AUTUMN
2026

Shanti Leprahilfe
Dortmund e.V.

NEWSLETTER

ISSUED AUTUMN 2026

A CHILDREN'S SONG

A piece for you, a piece for me
Who shares their cake, will be fed in spite of that!
We know that a place is free in our boat when misery strikes.
Chorus: II: Together we will sail through all storms of time :II

Many a house was flooded by the waters
Many lost their roof and shirt,
But there are many who help throughout the land
They relieve misery and reach out with their hands.

A piece for you, a piece for me…

Many are in pains when ill or old
Another hopes to find a job soon.
But there are many who help throughout the land
They relieve misery and reach out with their hands.

A piece for you, a piece for me…

Many came from far away and do not know where to stay
Another is looking for the sense, in vain.
But there are many who help throughout the land
They relieve misery and reach out with their hands.

A piece for you, a piece for me…

Lorenz Maierhofer (published in German in 2012)

(A dear friend sent us this children's song just after the flood disaster)

Shanti Lepрahilfe
Dortmund e.V.

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE SHANTI-FAMILY,

It was at the end of August, and the autumn letter to you was almost finished. One more short paragraph. But then: On 26 August, reports about the sudden flood disaster created by the Bhote river reached the media. Every day, the TV news showed us the disturbing images – images the extent of which we do not know in our country. I think you have all seen these photos and videos.

During the first days, we received many emails and phone calls in our offices: Everyone, startled and with compassion (if that's what we are able to feel from such a distance), wanted to know if and to what extent Shanti was affected? And many sent money immediately for the first relief measures. This was heart-warming and we are very grateful – because this sent us the message that we are supported in whatever we are going to do from the beginning!

Our station was not directly affected – thank God! The destruction halted about 60 km in the north-east. Three rivers meeting on the Nepalese side of Nepal's border to China burst their banks over a distance of 100 kilometres! Within the first half hour, the waters rose by frightening seven metres. The glacier that had broken down was about 700 metres long and 1000 metres wide. The waters rushed through the valley at a speed of 160 km/h.

Shanti immediately did what we could to help the survivors quickly and efficiently – as far as we could. The government had refused any help from foreign countries during four long, unnerving days. Not even the organisations based in Nepal were not allowed to help in any way, at first.

When the great flooding happened in Germany in the Ahr valley in July 2021, immediately help came in from the Federal Agency for Technical Relief, fire brigades, the Red Cross and so on, and many, many private helpers and organisations – a fact which makes us aware that we have enough reasons to be glad here in Germany – gratefulness for encompassing organised and spontaneous solidarity and helpfulness. In every disaster, we can experience this in Germany, again and again, which gives us a good feeling.

I will tell you more of some shining examples from private side later.

SHANTI'S FIRST CHANCE TO HELP

Only the police and the Army began to become active in Nepal at first. But at Shanti, we have a wonderful advisor, Uttam Niraula, the husband of our manager, Apsara. He is a lecturer of human rights at the University of Kathmandu, advising not only us, but a number of government members, too.

This brings it about that the government trusts us and allowed us to lend first help without taking the official route via the authorities issuing permits, which would have delayed everything. I think the one or other responsible person still remembered our help campaign after the earthquake in 2015.

So on the first day after the flood we started to pack relief products and send them to the area of disaster. Which included, from our stock for emergencies: sleeping bags, mosquito net, food, clothing, hygienic products, medicine.

Nobody had been able to take anything with them when they fled in a hurry. They had lost everything, except the clothes they carried on them. The flood waters and mountains of mud had taken everything away – including their identity papers and necessary medicine some had to take.

We distributed six „PAUL"s. You may remember the "Portable Aqua Units for Livesaving" which can filter at least 1,200 litres a day of bad and dirty water into pure drinking water of a purity of 98 percent.

