

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



Kanchenjunga Base Camp

#### Our purpose

Securing a brighter future for children in remote Himalayan communities.

#### Our mission

By 2030, ensure access to education for all children in the remote Kanchenjunga and Indrawati communities of Nepal.

#### Our drivers of change

- Education
- Livelihood
- Healthcare

#### **Our History**

HDFA commenced working in Nepal in early 2014, co-founded by prominent South Australian mountaineer Duncan Chessell and Andrew Stace, an educator with international development experience and a passion for Nepal.

In 2013 Duncan first visited Ghunsa, the home village of the Sherpa mountain guides who had helped him on several expeditions. Located in the far eastern area of Nepal in the shadow of Mt Kanchenjunga, the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest peak on the planet, the journey took a one-hour flight from Kathmandu, followed by an 18-hour drive, and then three days of serious trekking. The extreme remoteness and poor living conditions were striking. Ghunsa was well off the tourist trail, overlooked by charities and barely receiving any government support. This is what motivated HDFA into being; a determination to help the people of Ghunsa and other very remote areas of Nepal give their children a better future.

We soon realised that to effect true lasting impact, a more holistic approach was required – involving the whole community in Education, Health and Livelihood programs. We also observed an inverse relationship between poverty and good governance in Nepal. This was a fundamental issue that we have addressed together with the leaders of the Ghunsa community through governance training and support for the school, health post and community more generally. We are proud to have witnessed the community taking over responsibility for management and the majority of funding for the health post and their exemplary school.

In 2016 we started working in Indrawati, north of Kathmandu, a heavily earthquake-damaged region where human trafficking is rife due to crushing poverty. In 2017 we greatly enhanced health services to approximately 9,500 people through improved clinical outreach, family planning and awareness-raising. In 2018 we implemented an agricultural improvement program, equipping 200 of the poorest families with a year-round source of nutrition and income, which has been built on as the gardens, crops and small herds become productive.

HDFA continued to provide health and livelihood support to these communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, to help sustain the communities as they faced many challenges from 2020 through to 2022. Schooling was severely disrupted by the pandemic, and we are continuing to address the challenge of attracting children back into education in Indrawati and are looking to increase our impact in far eastern Nepal.

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#### **ABOUT US**

The Himalayan Development Foundation Australia aims to secure a brighter future for children in remote Himalayan communities. By 2030, we are working to ensure access to education for all children in the remote Kanchenjunga and Indrawati communities of Nepal.

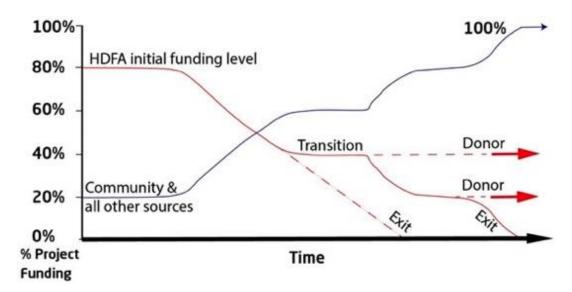
We believe giving children an education is the best way to break the illiteracy-poverty cycle and counter the risk of child trafficking. Our work also extends to health and livelihood improvement activities in order to give parents the capacity to send their children to school.

We are a small and passionate volunteer team, dedicated to working in very remote Himalayan areas that large-scale organisations overlook. Our aim is to engage with a community for 5-15 years, after which we hope to have equipped the community to manage their own future in a sustainable way.

Through holistic community development, we support communities in the areas of education, health and livelihood development to assist them to reach higher. We believe in giving a hand up, not a handout, where the community are engaged in the projects from the start and provide their input to assist their community. By providing opportunities within the community we aim to stem the flow of young people from villages moving to the cities and overseas where many of them end up working in poor, unskilled positions (or worse) due to a lack of education and a background of poverty. We aim to develop skills and economic capacity within the communities, so they may take care of their own future with responsibility and a level of financial security. Health and livelihood developments are enablers within the communities we work with to allow children to go to school, gain an education and have a brighter future.

A fundamental tool to achieving these goals is to strengthen governance at the local community level such as school management and health post committees and to encourage local communities to take on the ownership of *their* future and remove the reliance on handouts from government and NGOs.

