

Newsletter nr 1/2023 from KMCH Support Group

Bäckland and Stockholm April 2023

Hans Alm is dead.

Our grief is strong.

In 2007 Hans founded, together with the Buddhist monk Chembal Lama, the organization KMCH – Kailash Manasarovar Children of Humla. The aim was to give poor children in Chembals' home village in the district Humla in the northwest of Nepal opportunity to good education. To succeed a school hostel was needed. Hans gathered some friends and together with Family Olofssons foundation and other contributors, the school hostel could be built. Hans was until his dead chairman and the driving force in the Swedish part of KMCH. Hans' dedication has been invaluable. We who are left will together do everything that we can to continue conduct and develop Hans' vision for the children in Humla.

The board KMCH Support Group

From my heart

One of the many safe wise adults
from my childhood has passed away

Saw one always with interested gaze
Always humble answers to difficult questions
Yes sometimes even the teenager's lost questions

He read a lot
Thought a lot
Helped the world – both the big and the local

Now he is no more

Will continue my conversations with you Hans Alm

I forgot to say you were a role model
so I hope you read it now *Karl Sandberg*

*Chembal and Sonam have offered butter lamps at Boudnath
Stupa in Kathmandu and Lapka has done the same in the
monastery Namkha Khyung Zong in Humla.*

Hello, Namaste and Tashi Delek

The first newsletter of the year focuses on the exhibition at Taragaon Museum in Kathmandu that took place January 23-29. In addition to this, the newsletter includes information about the children who lived at the school home during the previous year, as well as an introduction to the annual report from KMCH Nepal. The newly elected president of the country is also introduced. Finally, the letter ends with an invitation to KMCH's annual meeting on April 29. The invitation and relevant documents will be sent later.

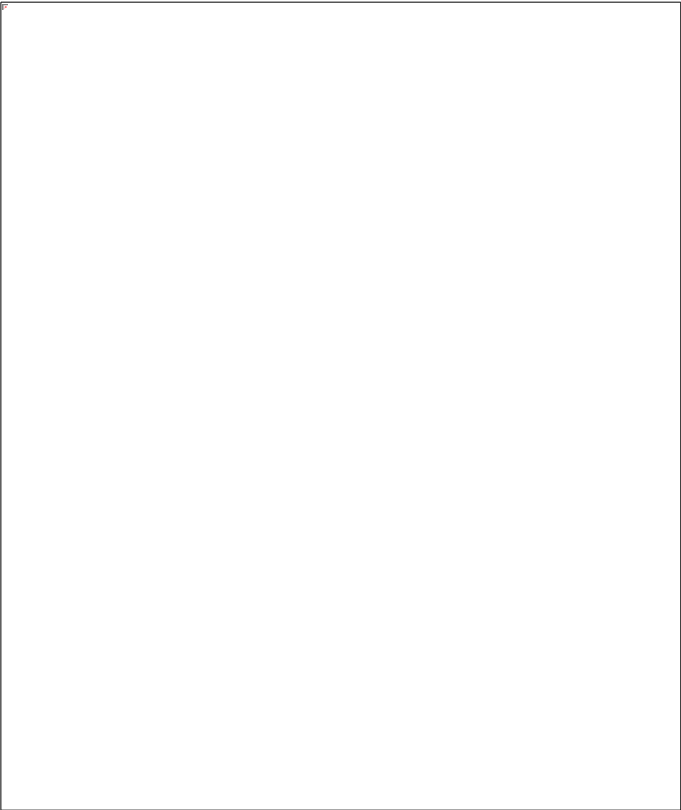
Exhibition in Kathmandu

The first class arrives, and students and teachers gather on the museum's beautiful brick stairs as Italo welcomes them. Excitement builds as they stream into the exhibition space, their murmurs growing louder and more eager. The students rush between the pictures and objects, and everything works perfectly.

This moment has been a dream since May 2019, when we stopped by Taragaon Museum in the Buddhanath district of Kathmandu on our way back from the school home in Humla. The museum's inspiring beauty and originality were palpable, and we met with Meena, the exhibition coordinator, who agreed to host an exhibition about KMCH. Our brains started working immediately.

