

THE LINK Newsletter

SPRING 2016

Clean Water to
NAOGOAN
FREE SCHOOL

Reconstruction
HINDERED
IN NEPAL



Walking Towards a Better Future

Six year old Apon lives with his parents in Naogoan, northwest Bangladesh. The family lives in a one room bamboo hut. Apon's father works as a labourer when work is available, but his income is low and irregular and not enough to meet their basic needs. There never seems to be enough food. When Apon's parents learned of International Needs' Free School in Naogoan they were overjoyed and decided to enroll him. Apon loves going to school. His parents are hopeful that Apon's education will help him escape the crushing poverty they have known.

The **Naogoan Free School** is located in northwest Bangladesh, in a rural area. The people who live in rural areas face debilitating poverty. Many of the children have no families or adults who care for them. Some work as day labourers in local factories or fields, while others live on the streets, sleeping wherever they find shelter. While the government subsidizes education, rural children are all but forgotten.

When International Needs opened the **Naogoan Free School**, the teachers and leaders simply invited anyone who wanted to learn to come to school. More than 250 children started coming to school every day to learn to read, write and do simple math. Today, there are over 400 children attending classes. The school teaches primary level education but needs to incorporate secondary education as most of its graduates cannot afford to attend secondary school elsewhere.

International Needs is seeking to move forward with the Naogoan Integrated Project by constructing a three-story building to expand its ministry to families in the region. This

expansion will include additional classes for secondary education, a resource library, a computer room, a chapel and recreation hall, a kitchen, dining hall, and a dormitory for 100 orphans and vulnerable children from remote villages.

Naogoan is a Muslim area of Bangladesh, yet the school has done very well in the community. Children who have learned to read and write have taught their parents to do so as well. There is renewed hope in many homes that the future will be brighter.

"We are so very thankful for the Naogoan Free School. We had no idea how clever our son was until he started going to school. Now we have hope for him."
Apon's parents

When you support the school, you are investing in Bangladesh's most precious resources—its children. Thank you so much! For more information on the **Naogoan Integrated Project** or to learn how you can help, please visit our website at www.internationalneeds.ca. •



Nazmul makes His Family Proud



Nazmul rises early in the morning to get ready for school. It is a privilege he does not take for granted. Nazmul grew up in the village of Ratoal in Bangladesh, with his parents, four brothers and one sister. The family lives in a house made of mud and straw. During the rainy season, the roof gets damaged and leaks. Nazmul's father, Mujibur, works as a vendor selling

vegetables in the village. His meagre earnings are irregular and not enough to provide for their basic needs. School for Nazmul and his siblings was just a dream. Their situation became so difficult that Nazmul had to go live with his grandparents. It was there that Nazmul heard of International Needs' **Naogoan Free School**. His grandparents were overjoyed and enrolled him in classes.

From the beginning, Nazmul was very attentive in class; he was quiet and studious. He handed in his assignments on time and very quickly became a favourite of the teachers. Nazmul's hard work was rewarded at each annual exam when he came in first place and won first prize. During the Primary School Certificate exam (Government Board Exam) Nazmul sat with thousands of other students from the Naogoan District. It was a very difficult exam, but Nazmul had studied very hard to get a good mark. When the School Principal received his score he was amazed! Nazmul had a record mark of 5.0 GPA and received a *Talent Sponsorship* from the Government of Bangladesh. These sponsorships are awarded to only a few people in the District.

Nazmul's family, his fellow students, and his teachers, are so proud of him! Nazmul is currently in grade seven and hoping to continue his studies at the Naogoan Free School.

“My family and I are so thankful for the opportunity that was given to me. It's a dream come true!” Nazmul

The Naogoan Free School teaches primary level education but needs to incorporate secondary education as most of its graduates cannot afford to attend secondary school elsewhere. •



Clean Water comes to Naogoan Free School

The children at International Needs' Naogoan Free School are rejoicing over the fresh, clean water running from their school's tap. Previously, the Naogoan school and community had very little access to clean water for their drinking, cooking, or personal needs and were forced to travel long distances to access safe water. Many times they had to go without or make do with whatever they could find, whether it was safe or not. As a result, families were constantly battling health problems such as diarrhea and cholera. Thanks to the generous support of donors, the school was able to install a submersible pump and tubewell providing a safe source of water year-round even during the dry season. An information session was held to teach the community about personal care and hygiene in the home. Now families are able to take an active role in maintaining clean homes. With access to safe drinking water and sanitary latrines, the Naogoan school and community are becoming free from waterborne diseases that have plagued them for years. •

PRAYER CORNER

Items for Prayer

“Beware in your prayers, above everything else, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but by fancying that you know what He can do.” Andrew Murray

Please continue to pray for the difficult situation in Nepal. One year after the devastating earthquake, remote villages are still struggling to rebuild their lives while waiting for government aide.



Reconstruction Efforts Hindered in Nepal

Nepal's devastating April 2015 earthquake killed over 8,000 people and injured more than 21,000. Hundreds of thousands of people were made homeless with entire villages flattened across many districts of the country. Days after the earthquake, our partners in Nepal delivered truckloads of food and supplies to sustain 330 families in the village of Lamasagu. The relief efforts continued as the country struggled to get back on its feet. Classes at the Lydia Vocational Training Centre resumed since our partners believed that the people of Nepal needed not only to rebuild the country but to dream again of a future filled with possibility.

