

MISSION REPORT – SPONSORSHIP FOR PRISONERS' CHILDREN (SPC)

Organisation: Prison Fellowship Nepal (Victims Support and Rehabilitation Program)

Mission dates: 26.12.2022 – 05.01.2023

Report writing: February 2023

Chryzalid has been collaborating for several years with the Prison Fellowship of Nepal [PFN] which works to support the families of incarcerated people while promoting their rehabilitation. Since June 2022, we have been funding their Sponsorship for Prisoners' Children [SPC] programme and were invited to come and see their activities in person and strengthen the links between our two organisations. At Christmas 2022, I had the chance to go to Kathmandu and be warmly welcomed by our Nepalese partners.

The families of prisoners are often the direct victims of imprisonment. In Nepal, no support is provided to these people, who often lose their main income once the person is in custody. The aim of our Prison Fellowship partners is therefore to support these families by contributing to the education, health, safety and resilience of the youngest children. In the Dhading, Chitwan and Makwanpur districts of Bagmati province, 175 children between the ages of 2 and 13 are currently benefiting from this programme.

Activities within the programme

During my stay, I was able to participate in many activities. I mainly accompanied my hosts in the distribution of food to several dozen girls and boys, travelling to various places in the three districts. Our regular trips gave us the opportunity to visit two houses built for some of the poorest families in the project, including celebrating the inauguration of one of them with the village and local authority representatives. I was taken to two of the three selected prisons to meet some of the prisoners whose children are supported by the SPC. These enriching experiences allowed me to see the importance of Chryzalid's support for the beneficiaries, who were often keen to show their appreciation, and to discover in more detail the extent of the investment and work of the PFN.

It is worth mentioning that the dimensions of their programme are even broader than the activities I witnessed. It concentrates on the schooling, health, and welfare of these children while providing opportunities for the guardians, often the mothers, to strengthen their livelihoods. I was impressed by the dedication of the whole team and the thoroughness with which their actions are implemented.

With solid experience in managing such a project (before the pandemic, 400 children were supported by the PFN, a programme funded by another organisation), the SPC consists of several activities:

- Distribution of food to 175 children (per child: 30kg of rice, 10kg of coral lentils, 4 litres of sunflower oil and 1kg of salt) every three months,
- Visits to families and monitoring of children (schooling, health, welfare) by social workers, approximately every 3-4 months,
- Coverage of school fees and distribution of school materials,
- Covering medical expenses for children who need it,
- Renovation of dwellings and construction of houses for the most precarious families (4 families in one year)¹,
- Trainings in agriculture or chicken breeding for 20 women, every semester, with distribution of certifications and provision of raw resources (animals or seeds),
- Call to visit relatives in prison, every 3 months, families are invited to meet to visit the inmate and thus maintain the link,
- Organisation of a "get together" at the end of the year where training on children's rights and actions to ensure their health and safety is held.

Summary of the trip

<p>27th December - Day 1</p>	<p>After putting my bags down at Dinesh and Benjamin's, we went to visit Bhaktapur and Bodnath. In the afternoon, we went to the Fellowship's offices. I met two members of the committee, to whom I introduced Chryzalid and its activities in more detail. Their wishes and prayers were addressed to the Vevey office and committee and we were warmly thanked for our commitment.</p>	
<p>28th December - Day 2</p>		<p>Dinesh, Benjamin and Prakash, the three members of the office working directly on the programmes, presented me with all the official documents, explained the structure of the organisation, the quality control and the procedures with the government as well as the account files (see details below). I was able to ask my first questions about the programme and consult the files of the children who benefit from it.</p>

¹ Part of the medical costs budget was reallocated to housing as fewer children than expected required medical assistance.

29th
December
- Day 3

We drove to Dadhing. On the way we went to hand over food to a mother and son and visit their home, which was the first to be built since the programme began. The first part of the house is finished and the second part has walls but is still waiting to hear from the state, which has committed to providing the roof.