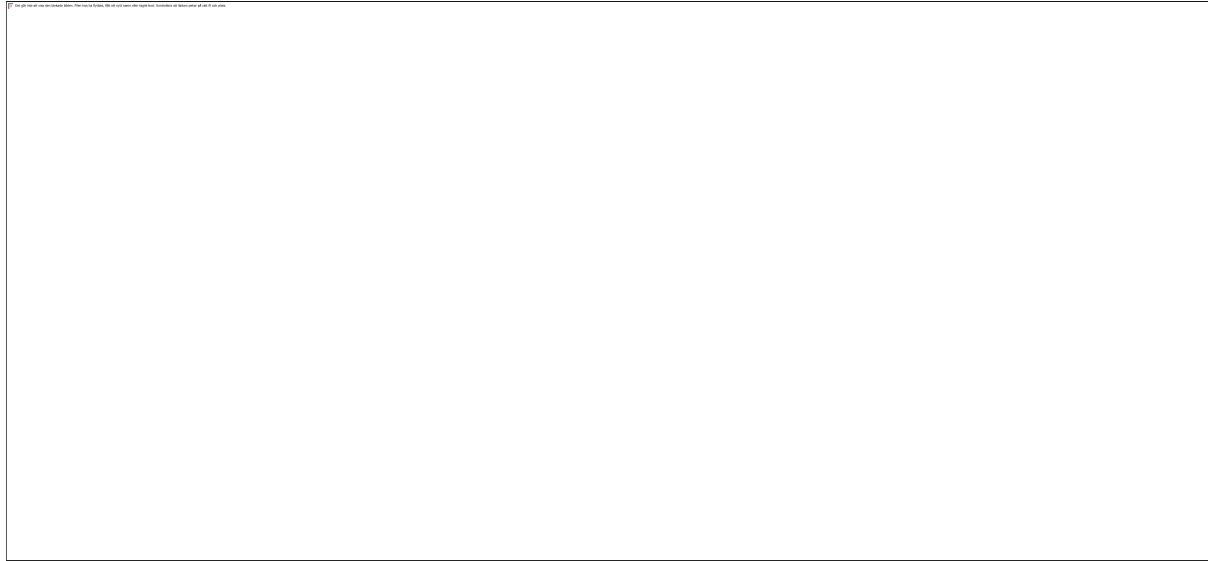
Despite the pandemic's intervention, we finally opened the doors on January 23, 2023, to spread knowledge about our work in providing 67 children with a chance for a good education in a remote part of Nepal through the school home. But that's not all – we also want to give a glimpse of the life and culture in that region, both past and present.

The exhibition features texts in both English and Nepali, as well as large pictures taken by the talented photographer Jonathan Stenvall, who joined us on our Humla trip in 2019. The exhibition tells the story of the school home, the school, and the monastery, showcasing, among other things, how we got there with the help of a large globe, a boy's description of his day at the school home, agriculture without machines, the tree-planting project, and greenhouses. The exhibition also explores the road that will change everything, a "graffiti wall," and a guest book.



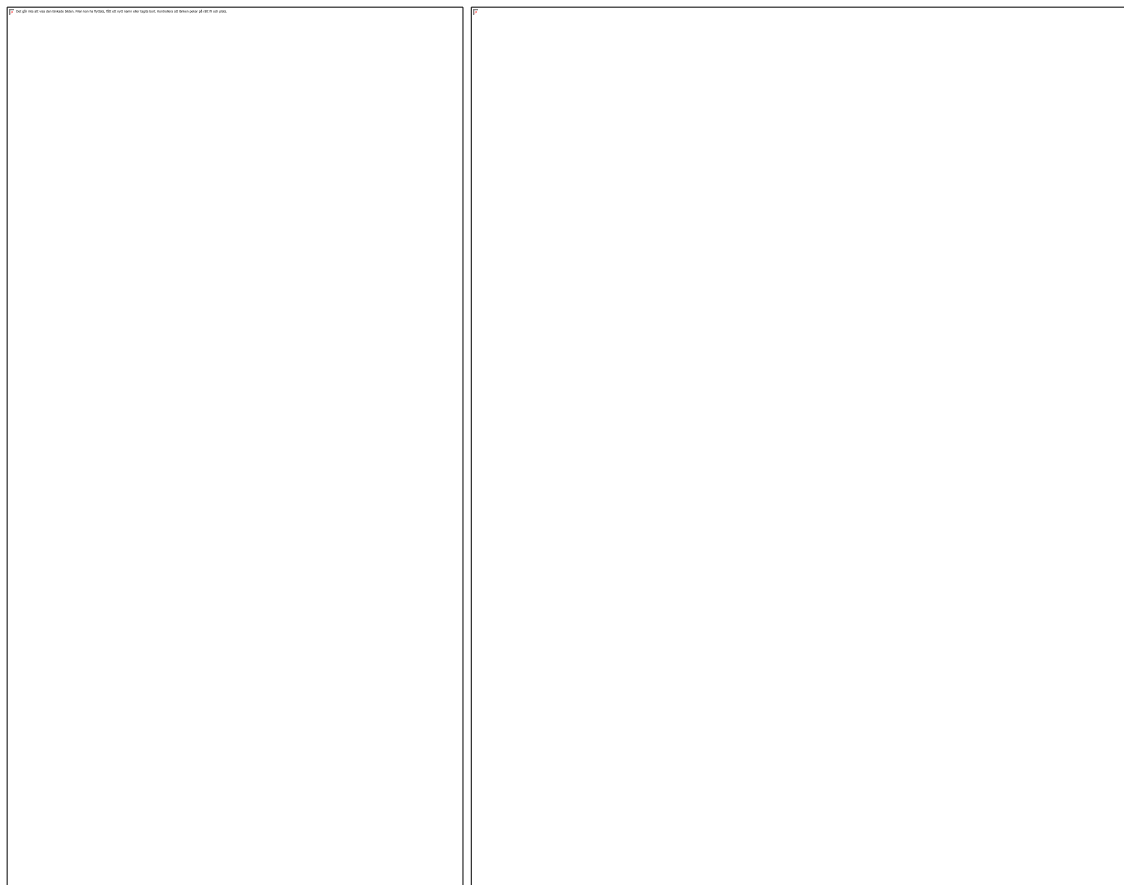
In one corner of the room, you'll find a couple of antique items that we borrowed. There's a wooden milk collector and what looks like a butte churn, which was

