

(Chunawar, Pugmo, Ringmo). This way, they can inform the residents of their times of presence.

The summer half year of 2018 was very intense, Pasang says. Part of her job is caring for the children of the Taprizza School. Sometimes the nurses go to the school, or the children come to the health post to receive treatment. Pasang and Kalsang have treated and disinfected many small injuries and scrapes, cured gastro-intestinal problems with the respective medicines and soothed eczemas and insect bites with the right ointments.

The adults who consult the health post, often suffer from headaches, lung problems and – like the children – from gastro-intestinal problems. There are many other difficulties. Sometimes our healthcare professionals cannot solve the medical problem themselves and have to refer the patient. For those affected, this means a two-day hike to Dunai to the state hospital, in the hope that there is a doctor there, who can help. If not, then, after the long march, they also have to take on a flight to Nepalgunj or Kathmandu. In practice this means: when seriously ill, it can take days until the patient receives an adequate treatment. In addition, the costs for the families become very high.

A further important task of Pasang Dolma is the assistance of women in pregnancy and during birth. In Dolpo, most women give birth at home. The danger that child and/or mother die in childbirth is high. Therefore, it is very important that the healthcare professionals are also trained as midwives.

Sex education is a very important part of Pasang's and Kalsang's work. They give short courses at the school and in the villages. Pasang spent one afternoon talking to young women about menstruation. Every young wom-

an gets a packet of sanitary towels as a present. Sanitary towels usually are not available in remote places in Nepal. The women have to help themselves with cloth. Often, menstruation is also seen as something dirty and impure. During their period, women are not allowed to share mealtimes with the others or have to live outside the living space used by others. Awareness still needs to be raised on this issue.

It is already the end of September and soon time will stand still in Dolpo. Beginning of November, the health post goes into hibernation, all medicines are packed up well and the rooms are secured for winter. The two nurses spend the winter months in Kathmandu. Pasang and Kalsang would like to further educate themselves during this time. We would like to support them and are looking for financing possibilities.

Events

Encounter with the mountain nomads of Kirgistan: Picture presentation by board member Claudia Schmid, Friday 8th February 2019, 7.30 p.m., Tibet Songtsen House.

Culture and Kitchen in Nepal: Picture presentation by Gabi Tautscher, Friday 29th March 2019, 7.30 p.m., Tibet Songtsen House. www.songtsenhouse.ch

General Assembly: The Taprizza NGO General Assembly takes place on Friday, **28th June 2019**, 7.30 p.m., in the Quartiertreff Hirslanden, Forchstrasse 248, 8032 Zurich, Tram 11 to Burgwies.

In the Tibetan earth-pig-year we wish you luck and prosperity.

The Taprizza Team



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NEWSLETTER 2019



20 years Taprizza School – Anniversary Festivities

The Taprizza School celebrates its 20 years of existence with visitors from Switzerland. Board member Pascal Stern writes about the celebration that will stay in our memories.

The day before the jubilee celebrations, work is still being carried out on the roof of the stage in the school yard in front of the multi-purpose building. Next to it, tents are set up in which the pupils can put on their dance costumes. The stage is much bigger than the one for the 10 years anniversary celebration back then. The work seems routine, everybody knows what to do. Otherwise, it is actually rather quiet at the school. The students have a day off before the celebration to prepare for their performance. 27 different presentations are on the program, and everybody wants to give their best.

Our Dolpo-Mugu-trekking-group from Switzerland also wants to contribute to the festivities of the Taprizza School. We decide on Swiss folk songs. Magda, our choir leader in the group, rehearses various well-known songs in Swiss dialect with us. But we are not all convinced that the ambitious canon will work. We are all a bit nervous, but the attitude prevails: participate bravely and then it will be fun.

In the afternoon, more and more parents arrive at the school. Some of them have undertaken long marches on

foot to attend the big anniversary celebration of Taprizza School. In the school yard, which used to be dust and earth and is now covered with stone slabs, long boards lie in rows for seating. We, the Swiss delegation, are allowed to sit on the specially provided school benches. Parents, relatives, invitees, residents of Pugmo and Ringmo are sitting next to and behind us, eagerly awaiting the children's performances.

