

HIMALAYAN TRUST UK  
The Nepal Earthquakes 2015  
“Building Back Better”  
Final report May 2018



[www.himalayantrust.co.uk](http://www.himalayantrust.co.uk)

 HimalayanTrustUK

 @Himalayan\_HTUK



# Introduction

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It is now three years since the Nepal earthquakes of 2015. We are pleased to say that the project has now successfully completed. This is our fifth and final update of the work that we have done. We couldn't have done it all without your support and the wonderful work by our partners on the ground in Nepal.

There will soon be more detailed reports available on our website, but we hope that this gives a comprehensive overview.

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- Background: Himalayan Trust and Earthquake
- The Appeal and our Phased Response
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## Summary

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- There were two major earthquakes in Nepal in April and May 2015, causing significant damage to the schools where the Himalayan Trust organisations work - both Solu Khumbu and Taplejung.
- Inspired by the unprompted donations by many of you, the Himalayan Trust UK trustees quickly assembled and decided the following strategy:
  - Launch a formal appeal
  - Work in close collaboration with our New Zealand and Australian Partners
  - Provide some emergency relief support, but to spend most of our efforts on the longer term rebuild
  - Ensure that the rebuild is based on prioritisation of need and follows the principles of the Himalayan Trust - execution by Nepalis themselves and meaningful contribution by the community to ensure that they had a stake in the outcome
- We raised a total of £525k, and 9% of this was allocated to emergency relief in the first few months after the earthquake and 91% invested in building schools.
- We worked very closely (daily emails, weekly calls, then formal steering group meetings) with our New Zealand and Australian partners, and together executed the project. We recruited teams of Nepali engineers and created three separate programmes to get the right geographic coverage.
- Overall, the project was done within our budget and with 3 months delay.
- In total **166** classrooms were rebuilt or retrofitted, covering **47** schools and **7,500** students

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# History of Himalayan Trust UK



*'Reaching the summit of a mountain gives great satisfaction, but nothing for me has been more rewarding in life than the result of our climb on Everest, when we have devoted ourselves to the welfare of our Sherpa friends.'*     - **Sir Edmund Hillary**

- Sir Ed Hillary set up the Himalayan Trust to give back to the mountain communities who had given him so much
- The UK arm of the Himalayan Trust was established in 1989 to support educational and health projects in the Everest and Kanchenjunga regions
- Our current President is Sir Chris Bonington CBE
- Our past Chairs include George Lowe (Hillary's best man and 1953 expedition member), George Band (1953 Everest member and first summiteer of Kanchenjunga 1955) and Rebecca Stephens (first woman Everest summiteer from UK).
- Mary Lowe and Susan Band, wives of the two Georges, have been long standing Trustees and we were delighted when Sue Leyden, daughter of John Hunt, the leader of the 1953 Expedition, also joined as a Trustee.

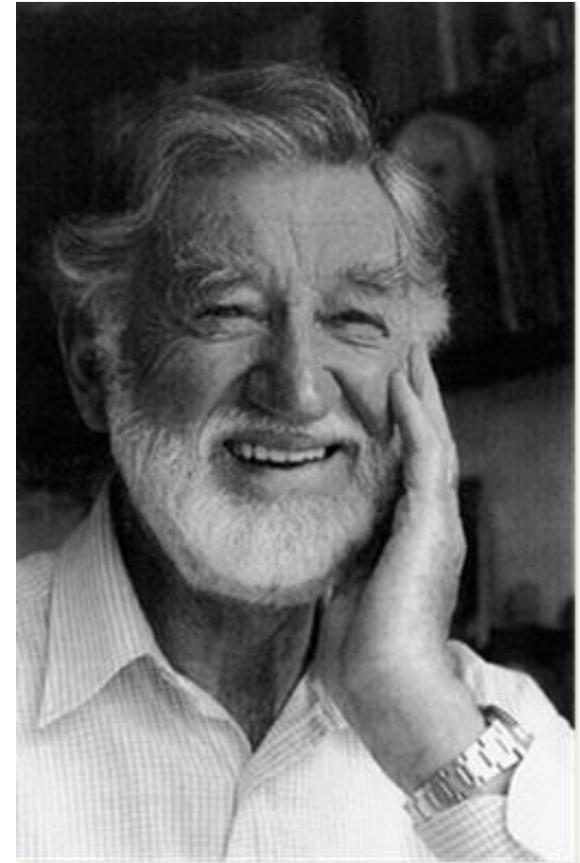
## HTUK: Guiding Principles

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Though we have adapted our work to the 21<sup>st</sup> century we strive to follow the initial principles of Sir Ed's vision

