



UPDATES FROM SPRING 2021



LET'S MAKE 2021 A BETTER YEAR FOR CHILDREN OF THE MOUNTAIN

SPRING INTO ACTION

NAMASTE

Welcome to our Spring issue of Children of The Mountain news. It is now 12 years since John Matthews established Children of The Mountain and the challenges ahead are as daunting as at any moment during that time. The global pandemic has meant that the schools in Nepal were closed for 6 months during 2020 and the impact on the children has been profound. In early 2021 we carried out a literacy assessment of over one thousand of the children we support, and on average, they are now one year (or more) behind where they should be. At the same time, our ability to raise funds has been dramatically affected and our income over the last year is down by 45%. However, we are determined to continue our expansion and to help give these children in Nepal the life opportunities they deserve. Thank you for your continued support of COTM. With your help we will change lives – forever.

Mike Smith, Chairman



OUR IMPACT



Since 2009 we have raised and invested over £900,000 into early years education in rural Nepal.



We have built over 50 classrooms across 4 regions and support 34 schools.



Over 1,000 students are currently benefiting from our early years education programmes.



Over 250 attend our 20 kindergartens daily.

GIFT AN EDUCATION

BECOME A FRIEND OF COTM

We would like to thank all those who have donated to the Friends of Children of The Mountain campaign, in response to the need to raise funds throughout Lockdown, when our usual fundraising events could not take place.

Thanks to you, we are still here for the children and with your continued support, we have adapted and are ready to continue this crucial work when children and families need it more than ever.

If you would like to support us regularly every month, we are looking to build this family of friends of Children of The Mountain and welcome your involvement.

JOIN FRIENDS OF CHILDREN OF THE MOUNTAIN TODAY!

www.childrenofthemountain.org/donate

100% of your donation goes to giving these children a better future. A little goes a long way.



SUPPORT US BY GIVING MONTHLY DONATIONS

We welcome your support with this campaign by giving regularly, a small amount each month helps us to provide the education and the future these children need.



£5 P/M

HELPS TO BUY ESSENTIAL CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT



£10 P/M

TEACHES A CHILD TO READ AND WRITE



£20 P/M

PROVIDES BOOKS FOR A PRIMARY CLASS

JOIN FRIENDS OF CHILDREN OF THE MOUNTAIN TODAY!

WIN A GOURMET BOX EVERY WEEK FOR A MONTH!

Celebrate the end of lockdown and **WIN** a gourmet box every week for a month...All monies raised will go directly to **Children of The Mountain** and help to recover the losses of **2020**.

The of end lockdown is in sight! There is a glimmer of normality returning, here's a chance to celebrate the end of this challenging year and win a gourmet box delivered to your home every week for a month!

Four of UK's leading chefs have offered one of their sellout gourmet boxes, creating this amazing prize to support the charity, Children of The Mountain.

Since 2009, COTM has provided life opportunities through education for over 5,000 of the poorest children in remote, rural areas of Nepal. Like many charities, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, COTM is sadly facing a considerable financial shortfall and risks losing many of the gains made over the past 12 years.

Without the charity's ongoing support, many children in these areas of Nepal will find it difficult to return to school and child labour and child marriage rates will once again soar. There has never been a more of an urgent need to support the challenging lives of these children and all the money raised in this campaign will go directly to responding to their needs.

Education is a powerful force for good, empowering both current and future generations.

**TO WIN THIS GOURMET EXTRAVAGANZA
SIMPLY DONATE A MINIMUM OF £10**



Just Giving LINK

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/
children-of-the-mountain-gourmet-box-fundraiser](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/children-of-the-mountain-gourmet-box-fundraiser)



Ben Tish



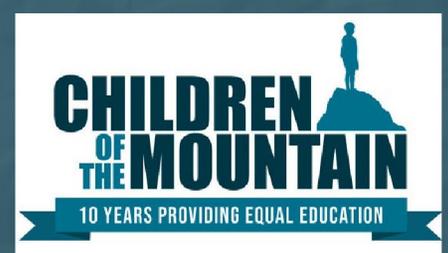
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Tommy Banks



Lisa Goodwin-Allen



RAJU BISHOWKARMA

COTM EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGER – COMPLETES TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM



Our COTM Education Programme Manager, Raju Bishowkarma has many years’ experience in the education sector having designed, developed and delivered a variety of educational teaching/learning materials and books for teachers and students throughout Nepal. Raju specialises in Early Grade Reading teacher training and pedagogical facilitation for teachers and students and has experience with working with organisations such as UNICEF and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. He has proved invaluable to the development and design of the COTM literacy programme. He is well versed in parent/community communication and coordination with Nepalese government bodies including, the Ministry of Education, National Centre for Education Development (NCED), the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) and district level education offices. He is currently working on his doctoral studies in sociology and humanities.

