



The
Umbrella
Foundation

3rd Quarter Newsletter 2017



Dear friends,

Monsoon is a time of renewal in Nepal - of fields, of rivers and, at festival time, of families - but it can also be a time of challenges. This year has brought widespread flooding in the South of the country, the worst for a number of years. For a country still recovering from the earthquake in 2015, this has caused a lot of additional stress and strain to many people. Fortunately, none of the children or families supported by Umbrella were affected by the floods, however that does not take away from the impact on communities who have lost their homes and fields. Whilst Umbrella have not been directly involved in the relief efforts, we have offered advice and suggestions to organisations and individuals wanting to help.

Come sun or cloud, earthquakes or floods, life at Umbrella continues onwards. In this quarter we have shifted our central office in Kathmandu to another location just 5 minutes away - we have been part of the community in Swoyambhu for 12 years and are happy to stay here. There are now just 11 children living in the childcare homes, with more having left and graduated into the Next Steps Education Programme in June this year. But the number of children we support in our other programmes remains steady, so we are still very busy day-to-day.

As the weather clears and gets cooler, we hope to see some of our wonderful friends and supporters in Nepal - as many of you know, it's a good time of year to visit! None of what we do would be possible without you so, from all at Umbrella, we send our thanks.

With gratitude,
Kyle Mohamed
Country Director

Dhulikhel Graduation Trip

Every year we organise a short yet thrilling adventure to celebrate the graduation of our youths from grade 10, and when they enter our NSEP youth program. This is significant as the Secondary Education Examinations (SEE)

are the hardest exams undertaken during compulsory education in Nepal. This year was no exception as we were greeted by a breathtaking view of the Kavrepalanchowk valley upon our arrival at Dhulikhel Lodge Resort.



The resort itself was charming, situated close to Dhulikhel old town, and the youth and staff were quick to explore the lush surroundings, taking many photos in the process. This was a theme that recurred throughout our time away and it is difficult to say how many ‘selfies’ (self-portrait photographs) were taken over the weekend. After a spot of energy from the lunch the boys went down to the nearby park and played a game of football while the girls continued their photo pilgrimage. Following that the umbrella entourage lined up for a delicious buffet, with some walking away with plates soaring to heights similar to the snow capped peaks of the Himalayas. Many jokes were told as everyone devoured their mountainous plates of food. The atmosphere was jolly as we all made our way into the conference room after a brief rest. There we began dancing to both Hindi and Western songs and the youth displayed their aptitude for recounting song lyrics word for word. Even the staff members embraced the music as we all danced together. If football hadn’t knackered the boys, dancing definitely did the job.



The next day we woke up to a sunny and relatively clear sky where it was possible to see the big hills in the far distance, which would most definitely be classed as mountains anywhere else in the world. After breakfast we all congregated onto the bus for a second time and made our way to Namobuddha monastery in the district of Kavre. Just like the resort everyone was delighted upon arrival and no expectations (or pictures) were left unfulfilled. The youth rejoiced in the fresh air as we traversed the holy site located on top of a big hill that overlooks the Himalayas. The monastery itself was stunning and designed in accordance with Tibet's famous architectural style, incorporating a lot of red and gold in particular. As we walked the steep steps of the monastery we discovered the noble history of Namobuddha, whereby the great being Semchen Chenpo gave up his life to save a starving tigress and her cubs. Overall the trip was a lovely way to celebrate all the hard work the youth have done in their their studies and we are already looking forward to next years adventure!





First Steps Program

We are proud to announce the commencement of the First Steps program, which has been designed as a direct response to feedback from our kids leaving the childcare homes. But before we talk about the program, we would like to acknowledge our friends at De Paraplu for their huge help in funding this exciting project - thank you so much for this additional funding!

This program is designed to improve the overall confidence and independence of the kids by increasing their abilities and skills in areas that older Umbrella kids have identified as being challenging for them when they leave the homes. For example, many of our kids have said they have struggled with navigating around Kathmandu - which is not surprising given the lack of information on bus routes! So, as part of this program, we will show them how to find this information, and then give them opportunities to practice. The specific areas we are working in are: Communication (inc. non-verbal communication skills), independent living skills (cooking, financial management, how to navigate in KTM, selecting colleges), health issues (Sexual reproductive health, substance abuse, hygiene) and personal & social development (Nepali culture/history/politics, gender issues, internet safety).

One thing we are really excited about is the introduction of mentors to our RCP kids. These mentors will act as big brothers and sisters to the kids, some are ex-Umbrella youths themselves, but most are from outside of Umbrella. This gives our young people access to a wider range of life experiences, and helps them build trust in someone who is not connected to Umbrella, which should help them in later life when it comes to building relationships. The skills mentioned above will be taught and discussed in familiar ways, for example through workshops, but then the learning will be reinforced through trips out with our mentors to allow the children to further discuss the issues, and to practice the skills. To use the example referred to above - about the kids travelling on buses - this would be discussed with all the children, then the children will go out individually with their mentors and practice using the buses to get around town. The aim is that learning these skills, and showing themselves and each other that they can do them, will lead to overall increases in confidence.

Yes, this does mean we are giving a bit more independence to our RCP kids than we have done before - and (as I guess is true for most guardians), this is a little bit scary for us! But it will be worth it to see our kids continue to grow.



Teej Festival

Teej festival is a moon festival which is celebrated yearly to remember the reunion of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. It is the only festival that is celebrated solely by females. Across Nepal, women and girls gather together, clad in traditional colourful dress to dance, sing and share stories over festive foods.

On August 18th, the women and girls of Umbrella spent the majority of the

morning beautifying themselves and dressing up in colourful, embellished saris and lengas. Everyone walked together to Evenpoint restaurant, which we had rented out for the day, to begin the Teej celebrations. On arrival, we ascended to the rooftop for a compulsory festive group photoshoot.

We then received a delicious traditional meal which consisted of momo's, pakoda, curried veg and rice. This would serve as fuel for the hours of dancing to follow.

We were then shown to a large function room, which would serve as our dancfloor for the evening. The girls took pleasure in taking turns DJ'ing. After hours of energetic Nepali dancing we hungrily made our way back to the rooftop where we chatted over another tasty meal. Tired and satisfied after the fun filled celebrations, the festivities came to an end and everybody said their goodbyes. Overall, the girls had a great day - the only downfall being that we have to wait a whole year to do it all again!



Thank you

On the 27th June 2017, The Umbrella Foundation were honoured to be invited to the launch of the Nepal Ireland Parliamentary Friendship group in Leinster House.

The group will explore areas in which Ireland and Nepal can collaborate. The invitation was extended by Maureen O'Sullivan TD and The Ceann Comhairle, Sean O Fearghail TD and we were joined by fellow members of the Nepal Ireland Society.



The Umbrella Foundation would like to thank Jane O'Rourke for hosting another successful Golf Classic this year. Jane and her friends raised €3855 on their day in Charlesland Gold Club, Greystones.





The Umbrella Foundation would like to thank Marion Megannety and her daughter Orna for hosting another annual Afternoon Tea in their home, in aid of The Umbrella Foundation. It looked like a great day!

Thank you to all our amazing donors, sponsors, volunteers & supporters. We look forward to updating you with more news next quarter!



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sponsorship@umbrellanepal.org

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