traditionally used to make "butter tea" – a mix of tea, yak milk, and salt. On a nearby table stands a 70-centimeter-long model of one of the school home buildings made in Sweden and shipped here in pieces.



Chemal provided two traditional costumes and a large rug that hung from the ceiling with the help of bamboo sticks and iron wire. Another bamboo stick – which we sawed down and brought in from a nearby bamboo thicket – held up a three-meter-long fabric banner featuring four colourful, dancing schoolgirls. This banner served as an exciting partition in the large room, drawing visitors in for a closer look.

Upstairs, we have decorated with even more pictures and there is also space for 20 chairs, a projector, and a large white surface where we show Gustav Nords' film from the Humla visit in 2016 and a slideshow with more of Jonathan's pictures.



To make the visit even more engaging, we have put together a quiz. The students team up and then walk around answering eleven questions. They do well. When they come out of the exhibition, we treat them butter tea. However, it is made by Chembal's wife using an electric mixer, not in the old butter churn.

During the week that the exhibition is open, we expect around 250 visitors, with half being regular museum-goers and the other half being students and teachers from the schools invited. It is the school visits that bring us the most joy, as one of the goals of the exhibition is to show city children what life is like in other rural parts of their country.

In the week leading up to the opening, we visited three schools – Hilary English High School, Kumari English Boarding School och Janakalyan Secondary School that Italo previously contacted regarding the exhibition to ask them to prepare questions. When they come, they not only get to see Gustavs' film, but also to meet and ask questions of Sopa Yaltsen and Konchok, who are from Humla and can tell them about life there and the differences compared to Kathmandu.

Taragon Museum is a beautiful place. When we arrived, the manager and his assistant looked at us five older Swedes with some skepticism. But they softened when they saw our imaginative solutions and the joy and enthusiasm of the students. They even took the initiative to hold a book donation day for the school's future library. The assistant's fiancée brought the first book: an English edition of *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

Throughout the project, we received excellent assistance from Chembal and Sonam. Sonam grew more confident with his tasks as did Sopa Yaltsen and Konchok, and towards the end, he confidently guided visitors in both Nepali and English.

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Swedens honorary consul general, Moushumi Shrestha, was impressed with KMCH:s work. Here she is surrounded by Sonam, Chembal, Lallo, Italo, Pär, Ann, Lennart och Sopa Yaltsen

The most enjoyable part of this experience was seeing how interested the students were. One day, we were even invited to a school for a "momos festival." Sweden's honorary consul general, Moushumi Shrestha, visited us on another day and was impressed with our work. Many others expressed similar sentiments in the guestbook, where we discovered a 100 USDollar bill one day, donated by a South Korean group.

Ann, Italo, Lallo, Lennart och Pär built the exhibition together.

Talk with Chembal Lama

Chembal shares the latest news from the school home on January 23, 2023 during a break from the exhibition work:

"Now it's really winter up in Humla. There has been a lot of snow, so people can't walk between the villages and are stuck inside their homes. They take care of the animals and do crafts.

The school home children are home in the villages with their families and have winter break because the snow makes it impossible for them to walk between the school home and the school.

The fall has been good, and the children are happy after two years of the COVID pandemic that caused several long interruptions in their schoolwork. Now, they are very pleased to be back to a normal life again.

One thing we need is one or two rooms where we can place sick children to stop the spread of the virus. We have learned this from the pandemic. We also want to build a library.

The road construction between Simikot, past the school home, and to the Chinese border is ongoing. But the pandemic has delayed it. Heavy rain and snowfall and landslides also make it difficult, as well as falling trees and boulders. So, there is no guarantee that the road will work."