It slowly gets darker, the stage is decorated with wonderful fabrics and lit up with solar light. The curtains open and Ram Chandra, deputy school manager, opens the celebrations for the 20 years anniversary. In the following hours, we experience a very diverse program with traditional Tibetan and Nepali dances and lots of singing. The pupils perform in wonderfully coloured costumes and traditional dresses, some of them probably specially sewn for this occasion. The girls wear beautiful jewellery and wonderful broaches, the boys hats and colourful shirts. The night is starlit and very cold. The parents, including grandparents, sit with their youngest children on the floorboards on the school yard wrapped in blankets. Ram Chandra guides everyone through the program skilfully. Between the individual performances, the incoming donations of the parents are read out. The donations are a form of appreciation for the performances of their children and the accomplishment of the

Photos (Claudia Schmid, Cornelia Klemme, Dawa Dhondup Lama, Semduk Lama)

- 1 School manager Semduk Lama with students (CS)
- 2 The visitors arrive at the school. (DL)
- 3 Traditional dancers (SL)
- 4 The students concentrate... (CK)
- 5 ... and are busy reading. (CK)
- 6 Taprizza student Parvati Shah is the best school graduate from Dolpo. (SL)
- 7 Class 10 students are honoured at the celebration. (SL)
- 8 During morning prayers (CS)
- 9 Pasang Dolma and her son Paliyor (CS)
- 10 Pasang and Kalsang at work (CS)
- 11 Participants during the event on menstruation (CS)





school. And the contributions are many.

Now it is our turn. We climb the stage as a group of 13 and are pretty nervous. But when we start singing “es Burebüebli” [a farm boy] and it goes “mal ufe, mal abe” [up and down], we lose our embarrassment and gain momentum. We are filmed by various cell phone cameras in the audience that visibly enjoys the Swiss folk songs very much. With big applause we leave the stage and make room for the dancers, who begin the next performance with great expressiveness. The celebrations will go on for a while for the pupils, parents and teachers, but our BergFrau.ch trekking group says goodbye, because we leave the school the next morning for Ringmo

Everyday life of students and parents

Carla Mom, a long-time supporter of the Taprizia School, visited the school together with others in the anniversary year. She describes her impressions of the children, the lessons and the life of the parents.

In September and October 2018, we visit Taprizia School for the 20th anniversary. In addition to joining the festivities, we can sit into all the classes and participate in the

everyday school life for one and a half days. We see many attentive faces and of course just as many side-glances on us.

Already in first kindergarten year, the children learn three alphabets: Nepali, Tibetan and English. That is quite challenging. The children sing songs to help them memorise all three alphabets. They already write their first letters – some of them write the letters mirror inverted just like our children do.

In the second year of kindergarten, the children make their first learning experiences with English. The lama sits on the floor with the children. He holds crayons in his hand, which he distributes to the children: “Is this your pen?” he asks. Or: “Are you Semduk Lama [Semduk is the Taprizia School manager].” The question – that the children have to negate in English of course – causes a lot of laughter.

Afterwards we visit a math lesson, which is given in Nepali. The teachers has written X and y on the board – apparently it is an assignment in algebra. It is exiting to see how the children participate and eagerly raise their hands. Then we have the opportunity to participate in the natural science lesson. We use postcards that we brought from Switzerland and talk about seasons, climate and weather with the older pupils.

Some students of the Taprizia School exchange letters with a school class in Zurich. They write each other in English and send drawings of topics they are currently dealing with.

Our school visit remains interesting and enjoyable. It is impressive to experience how much the pupils seem to like learning.

In the following days, we hike from village to village. It is harvest season, and the people are working hard on their fields. Everybody needs to join in and help, so some school children also come home at weekends to do fieldwork. The harvest has to be brought in as quickly as possible. Everywhere we meet parents of pupils, who welcome us wholeheartedly and invite us to very good local food. We are offered buckwheat bread and potato-pumpkin curry. We are also beckoned to test the local beer and self-distilled spirits. Everywhere parents thank us for our support of the Taprizia School. They are grateful and proud that their children can go to school. In the evening we are spoiled with music and dance. Thanks to Semduk Lama, we can visit many households and talk to the people about their customs and cultural heritage. We are even allowed to attend a wedding, which we greatly enjoy. We will remember our visit to Dolpo and to Taprizia School as a very interesting and joyful time.

News from the health projects

Together with our school manager Semduk Lama and a local team, Claudia Schmid led our groups of visitors in Dolpo. She took out time to visit our health care projects and to document the current situation.

The health post in Chunawar is very close to the Taprizia School right next to the campsite, where we stop on our trekking tour and pitch our tents.

The nurse Pasang Dolma and her son Paljyor cordially welcome me. I saw her last two years ago, when her son was only a few months old. Ever since Pasang Dolma has been a mother herself, the local women and men have more confidence in her. She appreciates this very much, and it gives her the certitude to carry out her work. Pasang gains more and more experience from year to year and enjoys her work. She seems to have found her vocation. Since the beginning of 2018, Passang is supported by Kalsang, a young man who graduated from Taprizia School and trained as a health assistant in Kathmandu. He is back in his home district and shares the job with Pasang Dolma. They have become an excellent team. At the beginning of every month, they draw up a plan of who works where and when at one of the three health posts in the region

