



**Esel-Initiative**  
**Gemeinnütziger Verein zur Förderung**  
**allein erziehender Frauen**  
**in entlegenen Weltregionen e.V.**

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Due to the Corona risks for travelers and for people who live in these destinations, Stefanie Christmann did not undertake a project trip this year. Although a Covid-19 test before the trip reduces the risk for the country of entry or the district, it is no guarantee that travelers will not cause additional sources of infection. The health care system in Nepal is comparatively poorly developed so therefore we do not want to increase the risks for local people. German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI) has agreed to waive the project trip in 2020. We would, of course, like to keep you up to date on the project in Nepal as far as possible on the basis of the discussions between Stefanie Christmann and Laxmi Gauchan, the President of Sahayog Himalaya-Nepal (SHN).

According to global Corona statistics (as of September 27), Nepal is in 52nd place. Many people are infected, especially in the Terai (densely populated lowlands on the border with India) and in the very densely populated Kathmandu valley. It remains to be seen whether the official figures reflect the actual situation in the country. Nepal is a poor and structurally weak country, Covid-19 tests are expensive. The poor often do not even go to a health center or hospital. The relatively low number of infected people in Nepal could be related to the lower number of Covid tests per 1 million inhabitants. In the richer neighboring country India, the number of infected people is rising sharply (every 230th inhabitant is or was infected), in Nepal every 401th inhabitant.

In Nepal, the government has imposed a three-month curfew across the country and strictly enforced travel restrictions between districts. In the meantime, the curfew only applies to the particularly badly affected areas, such as the Kathmandu valley. The measures taken by the government have certainly contributed to at least delaying broad expansion. To date, no Covid infections have been reported from Humla and Dolpa.



*The firewood trade is an important source of income for single mothers, but the loads are too heavy for the slight women (Humla).*



*Upper Mustang mother in her greenhouse*

However, the travel restrictions made it impossible for Laxmi to carry out the project for months. In particular, it was not possible to meet Saput Schechschen, the most experienced staff member who always does the data collection for new assignments to be sent to Humla. By now, with a negative Covid-19 test, travel is finally possible and Laxmi is planning, as

soon as the weather situation allows (strong monsoon), to send Saput to the

high-altitude part of Humlas this year, so that next year's assignment of naks and greenhouses to new single mothers can get started quickly. In 2011, we already assigned animals there, but Stefanie had been asked repeatedly about a new



assignment when she visited the project, as many mothers have been widowed or abandoned since and would benefit greatly from such help. At this altitude - just as in Upper Dolpa, Upper Manaslu and Upper Mustang - vegetable cultivation is only possible in greenhouses for most of the year.

Despite the travel restrictions from district to district, Laxmi, with the help of the mothers and local workers, has by now been able to complete the building of most of the greenhouses in Upper Dolpa. That is a great achievement.

After intensive consultations with the board of directors and with Laxmi, we have therefore decided - despite the difficulties that the global Corona crisis will bring again and again in the future - to not let the project rest, but to actively advance it together with Laxmi. As soon as we have the results of Saput's survey from Upper Humla, we will transfer further donations this winter so that Laxmi can organise all the necessary helpers for spring and summer.

In 2021, we also want to start further data collection in Upper Mugu (also for naks and greenhouses).

On September 22nd, 2020, the DZI again issued the donkey initiative with the donation seal of approval as we forward 100% of donations to the project.



*Mothers with their nak herds, Upper Dolpa*