Pär

Talk with Sopa Yaltsen

One of the people who participated in the exhibition and talked about the school home answered questions about their time there was Sopa Yaltsen.

"I lived in the school home for fifteen years and received my entire education at the nearby school," Sopa said.

Sopa's parents live in Humla but not near the school home.

"I met them during breaks when we had time off from our studies."

When you think of your time there, what do you remember most?

"All my friends and the staff who worked there," Sopa replied.

In 2015, he moved from Humla to Kathmandu. What are you doing now?

"I am studying business and economics. It's fun, but I could never have done it without the foundation of education I received during my time at the school home."

Lennart

Our Students

During 2022, there were 67 children living at the school home, 33 girls and 34 boys. Eight children graduated from class 10 during the year and will take the SLC (School Leaving Certificate) exam in the spring, which will allow them to continue their studies.

All children from KMCH who have passed the exam in the past have received financial support to pursue further studies, most of which have been done in Kathmandu. The financial support has mainly come from the Olofsson Family Foundation.

The introduction in Progress Report 2022 for KMCH Nepal

Humla is one of the most remote and underdeveloped areas with high number of uneducated people living in the areas and it lies in the northern part of Nepal nearly close to the Tibet. Since it is very far away from the Central Government of Nepal, every sort of proper services and facilities that every local people needed are not properly reached there.

KMCH is a Non-Profit organization established in 2007. Its main aim is to provide quality education to the children, mostly living in the rural areas of Humla, Nepal with first priorities on girls' education.

As we know education is the backbone of the country or places to start any development work so KMCH an NGO's establishing with aim of providing education to girls with first priorities and then to boys has been started since 2007.

Since due to lack of education and awareness in such underdeveloped areas so we mostly find there are discrimination between boys and girls for any activity. So, to reduce these types of problems in a society KMCH is establish to eradicate such social problems in Humla, a remote area of Nepal. KMCH has been providing not only education but also created an environment to learn their own society culture, norms and values. We got mostly children whose financial background is weak and whose parents can't afford children to learn in school and other problem is that if the children stay at their home, then they need to help their parents in the field, household works, to go and graze their animals in the jungle. So, due to these all works children can't get proper time to learn or go to school.

Therefore KMCH is acting as a platform by creating a proper environment to every children living in Humla for learning and going to school.

Chembal Lama

Information regarding current politics and more in Nepal

Nepal has a new president, Paudel from the Nepali Congress, who was elected with a large majority by parliament in March. Political bargaining led to Paudel's nomination by the incumbent government. This move caused Nepal's communist party to withdraw its support for the ruling coalition, which was formed after the last election. Dahal, leader of the Maoist party, is currently the prime minister for the third time since 2006. In Nepal's political life, it is common to become best friends with one's worst enemy if it serves one's own power position. Hence, it is uncertain who will govern the country in a few months. What Nepal needs are a leadership that can not only complete the five-year mandate but also implement its reforms in practice. There are many good proposals for improving Nepalese society, but constant changes in government and ministers mean that these proposals remain on paper.

One recent promise is that all women diagnosed with cervical or breast cancer will receive free medical care. Additionally, the state will provide free screening and vaccination against papillomavirus, which is a crucial step forward for women's health. However, will these proposals ever materialize.

Paudel is 78 years old and will serve as Nepal's president for five years. He succeeds Bidya Devi Bandhari, Nepal's first female president, who was heavily criticized for favouring her own party (NPC-UML, Nepal's communist party) during her tenure. Although Nepal's constitution does not give the president significant power, it is enough for Bandhari to delay several decisions before voting in parliament. Paudel is known in Nepal as a champion of democracy, having spent more than ten years in prison for his fight for democracy during the 1990s when absolute power lay with the king.

International Women's Day was also celebrated in Nepal on March 8. The country is a highly patriarchal society, and Nepali Times published an estimate of women's work in households. It compared it to an army officer's average salary (66,000 rupees per month) and what the work that a woman in a middle-class family does in the home would cost if she were paid. The total amount was 115,000 rupees per month. (If you want to read more, you can find several articles on www.nepalitimes.com).

In January 2020, current prime minister Dahal said at a press conference that as the leader of the Maoist party, he takes responsibility for 5,000 of the 17,000 deaths during the war that the Maoist party waged from 1996 to 2006. Dahal argued that Nepal's army was responsible for the other 12,000 deaths. Now, Dahal's statement may backfire on him, as the supreme court is considering whether he should be prosecuted for war crimes considering whether he should be prosecuted for war crimes.

Italo

KMCH Support Group annual meeting

The annual meeting will be held on April 2nd at Hembygdsrummet in Ekebyhovs slott. We will provide more details about the meeting in the notice for the annual meeting.

Greetings from the board of KMCH Support Group

by

Ann and Pär

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