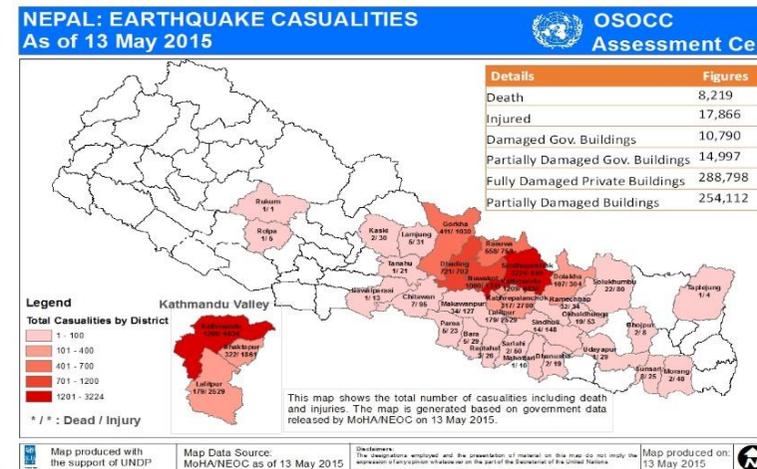
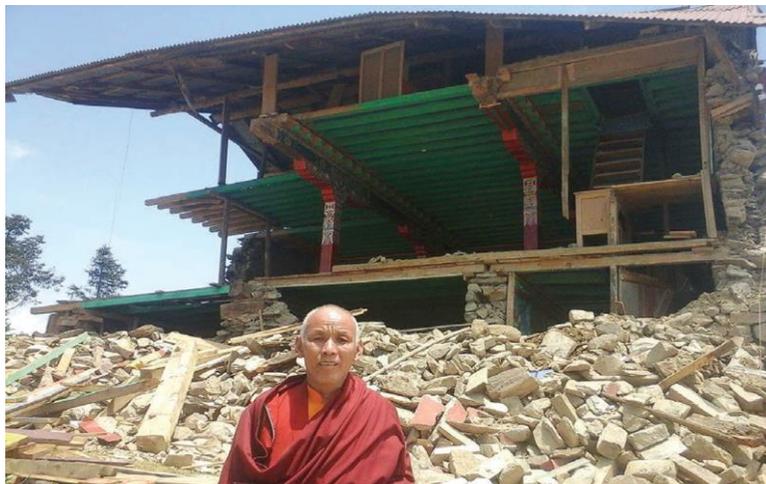
1. To focus on **basic infrastructure**  
(health, education, environment)
2. To do only what is **requested** by the mountain people
3. To **involve the community** themselves in the work –  
“self help”
4. To **minimise** all unnecessary **costs**
5. To look for long term **sustainability** and  
**independence** for the mountain people



**George Lowe** (1924-2013)  
Sir Ed's great friend and fellow 1953  
Expedition member and our Founding  
Chairman

# The Earthquakes

The first earthquake occurred on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015, registering 7.8 of the Richter scale. There was a second severe earthquake on May 12<sup>th</sup> near Mount Everest, registering 7.3 on the Richter scale. The final death toll was estimated at around 9,000 people. The economic impact to Nepal has been huge both in terms of reduced economic growth and rebuild costs (estimates range from \$5 to \$10bn). As you can see below – the impact on many of the schools where we have been working was massive.



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# Appeal Summary



- Already on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> April we started to receive donations and we were quickly overwhelmed by the support from the public. We spoke together as Trustees and then launched the “Building Back Better” appeal within 48 hours of the first earthquake. A few weeks later we met in person and decided to try to raise \$750k.
- Over the next 7 months we worked hard to raise whatever we could and had support from around the world – individuals, foundations, schools and corporates
- Eventually we raised £525k which is \$740k at today’s exchange rate (the rate has changed between almost \$1.60 and \$1.20 over this period, due to Brexit.)
- We received donations from £1 to £90,000
- We have estimated that over 10,000 individual donations have contributed to this appeal and individuals have run marathons, climbed mountains, organised curry nights, etc.
- We contributed £30k from the reserves of the Himalayan Trust UK to the appeal. We created this as a separate appeal to try to preserve funds for our long term education and health programmes which we continued to run during this appeal. This fundraising effort did have a big impact on our ability to raise funds for our core programs and we now have a lot of work to do to “catch up”.



