Our fourth trip to Nepal

by John Willing, Rotary Club of Orange Daybreak Club President 2013/2014

In April this year our District 9700 Community Development team led by the Rotary Club of Orange Daybreak (RCOD) continued their work in the high Himalayas.

On this, our fourth trip to Nepal one of the highlights was Ambassador Glenn White’s visit to Maidi a day’s journey from Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.

Ambassador White and District Governor 9700 Geoff Tancred officially opened the community hall and the literacy platform, built to encourage English literacy skills throughout the village.

Glenn White is pictured above with his wife Marianne being welcomed to the village with traditional red tikka and garlands of flowers. Walking beside them is Prakash Aryan, our “in-country” organiser, an essential person for our work in Nepal.

We are working with the villagers to build sustainable programs in teacher and health. These initiatives are already making a difference to the lives of remote villagers in the Dhading District in central Nepal.

The team this year comprised two groups. The first group of professionals spent two weeks in the Maidi and Dhola Areas, of the Dhading District, on health and literacy projects.

The second group was composed of Rotary members and friends who wanted to see for themselves the progress of the project. Evaluations of the project were also conducted by some members of this group.

District Governor of District 9700 in central west NSW, Geoff Tancred confirmed the positive results of the work: “Nepal will be forever in my heart - the Project was a true example of Rotary in Action”.

This newsletter covers these initiatives in detail. It also places a focus on how the relatively small but intense amount of work being conducted in this partnership is leading to sustainable outcomes for the people in these areas of Nepal.

Again we extend a big thank you to each of you – in Australia and in Nepal – for making such persistent efforts towards improving the lives of others.

John Willing
RCOD President, Orange, NSW Australia

Anzac Day - Australian Embassy

District Governor of District 9700 Geoff Tancred, wife Bettye and grandson Alex (from Toowoomba, aged 16) pictured above at the Anzac Day ceremony in Kathmandu. Bettye noted “the buglers were Gurkhas and performed the Last Post and the Reveille, it was very moving.” See page 4 for the full story of the day.

Riding the elephants in Chitwan

Morgan Collens (in blue) says: “After riding the elephants in the river Kendra (Duncan) and I had a lovely refreshing shower after a hot day although we were strictly reminded to keep our mouths firmly shut to avoid the water.” Page 5 details the adventures of the Team. THANK-YOU MORGAN FOR YOUR PHOTOS!
Dentistry in the Himalayas
by Dr. David Watkins,

My third trip to Nepal under the auspices of Rotary involved a base camp at Amarawati secondary school in April 2014.

For 8 days dentistry was performed under trees, in classrooms, libraries and an unfinished birthing centre.

The health team travelled in a four wheel drive vehicles, ambulances and motorbikes on some very steep and narrow roads. We were made to feel very welcome and appreciated, with welcome ceremonies in each of the four different sites.

Some 170 children and 90 adults were treated, 400 toothbrushes and paste were distributed and 240 fluoride applications with brushing instructions were given.

In preparing for the trip, I had looked at taking two university dental students from our university in Orange.

Asth a, a young dentist in her intern year, was able to join us. Her help was invaluable, not only for her dental skills, but her ability to help with translations, particularly of dental concepts, with which other translators struggled.

I can see already the benefits of our previous work. With extra equipment the local health posts can do more of this work themselves.

Partners
by Morgan Collens,

Morgan completed high school in Orange in 2013; after this gap year she will start university in 2015.

RCOD members and friends met with one of our partner Rotary clubs in Kathmandu the Rotary Club of Swoyambhu. Rajkumar Shrestha, Swoyambhu Rotary Club President welcomed the Australian guests with the traditional white blessing scarfs or katas. Also present were District Governors of District 9700 Geoff Tancred and District 3292 Dilendra Raj Shrestha.

Mary Brell notes, “Our partnerships are critical in ensuring we get things ‘right’ while working in Nepal.”
Innovation

"The adaption of the tractor motor to the trailer transport was quite ingenious and effective!" Michael Milston, RCOD.

Transport of all kinds

Kendra Duncan from Orange and her first ride on an elephant in Chitwan National Park.

April 2014 Community Development and Training Project

by Mary Brell,

Mary is the founder of a strategic training organisation in Orange and leader of the RCOD Community Development and Training Project.

Vocational Teacher Training:

Our work this year built on that conducted by the previous teacher training teams from Australia, as part of a Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) project. This work can now be extended with $40,000 provided through a Rotary Foundation Global Grant.

We are supported also by many individuals, schools, organisations and local Rotary clubs.

The teams have worked with community leaders to assess local needs and have trained 220 teachers across 26 schools.

By the time of completion of the project in 2015, more than 350 Nepalese teachers will have been given direct access to the teacher training.

Lisa noted that “The team focused on assisting Nepali teachers gain new teaching methods and strategies to help them deliver their lessons in a more interesting way.”

“We also extended the skills of those teachers who participated in the 2012 and 2013 training programs,” said Heather.

