

Building for the the Future of Nepal

We - Catherine Erskine of Cambo and Stella and David Rankin of Kevock Garden - have been trekking in Nepal. We have been seeing how plants grow in the surprisingly different conditions that exist, against the magnificent backdrop of the high Himalaya.

We have also learned of the extreme difficulties that the people of this poor country experience, and of their heart-warming commitment to their country. The three people who accompanied us on our expedition all have major needs, and we want to help them. We could just do this ourselves, but we want to involve other people, to increase understanding of this country and its people, with their great potential.



The first priority is Purphu Singi, one of our porters. During the monsoon this year, which was of exceptional severity, his mountain home was completely destroyed by a landslide. There is no insurance and his only option to raise the money to rebuild his house is a loan at 5% per month. All his income goes on rent for a couple of rooms for his family. He has stone from the house and some unbroken bits of wood but he must get permission, at a price, to fell a single forest tree, from which every piece of wood must be sawn by hand. Anything else must be carried up thousands of feet from the valley below.

He can do the work, but he is trapped; he can never get the capital he needs to build the most basic of homes. The amount needed is tiny by our standards; just over £4000. We have already given him some of this so that he can get started. He needs the rest over the winter, when he will have time to work on it.

Our second porter was Nurpu Singi. He has four children, and the second is desperate to go to secondary school and is seeking a sponsor. We have been immensely impressed by the quality of school education, and the commitment to it shown by both the pupils and their parents, who generally had no opportunities themselves. We would like to enable Suresh to board in Kathmandu, as there is no school in their mountain village. This involves a commitment of £500 a year for six years. We met several young people who have benefitted from such sponsorship and have been impressed by their commitment to the future development of Nepal.



Finally, Chhabi Thapa was our botanical guide. He is a masters student, who funded the first year of his course by working for five years as a teacher. He acknowledges the huge support of his parents, poor rice farmers, who provided him with all his earlier stages of education. He needs funding for the final two years - a total of £2500. He is a great character with many talents, who will be an asset to his country. He is completely committed to putting back into his country what has been given to him.

In none of these three cases do we want simply to give money. What we have proposed is that the money given is regarded as an indefinite interest-free loan. If and when they are in

a position to repay some or all of the loan, nothing should come back to us. Instead, they should support some other person who is in a worse situation than themselves - with the same conditions.

We are not setting up a big charity; this is a specific project to help three people. Can you help? Everything given will be passed on to them. We are setting up a bank account under the name 'Building for the Future of Nepal'. We will provide reports on the projects from time to time, including full accounts.

Catherine Erskine, Stella Rankin and David Rankin, October 2011

How to contribute

When you place an order, either mailing an order form or through our on-line store, you can include contributions to 'Building for the Future of Nepal'. There are 'plants' in the catalogue with codes XBF-£10 and XBN-£1, which you will find under X (for Xtra!) So, for example, if you want to give £12, order one XBF and two XBN.

Or, of course, you can send a cheque.

Thank you.