



Annual Report 2021

Developing Holistic Approaches to State Education: Nepal



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Trustees: Dr Mark Owen;; Mr Jamie Creswell; Mr Paul Kinnon

Over the last year COVID-19 and the resulting restrictions has dictated an irregular year of activity. Despite the hurdles to overcome, this report clearly demonstrates that our team in both Nepal and UK continued to serve the school's communities and even expanded project work into all 34 school communities across the Municipality of Panauti. This report highlights some of the key outputs, outcomes and impact of the project-work that took place between 1st July 2020 and the 30th of June 2021.

Schools were closed in this period, except for 10 weeks in early 2021, closing again in the Spring with Nepal's second, and devastating wave of infections and subsequent disruption to daily life. Our response meant we had to diversify our activities, and adjust to the circumstances of all schools being closed indefinitely, with the aim of ensuring every single child in the municipality was still able to access some form of education.

These continuing COVID-19 restrictions posed a number of difficulties for delivering our services. Without a Furlough or a Self-employment scheme in Nepal, students and their families were unable to work and therefore earn. Many relying on weekly wages, life became extremely uncertain and difficult.

This resulted in education becoming less of a priority for many families during 2020/21. As an education charity school was something we prioritised. Historically up to 2020, children in rural communities in Nepal have been left behind, already facing enormous barriers to education. However, in 2020/21 however this was compounded by real-term cuts to local education budgets, isolation, and long term school closures. Our work in Panauti has contributed to ensuring this was not to be the case for just over 2,200 children in Panaut we managed to serve despite difficult circumstances.

The government announced in May 2021 that all schools were to remain closed until further notice and were still closed in July 2021 the end of this reporting period.

Despite these difficulties we were able to operate within similar frameworks of our planned work.

This period saw the launch of our Public Education Improvement Project (PEIP) [footnote: (wider title "Improving Quality of Education and Mental Health Support for Young people in Nepal through Teacher Training, Youth Empowerment, and Enhancing School Governance")] following the successful grant awarded by the Unione Buddista Italiana and match funding from Erach and Roshin Sadri Foundation, other charitable grants and our own public fundraising locally and online. This initiative includes:

Training: Training teachers and facilitators across all the schools and programmes. School Management with just over over 140 school governors and head teachers.

Materials and school staff: Providing necessary practicalities of school and sustaining the quality of the school environment across 34 schools in Panauti.

COVID-19 and Sanitation: Safe water supply equipment, sanitation packs and workshops.

Advocacy: Research and consultancy with the local education authority in school management, budgeting and policy development.

Act on Education: Creative Community building in Schools and the wider community.

Ride for Life: Journey's to school and life and learning with bikes, Sports workshops and outdoor learning equipment.

Sister Schools: Global friendships with schools in the UK and cultural understanding

Detailed below are just some of the activities that took place.

Teacher Training:

Outputs:

8 Experienced Teachers were employed and then completed training, qualifying as Teacher Trainers with the Rato Bangla Foundation. They attended 30 full days, with a 98% attendance rate and 100% pass rate. Modules covered were Creative Learning Techniques Classroom Management

Stimulating Classroom Environments Mental Health and Wellbeing

Child Safeguarding Discrimination in the Classroom Inter-cultural harmony

Community Outreach

In regular assessments, all trainers demonstrated 'Significantly' improved knowledge and understanding over each area.

Each new trainer then conducted baseline surveys across all 34 schools, helping complete our baseline survey.

Outcomes:

By June 4 of those teachers had facilitated teacher training with 132 teachers 8 trainers who in turn were working throughout their catchment areas in outdoor leaning classes. Ensuring over 1200 further children participated in education during the lockdown. 4 further teacher trainers had taken their post in by July, preparing to work with a further with 105 teachers across the 34 schools.

School Senior management report Teacher Trainers have demonstrated tangible improvements in the teachers' knowledge and activities in the areas of:

- classroom interaction,
- role play,
- News sharing/job charts/ weather charts/clock activities/Warm ups/ classrooms agreements and feedback
- audio/visual resources,
- field trips,
- observational, experimental, individual & group works,
- practicing,
- developing resources booklets for the classroom.