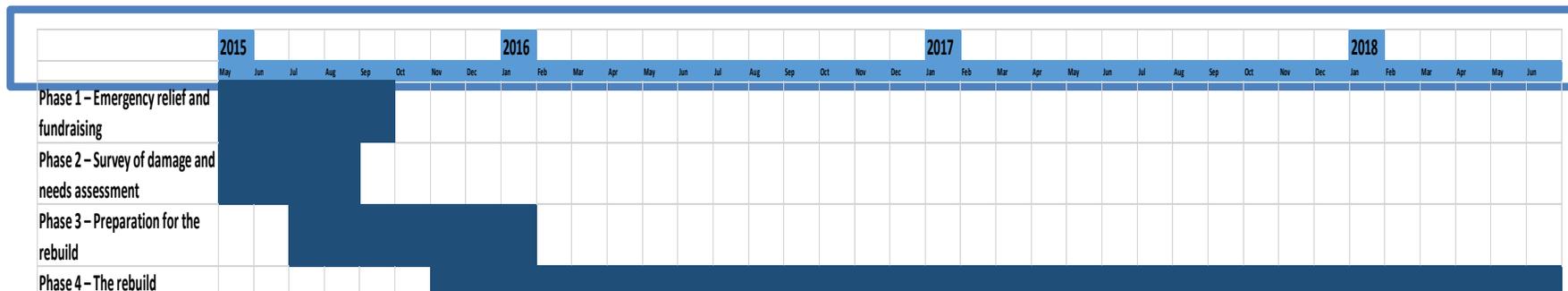
# Our Staged Response



As we managed the appeal, we tried to phase our response in four distinct phases:

- Phase 1** – Emergency relief
- Phase 2** – Survey of damage and needs assessment
- Phase 3** – Preparation for the rebuild
- Phase 4** – The rebuild

The timing for each phase is laid out below. We originally planned to complete the work by December 2017, and we achieved that in the work in Upper Khumbu and Taplejung, but were delayed by 3 months in Lower Solu. Overall, we were pleased with this timing.



# Phase One – Emergency Relief I

- In the immediate days of the earthquake we provided some assistance to our local NGO partners who distributed food and tarpaulins locally.
- Throughout May and June 2015 we then supported the following, together with our Australian and New Zealand partners:
  - The creation of 26 Temporary Learning Centres (in Taplejung and Khumbu), so that the schools could remain open
  - Distribution of 837 tarpaulins
  - Housing relief for some particularly poor families
  - Collected from the UK and distributed in Khumbu over two tonnes of sleeping bags, tents and tarpaulins
- At an early stage the Trustees made the strategic decision to **limit expenditure on relief at a maximum of 15%** of whatever money we could raise. We felt we should allocate at least **85% of the appeal to the long term rebuild**, as we felt this was where we could be a more valuable partner. In fact, we managed to limit relief expenditure to 9% of the overall project.



# Emergency relief II



Collection in the UK .....

..... to on the ground in Khumbu



Temporary learning centre

## Phase Two – Survey and Needs Assessment



- We worked closely with our partners in New Zealand and Australia, with full co-operation and sharing of knowledge, costs, and expertise.
- Within days of the first earthquake a survey of damaged schools was started. After the second earthquake this had to be repeated.
- Using consistent methodologies, all 300+ schools were investigated for damage, and where appropriate, assessed.
- These schools were mapped during the monsoon months using a ranking system based on needs, damage and the presence of other donors.
- This enabled us to decide in which areas we should focus our work, and helped determine which implementing partners we should work with.



