

VOLUNTEER DOSSIER



HELPLESS COLONY

(also known as the Happiness Colony)

Join us to build a better future!

The only volunteering opportunity where 100% of your contribution makes a difference

Kathmandu, Nepal
Updated December 2017

1. Introduction

The Helpless Colony orphanage was started in 2004 by Nanu Rai, a single woman. Nanu Rai continues to run the orphanage today.

There are now more than 20 members in the Colony. These are the kids, Mommy Nanu Rai and a lady who helps her.

The children in the colony come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some children are orphans. Other children have a single mother or a single father who cannot support them or has abandoned them.

Over the years the orphanage has made significant progress. In the beginning there were about 18 small kids living in a small house. We had no furniture, not even beds, and the children slept on the floor. They could not afford to go to school. The Helpless Colony is called this way because in the beginning the situation of the orphanage was so dire that it was the most appropriate name.

Nowadays all the children go to school and get an education in English. We have some modest furniture. The children eat regularly every day. We now call our orphanage the Happiness Colony. We are all like one big family and we even call our volunteers "Brother" and "Sister".

The main aim of the colony is to ensure that all the children grow up in good conditions and get a good education. The final objective is to get all the children independent. Some children have already left the orphanage and have found stable work places or started university studies.

Currently the colony is managed purely on the basis of donations. There is no source of permanent income and there is no government support. The donations are solicited primarily by going from door to door. Having volunteers is critical to the sustainability of the orphanage as they represent an additional and much needed source of support.

2. The members of the colony



My name is **Mohan Rokaya**. I am 12 years old, studying in class 6. I like to study and my favourite subject is Nepali. I like to play football and we all play football together on holidays. In animals I like lion the most. In free time I like drawing, dancing and playing. My aim is to become a doctor.



My name is **Amita Thami**. I read in class 6, I like to go to school. My favourite animal is rabbit. I love dancing and I want to become a dancer. I like to study and make mommy (Nanu) proud. I am very happy that I have a chance to dream and study in my life.



My name is **Rasmi Joshi**. I am 10 years old and studying in class 4. I like to play skipping. I like cow among animals. My hobbies are reading and dancing. I want to be a doctor.



My name is **Durga Joshi**. I am 14 years old. I study in class 7. I like sports, especially I like to play volleyball. Dancing, singing and reading are my hobbies. I like rabbit as an animal. I want to be in military force in the future, that's my dream. And I am very happy to be here.



My name is **Laxmi Tamang**. I read in class 4. I am 11 yrs old. I like sports. I like playing skipping after school. My favourite animal is rabbit. I love dancing and singing. I want to be a doctor.



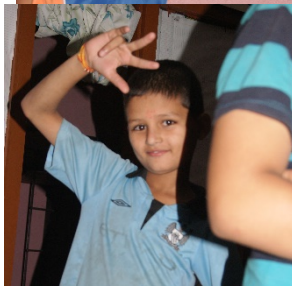
My name is **Samjhana Nepali** and I am 9 yrs old. I like going to school. I am in class 1. I love mommy here and spend time talking with mommy and playing with my friends and sisters. I like to play badminton and skipping. I want to be a nurse in the future.



My name is **Ritu Gurung**. I am 8 yrs old. I am studying in class 1 and I like to go to school. I like to play with brothers and sisters. I like drawing and reading. I love my home and mommy. I want to be an engineer.



My name is **Biraj Gurung**. I am 9 years old. I read in class 4. I like to study English and maths more than other subjects. I like playing carom board. My favourite animal is lion. I like to sing and like singing, like so many other things and my mommy too. I want to be an engineer in the future.



My name is **Rhitik Sanjyal** and I am 10 years old. I am studying at class 4. I like studying and my favourite subject is maths. My favourite animal is lion. My hobbies are singing, dancing and reading. I like playing football. I want to be a doctor.



