

Hello every one!



Once again did we visit some local families in different corners of Sikkim...and everytime it is a revelation in some way or another....Few weeks ago did I go for a 'wander' with Guman Singh one of our local teachers to visit a potential candidate. From the road did we have to go all the way down into the valley. We walked over small trails through the fields, past little huts, cows, flowers, little streams and forest. "Look, miss", said Guman Singh, "that is a very poison plant", and he points at a green plant with big leaves. He explains that even eating a little bit of the leaves has serious results....the person starts to show signs of becoming mad and when no medical treatment is available then the person dies. He recounts a story of a local family that accidentally mixed the leaves with their vegetables....and they hardly survived... Sometimes can have an encounter with a poisonous snake too here in Sikkim.....ha, ha, so nice to live in the country side....!!

Anyway, we keep on walking down and at some point are we coming near the place where the family is supposed to live so we ask some locals where the house of Pem Kumar Subba is....of course, in the jungle there are no streetnames and numbers.....some one points out towards a tiny bamboo hut on the steep side of the mountain. Few children are playing outside in ragged clothes, barefoot and with dirty faces. I recognize one of their faces as the 5-year old child that came to our school the other day with his father asking for admission. The little hut is indeed his 'house' but it can hardly be called a house. Just then the father appears. I have seen many basic houses here in Sikkim but a situation like this I have not seen before....The walls are made of woven bamboo, not even covered with mud and on top a roof of corrugated iron. The wind blows right through all the openings and that is no fun with the cold winter approaching. The hut is really very small and has only 2 "rooms". One of them has one bed where all 6 family members (father, mother and 4 children) sleep. There is not even a mattress but just an old blanket to sleep on and one old quilt and one pillow to share.... The other compartment is used as a kitchen, a small fire is burning in the corner, there are a few cups, spoons and pots and that's about it....We are sitting on some kind of small wooden stool on the floor....and I am looking around in astounishment....there is not even a lightbulb....and water comes from a hose outside. It is almost unbelievable that people can live like this... We talk some things over and we decide there and then to take the five year old son into our hostel next year. And once again do I feel how beautiful it is to be able to do something for this family!



So I thought we had more or less seen the most needy cases.....until one week later I visited a really remote area high in the mountains towards the Nepal border. There is a village where the mud road literally ends and one can only proceed on foot over small and steep trails. There was a family living high and cold under the same living circumstances as the family mentioned above.....but here it is a family with none less than seven children!!!!



Here are a few lovely words from some of the students writing letters to their sponsors.... -“ I like this school very much and I am very happy here!” -“ I am so happy because next year I am going to be a monk!” -“ I like my school very much because our teacher helps us and cares for us”. -“I am always happy in my school, I pray for you, I love you very much”. -“ My family is happy for me to be in this school”. -“Thank you for helping in our school. We learn many things!” -“We love our teachers very much, our teachers love us very much!” - this is it for now....the children are sending you their joy, much love and many smiles! Thanks so much for all your interest, support and enthusiasm!!



With love
Hedwig