The teacher training team this time comprised: Jo and Glenn Allen from the Central Coast, Lisa Fleming (the daughter of RCOD member Graeme Fleming) from Brisbane, Mary Arnold from Lightning Ridge and Heather Grant from Orange.
WOMENS HEALTH

by Lynette Bullen,

Lynette Bullen is a health professional and works at a large mental health and drug and alcohol facility in Orange. Lynette is also the President Elect for RCOD for 2015.

Health training is the second part of the Community Development and Training project for Nepal.

This year we focused on two areas – dentistry with David Watkins and general health issues training with Lynnie Lambell, a registered nurse from Orange and myself.

32 health workers and health teachers attended four days of intense training provided by Lynnie and myself.

The first day, with the assistance of an interpreter we talked with the workers about what issues they wanted covered during the 4 days.

The topics included: non communicable diseases such as: COPD, hyper/hypotension, arthritis, mental health, heart disease, diabetics, uterine prolapse.

Revision on hand-washing techniques from last year’s training was requested as well as another demonstration of pelvic floor exercises.

This resulted in both Lynnie and me on the floor practicing our sit-ups with much laughter on both sides.

Domestic violence was discussed at length in separate male and female groups. This brought about much discussion by both groups as it is something that is never discussed openly.

I have a feeling that the conversation on DV will not stop with us leaving Maidi but will continue into the future.

The following week, together with 3 of the local health workers we travelled around the district speaking to the mother’s groups about what the workers had learnt during the previous week. We would have had up to 60 women at these sessions which were facilitated by the health workers.

The highlight for me personally was the day we spent with 8 dedicated female health workers teaching them about how to make reusable sanitary pads. A peddle sewing machine was hired for the day at the cost of completed $2. This money was well spent as over 60 pads were by the end of the day.

My time over in the village has left me with such treasured and lasting memories of the beautiful men and women who welcomed me into their community, homes and lives.

Anzac Day at the Embassy

by Geoff Tancred, District Governor District 9700 Australia

Geoff is an insurance broker and retired tax accountant and has served on the Rotary District Board for over 20 years.

It was a very moving experience to hear the Gurkha Army attachment play the Last Post and to remember – in this exotic and far away country - the lives lost on those beaches of Gallipoli: Lest We Forget.

After the ceremony Anzac cookies and chardonnay went down well! We met other Australians and Nepalis and saw first-hand the support the Embassy provides to others.

We had a chance again to talk with Ambassador White and were all impressed by his friendliness and the work of his team.

The Australian team with our Nepalese partners joins the Ambassador and his wife on 25th April 2014. Murray looks ready to leap into action!

Joining over 200 other expats and locals we were lucky enough to experience Anzac Day at the Australian Embassy, Kathmandu.
More Adventures
by Robyn Murray and Lynnette Bullen, President Elect, RCOD 2014/15

Robyn is a manager for NSW Health and lives in Orange. Lynette is a health professional in Orange.

This work could not occur if it was not for the many individuals, organisations and clubs and their support.

This year along with the teaching and health professionals a second team over two weeks later to have a holiday and look over the work being done.

This team comprised: Tom & Gwenda Bunworth, Michelle & Kendra Duncan, Michael Milston & Ann Dib, Julie Fleming, Jennifer & Morgan Collens, Don Bruce, Geoff & Bettye Tancred, Alexander McKenzie, John & Anne Brell, Joan Raftery, and Murray Paterson

Alexander McKenzie (aged 16 years) “It’s hard to say what part (of the trip) was favourite because it was all so good. One thing I will hold with me forever is the flight over Mt Everest; also seeing Prakash’s face when we saw the tigers - priceless.”

This team went many places in the first week, a key highlight being a trip within Chitwan National Park. Riding elephants and seeing tigers were big favourites.

Morgan Collens: “In the indigenous village, Kendra made two new friends and was stolen away. They took her to their house and started taking photos of her, making us laugh about the ‘reverse tourism’.”

Michael Milston was impressed with the water program in the villages.

“Government funding provides the new pipes to bring the water from the hills. The pipes need to be buried so they cannot be affected by vehicles, weather or other factors. The village has agreed to provide the labour to dig the trench so more funds can go to the infrastructure materials. Each village family has to donate a person-day’s labour each day until the 3-4 km trench has been completed.” Michael Milston

While the work from April 2014 is wound up and the many reports and evaluations of the work are written; we are already planning for November 2014 and April 2015.

In November 2014 we are focusing on how we can assist services in Nepal to further improve the lives of people with a mental illness. A team of senior clinicians will meet with government ministers and mental health experts in Kathmandu; we will also spend time in the Dhading area working with staff from their primary health posts.

Mary will again lead a team to the village this time with a central theme of women’s health.

In April 2015 the health, mental health and teacher training will continue.

Want to join the growing team?
A senior Nepalese psychiatrist noted in 2013, “For me, it was an extraordinary experience to be with so many people from Australia staying in the tents and offering so many programmes to local people at the same time.”
Scholarship Students
by Mary Brell,

Scholarships now form part of the Community Development Project in the villages of Dhading.