My name is **Roshan Sanjyal**. I am studying in class 7. I am 13 years old. I like to study science more than other subjects. I like playing football. My hobbies are reading, dancing, and visiting new places. I want to fly, I want to become a pilot. I came here when I was little, and I have many brothers and sisters now, and a lovely mommy.



I am **Manju**. I am 5 years old and I am in grade 1. I've been in the Helpless Colony for 1 year. My favourite animal is deer because it has many horns. My favourite subject is Nepali. My best friend is Pabin. I love Mommy because she loves me so much and she is very beautiful.



My name is **Santosh** but everybody calls me Kandza because I am the youngest in my family. I am 6 years old and I am in grade 1. I would like to have one cat and one dog in my house so that the cat can kill the mice and the dog can protect the house. I like to watch the chicken that live on our roof. Our Mommy is like my own mom to me.



My name is **Pabin**, I am 8 and I'm in grade 2. I've been here for about 3 years. My favourite toy is the remotely operated helicopter though I don't have it. I'd like to be a boxer when I grow up. I am so happy living here I would like to stay here forever.



My name is **Utsav**. I am 10 and I go to grade 5. My favourite game is football and my favourite player is Pele. My favourite place to visit is the zoo and my favourite animal is the tiger. I'd like to become a doctor when I grow up.



I'm **Kumar**. I am 11 years old and I'm in grade 6. I've been here for nearly 3 years. My favourite subject is math. I love playing cricket with my friends. I am very disciplined, I love studying and I want to become smarter. I dream to be a brave Gurkha soldier.



My name is **Suroj**. I am 11. I am in grade 5. I came here 5 years ago. I like to play and read. I always win in memory games. I want to be a scientist when I grow up. My wish is to make everybody happy.



My name is **Sushila**. I am 12 years old and I am in grade 8. My favourite subjects are Math and Science. I love to play badminton and I love visiting with the volunteers. My favourite place in Nepal is Pokhara though I haven't been there. I'd like to be a doctor so that I can help people. I wish that I could always be with my Helpless Colony family.



My name is **Hira**. I am 13 and I'm in grade 8. My favourite subjects are Science and Math. My favourite animal is rabbit because it has a nice white colour. When I grow up I would like to be a rich man so that I can help others. I like to visit temples and my favourites in Kathmandu are Swayambu and Bodhanath. Mommy saved me when I was very sick with meningitis so I think I am alive thanks to her.



I am **Ujjwal**. I'm 14 years old and I go to grade 9. My favourite subject is math and I'd like to be an engineer when I grow up. I wish that our Helpless Colony grows bigger and stronger and never ends and that my future is successful. I am very thankful to the orphanage because it helps to make my future bright.



My name is **Rohit**. I am 16 years old. I'm in grade 9. I joined the orphanage almost 10 years ago. My dream is that I have several dogs and every morning I can go jogging with them. One day I would like to be a lawyer so that I can help people who did not get justice. I like when the volunteers visit because I can ask them questions about their countries and learn from them. It is very important that the volunteers come here because the orphanage is run by a single woman who doesn't get any other support. For me Mommy is everything.



I am **Alisha**. I am 18. I like to sing. I want to be a nurse. I'm here from the start of the orphanage. I love the whole family and I am very happy to be here.



I am **Nanu**. I'm 37. I started this orphanage because I come from a very poor family and I don't want other children to have the same difficulties when growing up and when getting educated as I had. I love playing and singing with children and I want the children to always be happy and smiling. I really want the volunteers to come here to help the children and also to contribute to the orphanage economically. My dream is that we have our own house so that we can look after more orphans, play with them and cook for them. There are many other single women in Nepal and I would love to organize free training for them to help them to improve their life.

3. Monthly budget: main costs

In this chapter we explain the costs of running our orphanage to help understand our need for support. These are average costs over the year as they appeared in May 2014. For some items that appear only once or twice a year, we have made a yearly estimation and divided it by 12 to get a monthly average. All costs are in Nepali rupees (Rs). 1 US\$ approximately equals 95 Rs. We have also included the amounts in US\$ for easier understanding.

