

Nepal knitters newsletter

April 2014

Number 14

Hello to all the Nepal Knitters,

Another year has passed since I sent a newsletter, I hope everyone is well and had a good Christmas.

Ross and I returned from Nepal in March after spending 5 months there. Ross was kept busy reviewing the progress of projects as well as assessing the viability of new project applications such as

- A water driven grinding mill to grind corn and millet for women in remote villages
- Bio gas units using human and animal waste to make methane gas for cooking stoves.
- Repair of classrooms in various villages
- Construction of new classrooms
- Repair of a water driven turbine that generates electricity to a small village

Each Saturday I visit a children's home where I continue to teach craft, I have been doing this for 10 years and the children who first joined the program have now grown up into lovely young women. I have about 15 children who attend the craft class each week, including three boys. The boys enjoy crocheting and make items such as fingerless gloves, bed covers, head and armbands. I also teach knitting, beading and patchwork to the girls. They enjoy making items for themselves such as crocheted jackets, ponchos, bags, slippers and hats. They also make presents for their friends such as beaded earrings and crocheted pencil bags. The girls are able to make these things for themselves with patterns.

This year we have distributed

650 jumpers and 700 beanies

A summary of where we distributed jumpers this year

- We distributed jumpers at a home for about 35 disabled adults and children, many of whom are in wheelchairs or confined to bed. These people have either been abandoned by the families or cannot live in the family home due to lack of wheelchair access or nursing support. They are a lovely group of people the younger ones attend a school on the property.
- A family from Brisbane funded a project to bring water to a village and school. The 4 Aussie children, their mum and their grandmother helped us distribute 130 jumpers and beanies to the school students. The children looked lovely in their brightly coloured jumpers, the excitement level was quite high. We had a great day, they also brought

bottles of bubbles and the school children had a lot of fun, never seen 'bubbles' before and they enjoyed jumping and trying to catch the shiny bubbles.

- Two years ago we distributed jumpers to the small village of Lumsa where we have funded a number of projects such as Micro Hydro for the village electricity and repair of classrooms. This year we returned to the village to assess the projects and handed out 140 jumpers and beanies. We like to wait a few years before redistributing jumpers because by then we know the previous jumpers will be well worn and possibly passed down to a younger sibling or cousin. Nothing is discarded or wasted, even jumpers with holes in the elbows are worn and kept as an undergarment.
- We delivered jumpers and beanies to two new villages. I wish I could share with you the excitement and wonder when we open the bags and start to hand out lovely, colourful and well knitted jumpers and beanies. It is especially exciting when we distribute in a village for the first time. The parents can't believe their luck, to get something which otherwise they would have need to buy for their child.
- A sad story at BESDEC orphanage, a fire broke out in their storage room during the night and destroyed everything there. Fortunately the children were not harmed, but it was coming into winter and they had lost most of their winter garments. We were pleased to help and fitted the 28 children with jumpers and beanies.

We only distribute to children's homes and schools where we have a relationship, we like to fit a jumper to each child to make sure everyone receives one.

Before we hand out the jumpers and beanies to any group of people we explain to them, through interpreters, how we received the articles. We explain that all the jumpers and beanies are knitted with love and care by many women in Australia. We say that the knitters are all volunteers who enjoy making these articles and want to make the lives of children in Nepal a little better.

A message to our new knitters

There are a few things I like to explain to our new knitters. In Nepal mothers like to wrap their babies in traditional clothing so we do not take over any baby clothes. When we hand out the jumpers the mothers ask for jumpers a few sizes bigger than the child, this is so the garment can last a few years. Nepal has a very cold winter and the village children wear many layers of tattered clothing and the new jumper is pulled over all the existing clothing.

It is for these reasons that we prefer to take larger jumpers for children from age 4 to adult.

To make this program worthwhile, we try to keep our costs down. We have to send all the jumpers and beanies by air to Kathmandu and without the airlines help with the freight we could not continue this program. With this limited amount of free freight each year we have to limit ourselves to sending only jumpers and beanies. We are unable to take scarves, blankets, socks or used clothing.

Jumper sizes

Your jumpers and beanies are wonderful, they are bright and cheerful and gratefully received. We mainly give jumpers to school age children and therefore we need jumpers to fit children from age 4 to about age 15. Therefore the minimum chest size for the smallest jumper should be no less than 33cm across the front or 66cm in circumference.

Mums over there, as well as here, like to get clothes a bit big for their child so that they will last two or three years – because of this the larger sizes are very popular.

Most knitting patterns are fine, but some are a little short in the body – this is a guide on the size of jumpers we need and the approx length.

Underarm measurement of the front	Length from shoulder
33 cm or 13 inches	45 cm or 18 inches
35 cm or 14 inches	47 cm or 19 inches
40 cm or 16 inches	51 cm or 20 inches
44 cm or 17.5 inches	56 cm or 22 inches
48 cm or 19 inches	62 cm or 24 inches
51 cm or 20 inches	65 cm or 25.5 inches

Your discarded things – our gems

Thanks you so much for your wonderful response to this appeal. I continue to collect any unwanted haberdashery items. I use some of these items when teaching craft and sewing in Nepal. The craft students love the bigger size buttons to decorate the things they make (20c piece or bigger), so if you have any of those which you don't want I would be grateful if you could add them to your knitting bags.

Your discarded costume jewellery comes in useful as I can use the beads to remake necklaces, bracelets and earrings which I sell at markets, the money we make goes back to our organization. Lightweight plastic beads I take to Nepal for the craft lessons. The students get a big thrill from being able to make necklaces and earrings for themselves and their school friends.

I really appreciate you sending me any of your discarded jewellery or large buttons but please don't go out and buy things, keep your money for wool.

Don't forget to put your name in the bag with the jumpers
so we can maintain our knitters list and keep it up to date for the newsletter.

As usual I have included a page of photos of the children and their jumpers. I hope you are able to spot one of your jumpers in the crowd. If you have access to the internet you

can view more photos on facebook – Nafa knitters – you are welcome to become a ‘friend’ on facebook.

We continue to do information talks to clubs, women’s groups and retirement villages. I have been traveling to Nepal for over 28 years and enjoy sharing my experiences with others. This information talk with slides shows the beautiful countryside, the mountains, how the people live and their diverse culture.

I give these talks to entertain and inform people about our organization and Nepal.

I also bring along some Nepalese craft items for sale however we do not expect or pressure our audience to buy our craft goods or give donations.

Our parent organization Nepal Australia Friendship Association is a Brisbane based charity run by volunteers. We are a non religious and non political association who try to help the people of Nepal improve their lives. We raise money for our projects by selling goods at our craft market stalls

If you would like us to come and give your organisation an interesting and informative talk
(with no fund raising obligations)

please contact me at the below address or phone 3207 4774

Drop off points for knitting

Brenda Hazelwood	22 Leicester Street, Birkdale 4159 Ph 07 3207 4774 Email nafasec@hotmail.com
Deb Setterlund	4/95 Coolibah Str, Bardon 4065 Ph 3366 1826
Helen Zada	10 Red Gum Court, Warner 4500, 38820028 (Pick up for Redcliffe and Deception Bay)
Carol Davis	14 Richmond Street, Gordon Park 4031 Ph. 3857 4477
Wendy Eastwell	66 Blackstone Street Indooroopilly 4068 Ph. 33788270
Jim Drapes	Peregrine Travel and Backtrack Adventures, 222a Barry Parade, Fortitude Valley , 4006. Ph. 3850 7655

If you need any more information or need to contact us with any queries, please feel free to call me, or if I am not at home, either Deb or Helen.

Brenda Hazelwood