The survivors are brought to 25 reception centres – not too far from the disaster area, but safe enough. This is a distance of 60 km and three hours for our team. Most of the roads in Nepal are risky anyway (as you can see in our video film, details on the last page of our letter). But the flooding had made many roads simply unpassable. Many relief products could only be transported by helicopter, dropping them at various places, during the first few days.

We are grateful to the military men who managed to clear the roads within a few days. We were soon able to reach the survivors with our fully packed cars. Our Shanti team, well-adjusted to working together, will drive to one of the reception centres, taking everything with them which is necessary: from the sleeping bag to food, from nutrition to the important medicine for chronically or acutely ill people. Then we will look for the next centre and what to bring there. In the meantime, many other organisations are helping with the relief measures.

For us, the main thing is not only the physical aid, but also that the survivors in Shanti's helpers meet people who can imagine their needs in a friendly and compassionate way, trying to help them in the best possible way. Our medical team cares for the injured, issuing new medicine because their own medicine has been lost in the floods, advising the people who have lost their identity documents, and more.

Every day brings new tasks. I am in phone contact with our team members several times a day, becoming aware, again and again, that they are encouraged when I tell them that you, dear friends, stand by our side, you support all the relief measures which come to the aid of those people who have suffered so much.

FIGURES ...??

Since 26 August, every day changed the figures – upwards mostly, unfortunately. Today, 12 September, a total of 5,132 people are being missed on the Nepalese side, and approximately 550 people on the Tibetan side. The death toll is 1,354 – until now. Nobody knows how many people were saved.

You may have the same problem as I have during such disasters: The figures are so overdimensioned, so incredible that I feel that there is something like an invisible wall between the figures and me. But I can react immediately when I hear of the pain some individual persons have to suffer.

Sunita, one of our most experienced and warm-hearted kindergarten teachers, told me about a new orphanage we installed in one of the reception centres near the disaster area. She was still shaken by the fate of the 7-year old Shakti Man and his 12-year old sister Bina. Their mother ran up the hill with him and two smaller siblings, away from the flood. "Quick, quick", she cried again and again, showing with her hands up the hill. A wave took the two small children, and another wave took the mother. Until the last moment, the mother cried to Shakti Man that he should "run, run!" Then she disappeared.

He ran as fast as he could, desperately holding on to this schoolbag. The waving of his mother pushed him forward. A wave got to him but then he saw a long, thick tuft of grass. He let loose of the

schoolbag and held on to this tuft of grass before he was flushed away. He held fast until somebody drew him away, to safer grounds. He can still see the hands his mother waved before his inner eye. His big sister was saved because she did not take the school bus but a shortcut through the jungle by foot, some distance above the danger zone.

Sunita tries to paint with the children in the new orphanage, for them to overcome the traumatic experience. One of the girls was unable to paint, she could only write: I miss you my family, Aana, Baba, Grandmother, Grandfather ...

Another story is incredible, too. Rajendra Dawadi was the director of a large school in which he was a schoolboy once himself. Two or three people warned him when they passed him, urgently, only some minutes before the flood arrived. He regarded the warnings as sincere, and was able to get all the teachers and children in tow to run with him up the hill before it would be too late. A total of 1,643 children were thus saved! When he turned around, up there in a safe height, the huge school complex was totally immersed in the floods. We fear that all the parents and grandparents of those children have died in the floods.

Another story, which leaves us grateful, is that of a married couple, both with handicaps and only a little money, has succeeded in cooking large pots of meals, giving food to 20 survivors! Which is a shining light in the suffocating darkness.

NEXT STEPS

We plan to take the smallest hildren and those up to 10 years out of the reception centres to Shanti in order to better care for them. We intend to mix the children, Shanti children and children being traumatized by the flood, in order to help them to avoid turning their thoughts and feelings and conversations always around the things they had to see and feel. We have some wonderful dancing and musical teachers who will care for them with special compassion, so that the darkness in them can be replaced with something light and shining.

Real trouble is the fact that the children cannot be identified easily. The small ones do not know their names, as in Nepal they are not called by their name, but by a loving "Babu" (small boy) or "Nani" (small girl). They cannot tell us the names of their parents, as they know them only as "Ama" (Mummy) and "Baba" (Daddy), like in any family!