The orphanage is run on the basis of donations that are solicited month to month. A small portion of income comes thanks to the visiting volunteers. We have no permanent source of income and no government support. As the donations are irregular, we have to constantly look for more donations to cover our costs.

	Monthly in Rs	Monthly in US\$
COSTS	May 2014	May 2014
Building expenses	45,108	\$ 475
Food items	38,292	\$ 403
School items	41,288	\$ 435
TOTAL COSTS	124,688	\$ 1,313

4. Costs detail

	Monthly in Rs	Monthly in US\$
COSTS	May 2014	May 2014
House costs		
House rent	35,000	\$ 368
Electricity	1,200	\$ 13
Telephone	900	\$ 9
Water	800	\$ 8
Garbage collection	400	\$ 4
Internet	1,700	\$ 18
Mobile phones	1,000	\$ 11
TV subscription	400	\$ 4
Light bulbs	500	\$ 5
Mosquito repellent liquid	208	\$ 2
Other house costs (small repairs etc)	3,000	\$ 32
Total house costs	45,108	\$ 475
Food costs		
Rice	12,000	\$ 126
Dal black and red	3,600	\$ 38
Beans	2,000	\$ 21
Bitten rice for kids school lunches	3,600	\$ 38
Vegetables	2,000	\$ 21
Potatoes	2,700	\$ 28
Chicken meat	3,200	\$ 34
Gas for cooking	6,000	\$ 63
Oil for cooking	2,400	\$ 25
Soap and detergent powder	792	\$ 8
Total food costs	38,292	\$ 403

(the table continues overleaf)

School costs		
School fees	29,750	\$ 313
School uniforms	1,583	\$ 17
School sports uniforms	1,000	\$ 11
School shoes	1,225	\$ 13
School books	3,167	\$ 33
School supplies	833	\$ 9
School bags	992	\$ 10
Sandals for home	238	\$ 3
Hospital expenses	2,500	\$ 26
Total school costs	41,288	\$ 435
TOTAL COSTS	124,688	\$ 1,313

5. Activities plan

In order to raise the standard of living and to make our colony more sustainable, we have identified a number of investments that must be made. We are looking for the sources of financial help in order to implement those activities and you can find them listed here by level of urgency.

- **PRIORITY: Tables for studying and eating**

As of today we are always eating on the floor and we are doing our homework sitting on the floor. Having a table on which we could do our homework would be extremely useful for us. We need 3 tables and 6 benches. The total costs of all these items would be 50,000 Rs (\$526).

- **PRIORITY: Big lamps**

Due to limitations of the Nepali electricity grid, we get electricity only several times a day for some hours. It would be very useful for us to obtain big rechargeable lamps so that we could do our homework when there is no electricity. We have 5 rooms so we need 5 lamps. The cost of one lamp is 1,500 Rs, so the total cost would be 7,500 Rs (\$79).

- **PRIORITY: Electric rice cooker**

We have to cook a lot of rice and currently we are using a gas rice cooker which is inconvenient and dangerous. An electric rice cooker would make our life a lot easier. The cost of a rice cooker is 5,000 Rs (\$53).

- **PRIORITY: Cupboard for children's shoes**

We don't have a cupboard so all the children's shoes are simply lying on the floor. A cupboard might cost 8,000 Rs (\$84).

- **Hangers for clothes**

We also need hangers for clothes. We need 4 hangers at a cost of 3,000 Rs, total cost 12,000 Rs (\$126).

