



NEPAL - First Steps Himalaya



First Steps Himalaya (FSH) works in partnership with disadvantaged communities in the rural Himalaya to promote early childhood development and quality education in schools.

The organisation's vision is for Nepali children to have access to improved education from early childhood, to school and beyond. This provides children with the opportunity to reach their full potential and has a lasting impact on the entire community.

The majority of schools in rural Nepal are inadequately resourced and are staffed by untrained or poorly trained teachers. Furthermore, as a result of poor early childhood development, the majority of children enter school without adequate preparation. First Steps Himalaya recognised the need to provide accessible early childhood education to improve educational outcomes for children.

Since its first early childhood centre opened in 2009, the number of early childhood centres run by FSH has increased significantly. Hundreds of children in a growing number of communities now benefit from attending daily pre-school classes. To ensure the continued development of these children, it became essential for FSH to extend its programme beyond pre-school children. In 2012 they began working in primary schools, creating child friendly learning for older children.

With funding from Purple Cake Day, First Steps Himalaya establishes early childhood centres in rural Nepal. Each centre caters for up to 30 children from three to five years old. The

centres are based at existing government primary schools, where under fives were previously neglected. Classrooms which were bare and dirty are transformed into bright, airy and well equipped spaces for play-based learning. The children enjoy a range of activities including craft with play dough, drawing, painting, construction toys and outdoor play.

Purple Cake Day supported schools are also painted and fitted out in a similar way. Educational resources including arts and craft materials are provided to teachers who are encouraged to create their own materials and make use of natural resources. Where children used to recite with no understanding, they are now engaged in learning.

Ongoing training, supervision and support are provided to early childhood and primary school teachers as part of FSH's implementation process to ensure quality is maintained.

Funding from Purple Cake Day enables First Steps Himalaya to extend the number of early childhood development and primary school classes supported each year. As children progress through school, the project will continue to support them throughout their primary education. In time these schools will become centres of excellence, setting an example for other schools to follow. They will also enable the continuity of the love of learning and prevent children from slipping backwards within the existing inadequate education system, ensuring a brighter future for rural Nepali children.



For further information on First Steps Himalaya, visit their website www.firststepshimalaya.org