Upon arrival in Dhading, several families had an appointment to receive the children's food. When it is not possible for the Fellowship team to deliver directly, a meeting place is determined (often in front of a shop selling the products) and the travel expenses of the families are covered by the programme.

We then went to Dadhing prison to allow a 4-year-old boy to be released from prison where he had been living with his mother for a year. The mother requested for PFN to take care of her son. This involved talking to the prison governor and then taking time to discuss the details with the mother. The time of the procedure gave me the opportunity to talk to a prisoner who wanted to thank Chryzalid for all the support given to the children. Finally, the foster father of the Peace Loving Girls Home in Pokhara (where the younger children are also housed) came with a daughter to visit her mother. Having been able to get out of prison 6 months earlier, his presence made a good transition for the little boy who already knew her and we finally set off with the two children and their guardian. We put them on a bus to Pokhara and continued our journey to Sauraha.



30th
December
- Day 4

After an elephant ride organised for me in the morning, we went to distribute food. I also discovered the "Chitwan Farm", a place with several plots allowing cultivation and breeding throughout the year, notably thanks to the employment of three former prisoners. It is here that the Livelihood project's training sessions are held. The Peace Loving Boys Home is also located here, generating income by renting out the building (on the outskirts of Kathmandu) previously used for this purpose. Currently, Red Dragon Fruit crops are planted here to generate income. During the rainy season, rice is grown to provide food for the boys in the home.



We visited several families to bring them food supplies and ended the day by going to the surrounding forest to distribute food for two children and to visit the location of the next housing assistance. They are currently living close to their families but under a rudimentary shelter without walls. The existing structure provides protection from the fire for cooking (see photo). It is from this structure that their future home will be established.



31th December
- Day 5





To start the day, we went to a village where a house had just been completed. I was able to visit the place, the walls were freshly built and a tin roof had been laid. The Chryzalid plaque was placed over the door and we inaugurated the house in the presence of many people from the village and the local authority representative. A speech was made by the local social worker to explain to the village the reasons for the construction and our presence. Accompanied by the local representative, I cut the ribbon of the house and distributed sweets to the children present. We quickly set off again to distribute food to a family we had arranged to meet.





After several hours on the road, we arrived at Bimphedi prison. When we entered the compound, I saw that tarpaulins on the ground had been set up as well as tables and chairs. Prisoners whose children are in the care of the programme had been summoned. About 50 of the 110 in the facility were present. They sat down on the tarpaulins and we sat at the tables with the prison director and some officials. The father of the family whose house we had inaugurated in the morning was present and addressed a few words to



me to thank Chryzalid for allowing his family to live in better conditions. Another prisoner took the floor to express the gratitude of the prisoners for this programme and to ask Chryzalid to continue funding these activities for at least the next two years. Dinesh asked me to say a few words about Chryzalid, translating my speech. He then took the floor and gave all the information about the programme and their activities. After several photos, we drove back to Sauraha.

<p>1st January - Day 6</p>	<p>We left for Manahari, where we had arranged to meet several families for food distribution. We stayed for a few hours before leaving. This kind of gathering is a good time to explain to the adult tutors, often mothers, that the livelihood project exists and to sign them up if they are interested. Many women have signed up for the next training. On the way home, Dinesh and Benjamin stopped by to organise the next course with the veterinarian. After a visit to the farm, we returned to Sauraha for a dance performance and to enjoy the last evening there.</p>	 
<p>2nd January - Day 7</p>	<p>We took the road to Pokhara. Once there, we went paddling on the lake and drove to the Peace Loving Home for the end of the day. The prisoner's girls who are housed there had prepared a little show for me and I met up with the two young children I had met at Dadhing prison. The little boy is acclimatising well to what he calls "the hotel". After spending the evening there playing with the children, I was driven back to my hotel.</p>	
<p>3rd January - Day 8</p>		<p>This eighth day was all about tourism. I was taken to see the view of the Annapurna Mountains before being taken to the International Mountain Museum. I spent the afternoon and evening resting and visiting the surrounding area, enjoying a walk by the lake.</p>