Raju’s first task on returning to the schools after Lockdown has been to provide a 3 day training course for 120 teachers, Grade 1-3, of 36 schools, setting standards and evaluating teaching techniques for 120 teachers, Grade 1-3, of 36 schools, setting standards and evaluating teaching techniques.

The Nepali Literacy Package and design is immensely helpful for teachers to do remedial teaching for the children. The reading cards, pictorial handy books, sponge letters, alphabet dice, magic ball charts, story books are some of the materials designed to help children read joyfully so that reading habits can be developed gradually. There are many challenges for the teachers, one main concern is that in the same grade, children are at different levels, the ones who can read will progress, those who cannot fall behind and struggle to catch up. To address this issue, as part of the teacher training Raju, helped teachers to understand how to identify the exact level of each child. Teachers use remedial method to help

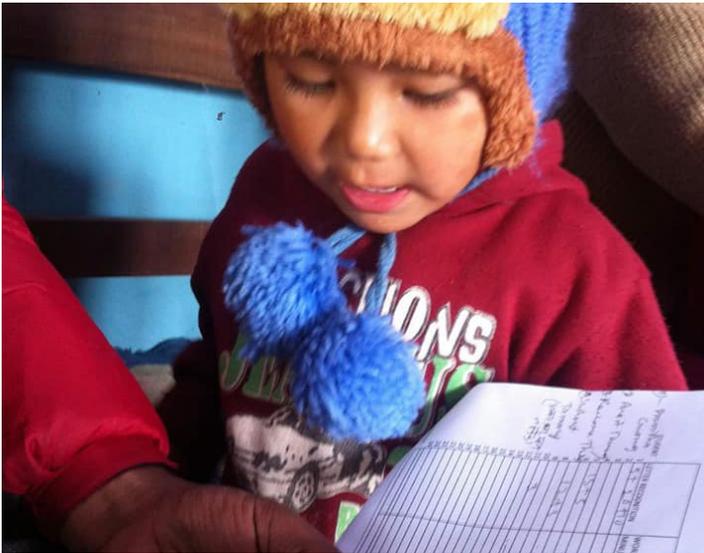
each child complete the learning steps, they record the progress and reward when levels are reached. The children work in pairs, to strengthen themselves, enjoy their reading and learning in a fun way. “ I am confident that in the coming weeks, as the children return to school, following my time with the teachers, the children will move forward with better reading skills.” Raju comments after the success of this training.

It was good to see the positive response from the teachers, which has helped to motivate them after a year of Lockdown, here are a few comments from teachers who attended the training

“I now have clear solutions how to help my students learn to read, I am so happy to get these varieties of materials that will make it easier to teach the children.” Surya Nepali, teacher of Shiva Secondary School, Bandipur with 30 years’ experience.

“I learned various ways and techniques of helping the children recognise alphabets through sounds and shapes, I will restart helping the children in a fun way with these materials.” Bishnu Shrestha, Saraswoti Secondary School, Borlang, with 27 years’ experience.





EGRA

Early Grade Reading Assessment

HOW WE MEASURE IMPACT

EGRA is an immensely important assessment tool for COTM, and critical to the success of our charity to measure the impact and progress of the children. The Nepalese government sets specific literacy targets for children in early years education known as the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) targets. Essentially these help assess the student's oral fluency and word count per minute reading ability at a given age. Earlier this year, when all the schools returned, our team carried out an EGRA assessment on over 1,000 children across 34 schools in the 4 regions in which we operate. This was a huge logistical undertaking but has given us a baseline assessment of every child we support. Unsurprisingly, with the children missing 6 months of school in 2020, the average results were well behind government targets. However, we have subsequently held teacher training seminars in all four regions, and doubled the size of our school support team, to ensure that the COTM literacy programme fast tracks the children back to the required fluency levels as soon as possible. We will be carrying out further EGRA assessment in April, September and December to monitor progress.

