



First Steps Himalaya

Changing lives one classroom at a time

Update from Nepal: January 2017



ECD and School Support Projects, Sindhupalchok, Nepal

Progress Report to Yucha: January 2017

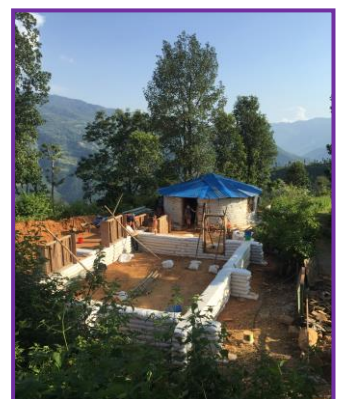
1.0 Introduction:

1.1 The **purpose** of this report is to update Yucha on the progress of the Early Childhood Development and School support projects, Nepal. The report **covers the period from May 2016 to January 2017**.

1.2 **Background:** The earthquake of April 2015 devastated the First Steps Himalaya project area with 95% of schools severely damaged. FSH has been working since then to re-establish its projects and rebuild earthquake damaged classrooms using earthquake resilient earthbag building methods. Yucha provided funding of NZ\$ 20,931.94 to rebuild the school at Mulkharka. Yucha team members and supporters came to Nepal to help construct the building.

1.3 **General situation:** This is improving as more people begin to rebuild their homes. There are still aftershocks and people still fear more large earthquakes. Most schools are still operating in temporary learning centres. Classes are often merged into confined spaces which are not conducive to learning.

1.4 **Project summary:** There has been excellent progress this season. Not only we have been able to finish previously started earthbag projects, but we have also completed a large earthbag classroom at Sangachok. This means that the children can finally move out of the training centre which has been used as a classroom since the earthquake. The training centre will be fitted out in April 2017.





First Steps Himalaya

Changing lives one classroom at a time

Update from Nepal: January 2017

We were also delighted to have teachers from many of our supported schools attend training at The British School in Kathmandu.

1.5 Limitations: We were unable to paint Mulkharka School this season, due to the pressure of work at Sangachok with other buildings. However, this will now be done as a priority in March.

2.0 Project progress

Earthbag building: This has been another busy season for earthbag building. We have constructed a new 7 x5 metre early childhood classroom at Sangachok. This was built in less than a month with the help of a large team of international volunteers including 7 people from Sustainability House, Adelaide Australia and 11 volunteers from Peak Freaks Canada. Both these organisations are returning to Nepal next year for the next phase of the earthbag building project. The new classroom will replace the original FSH, ECD building that was lost in the earthquake. This also means that the children can move out of the training centre which has been used as a temporary classroom for the last 18 months.



We have also completed a block of 3 classrooms and a larger computer/resource room at Sangachok. These were constructed using a proven recycled brick method which is reinforced with concrete.

Other progress at Sangachok: The training centre will be fitted out and ready for use in April 2017. This will allow teachers from the project area to attend workshops and stay over where necessary in the new accommodation building. This will also be completed in March 2017.



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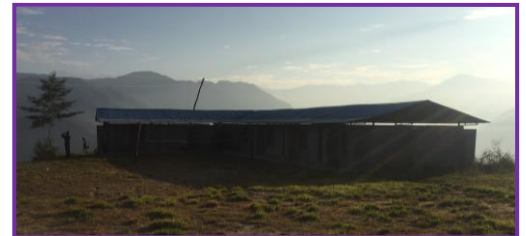
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Below: Pre- school children explore resources



3.1 Mulkharka School: The children at Mulkharka School love the new earthbag school and the community are so grateful for the support of Yucha and First Steps Himalaya. Teachers have attended two training sessions at The British School in Kathmandu which is enormously helpful for them. The classrooms will be fully fitted out in March/ April. Low tables are being prepared for younger children from ECD to class 3 and desks will be provided for the older children. We have agreed to continue funding to support the ECD teacher at the school.



3.2 Teacher training: We organised training for teachers at The British School in Kathmandu in November. Eight teachers attended and took part in a full day series of training workshops which was followed by two days of classroom observations.

The focus of the workshops was:

- Using books to teach English in exciting and creative ways both to EC and class 1,2,3,4.
- Using dice and other practical resources to teach Mathematics skills.
- Play based learning.
- Positive behaviour management strategies.





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This was highly effective and we look forward to organising more similar training at The British School. We plan to further develop our relationship with The British School by hosting them at our new training centre and accommodation block next year. Our supervisors will follow up on the attendees to see how they incorporate new ideas into their lessons.

We also had two Chinese teachers working with staff and students in Sangachok for 4 weeks. They worked alongside teachers to improve the English language learning in the school. Teachers and children alike enjoyed the lessons and the teaching volunteers plan to return next year.



3.7 Future plans: The first half of 2017 will focus on projects and the training centre. The training centre will be fitted out and a number of training workshops held at this time. There will be more earthbag building in the second half of the year when Court Construction, Sustainability House and Peak Freaks return with teams.

The projects will continue to be supported with visits by supervisors, resources and training. Once the schools move into permanent classrooms, we will be able to do a lot more.

Training will be important in 2017 for all project schools. This will include on site supervision, workshops at the new training centre and in Kathmandu. *Right: The supervisory team based in Sangachok*



6.0 Conclusions and recommendations: We are making excellent progress towards achieving our goals in the post-earthquake recovery of rural Nepal. The combination of new earthquake resilient classrooms and teachers that are better trained and supported can only benefit the children. First Steps Himalaya is very grateful for the enormous support provided by Yucha in 2016. We hope that we can work together again in the future.