<p>4th January - Day 9</p>	<p>It was the longest day's drive of the trip, we returned to Kathmandu in about 7 hours. The rest at the end of the day was therefore very welcome for everyone.</p>	
<p>5th January - Day 10</p>		<p>My last day in Nepal. We mainly spent it in the Fellowship's offices to reflect on our journey so far, finish some documents to be handed over to me and to allow me to ask my last questions. After saying goodbye to Prakash and Dinesh, I went to the market and Benjamin took me for a last excellent meal before landing at the airport.</p> <p>To Dinesh, Benjamin and Prakash: I would like to reiterate my thanks for the way you welcomed me and your kindness. I will forever remember this visit and I wish you the very best!</p>

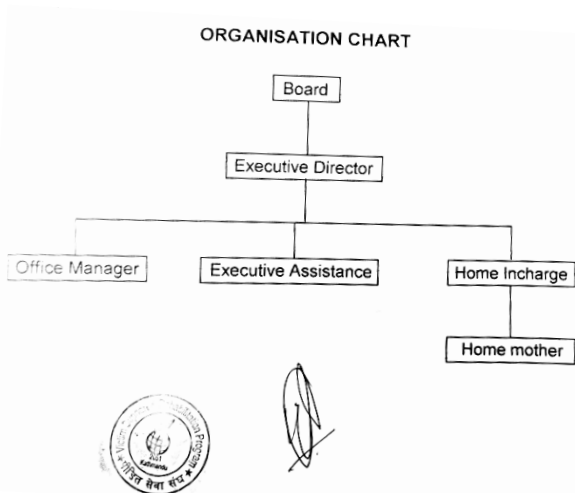
Adaptation and impacts, example and testimony

One of the main qualities of this project is that it is locally based, with the population. The actions are set up to meet the needs of the children and the families of which they are members. This makes it possible to adapt very well to unforeseen circumstances. For example, in the first training course given as part of the livelihood project, ducks and chickens were distributed to the women who had attended. However, for some families living at higher altitudes, survival of these animals was not possible. In response to this problem, a breed of chicken that is more resistant to the cold and requires less food was chosen for the second training, in order to give the project a better chance of bearing fruit and enabling these people to generate an income from the activity. The adaptation was done by exchanging with the women concerned and thanks to their inputs and requests.

During our visits, several people wished to thank the actions put in place to help the children, supporting the important impact that these had on their families. This was the case of the grandfather of two beneficiary children who explained to me how valuable this help was. His son-in-law was arrested and imprisoned for poaching rhinos (a highly protected species in Nepal because it is endangered). Currently and for the last 5 years, 60 men are in prison for this judicial case because it is very difficult to determine who the real culprits are. For the woman and children involved in this testimony, this decision came very suddenly and deprived them of their main income, forcing them to come and live with their closest family, including the woman's father, for

support. However, the family does not have accommodation, as there is not enough room in the aunt and uncle's house for everyone. The only 'hard' building provides shelter for the fire for cooking. The mother and her two children sleep under a raised shelter without walls. In addition to food and schooling support, the new house to be built will be a huge relief for their family and the grandfather expressed his gratitude that his grandchildren and daughter will be able to cope despite their family's unfortunate situation.

Functioning of the organisation



The trip also gave me a better understanding of how the structure of the PFN Nepal works.

Governmental control / evaluation-reporting

Government approval is required for such activities, especially those that receive foreign funding. The Social Welfare Office [SWO] audits and controls every two years (but in this case, due to the form of the project, every year). An independent auditor is commissioned and they must change every 3 years and be approved by the government. Approvals from all local districts must also be obtained. Once the payment is

received, an application must be sent in with all the letters of recommendation from each district and it is necessary to wait for the SWO to validate before the money can be used. Every 4 months a report must be sent to them. The administrative cost of the activities should not exceed 15-20% of the budget.