- **Vacuum cleaner**
The only way we can clean the floors right now is by swiping them. A vacuum cleaner would be extremely useful for us. The cost of a vacuum cleaner is 5,000 Rs (\$53).
- **Sewing machine**
Our only sewing machine broke down recently and we need a new one urgently. Jyoti who is studying embroidery is very good at sewing clothes. The cost of a sewing machine is 5,000 Rs (\$53).
- **Children's games**
Most of our games are old and out of order. We would love to get two badminton rackets, two table tennis rackets, a football, a basketball and some board games. The total cost of all games would be 5,000 Rs (\$53).
- **Mixer**
When we need to cut garlic and other vegetables, we sometimes have to beat them with stones. A mixer would make things much quicker. The cost is 2,000 Rs (\$21).
- **Solar panels**
The electricity is one of our major costs. More importantly, we get electricity only several times a day due to limitations of the Nepali network. The solar panels would provide us with a permanent source of electricity. The cost of purchasing and installing a solar panel is 20,000 Rs. We can install two solar panels on our roof, which would cost 40,000 Rs (\$421).

ALREADY DONE:

- **PRIORITY: First aid kit**
We don't have any medicines so whenever there is even a small medical problem, we have difficult time addressing it. The cost of one first aid kit is 1,500 Rs (\$16).

6. Our ambition

Our most important ambition and our biggest dream is to have **our own house**. Our biggest torture is having to constantly look for money to pay the monthly house rent which is our biggest fixed expense. The cost of a piece of land and a house fit for an orphanage in Nepal is about 10,000,000 Rs (\$105,000).

UPDATE: In July-August 2014 we moved to a new house located in the same area. In accordance with the Government of Nepal's regulations for the number of children that can live in one room, this new home is bigger and will therefore be able to increase the quality of life of the children. The Colony's financial situation does not allow to purchase extra furniture for the house however, and so one can notice that the living and dining room do not have a table, and that most of the outside walls have not been painted yet.

This move represents an important step in the life of all the children of the Helpless Colony, and we hope that many of you will come visit our new house and help us make it a wonderful place to live for all its residents!

7. How to be a volunteer in our colony

Over the years we have had more than 100 volunteers in our Happiness Colony. We are eagerly looking forward to welcoming our new volunteers because they provide us with invaluable help.

The activities in which we most often get help from volunteers are as follows:

- Speaking English with us
- Playing with us
- Helping with our homework (English, math, science)
- Organising and taking part in our extracurricular activities (play football and cricket, taking walks, going to the movies, visiting temples)
- Helping with the housework (cleaning, cooking, fixing clothes)
- Administering first aid

If you have any specific skills, such as business, marketing, teaching English, plumbing, electrician, building, nursing, sowing, sports, this would be extremely helpful for us as you could both apply your skill in our house and/or you could teach us this skill.

8. Volunteering and day to day life with us

The usual day of a volunteer in the orphanage begins around 7am when we start doing our homework and the volunteers can help us. After we've all had our breakfast at around 8.30, the volunteers take the little children to their school and the rest of the children take the school bus. From about 9.30 to about 4pm the volunteers have free time which can be used to discover the local culture and to visit the many tourist attractions around the Kathmandu valley. We come back from school at about 4pm and then we all play and hang around the house together until around 6.30 when we all eat dinner together. In the evening we do our homework and we would appreciate if you were there to help us with anything from math to English to science. We go to sleep at around 10pm. We have a day off from school on Saturday and we suggest that the volunteers spend the whole day with us. At the end of September and beginning of October there are two weeks of holidays in Nepal during which we don't go to school.

It is critical that the volunteers offer financial support to secure the sustainability of our orphanage. It is important to understand that when the volunteers come through intermediary organizations, only 10-15% of the fees they pay eventually reaches us. If you come to us directly, 100% of the money goes to the orphanage.

We propose to the volunteers to contribute as follows. This contribution includes the costs of the accommodation and the food in the orphanage.

Length of stay	1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks	1 month
Contribution	15,000 rupees	20,000 rupees	25,000 rupees	30,000 rupees
	= \$158	= \$211	= \$263	= \$316

We would also greatly appreciate if the volunteers could contribute to the future activities as described in Chapter 5.