Act on Education:

Outputs:

This resumed in early 2021 when schools re-opened for 10 weeks. We facilitated 9 initial workshops, introducing the process and beginning research with 82 children on what issues will need to be addressed in each school. We also set up the music, art and drama lessons that are to take place across from October 2021 to April 2022.

Outcomes:

Students were able to gather and experience together something creative, fun and engaging. This contributing to their wellbeing and a feeling of being supported over this period. The experience was uplifting and brought back connection into a time when many children were experiencing fear, tension and loneliness.



Materials and School Staff:

Outputs:

We delivered over 186 outdoor learning workshops, events and outreach groups, not only with academic work but also COVID-19 safe workshops and emotional wellbeing conversations and exercises. We also delivered 317 education packs to families including learning resources with tasks, school project work, reading materials and sanitation supplies. We have made over 600 phone calls to families too far away to reach, and where possible delivered a small amount of online learning, including volunteer teachers teaching from the UK.

Outcomes:

This work has meant that children are still able to gather and communicate with friends and their teachers, enhancing a sense of normality and wellbeing, and has resulted in more than 500 children engaging in classes when so many are not able to access any type of education.



Om M Waiba, head teacher at Balchandra tells us:

"The resources teachers have made make the classrooms more open, friendly and exciting for the children returning. The teaching staff are feeling more supported. And there is a lot of hope for the changes this initiative is bringing to the school"



Teachers visit for 1-2-1 training during lockdown 2021



COVID safe sanitation workshops



The view as our teachers walk to their catchments for outdoor workshops

FINANCE:

Financial Review and Reserves Policy

Freedom to Learn currently has no outstanding debts or capital.

We keep enough reserves to enable us to ensure that we meet our existing obligations to pay the staff who run our existing programmes for a minimum of 3 months, including the most essential materials.

Most of our income and expenditure is through project funding, and is therefore preallocated to specific costs. We are very careful as trustees not to commit to future expenditure that we cannot afford, and for the coming financial year we foresee no problems.

The Trustees have signed off this year's Financial Statement. It has been independently checked in line with regulations for charities with an income of over £20,000 ready for filing with The Charity Commission by 30th April 2022

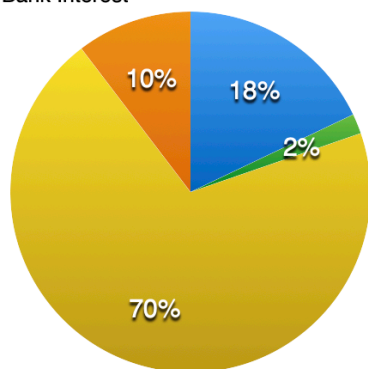
Governance, Organisational Structure and Trustees

Freedom to Learn is run in accordance with our Memorandum of Articles and Association and, as a small organisation, all our trustees play a very active and vital role in the running of the charity.

Dr Mark Cristian Owen, Director of the Winchester Centre of Reconciliation and Peace, continues to be Chair of Trustees. We are grateful to draw on the systems expertise of Paul Kinnon and development and peace building expertise of Jamie Creswell on our board of Trustees.

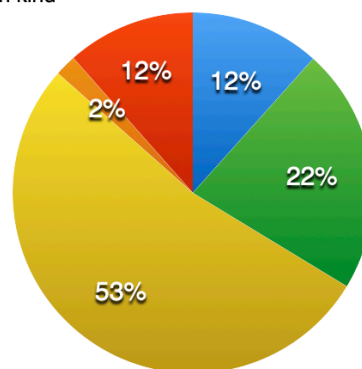
Trustees are elected by existing trustees on the basis of a majority vote. The new Trustees are elected by a majority, and rotation of positions is done in line with our Articles. New trustees are given training and information on their legal obligations as a charity trustee, and are strongly encouraged to attend external training where possible. Our day to day operations are run by our UK based Project Manager. Since June 2018 we have employed a Fundraising and Development Manager. We also currently employ a Nepal based Project Manager. All staff are self-employed and invoice us on a monthly basis dependent on project funding.

