and geologist can safely reach the village. For monitoring the water situation we are in contact with the representatives of the village and with the company that carried out the work. The second phase will be completed as soon as possible.

 *Con il contributo 8x1000  
dell'unione buddhista italiana*

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## COVID CONTRIBUTION

To offer our contribution to the Covid emergency in Italy, we participated in a fundraiser of the Kunpen Lama Gangchen Association in favour of Verbania Hospital for the purchase of a cardiotocograph machine. This machine allows pregnant women to be monitored without having to access the hospital, giving greater protection to both the mother and child during the Covid emergency.



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*Thank you!*