Some past volunteers have written in their blogs about their experiences here. You can check out their blogs here:

<http://inspiremisilly.wordpress.com/2013/12/22/the-helpless-colony/>

<http://gretchensmueller.blogspot.com/2011/01/helpless-colony.html>

If you have any other inquiries or would like to hear from former volunteers, please feel free to contact Aleksei at aleksei.trofimov@gmail.com and William at w.guicheney@gmail.com.

9. Activities we provide for the volunteers

We are extremely happy to accompany our volunteers in their sightseeing trips and to teach them what we know about Nepali culture. We offer the following activities to the volunteers:

- **Sightseeing**

Kathmandu is a fantastic city full of UNESCO World Heritage sites. We love going to the world famous temples of Swayambu Temple (the Monkey Temple on the hill overlooking Kathmandu) and Boudhnath Temple (the largest stupa in Nepal). The Boudhanilkantha Vishnu Temple is literally just a 15 minutes walk from the orphanage. There is also a Krishna Temple nearby. The entrance to the Shivapuri National Park is also very close to the orphanage and it is possible to take a 3-hour hike up the Nagigumba peak to the Lhundrup Choeling Monastery. There are also some meditation centers nearby.

- **Learning about Nepali language and culture**

All the kids in the orphanage speak English and go to school where English is the language of instruction, but of course we come from all over Nepal and from all kinds of backgrounds. No volunteers go away without a deeper understanding of Nepali culture and without acquiring quite a Nepali vocabulary!

- **Cooking Nepali food**

Our main food is dal bhat, which is steamed rice with a cooked lentil soup. We always add some curry to our dal bhat. We love cooking other Nepali foods however and we would enjoy sharing our knowledge with the volunteers.

10. Practical information

Helpless Colony is located in the region of Kathmandu called Boudanilkantha. The exact address of the orphanage is Narayanthan, Ghumti, Pasikot. You can follow this [link](#) to see the Google Maps location of the orphanage.

Narayanthan is a suburb of Kathmandu which is centered around a large temple devoted to Vishnu (also called the [Boudhanilkantha Temple](#)). The temple is about 15 minutes walk from the orphanage. There are many local food restaurants, internet cafés and shops in the area around the temple. Also within the walking distance is a Krishna temple, Katmandu Animal Treatment Centre and a monastery which can be reached after a hike up the mountains in the Shivapuri National Park.

The easiest way to reach the orphanage from the airport is to take a taxi which costs around 1000 rupees. We can pick you up from the airport if that is more convenient for you. From Thamel, the touristic area in the centre of Kathmandu, the taxi to the orphanage costs around 400 rupees and it takes about 30 minutes. Our volunteers often take a public microbus from Thamel which costs 20 rupees and is a cultural experience in itself.

Approximate distances to different locations of interest:

- Nearest public bus station – 10 minutes walk,
- Nearest phone/internet café – 15 minutes walk,
- Nearest major touristic area Thamel – 30 minutes drive,
- Nearest medical services for minor ailments – 15 minutes walk,
- Nearest major hospital – 30 minutes drive.

Our house has 4 floors. The children's rooms are located on floors 2 and 3. The kitchen is on floor 3. We usually eat on the large terrace that is located next to the kitchen on floor 3. The volunteers live in their own room on the top floor. The room can be closed and it is perfectly

safe to leave personal things there. There are two showers/toilets which are located in the staircase between the floors. We only have cold water. Electricity is on for only several hours each day. From our house we can see the mountains that make up the Northern ridge of the Kathmandu valley. The house is surrounded by fields and other detached houses. On holidays we play cricket or football in the field next to our house.

The costs of living in Nepal are relatively low by Western standards. For example, the cost of a lunch in a local restaurant is 100-150 rupees (1-1.5 USD). The cost of accommodation and food at the orphanage is included within the contribution and you can expect to spend no more than 10 USD daily for other optional expenses like visiting local landmarks or going to restaurants. The volunteers usually buy gifts for their family in the area of Thamel where you can be sure to find great deals. For example, an authentic pashmina scarf can cost about 300 rupees. Major credit cards are accepted in local ATM, the Nabil bank and the Nepali Investment Bank ATMs are the most reliable ones and can be found throughout Kathmandu.

