

SHREE CHANDRA JYOTI LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL
Sagar-Bakanje, Bakanje ward no. 4, Solu-Khumbu
based on a visit by Himalayan Project in autumn 2000

Shree Chandra Jyoti Lower Secondary School in Sagar-Bakanje is the main and central school of Bakanje VDC. The first school in Sagar-Bakanje was built by Sir Edmund Hillary in the late sixties and it was extended in the eighties and again prepared for High School in the mid-nineties by the Nepali Government. But even though the buildings are there for 8.-10. class they remain empty, as there have still not been economy for providing teachers and educational materials. Therefore the school remains as a Lower Secondary School with up to 7. class. The Headmaster of the school is Mr. Ang Dawa Sherpa living in Sete one hour walk from the school. Himalayan Project wants to give help to the school to establish the Secondary School and later the High School. In this matter we are in cooperation with Himalayan Trust and with the active School Managing Committee of Sagar-Bakanje.

About the cooperators of this project.

Since 1996 many Danish trekkers have experienced Nepal in trekking groups arranged by the founders of Himalayan Project. For all of them it has been a great experience, but for some it changed their view of life. In 1997 some group-members decided to help the villagers of Chhumbu in Solu-Khumbu District close to Sagar-Bakanje to build a primary school. And during this work they decided to establish Himalayan Project with the purpose to build this school. But soon the number of members increased and new ideas and projects were introduced. Today we are 112 members of Himalayan Project, Denmark and Himalayan Project, Nepal (HIPRON) is establishing. And now many minor projects are run in the upper part of Solu like road building, forestry, women group, scholarships, tourism and now also school upgrading. And the future plans are to start adult education and folkhighschool in a major scale in the same area. More information about Himalayan Project can be found on the Internet on www.himalayan-project.subnet.dk.

Himalayan Trust is the well-known organization founded by Sir Edmund Hillary. They have besides of being the founder of Sagar-Bakanje School been supporting the school with educational materials every year since.

Some details of Sagar-Bakanje VDC.

According to the headmaster there are 5,000 persons living within the catchment area of the school. Of these 1,500 persons are more than 18 years of age, while 3,500 are younger than 18 years of age. We produced a complete survey of the inhabitants of Ward No. 4 and 5, which are the two wards included in the village of Sagar-Bakanje.

Ward No. 4 is inhabited by 119 persons of which 10% are 0-5 years, 18% are 6-14 years (out of these 95% are attending school) and 20% are 15-22 years (out of these 33% are attending school).

Ward No. 5 is inhabited by 238 persons of which 9% are 0-5 years, 28% are 6-14 years (out of these 91% are attending school) and 22% are 15-22 years (out of these 60% are attending school).

Ward No. 4 consists 100% of people of Sherpa origin.

Ward No. 5 consists of 84% Sherpa, 8% Khami and 8% Thami.

For the moment we haven't done more surveys but we are considering about that.

The village of Sagar-Bakanje is well established with big houses according to Sherpa custom, and they claim that the village can accommodate more than 50 students from outside the village.

Students in Sagar-Bakanje School.

First class have enrolled 16 students - 2. class 10 - 3. class 15 - 4. class 16 - 5. class 20 - 6. class 19 - and 7. class 10 students, which is in total 106 students. Four students from the village is enrolled in Chhimbu Primary School although they has to travel for 1-2 hours both ways.

Which other schools is there?

The nearest High Schools to Bakanje VDC are the High Schools in Chaulakharka (Solu-Khumbu District), Junbesi (Solu-Khumbu District) and Bhandar (Ramechhap District). Only the two first can attract students from this VDC. They can all be reached in one day, but the students has to stay there when studying.

Schools which can feed a High School in Sagar-Bakanje is Sagar-Bakanje Lower Secondary School itself with 106 students. Gumdel Lower Secondary School with 50 students. Kenja Lower Secondary School with 75 students. Chhumbu Primary School which is newly started with 38 students. Shringma Primary School with 40 students. Sagardanda Primary School with 60 students. Dachhu Preprimary School with 15 students. Changnyima Preprimary School with 20 students.