## Phase Three - Preparation for the Rebuild

Having seen the extent of the damage (over 25% of the schools had serious damage) we realised that this was a significant and long term exercise that would take us at least two to three years

Our overriding objective was to “Build Back Better” applying the following principles and prioritisation system:

1. **A focus on the most needed areas**, using the information gained from the surveys
2. **Collaboration** with our international partners and others regarding design (including earthquake resistance designs), cost and local sourcing.
3. **Benchmarking** on costs to ensure value for money
4. **Adding value** (not just a substitute for government funds with no overlap or duplication with other donors)
5. To obtain **community contributions**, unless the community had been too badly damaged to help
6. The implementing partners must have **proper controls and experience**
7. **No UK costs** – all money spent on the ground in Nepal



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# The Rebuild – Overall approach



Together with our New Zealand and Australian partners we developed a plan with the following components and goals:

- Over 100 classrooms to be rebuilt and major repairs (retrofit) for over 40 classrooms.
- Cover three “Zones” – Khumbu, Lower Solu, and Taplejung. Each zone ended up with specific projects with different executing partners and funders:
  - Khumbu – REDDS
  - Lower Solu – LSERR
  - Taplejung- LSERR
- Develop a vocational training programme to encourage use of local labour, and as a result increase the buy-in of local communities
- Actively engage in each school, and agree an appropriate contribution, from the local community (see below)
- Explore best practice in Nepal (e.g. Gurkha Welfare Trust) and internationally (e.g. Johnstaff) and built “knowledge sharing” into each programme
- Start with the retrofits but to work straight away with architects and the Government of Nepal to get the necessary consents for the rebuilds and use of the best design possible.
  - Invest in project management skills of our implementing partners and appoint headhunters to recruit the right engineers.
  - Invest upfront in the appropriate governance structures.



# The Rebuild - Capacity building

## 1. Recruiting Engineering skills

We appointed headhunters and carried out a formal recruiting panel. We recruited two great guys, Satay Man and Prithibi, who had the required engineering and project management skills, for both Himalayan Trust Nepal and REED. We also recruited dedicated engineering teams to complement the community skills and contacts of HTN and REED.

## 2. Donor Co-ordination

We appointed Pushkar Shrestha (who we had worked with for 5 years) who also had great experience in building schools to help support HTN and REED and ensured all donors were represented in between our regular visits.

## 3. Formal contract structure

We negotiated detailed implementation plans, MOUs, budgets, Gantt charts, and other project related documents for each project. We also took advice from a multinational contracting company (Johnstaff, see [www.johnstaff.com.au](http://www.johnstaff.com.au)) who visited the team in Nepal and gave advice on the programme management design.

## 4. Accounting

We recruited a well know local accounting firm (Raj MS) who developed financial control systems for each contract and trained the accounting staff.

## 5. Best practice and knowledge sharing

We worked with Nepali organisations (such as the Gurka Welfare Trust) to educate both ourselves and our local partners on best practice and provide cost benchmarking to ensure value for money.



**Satay Man Lama**, EMP, HTN . Is a Civil Engineer with more than 7 years of experience in construction of school building.



**Prithbi Man Thapa**, EMP, REED. Has Master's in Engineering, and has more than 10 years of experience in community based construction.



**Pushkar Shrestha** was the Donor Coordinator. Pushkar used to be the Country Director in Room to Read Nepal and supervised their construction programme (65 -70 schools built annually)

# The Rebuild - Community Contribution I

One of the key Himalayan Trusts' guiding principles is community contribution. Our target was for 10-25% of the cost of each classroom to be donated by the local community. This was to be in the form of either labour (e.g. to clear the site) or materials (e.g. bringing sand, stone and mud to use in the building process and provide support in carrying materials to school). These contributions were "audited" and agreed up front with the community in a series of meetings facilitated by our local partners.

This contribution by the community had two main advantages – it allowed your money as donors to go further and, even more importantly, ensured buy-in of the local community and civic pride in the school. This is very important for the longer term – buy-in to the importance of education across the whole community.

Some of the commitment by the communities was breathtaking, as you will see from the photos of Lungthung school in remote Taplejung. The communities carved by hand a bigger area so the new school could be safe from future earthquakes and landslides



Community contribution in Sewalung, Taplejung



Maintenance training meeting, Khumbu

# The Rebuild - Community Contribution II



Community consultation meeting



Community contribution: Ground clearing and materials



Community clearing terrace by hand in Lungthung, Taplejung

# Site Clearance



# The Rebuild – supervision and governance



We were very aware of the responsibilities of managing such a big project. The committed spend from all donors is over \$1.7m and we worked very hard to minimise the chance of there being issues of over spend, corruption, or other failure – though we are all aware that the risks couldn't be completely eliminated given the realities of life on the ground in remote Nepal.

