



HIMALAYAN LIFE



Protecting, nurturing and educating children in the Himalayas, thereby making a lasting transformative impact on individual lives, families and the community at large.

ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/21

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

“We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.”

John Dewey, Educator & Philosopher

Three words come to mind as I am reflecting on the experience of the pandemic: change, gratitude, relevance.

All of us have had to embrace **CHANGE** throughout the pandemic. Social distancing, home-office, zoom-meetings, to name just a few. For our work in the Himalayas, rapid change has been the one constant on which we could rely! The various forms of lockdowns and circuit breakers called for creative ways of adapting our programs and home care for children.

In Chitwan in southern Nepal, we completely pivoted from sports and adventure camps for kids in marginalized jungle communities to providing relief to the very same communities. It only had taken Covid weeks to penetrate the thin veneer of people’s livelihood with unemployment, to the point of families going hungry.

GRATITUDE: Faced with the pandemic early last year, the question did enter my mind whether as a charity we were going to get through this. Would there still be resources for our programs of rescuing, protecting, nurturing and educating children in the Himalayas, when people were facing hardship and unemployment at home? I am humbled by how you answered this question with a resounding YES. Your generous giving has allowed us to continue our work of building a future for children in the Himalayas. With your help, we have also been able to come alongside hundreds of families and individuals in dire need, as the pandemic pulled the rug out from underneath their feet.

As this tidal wave of new poverty is sweeping over South Asia due to Covid, can we – a small North Vancouver based charity – even make a difference? In light of the millions in need, is our work **RELEVANT**? The famous starfish story comes to mind. During a spring tide, thousands of starfishes were being swept onto the shore. A girl began picking up one starfish after another, throwing them back into the water. A passerby remarked that the effort was quite pointless, as there were so many and it didn’t really make a difference. The girl paused, looked at the man, picked up the next starfish and chucked it into the ocean, saying, “well, it certainly made a difference to that one.”

Thank you for helping us make a difference to girls and boys in the Himalayas!



Daniel Burgi,

CEO



PHOTOGRAPHY

Most photos courtesy of **Peter Schaeublin** (www.peterschaeublin.com) and **Christian Habermeier** (www.christianhabermeier.com).
Cover photo by **Christian**.

COVID-19 REALITIES

The pandemic has severely impacted South Asia, both as a health crisis and even more in its economic implications. Millions of migrant workers throughout the region have lost their jobs and livelihood, and in the absence of any government assistance, the onslaught of poverty has been devastating.

The communities in the southern jungles of Nepal have been hit particularly hard by this crisis, where many families depend on the income from labour work abroad.

At Himalayan Life, we have focused on these communities with our relief efforts.



16 jungle communities served by relief.



464 families received relief packages, benefitting 1,657 children and 911 adults.



24,000 pounds of rice distributed (plus oil, salt, soy beans).



4,160 pre-packaged meals delivered to children in the streets in Chitwan.



\$10,205 CAD total invested in the relief efforts.





ASHA: A LIFE TURNED AROUND

by Salomi Sherpa

Asha* and her three siblings were raised by their father in the Yangri Valley. Last summer, when Asha was just 14, her father was burdened by the need to feed his family and decided to marry her off. Asha had limited education and had to walk an entire day to get to school. Once the pandemic hit, and she was married, her father no longer allowed her to attend.

Teachers at the Yangri Academic Centre (YAC) first met Asha when they visited her village as part of the new Distributed Teaching program put in place to ensure

that education continued despite the pandemic. In November, YAC received the fantastic news that the school could re-open again! Upon hearing this, Asha's father requested that the YAC team enroll his two sons. Knowing that Asha had been denied an education because of her marriage and that her younger sister had never gone to school, the YAC staff urged their father to send the girls too.

When the father arrived at the school three days later with all of his children, including both girls, the YAC team was ecstatic!



He agreed to allow Asha to spend the next three years at YAC. Asha is now in Grade 4 and has the chance to get at least a basic education. She loves to learn and is eager to understand the things around her. Her education and the safe environment of the school are allowing her to grow and she is thriving.