TAPLEJUNG

OUR LATEST OPENING

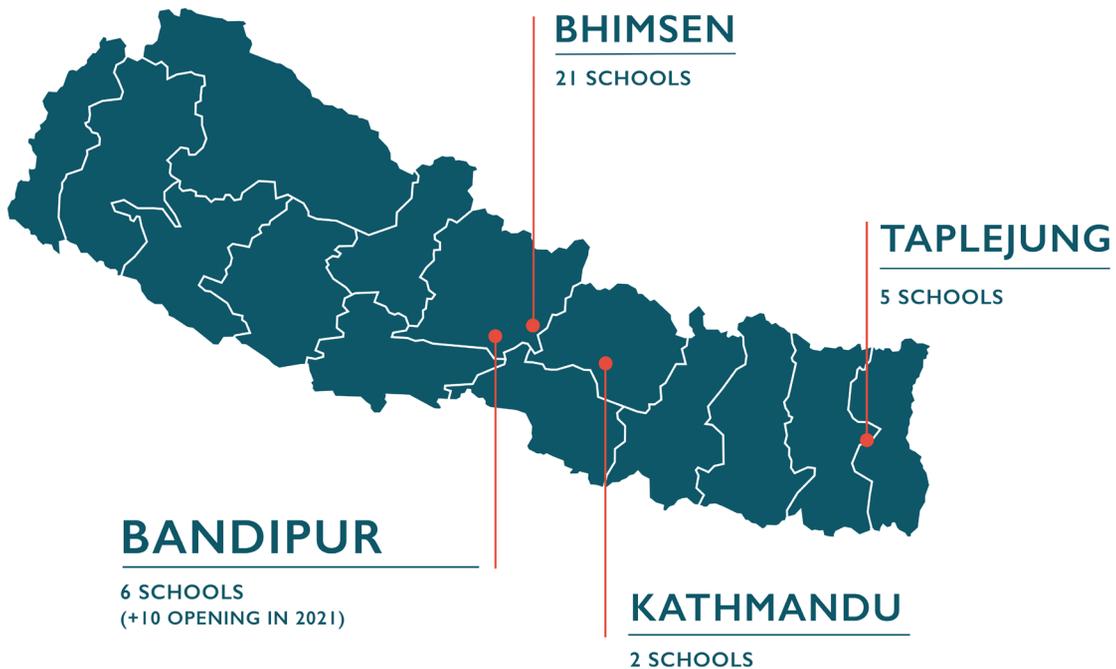
Helmuth Neuwirth is Trustee and Chairman of COTM Austria.

Helmuth tells us ‘On a trekking tour to Everest 2010, I had the pleasure of being a guest at a school party. I saw the poor facilities at this school. For that reason, the idea that children go to school a little better was taken up by me. Since my trip to the east of Nepal, Taplejung District in the Khokling region, it has been a special need for me to support the urgent school building in this region.’

In 2020, Children of the Mountain expanded its operations to support 5 schools in Taplejung, a remote rural area in East of the country. We have introduced our Katchua Klub kindergartens and our Nepalese literacy programme in Creative Classrooms grades 1-3.

In February of this year, we recruited a new trainer, Devi Ojhar to specifically support this new cluster of schools and in March, our Programme Manager, Raju Bishowkarma, has delivered a teacher training seminar for all the early years teachers at the schools to kick start the COTM programmes.

We have subsequently agreed with the local municipality that they will match fund our on-going support as they are delighted with our initial impact.



TEAM UPDATES

WE ARE GROWING



Nishana will look after 5 schools in the Ghyampesaa cluster and is very proud to be working for COTM. “ I have been able to learn a lot of things from the organisation and I will try my best to support the children and teachers at the schools. The Nepali Literacy Training, really helped, I now know I can help the children to read and learn. Thank you COTM for giving me this opportunity to work” Nishana is studying Bachelor first year in business studies.



Devi will look after 5 schools in the remote part of Taplejung district. These are challenging schools that are in high hill and remote areas, Devi is very happy to visit the schools and looks forward to learning more about education programs to support the teachers and students. “The teachers have a lot of expectations for support and I hope that I will be able to offer this for them”



Sapana will look after 6 schools in Borland cluster. In a short period of time Sapana has learnt much about the education programs “I have received many different trainings in the past, but have now learnt how children can learn much better with the Nepali Literacy Program. I am very thankful to the entire team of COTM, I enjoy rhyming, singing and dancing with the children. Every school should be friendly and a place where they feel safe”

WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER ON THE BOARD

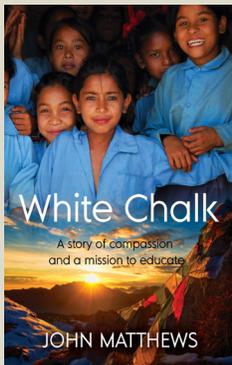


Earlier this year we said a fond farewell to Amanda Harkin who was one of the founding trustees of COTM and has made a huge contribution to the success of our charity over the years. Whilst no longer a trustee, we are delighted that Amanda will continue to support our efforts. Kaye Mathew, Marketing Director of Northcote Hotel & Restaurant, has been a supporter of COTM for many years, through events held at Northcote and in 2018 helped to raise over £50k with a group of hospitality colleagues on one of our Nepal Treks. Kaye joins the UK team to focus on vital fund raising activities and support the marketing and promotion of COTM profile.



The Funding Network is an open network which links potential donors to charitable cases and social entrepreneurs through live crowd funding. They aim to raise money for small non-profits driving social change and help both individuals and businesses to combine their giving with others, to make a bigger impact.

We are delighted to confirm that at the end of 2020 we successfully bid for funding to help with the development of 50 early years classrooms in the Bandipur region, matched with funding from the local authorities. This project will take two years to deliver and will impact on over 1000 children. We are hugely grateful to TFN for their support.



WHITE CHALK

THE INSPIRING
STORY OF A MAN,
A MOUNTAIN AND
ONE THOUSAND
CHILDREN

Our Founding Trustee John Matthews has written a book. It's called White Chalk and will be available on Amazon in June. The story charts Johns trials in those early years. We share his joys and frustrations, his highs, and lows as he begs and borrows to complete our first school and establishes Children of the Mountain as a charity.

The story continues as we share Johns Journey over a five-year period, as he continues to build more schools, battling corruption, bureaucracy, social and cultural constraints, and the occasional revolutionary Maoist to bring education to this remote community in the foothills of the Himalayas.

holroyd howe

feeding independent minds

HOLROYD HOWE CONTINUES COMMITMENT TO COTM

We are hugely grateful to our Corporate Sponsor, independent schools caterer, Holroyd Howe for continuing their support and extending through to 2022. Nick Howe a long time supporter of COTM, extended HH commitment to 2022 because of Covid. Their planned fundraising trek for 15 people in October had to be cancelled and they will now be completing this in early 2022. HH works exclusively with independent schools to create a fresh and thoughtful food service that is uniquely tailored to meet the needs of each school. HH partnered with one of its suppliers in December – BUNZL, to donate a proportion of all Christmas Cracker sales which raised over £1,500 for COTM. Pupils and catering staff at Pipers Corner School in High Wycombe took part in fundraising activities, auctioning Christmas cakes they had made. Nick Howe comments “With the re-opening of all schools in March, it at last paves the way for many more exciting fundraising activities planned to recommence, ranging from Easter treats for pupils, ‘multi day’ donations, food tasting tables and school awareness assemblies about COTM, which will create more initiatives.”



SARITA SHRESTHA

MEET ONE OF OUR PROGRAM MOTIVATORS IN NEPAL

Sarita joined COTM 2 years ago, she is a much valued member of the team and supports 6 schools in Bandipur. Here we find out a little more about Sarita:

Describe your day working with COTM

I go to school. I enjoy with ECD students and support teachers. I teach rhymes and teach children how to use learning materials.

Where do you live and how far do you travel for work?

I live in a small town call Bimalnagar. It is nearby Prithvi highway to Pokhara. And nearby a river call Marshyangdi which flows down to Chitwan comes from Himalaya that I can see from my home.

I do a short bus ride on a highway then I walk almost an hour to reach each 6 schools.

Where did you attend school & what learning experiences did you value the most?

I studied in a school call Shree Jeevan Jyoti Secondary School in Palungtar, Gorkha district across the river Marshyangdi. I learned the value of education in school which I got motivated to continue my education further. Now, I have completed grade 12 and started to do my Bachelor level.

What inspires you to teach the children each day?

In my childhood, I could not learn in a child friendly way using beautiful learning materials. So, I am inspired from my childhood to help children in a better joyful environment that I try to practice each day.

What do you enjoy to do away from work?

I enjoy travelling to new places.

What is your favourite food?

My favourite food is Nepali food – Dal, Bhat, Tarkari.

What makes you laugh?

Children's funny activity makes me laugh.

What music do you enjoy?

I enjoy listening to modern Nepali song and some folk songs.

What is your favourite Nepali tradition?

My favourite Nepali tradition is my Newari culture.

