

Sikkim Himalayan Academy - News

April/May 2010

When Jannie asked if I'd write a newsletter to review the events and experiences of my trip to the Sikkim Himalayan Academy and the Myal Lyang Academy (Dzongu, north Sikkim), I'd imagined myself, sometime in the future, looking through all my photos and rattling-off a nice little account of my many fond memories. But this, of course, is so difficult to do. Two months after my return, I still love looking through all my photos - and they do speak volumes about daily life at the school, the joy that simply emanates from the students, and of the experience of visiting Sikkim. So, I've decided to let them do the talking.



Malcolm Grant

News in Brief

Sikkim Himalayan Academy:

Lemit & Nimphuti (Class 8) passed the entrance exam for Dr Graham's School

New computer delivered (support is also on-hand - local firm)

New Sony stereo system was purchased (for cultural activities)

Favoured candidate accepted offer to replace Jamyang (School Principal)

Biggest turn-out yet (parents & guardians) for the school's cultural programme

Annamika's family celebrated a milestone in her new baby's life (eating rice)

Adam (volunteer) started planning a greenhouse with GS

(Heard just this week that greenhouse now complete)

Myal Lyang (Dzongu):

Teachers seized the chance to learn about UK teaching from me

Jannie approved funds for the purchase of a cow (students will learn to milk it)

Life in Sikkim



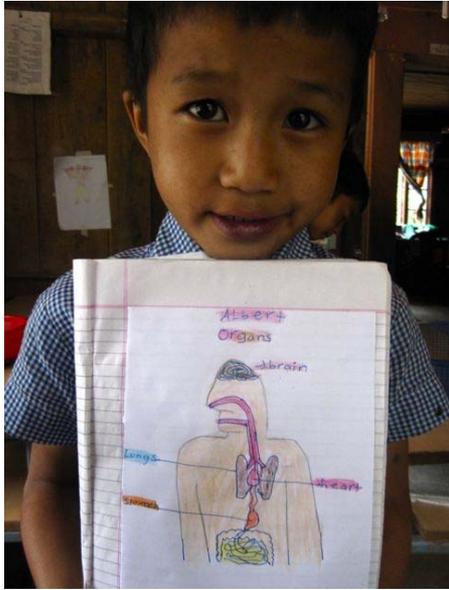
Transport



Volunteer accommodation



Lessons



The students love to learn through creative and hands-on activities



H	E	A	R
S	P	T	S
U	I	O	E
N	C	E	T

Word games are popular too

Teachers



Teacher training meeting at MLA

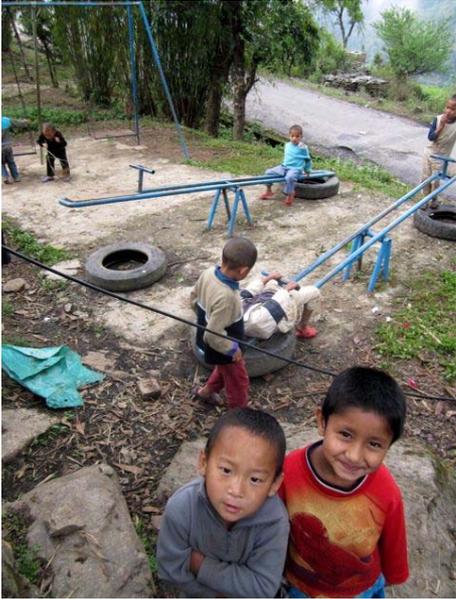


Teachers and cooks at SHA

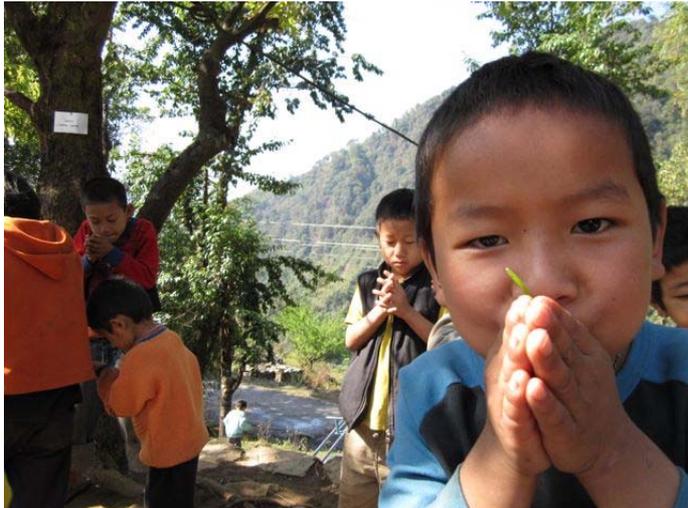


Loden, Jannie and Teachers at MLA

Time off



Simply, having fun



Learning to make grass whistle



Celebrating the arrival of the new stereo

Looking after people and places



Cultural Celebration



Class 3 and 4 girls are transformed



Gyatcho (right) bravely volunteers to tackle a female role



The lower school perform



Cultural Celebration



One of the incredible masks crafted by Lopen (teacher)



Adam and I with characters from the stories we read to students at bedtime



Jumping for joy at the end of the show

Time together & time to go



Meeting past pupils at Dr Graham's



One of many walks



Campfire and marshmallows at MLA



Leaving MLA

Future developments



Jannie and Jamyang review the architect's plans for a new school building. The hostel is to be built as a matter of priority, to improve sleeping, medical and washing facilities.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank the staff and students at both the SHA and MLA for their warmth and generosity throughout my visit. The sense behind using education as a lifeline to safeguard Sikkim's children and its culture is totally compelling. The dedication with which the staff and students set themselves to this work is truly impressive. The manner in which they overcome local difficulties and keep pressing-on is simply humbling.

Thanks to Jannie for her good company and for the invitations to join her on some of her 'missions'. And finally, thanks also to Magi for her assistance in planning my visit.

Malcolm Grant PhD, MSc