- Public fundraising
- Grants
- Bank Interest
- Regular donations
- In kind



Total Monetary Income £79,644.27

- Staff Wages
- Education Projects
- In kind
- PEIP Project
- Core Running Costs



Total Expenditure: £71,686.62



Income and Expenditure Account 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

Income		
Fundraising	£14,280.86	
Grants	£55,686.86	
Gifts in Kind	£8,250.00	*
Regular Donations	£1,422.00	
Bank Interest	£4.55	
		£79,644.27
Less Expenditure		
Projects:		
Rural Community	£37,752.53	
UBI	£15,727.80	
	£53,480.33	
Freedom to Learn Wages	£13,440.00	
Incuive Office Rental	£3,520.00	
Insurance and Professional Fees	£372.67	
Website	£316.80	
Accountancy	£250.00	
Fundraising Expenses	£105.82	
Bank Charges	£101.00	
Training	£100.00	
		£71,686.62
Surplus of Income over Expenditure		£7,957.65

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2021

Current Assets		
Business Money Manager Account	£39,935.41	
Community Account	£6,368.57	
		£46,303.98
Current Liabilities		
		£0.00
Net Current Assets		£46,303.98
Financed by		
Accumulated Fund Brought Down on 1 July 2020		£38,346.33
Surplus of Expenditure over Income for the Year		£7,957.65
		£46,303.98

* Gifts in Kind broken down as follows:

Activities:		
Aimee Foster - Social Media Manager	£5,120.00	
Tamsyn Beach - Bookkeeper	£250.00	£5,370.00
		Based on 12 hours per month Year End Fee
Office Expenses:		
Incuive - 2 Free Desk for 12 Months	£2,880.00	£2,880.00
		£8,250.00

Freedom to Learn
Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of the charity, Freedom to Learn, for the year ended 30th June 2021, as set out in this report.

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 43 (2) of the Charities Act 1993) and that instead an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under Section 43 (3) (a) of the 1993 Act;
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under Section 43 (7) (b) of the 1993 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissions. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by Freedom to Learn and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes a consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

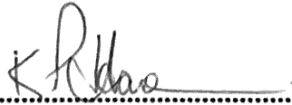
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the following requirements have not been met:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 41 of the 1993 Act;
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act.

or;

2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to reach a proper understanding of the accounts.

Signature



Name

K.P. HARRIMAN

Profession

COMPANY DIRECTOR

Address

10 PLANTATION

EVERTON LYNNINGTON HANTS SO410JU

Date

15/12/21

As Chair of Trustees, I am once again extremely pleased to endorse this report, which clearly demonstrates the significant achievements of our staff, and the young people, teachers and parents engaged in our programmes.

As with so many organisations in 2020-21, our work has been dominated by negotiating the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Restrictions both in the UK and Nepal inevitably impacted on our operational timetable and nature of engagement; with many activities being switched to remote working and requiring rescheduling. However, the ingenuity and resilience of everyone involved in the projects meant that (unsurprisingly for the trustees), once again it has been a year of achievements and progress for the inspiring schools and communities we are fortunate enough to work with.

This report clearly demonstrates how much can be achieved with relatively few resources, if allied to excellent staff, hard work, and determination. As trustees our sincere gratitude goes to our primary donors in 2020-21, the Italian Buddhist Union and the Erach and Roshni Foundation: their willingness to allow us to modify our working practices in response to the pandemic is hugely appreciated, and demonstrates a wisdom and willingness beyond simply adhering to organisational procedures and principles. We very much look forward to continuing our association with these excellent organisations.

The global nature of future challenges (the pandemic and the climate crisis being two significant examples) has once again emphasised the inequitable and discriminatory nature of global structures and systems. Whilst developed countries have the luxury of vaccines, furlough schemes, and sea defences, many of the poorest people in the world are disproportionately impacted by global crises. Access to, and quality of, education can play a significant role in readdressing the balance of global inequities and injustice; and was one of the primary reasons why FtL was founded.

It is perhaps important to remind ourselves periodically of why we do this work, and on behalf of the trustees I would once again like to thank our hugely talented and dedicated staff, donors and supporters, and volunteers for all their hard work. We would also like to thank the young people we work with for giving us the opportunity to support them, and to contribute in some small way to tackling the global challenges we all face together.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M Owen', written on a white background.

Prof Mark Owen