

Newsletter 3 2003

Hello dear Friends!!

In the meantime here in Sikkim we are up and running for almost 4 weeks now and on many levels things are working out very well!

21 Children are living with us in the hostel and 20 local children visit us every day. So together 41 kids in the school. A very nice and manageable number to start our first school year.

The shy ones are not so shy anymore...their attitude and their faces are opening up...some even become a bit naughty...so beautiful to see!!

We are able to feed the children good and very varied food...this message is spreading.... Some parents from our hostel children mentioned that they would like to stay with us too.... And it pleases me because I have seen the food situation in the other school last year and it was horrible and children were suffering. Right now there is always enough of the thukpa (thick noodle soup), rice and dahl, chapattis with vegetables, tea momos with vegetables, fried rice, porridge so kids can always get seconds.

Because in general the knowledge of English is quite little, we mostly focus on teaching English at least for the first 3 months. Besides that we give mathematics, art, songs and later on we will also teach general knowledge, social science, introductory science.

Since the children come from different ethnic tribes each with their own language there are also taught their own language and specific script: Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali.

Next to regular classes we do sport, games, we take the kids for walks, we teach some yoga, we visit the old local monastery to do some prayers and to light a few butter lamps and the kids help us in the garden.

And next to this there is the daily study period.

I am teaching a group of 4 to 6 year old children in a sort of combination class for nursery-LKG. Most of these children go to school for the first time and almost everything is new to them. At home they have never done things like making a puzzle or simply drawing. When I gave them color pencils and paper they had no idea what to do....And when I gave them books for "reading"

(watching pictures) few of them kept them upside down. Matching pieces of a puzzle together was also a very new phenomenon....

It is beautiful to see that they pick it up and are able to make small steps every day.

Right now they can already name a lot of pictures in English....Doooooog!, Monkeeeeeeeey!, b... b... butterflyyyyyyyyyy!

Days are busy...but it is so rewarding and satisfying to experience the effects and to see the shiny faces of the children behind a big plate of food or on the newly built swing.....

Thanks for all your support, enthusiasm and interest!!!

It definitely keeps us going!!

Much love to you all from:

Murum, Dicky Lhamu, Laymit, Chuzang, Pumjay, Kursong, Nedup, Tempa Onchuk, Sonam Wongdi, Nim Phuti, Kunjankit, Samten, Sonma, Pemkit, Purmit, Rha Tsering, Pema Wongchuk, Ong Keela, Samgyor, Dawa Shamyor, Shrap, Amosh, Parseela, Sangita, Ashbin, Dil Maya, Anusha, Manissa, Badal, Binod, Aman, Tilarupa, Bibek, Keshal, Bintika, Dawa, Yogina, Dichen, Sushmita en Shajana ...and from me!

Hedwig