While we might take education for granted, there are still many places around the world where the importance of schooling, particularly for girls, is not commonplace. At YAC, we strive to serve children, especially girls like Asha, in a way that shares the transformative work of education with their communities.



*Name changed for privacy

BREAKING CHAINS AND BRINGING CHANGE



“We all know that Nepal is a male-dominated society. That is why we must break the chain and bring change.”
Aksha Shremal, Street Children Shelter Program Manager.

Children generally bear more than their fair share of hardship in the socio-economically marginalized communities in the Himalayas. They do not experience the level of care they would need for developing in healthy ways and have to either fend for themselves or join the workforce at a very early age. Across South Asia, girls are particularly vulnerable. They are more likely to drop out of school early to be given away in marriage or help out with domestic chores. Even worse, they are at greater risk of falling victim to trafficking and sexual exploitation.

In light of this reality and with the hope of bringing change, Himalayan Life created the Street-2-School-Girls' Home (S2S) in July 2020. Presently, 13 girls find protection and care in the hands of our passionate staff.

There has already been much transformation as a result of the girls experiencing peace and safety in their new home, some of them for the first time in their life. Over the next three years, we plan to take in 11 more girls at our current S2S Girls' Home, and even open a second home to serve another 24 girls from the surrounding slum community and border towns.

Lifting these girls out of their desperate circumstances is not just a win for women in a male-dominated society, but is transformative for families and communities. Breaking the cycle of child marriage and trafficking, in conjunction with education, affords girls a brighter future. Our desire for the girls at the S2S homes is to grow into confident, thoughtful and responsible young women who are leaders and role models for girls in their communities.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Financials for Himalayan Life Internationally for 2020/21

International Revenue

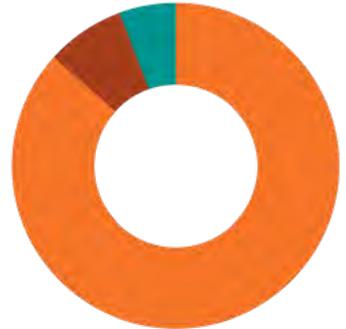
CANADA	\$795,328
SWITZERLAND	\$874,006
TOTAL	\$1,669,334



International Expenses

(Combined for Canada and Switzerland)

PROGRAMS	\$1,434,917	(86.5%)
ADMINISTRATION	\$132,452	(8%)
FUNDRAISING	\$92,033	(5.5%)
TOTAL	\$1,659,402	



*All funds are in Canadian dollars.
Detailed audit statements are available upon request.

THANK YOU

On behalf of the nearly 2,000 children whose lives have been impacted by Himalayan Life in the past year, including providing 382,000 nutritious meals, we wish to thank **YOU** for **YOUR** care, trust and continued support. Thank you also on behalf of our 140 Nepalese staff members, who deeply care and value the opportunity to play an active role in the

transformation of children in the Himalayas. **YOUR** financial giving is fuelling this ongoing transformation. **YOU** are making a difference, and with **YOUR** help, we are committed to giving our utmost to continue rescuing, protecting, nurturing, and educating kids in the Himalayas.



LOOKING AHEAD

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2021-2024

FOCUS ON TRANSFORMATION

- Rescue and protect street children and abandoned children
- Nurture street children through safe homes and holistic rehab programs
- Organize holistic sport and day camp programs
- Facilitate vocational training and employment for marginalized individuals

1

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

- Expand the school in Yangri by adding a Secondary School Campus
- Increase the academic standard through a variety of avenues
- Create scholarship programs for the academically gifted and socio-economically marginalized

2

FOCUS ON GIRLS AND WOMEN

- Create a girls specific scholarship program
- Significantly increase capacity in our Girls Homes
- Create training opportunities for women in leadership

3

FOCUS ON INCREASED VISIBILITY

- Increase the reach and awareness through public events and social media
- Broaden the scope of our social enterprise in plastic recycling by creating partnerships
- Offer vision and adventure trips to the Himalayas

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OUR BOARD

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Interserve Canada Medical Advisor

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HIMALAYAN LIFE

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