We tried to mitigate risks in the following ways:

- 1. Proper Project Management structures** – as explained earlier
- 2. Capacity building of teams in Nepal** – we have invested significantly in our local partners (with whom we have been working for decades) to fill skill gaps, and ensure continual knowledge sharing between our partners
- 3. Close partnership with Himalayan Trust International partners** – we met together both in Nepal and on regular conference calls. Plus 100's of emails per week!
- 4. On the ground visits to Nepal by UK Trustees** - our trustees made over 20 trips on the ground during this period – including several out to the field to visit the schools. 3 trustees were in Taplejung where, as part of their work, they will be inspecting the finished schools. In addition, there have been countless conference and skype calls and literally thousands of emails regarding the project.
- 5. Significant extra work by the UK Trustees** – because we are all still volunteers and not one penny of your donation has gone to fund our travel or administrative costs, collectively the trustees have given significant extra effort over the last three years to allow successful completion of the appeal.



Knowledge sharing – Rinji Sherpa,, Satay Man, Prithibi, and Pushkar



HTUK Trustees with REED team April 2016

# The Rebuild - Government Approvals



**We have strived to achieve full compliance with the laws and rules of Nepal.** Though this has slowed us down a bit at times, we have done our very best to ensure that we are in full compliance and have worked very closely with the Department of Education. Each design has been approved by them, and we are doing our best to support the state provided education system.



Department of Education inspection, LSERR

# The Rebuild Plan – Design and Training



## Masonry training

In January 2016, a seven day earthquake resistant construction training programme was conducted in Taplejung under the TSRP program. 34 skilled, semi skilled and unskilled workers participated during the training. The training included both practical hands-on experience and theory. The trained workers were hired to do the new construction of 5 schools and the retrofitting of 2 schools.

## Design choice made

Earthquake resistant design was prepared by MRB and Associates, one of the most experienced engineering firms of Nepal. MRB and Associates is headed by Manohar Rajbhandari, an experienced structural engineer who specialises in earthquake resistant technology. School building design has been approved by the Department of Education and Department of Urban Development Building Construction (DUDBC).



Above: Masonry Training “Graduates” after completing their course

Below: Meeting being conducted to agree on the process of school construction



# The Rebuild - Challenges



During the summer of 2015 the huge scale of the task slowly became clear and we realised we had to approach this as a multi year, multi partner, and multi donor programme. The challenge came from a variety of factors:

1. **Huge scale.** The photos give a feel for the sense of damage
2. **Remoteness.** Imagine trying to rebuild 150 classrooms spread out across villages high in Himalayan villages, with most being several days walk from the nearest road.
3. **Capacity limits.** Our normal partners focus on health and education and some retrofit / maintenance work. Plus the earthquake created huge skills shortages in engineering skills.
4. **Bureaucracy.** This was a district wide programme – it wasn't a case of repairing a couple of rooms being rebuilt “under the radar”. We needed (and have received) full government approval. If you have worked in Nepal, you will understand how hard this can be!
5. **Community agreements.** Following on from our principles we have insisted on community contribution. This needs engagement with the community and the school management committee. This takes time to do well.
6. **The Blockade.** Many think the blockade of Nepal from September has had a MUCH bigger economic impact across Nepal than the earthquake itself. We sympathise with that viewpoint – it has caused us huge delays and price increases of over 15%.

Together with our partners we have spent several months building up the capacity to be able to tackle this project, and some of the key actions are covered on the next page.



# Results: Performance vs Plans

Despite the challenges we are delighted to say that we managed to exceed our target of rebuilding and repairing over 150 classrooms. The REDDS and LSERR programmes were completed by the original target date of December 2017, though the LSERR programme was completed 3 months late by March 2018.

Overall we achieved the following;

		REDDS	LSERR	TRSP	TOTAL
<b>Schools</b>		15	21	7	43
<b>Children</b>	Girls	920	2,511	295	3,726
	Boys	1,015	2,426	306	3,747
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,935</b>	<b>4,937</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>7,473</b>
<b>Rooms</b>	Rebuild	70	28	12	110
	Retrofit	6	46	4	56
	Wash	6	-	-	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>172</b>



Above: TSRP workers at Bipudham, Taplejung

Below: Junebesi, Khumbu



# Finances



## Summary

- We created a separate fund within the Trusts account for the appeal
- We then created specific accounts with our local partners in Nepal to receive and then distribute money for each programme
- Each of the 3 main rebuild programmes were subject to audit by Raj MS
- The transfers from the UK to Nepal are laid out on this page
- Full details of each programme accounting flows and costs (which reconcile to these numbers) will be posted on our website within the next few weeks (we are creating a new website at the moment – hence the small delay)
- Within each programme we created a contingency – overall these were not used – but the main issues that we had to cope with was due to Brexit, as the pound fell from around \$1.55 at the time of the earthquake by over 20% at some points.