Because of the fact that students has to stay far away from their home, only few students from the VDC is studying after 7. class. As far as the headmaster knows the number of advanced students from the VDC studying in Chaulakharka and Junbesi is 13 students in 7. class (while 10 is staying at S-B), 10 in 8. class, 9 in 9. class and 8 in 10. class. This is in total 40 students studying for higher level than lower secondary. But the number would be higher if the students could stay more close to their homes.

These above mentioned numbers suggests that almost all students in the school is derived from the very close vicinity of the school itself, even for the higher classes. And it furthermore suggests that only a very few youngsters from the catchment area of the school is studying higher than primary and lower secondary level. But again to confirm this we should consider to do more surveys on the inhabitants of the area.

Probably it also is a contributory reason that the standard of a lower secondary school is not attractive to students who wants to go further, leading to that they leave the school already before 6. and 7. class. An upgrading of the school will add more well-qualified teachers, which will lead to a general upgrading of the school as a whole.

The criteria's of Government.

The Ministry of Education is under the law and appropriation of His Majesty's Government establishing and running schools in the districts. The main criteria's to establish higher education are:

1. There should be a Secondary or High School in each VDC.
2. There should be a minimum of distance between two High Schools (in Kathmandu 20 km).
3. In remote areas there should be at least 15-25 students in each of the higher classes.
4. Each class shall have at least one year of successful running.

5. The teachers and the administration shall fulfill the criteria's of proper management.
6. The students shall after one year be able to show proper knowledge by examination.
7. The Management Committee shall be active in the establishment and running of the classes.

All these criteria's should be fulfilled in the case of Sagar-Bakanje High School, so the District Education Office should register our upgrading and provide us teachers after one year of running.

How to do it?

As a start Sagar-Bakanje Lower Secondary School should upgrade to a Secondary School by starting an 8. class. The funds for this should be found by the Managing Committee partly in the village, in the VDC and in the District, and partly by Himalayan Project and Himalayan Trust.

A rough estimate say that teachers salary will be 100.000 Rs each year for a well educated secondary teacher without remote area allowance. Educational materials should be 50.000 Rs for establishing stationaries the first year and 30.000 Rs each year for the students materials. Deposit for DEO is 15.000 Rs the first year.

When the 8. class is running nicely and DEO has taken over, we could start the upgrading to High School by running 9. and 10. class. But this will depend on how the running of 8. class went on and how long time passed before DEO took over its obligations. The appropriations of the districts are not always sufficient, so before we start the process we should be sure to be able to run each class for more than one year. Rough estimates about 9. and 10 class say that teachers salary will be more, like 125.000 Rs each year, but also that there could be need of an extra high level teacher when all 3 classes is running. The educational materials should be around the same as for 8. class for each of the two classes. Deposit for DEO is 30.000 Rs for each of the two classes for the first year of running.

What to do now?

Headmaster Ang Dawa Sherpa should set up a precise and very detailed budget for the first year of running of the 8. class for teachers salary, educational materials and deposit. And also a budget for the following years of running of this class. Therefore he must find candidates for the job as a secondary level teacher, so the negotiations about wage can be set. And also that the qualifications of the teacher can be examined.

The management Committee and Headmaster Ang Dawa Sherpa should provide a more well-founded statement about the basis of students in the area. This could be done by a thoroughly survey of inhabitants of the wards still not examined, both in the VDC and in adjacent wards. This survey should contain a question for young people how far they want to continue in 8. class in Sagar-Bakanje or wanted it if it were there when they was still attending school.

There must be an approval of District Education Office to run the 8. class, and it also must contain the criteria's of DEO to register this school as a Secondary School, and also an undertaking to take over the obligations of running the Secondary School. This paper should be obtained by Management Committee. Also other papers of approval should be attempted from Ministry of Education and from Member of Parliament of the District.

When these points has been presented, a representative of Himalayan Project should visit Sagar-Bakanje VDC to cross-check and verify the informations provided and to negotiate with the Managing Committee about the fundraising.

For now it could be a possibility to raise the funds in such a way that Himalayan Project provides the teachers salary, Himalayan Trust provides the students educational materials, and gave a help with some of the educational stationaries and the village, the VDC and the District could provide the rest of the educational stationaries as well as the deposit for DEO.