I hope that the Social Media and television can help here, and post the photos there. You may recall that the same thing happened when the Red Cross in Germany searched for children after Second World War. With their help at last ten thousands of children could be reunited with their parents.

COOKING - BUT HOW?

One problem is the cooking energy. Gas has become so expensive that nobody can buy it anymore. The Energy Minister ordered the gas bottles to be only half filled for the same money in order to conceal the price increase. This did not help the people, and we fear that they will start to fell trees in order to have wood for the cooking fire. This was normal in former times.

But in Nepal, too, people are starting to become aware that more landslides will come if the climate changes because of the lack of trees which hold the soil together. The falling off of the glacier was one of the consequences of the climate change.

The government hopes to mend the situation by induction hotplates from China. They tried these after the earthquake, but you need special pots for these plates, and nobody had them. So the people

did not use the hotplates. The latest version of the hotplates can be used with the regular pots, however. But: How does that work?

Here our friend, Sangita Shresta, is a big help. She owns a 5-star hotel in Kathmandu. I asked her, and she agreed with her chef to teach the people to cook on these hotplates. He cooked the Nepalese standard meal „dhalbat", showing this in a video, and distributing the video in the networks. Everybody, man or woman, can learn how to cook with these hotplates, making gas and firewood superfluous! Nepal has enough electric energy by sunpower and water.

We can therefore hope that our fruit trees will not end beneath some cooking pots, but can supply everybody with vitamins, hold the soil together, give shadow and be a home for the birds. More than 30,000 trees have been added this season!

VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The Nepalese people will suffer from disasters again and again in their country – only think of the terrible earthquake 11 years ago with a death toll of about 9,000. How often did we have to report of landslides and devastating floods – which mainly affected the poor, of course. The fact that we tried and try to stay by their side and help them makes us aware, again and again, how brave they are in these terrible circumstances, how they tackle life with much courage, how strong their will to rebuild what has been lost. That is why we hope – no: why we are confident – that they will manage a new beginning. We will help them to do so, with all our powers.

Now, Heiko discussed with Peter Effenberger how we can help the farmers who have lost everything. Peter is a Demeter farmer, living in Nepal for more than 15 years, and knowing all about the Nepalese situation. Peter suggested that as soon as the waters have drawn back and the farmers can till their land, they should form cooperatives. The method is the following: Several farmers work together, sharing the necessary big equipment for agriculture, such as small tractors, harrows etc. (one such tractor costs approximately 1,000 to 1,500 euros). We will replace the traditional sickles, hoes, buckets etc. the farmers owned.

The fathers of our all-round educated employee Dipendra is a blacksmith and has already made some iron ploughshares to our complete satisfaction. I had taken a sample from Germany to Nepal some years ago. He is happy to get a big order, being able to employ some helpers, too. They create some jobs for the untouchable blacksmiths, who are ostracized by society!

We will also buy new buffaloes for the farmer families as their manure is absolutely necessary to make the land fertile again. You can buy a buffalo at roughly the same price as a new tractor. But at first we will give every family ten of the robust, Nepalese chicken – their eggs will give them the needed protein.

What we most hope is that there is a result from this flood disaster: That Nepal must get independent from food imports from China and India.

That is also the case with the importation of artificial fertilizers. The farmers cannot even afford these as the global market prices have gone over the top since Mr. Trump has ordered to bomb the nitrogen works in the Middle East.

We were very happy to hear that the Bingenheimer Saatgut AG will give us the seeds for the valuable vegetables for free. Every bit of the seeds the farmers had was lost in the floods, too.

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Dortmund e.V.

Dear friends, I cannot thank you enough for everything you do to support us! You save us and the people in Nepal from despairing in the face of the extent of the disaster. Your trust in our work helps us to be hopeful and full of new courage.

Stay protected – you and your families!

Marianne Grosspietsch