EXPENDITURE			£	\$	NR	£/NR	\$/NR	£/\$
<b>Relief</b>	n/a	Airlift - funded by personal donation						
	May-15	Housing Relief - Himalaya Club	21,000	32,550	3,276,000	156	108	1.55
	Jun-15	TLC share	19,000	29,640	2,964,000	156	108	1.56
	Jun-15	Emergency support AHF / REED	7,000	10,920	1,092,000	156	108	1.56
		<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>47,000</b>	<b>73,110</b>	<b>7,332,000</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.56</b>
<b>LSERR</b>	21-Feb-16	1st payment	10,000	13,937	1,522,202	152	109	1.43
	6-May-16	2nd payment	19,000	26,915	2,858,146	150	106	1.43
	13-Mar-17	3rd payment	25,000	30,750	3,220,453	129	105	1.23
	16-Mar-17	4th payment	20,000	24,600	2,864,297	127	116	1.23
	13-Jun-17	5th payment	17,500	22,400	2,266,969	130	101	1.28
	8-Jul-17	6th payment	11,700	15,210	1,546,556	132	102	1.30
	2-Oct-17	7th payment	11,200	14,784	1,541,706	138	104	1.32
	4-Dec-17	8th payment	10,600	14,204	1,454,791	137	102	1.34
		<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>125,000</b>	<b>162,800</b>	<b>17,275,120</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>1.30</b>
<b>REDDS</b>	11-Feb-16	1st payment	32,000	45,336	4,914,008	154	108	1.43
	26-Jun-16	2nd payment	20,000	27,336	2,963,211	148	108	1.42
	20-Jul-16	3rd payment	24,500	31,591	3,385,249	138	107	1.31
	20-Dec-16	4th payment	28,000	34,736	3,755,969	134	108	1.25
	13-Apr-17	5th payment	24,037	30,286	3,122,499	130	103	1.26
	19-Apr-17	6th payment	24,269	30,579	3,151,215	130	103	1.26
	19-Apr-17	7th payment	24,050	30,303	3,122,703	130	103	1.26
	4-Sep-17	8th payment	25,144	30,530	3,106,688	124	102	1.33
	30-Nov-17	9th payment	17,500	22,895	2,348,977	134	103	1.32
		<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>219,500</b>	<b>283,590</b>	<b>29,870,518</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1.29</b>
<b>TSRP</b>	3-Feb-16	1st Payment	28,500	38,571	4,161,848	154	108	1.43
	8-May-16	2nd Payment	8,000	11,308	1,200,957	154	106	1.45
	3-Nov-16	3rd Payment	45,000	56,250	5,879,208	131	105	1.25
	09-Jun-17	4th Payment	24,975	31,718	3,251,485	130	103	1.27
	11-Jun-17	5th Payment	14,025	17,812	1,818,862	130	102	1.27
		<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>120,500</b>	<b>155,660</b>	<b>16,312,360</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1.29</b>
<b>Technical Support</b>	Dec-15	People 2 People	2,100	2,976	316,056	156	106	1.47
	Feb-16	People 2 People	3,673	5,105	554,400	154	109	1.42
	Mar-17	Raj MS - REED	3,501	4,520	465,600	133	103	1.29
	Mar-17	Raj MS - HTN	1,844	2,559	263,600	143	103	1.39
	Jun-17	Johnstaff	2,300	2,741	296,010	130	108	1.65
		<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>13,418</b>	<b>17,901</b>	<b>1,895,666</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>1.33</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>525,418</b>	<b>693,062</b>	<b>72,685,664</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1.32</b>



# THANK YOU ....

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**Celebration of “reaching Camp 5” in our rebuild  
at the British Embassy in Kathmandu April 20<sup>th</sup>  
2017.**

*Our local partners with members of UK Himalayan  
Trust, NZ Himalayan Trust, and Australian  
Himalayan Foundation*

To our wonderful colleagues on the  
ground in Nepal doing all this hard  
work ....  
and to all of you, our donors.

Without your generosity all this  
work would not have been possible.

116 classrooms by this month and  
another 50 to come ... we hope you  
are happy with this achievement

**THANK YOU !!**