We strongly advise our volunteers to take out an insurance policy for the duration of their stay in Nepal. With regards to the necessary immunizations, please follow the CDC guidelines <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/indianrg.htm>.

Most nationalities can get a visa on arrival in the Kathmandu International airport. 30-day visa costs 40 USD and 90-day visa costs 100 USD. Be careful when you arrive not to follow the touts that will try to lead you through the airport: they are harmless but they expect a large tip. When applying for a visa, we advise our volunteers to simply state that they come for tourism, as stating that they come to work as volunteers may lead to a snowballing bureaucratic process.

We suggest the following packing list:

- Camera
- Mobile phone (it is very easy to get a local SIM card)
- Map of Kathmandu / guidebook
- Mosquito repellent
- Toiletries
- First aid kit
- Sunglasses
- Sunblock
- Towel
- Flash light
- Electric adapter (the current here is 220 volts, 50Hz, two rounded pins)

11. Contact information

There is a number of ways through which you can contact us.

Our main email address is helplesscolony2@hotmail.com.

Please visit our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/helplesscolony1>.

Our fixed landline number is (+977) 1 4370947.

The mobile phone number of Nanu (manager of the Helpless Colony) is (+977) 984 1770351. It is better to arrange a phone call with Nanu in advance so that Nanu has someone who can translate for her from English to Nepali. The mobile phone number of Alisha who speaks good English is (+977) 986 0048736.

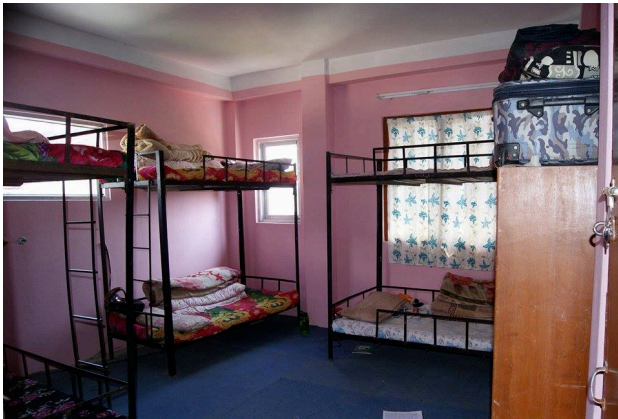
In case you would like to make a donation, here are our bank requisites:

Account holder's name: Nanu Rai
Bank name: Everest Bank Limited
Bank SWIFT code: EVBLNPKA
Account number: 02800501203763

We also have a P.O. box where the donations of clothes and school supplies can be sent. The Nepali local postal system is not very reliable so it is a good idea to send any parcel with a specialized logistics company. The address of the P.O. box is:

Nanu Rai
P.O. Box : 15142
Kantipur Parcel Care : 488
Kathmandu, Nepal

12. Photos of our house



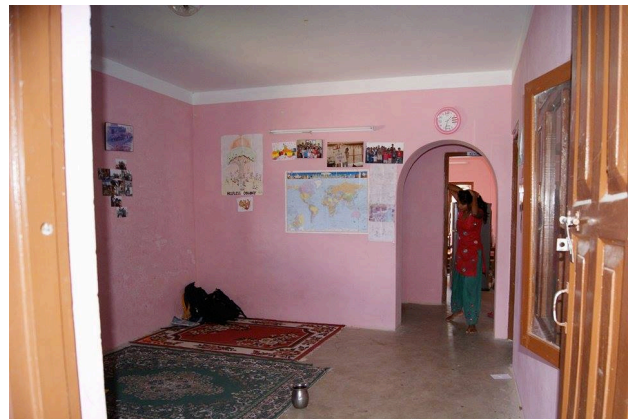
Childrens room



Childrens room



The house



Common room



Kitchen



The view from the roof of the house



The view from the roof of the house