All over the developing world it is harder for a young girl to move out of the cycle of poverty.

It is harder for them to make the most of their talents and skills and continue their education.

It is thus harder for them into the future to support their families and their children as they cope with the many pressures of their lives.

For both young boys and girls in this economically stressed area having good intelligence and learning ability does not mean you can go on to higher education.

The Community Development Project made the decision to start a series of scholarships for these young people.

So far, they have been awarded to 13 students who are from exceptionally poor families and who show academic ability, to ensure they are able to stay on to complete years 11 and 12. This is an opportunity that they would not have had without these scholarships.

Eleven of these students are girls.

These girls will now be able to complete their studies and move away from the cycle where they would otherwise have been married and had babies by the age of 18, if not younger.

With their family’s permission, the names of the students are listed to the left.

Congratulations to each of the Scholarship Holders!

The First Scholarships
1. Sangita Ranh
2. Sulochana Bhatta
3. Man Maya Ale
4. Ganga Shrestha
5. Pabita Garanja
6. Rama Bhatta
7. Sita Shrestha
8. Sangita Adhikari
9. Sunita Shrestha
10. Pradip Aryal
11. Prabin Bk
12. Rash Maya Thapa
13. Durga Timalsena

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION FUTURE VISION PLAN
Leader in global development
This project is also now supported through a Global Grant from Rotary International through the Rotary Foundation. The Foundation is about sustainability. In its Future Vision Plan grants are awarded to projects that will make a lasting difference.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
For information on the direction of Rotary International and the Rotary Foundation:
VISIT: WWW.ROTARY.ORG
A BIG thank-you
by Mary Brell,

So Many People to Thank!!

1. **Rotary Club of Orange Daybreak:** Without RCOD agreeing to be a sponsor club, we would not have been awarded a Global Grant or been able to establish Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) projects. The club has also allocated funds each year to support the project. In 2013/2014 $5000 was allocated (approx. $2500 of that has been spent to date).

2. **District Governor – Geoff Tancred:** Without whose support we would not have received the Global Grant from Rotary International through the Foundation. It is this Grant that is providing funding for the Teacher Training Program.

3. **District Foundation Director - Ian Simpson:** Supported the 12 month arduous application process to be able to receive the Global Grant from Rotary International.

4. **Individual Donors:** If it wasn’t for the many, many people from across Australia who donated funds, either to RCOD or to the RAWCS project, we would not have been able to provide the health, building and teaching resources to this remote community in Nepal.
   - To date approximately $12,270 has been donated by individuals and clubs to either RCOD or directly to the RAWCS project or directly to the Village. We can’t thank you all enough.
   - Some of these funds, as the donors know will go to providing scholarships as detailed on the previous page.

5. **The Volunteers:**
   - The April 2014 Vocational Training Team consisted of: 6 teachers and a Health Team of three (two nurses and 1 dentist). Without their generosity, dedication, professionalism and total commitment, the results achieved over 3 years would not be possible.
   - The volunteers have all paid their own airfares and accommodation.
   - They have generously donated and provided many resources.
   - They have lived and worked in tough conditions.
   - They have certainly witnessed the fruits of their labour.

6. **QUOTA of Orange:**
   - These women have made hundreds of fabric sanitary pads which have been distributed to the women in Maidi Village.
     - They believe that women should not have to suffer as these women were doing.
     - The women in the village are now making their own fabric sanitary pads as the result of the donation that RCOD has been able to make by providing the fabric for these to be made this year.

7. **District 9700:**
   - District 9700 awarded to Prakash Aryal (local coordinator) a Paul Harris Fellow. This was given to him by the District in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the village of Maidi.
     - Prakash realised that this remote area was in desperate need of support in the areas of Education and (maternal) Health.
     - He has worked tirelessly with many Rotary and Non Rotary volunteers to bring about the huge cultural change that has now occurred in this village.

8. **Rotary Tour Group:**
   - Thank you for travelling to Nepal.
     - You have witnessed a great change in a people who were isolated, with low literacy levels, and poor (maternal) Health.
     - People are living in conditions that we would not tolerate; poor electricity distribution, little or no water, low access to quality health professionals, and so the list goes on.

9. **Hike Himalaya Adventure:**
   - A project like this needs an “in-country” organiser. This group has spent an incredible number of hours in organising the Volunteers and the Tourist Group. We know this company to be highly ethical and trustworthy (we also know there are many in Nepal who are not). A significant degree of this work is carried out pro bono.

The OUTCOME:
Three years has seen an amazing shift in thinking, attitudes, and abilities of Health workers and Teachers in this remote village. If it wasn’t for all of the above this would never have happened.

**THANK YOU**
Photos show the teams at work and at play – from the jungles of Chitwan to the high villages of the Himalayas – in the classrooms and outside the tents; and the teams before the visit in April 2014 in Orange.