26th May 2015
Principal’s update on the TBS Charities

Dear TBS Charity contributors,

I would like to start this update by thanking you for all your support. It has been overwhelming. The generosity and kindness of all our contributors has already led to some great progress. We believe we have collected enough money to fully rebuild the 3 Dhading schools we work with and to help the DNC and Bungamati schools with their building needs as well. The current total is just over £80,000 which is a fantastic effort. We want to keep going with our fundraising because, although this is a significant amount, we know that this will fund a small proportion of the school rebuilding that is going to be needed in Nepal and once we complete these initial projects we will want to do more. The latest estimates are that around a million children are without schools at the current time. As Nepal drops out of the headlines it will still need support and all the children and staff at TBS hope we can continue to have a positive impact on those in incredibly difficult circumstances.

It is now over 4 weeks since the devastating 25th April earthquake hit Nepal. Whilst the aftershocks that still continue are less severe, they still continue to fuel nervousness across Nepal. Additionally, there is still the worry of a further large earthquake occurring and we are all continuing to be vigilant with many Nepali families still sleeping outside and experiencing difficulties that the more fortunate of us would find it difficult to cope with.

Our own school community at The British School remains safe and well. Many of our own children, parents and staff have faced difficulties but the level of commitment to keeping our school open for the children and parents, many of whom are essential to the aid effort, has been incredible.

I will send out another update shortly which details our visit to Dhading this week. The area itself is getting back to business as usual and there is a determination to rebuild that is strengthened by the support from the many charitable organisations. We are contributing in a way that is probably more unique at the moment by focussing on ensuring there is funding for school rebuilding that is longer term in nature. We hope that it will be possible to get the 3 schools we work with rebuilt within 3 to 6 months. Why the imprecise time scale? Simply because the schools are in such difficult locations that the next dangers will be landslides, monsoon rains and impassible roads so that materials may be difficult to transport to their locations. We will overcome these difficulties in time though and the support of local communities in helping to do this is in place after the series of meetings we have had thus far. We also need to comply with the authorities, communities and Education Ministry and negotiating their support will be essential and ongoing.

This is an example of the type of building our schools would find useful. This is the only building that is fully intact at any of our schools because it was built to a high specification and was therefore much more
resistant to the earthquake than any of their other buildings. Our engineer has designed similar buildings for each of the three schools.

Therefore our aim remains to resist compromise and, although we have supplied materials that have helped set up safe temporary spaces, we do not want to rebuild quickly if that compromises quality. This was the problem in the past and has led to the majority of school buildings across Nepal being so vulnerable now.

It is also worth stressing to all our contributors that we will be using the money donated from outside The British School for the medium and long term. I would like to restate our key principle. You have entrusted these funds to us and our commitment is that not one penny of this money will be wasted on administrative costs. Our school can bear any such costs quite comfortably and our time will all be given voluntarily in supporting our Dhading projects and the charities we help in Kathmandu. All our children have always had a class or year group charity (usually a school or educational institution with significant needs) they work with so all our projects were ongoing before the earthquakes hit. Therefore we know that there is a significant need from all our projects and we will continue to closely monitor the impact of our work in terms of value for money.

We have already some mechanisms in school to continue to raise money for any more immediate needs. The British School have always had charity weeks, and used profit from our tuck shop and school shop. This gives us a steady flow of funds for the short term support that may continue to be needed. Therefore the funds generated by your kind support can have more of an impact in the longer term on those children that desperately need your help.

We will continue to keep all those who have supported us informed through these updates and on our school website. Although school closes on June 26th, the work will continue over the summer when we hope to have detailed plans finalised so that construction will begin. Hopefully it will go smoothly.

In conclusion, thank you for every contribution, whether large or small. There have been some tremendous stories particularly from the children and schools who have been involved in fundraising in some extremely creative ways. This thoughtful and selfless behaviour from young people who have been affected by the difficulties others are facing, has been appreciated by the Nepali people we are helping and the fact we can guarantee support in the coming months is a great source of comfort to them.

Thank you
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