Within 3 months after the end of the programme, an evaluation of the SWO will be conducted, normally in the summer of 2023 (between June, July and August). This evaluation has to be paid for and organised in advance, the programme can start before receiving the authorisation but it is necessary and must be conducted annually in order to continue. No funding is received from the government, the PFN benefits from tax reductions for its non-profit status.

Internal financial control

All money received goes into a special account created for the SPC. Every withdrawal from this account must be signed by the chairman and the treasurer. For any expenditure over \$5000, the committee must validate. For any purchase of equipment or other special expenses (e.g. for the website), at least three quotations must be sought and the best and most economical option will be chosen on the basis of these proposals. For day-to-day expenses, an internal system is set up in the 3 project locations. Every evening, the invoices are sent in a photo so that they can be validated by the central office team.

I had the opportunity to look at the expense receipts and to see that for each purchase, a document is required for the accounting. The PFN team is very rigorous in this respect and the accounts seem to be perfectly kept.

Staff of the organisation

3 employees work in the Kathmandu office (Dinesh, Benjamin and Prakash), 4 are employed at the farm in Chitwan, 2 in Pokhara. 3 social workers are also employed to visit families in different districts and are paid per visit (600 rupees per check), they visit the children every 3-4 months. Every year the worker is evaluated and the contract is renewed if everything goes well.

Setting up the programme, selection process of the children

An advertisement was put in the prisons, on the walls, explaining the selection criteria and the benefits for the children and families. After 2 weeks, interviews were conducted with the many people who had completed the application. An age limit for the children had to be established (12/13 years old, the school leaving age) in order to help the youngest, especially in their schooling, and those most in need. The number of cases selected per prison corresponds to the proportion of prisoners there. The choice is made by the three people in the office with the advice of the district social worker who works closely with the families and has been able to see them directly.

Once the selection was made, all the people were called to an appointment at the prison to sign the documents and take photos of the children (the travel expenses were still to be paid by the candidates as the support of PFN could only be provided once the selection process was completed).

Programme monitoring

As mentioned above, regular visits are organised. Parents or guardians can report health concerns at any time. Each child is monitored and information about him/her is kept in individual files in the PFN offices. I was able to consult these files when I visited the office.

When food is distributed, adults are asked to sign a register, a photo is taken and travel expenses, if any, are also noted.

Future needs and collaboration

The Fellowship asks Chryzalid to continue its support for at least the next two years in order to ensure a minimum of 3 year's programme.

It would also be appreciated if Chryzalid could send some kind of partnership certificate that would be framed alongside the other certifications and official documents that the organisation has received.

Concerning other possible projects, more in line with development cooperation criteria than assistance, two existing programmes could be developed. The Fellowship team proposes to link the two in a larger programme whose overall objective would be the social and professional reintegration of prisoners in order to fight



the cycle of violence. An outline of the project was drawn up before my departure and is attached to this mission report.

The first aspect would be the rehabilitation of women prisoners when they leave the prison and have no family ties or social connexion on the outside. A project around the Chitwan farm (which should be expanded soon) would allow them to work and support themselves while training to reintegrate into society. This would involve 10 women per year.

A second component would be the training of women prisoners before their release from prison. Several occupations are targeted according to the wishes and aptitudes of the persons at the end of their sentence. This would involve 100 people per year.

I think that such a project has a good potential, especially if it can be submitted to the Fedevaco. The proposal document is a good basis, which will of course have to be completed in order to meet the criteria and requirements of the federation and the technical committee (who evaluates the projet and decide if it meet the right objectives), but the place and the conditions are favourable for a project related to the empowerment of the populations concerned. I am available to discuss this further with Laurence in the future.

Annexes:

- Constitution of VSRP
- Application for renewal of the SPC
- Proposal for a new integration and rehabilitation project for prisoners
- Image rights, authorisation for the use of photos