However, trouble continued to plague the country as India, unhappy with Nepal's new constitution, declared an unofficial embargo. Esther Tapa, International Needs Nepal's Director shares,

“India's unofficial embargo has caused the entire nation to suffer. It led to a fuel crisis, no cooking gas, little firewood for cooking and a shortage of food and other basic supplies. This has caused all sectors of the country from education, health, business, and tourism to suffer. The economic loss as a result of this blockade has surpassed the damage the nation endured from the April 2015 earthquake.”

Very sobering words. Please pray for the country of Nepal. Even though the embargo has been lifted, it has greatly hindered the reconstruction efforts. Pray for wisdom for our partners and for all who are in a position to effect positive change in the country. •

Items for Praise

“Let our hearts overflow with thankfulness.”
Colossians 2:7

Praise God for the compassionate work of our partners in rural northwestern Bangladesh. There are many slum children receiving a free education at the Naogoan Free School. Hope has been renewed!

A Picture Worth a Thousand Words



Some years ago, I was helping our Child Sponsorship Coordinator upload children's profiles on our website when the photo of a little girl arrested my attention. She was covered in dust and looked ill, weak, and hungry. The hopelessness in her eyes grabbed me by the heart and wouldn't let go. When I read her information, I discovered that Mishel was one of Zambia's AIDS orphans. She lived with her elderly grandmother who

was unable to care for her or provide enough food for them to eat. Hunger was a constant companion. Due to their lack of funds Mishel was unable to go to school. My heart broke for her.

I continued working on the other profiles, but my mind kept going back to Mishel. The following day, I decided to sponsor her. With a sense of urgency, I sent a small financial gift to our International Needs partners in Zambia so they would be able to get a few essential supplies for her like food, blankets, clothes, medicine, and a mosquito net.

About a month later, I received a letter from our partners in Zambia. The letter had a photo of Mishel, looking well, dressed in clean clothes and smiling from ear to ear! The sight filled my heart with such joy! A young woman was standing next to her reading my letter. In her letter Mishel shared that the day God spoke to my heart to sponsor her, was the best day of her life. She now lives with her mother's cousin (the woman in the photo) who loves her and takes care of her. Mishel goes to school now and loves it. She likes her new school uniform and jersey. The blanket she received keeps her warm at night and the mosquito net protects her from malaria. She eats regularly and gets food hampers once a month. She is so thankful to God and prays for His blessing on my life. To this day, I still marvel at the impact of sponsorship in Mishel's life. Such a small investment and yet such huge benefits. I agree totally with the words of Sister Mary Rose McGeady, **“There is no greater joy nor greater reward than to make a fundamental difference in someone's life.”**

Sponsor a child in need and you too will discover the joy of impacting another for good. You will be surprised at how much your own life will be enriched in the process.

Story by Gabrielle Marshall, Communications Assistant at International Needs Canada. •



An Introduction...

We are very pleased to introduce International Needs' new Donor Development Officer, Henry Vanderlaan. Henry has a BA in Economics and is currently studying Fundraising Management at Algonquin College. For the past 10 years, Henry and his wife Wendi owned and operated a successful cut flower farm, serving the Greater Toronto Area. Henry's father and grand-father were also plant lovers who liked "the feel of soil" under their fingers. Henry serves as a deacon at his home church, New Street Christian Reformed Church, in Burlington. The Vanderlaans have 3 teenagers and make their home in Waterdown, Ontario.

"I am excited about working with a dynamic group of people who are dedicated to transforming people's lives and affecting positive change in communities around the world. I also look forward to meeting many of our donors, whose support is essential to the work of International Needs worldwide."

Contact Henry Vanderlaan at henry@internationalneeds.ca •



Knitting Club Reaches Out to Bless the World

A group of ladies from the *Muskoka Knitters for Global Warmth* have added Child Sponsorship to their impressive list of caring for those in need. The group meets once a month at Faith Baptist Church in Muskoka, Ontario, where they enjoy knitting for a good cause. Their knitted goods which include lap blankets, afghans, mitts, hats, scarves, and baby blankets, have made their way to children and families in need in many parts of the world. Places like Nicaragua, Belize, Guatemala, Ukraine and Ethiopia, to name a few. Lynda Irwin, one of the group's leaders shares...

"The ladies love to knit, especially when they know their creations are going to children and families who really need them."

In 2009, at one of their meetings, there was a presentation on the needs of children in Uganda. One lady suggested that the group adopt a child through child sponsorship. After taking a vote it was decided that they would sponsor a child and the group began sponsoring Madinah in Uganda. Six years later, Madinah is still receiving support from the Muskoka Knitters. She is doing very well in school and is that much closer to realizing her dream of becoming a nurse and making a difference in her own corner of the world.

Hats off to a great group of ladies for putting their compassion into action and making a difference in the lives of so many. May God continue to bless the work of your hands. •

A Word of Thanks to our Volunteers

Volunteers are an important part of the work of International Needs Canada. They help us with fundraising, administrative tasks and operations, and they help spread the word about the work of International Needs throughout the world. Over 12,000 letters a year are processed and sent out by faithful volunteers. You know who you are! A big thank you goes out to all of you, young and old, who have freely given of your time for the benefit of others. May God's richest blessings be yours! •