#### **DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**



#### **OUR PEOPLE**



Andrew Stace – Chair Nepal programs – sub-committee



Anne Skipper – Vice Chair Fundraising sub-committee



Dr Jo Arnold – Board Member



Melissa Westgate – Board Member Fundraising sub-committee



Chris Miller – Board Member



Duncan Chessell – Board Member CEO (Voluntary) – all committees



Ed Parker – Treasurer Nepal programs – sub-committee



Ella Price - Secretary



Doreen Ho – Accountant (Voluntary)



SECTION 2 GOVERNANCE

#### **STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT**

The Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Inc (HDFA) is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and is an incorporated association in South Australia.

The management committee (board) consists of eight board members with a variety of skills and experience in not for profit work and boards, education, accounting, business, legal and fundraising, and the majority are 'responsible persons'.

The Australian accounts are reported on by an external organisation (McCormack A&A) on a pro-bono basis directly to the board and annually independently audited by Oreon Partners, whose report is included in this Annual Report. We conduct spot audits on our Nepalese supplier and partner organisations, regular monitoring and evaluation trips to the field and offices in Kathmandu, with annual independent audits conducted by local Nepalese firms. All bank accounts in Australia (HDFA) and Nepal (In Country Delivery Organisations: PHASE Nepal and KBSS) operate on a two-to-sign basis for all transactions. In line with AusAID and DFAT requirements and industry best practice, no board members receive board fees. Duncan Chessell is a volunteer CEO and receives no fees.

HDFA applied in late 2016 to the Department of Foreign affairs and Trade (DFAT) for authorisation to operate an overseas public aid fund with deductible gift recipient status. This would enable the organisation to fundraise and issue tax deductible receipts to donors in its own right, and access a wider pool of funds from PAFs, corporate and government grants. The process requires two years of track record before application and is assessed by DFAT, ATO and Treasury, which process typically takes approximately two years to complete.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2018, the Federal Assistant Treasurer, Mr Stuart Robert, declared the Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Incorporated a Public Fund under subsection 30-85(2) of the *Income Assessment Act 1997* as a developing country relief fund; and as an approved organisation declared by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop (earlier in 2018).

This allows HDFA to issue tax-deductible receipts directly to Australian resident donors and allows HDFA to apply for funds from a significantly wider and deeper pool of donors and greatly enhances the credibility of the organisation.

#### **Australian Activities**

Our volunteer board plans, monitors and manages our development activities overseas. We also help our members and supporters to organise events such as dinners, quiz night and media coverage, and we look forward to continuing these fundraising activities in 2023.

In 2023 we are recruiting for more volunteers to lend a hand. Please contact us if you believe you can help.

info@hdfa.org

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Namaste! The Annual Report is always a great document for us to put together. It gives us a wonderful opportunity to share the successes and challenges that we have encountered over the year. The last 12 months have certainly been no exception. Despite ongoing COVID-19 issues, the Himalayan Development Foundation Australia has been able to continue our holistic development support of remote communities in Nepal alongside our partners.

In April, I was able to return to Nepal for the first time since visiting in 2019. It was wonderful to be able to return to a place I love and to reconnect with its people. This forced break from travelling to Nepal between 2019 and 2022 was the longest time between visits for me since I first began visiting in 2001! While it was still quiet by Nepal standards, it was wonderful to see tourists returning and just as importantly, a growing local tourist market with many locals visiting rural and remote areas as domestic travellers. Whilst my time there was busy meeting with stakeholders from both the Indrawati and Kanchenjunga Community Projects this was time well spent in gaining a deeper understanding of local conditions and capacity. In addition, I attended the PHASE Nepal Bi-Annual conference which proved an excellent opportunity to learn more about the work PHASE is doing across their projects in Nepal and connect with other development experts. It was affirming to hear of the wonderful work they are doing and the level of professionalism that PHASE brings to their activities.

During this visit, I also spent time with the villages we support through the Indrawati Community Project, observing the work that is being done and spending time listening to the local people. I was buoyed by the amazing strength and character of the people living throughout the valleys that we support. It has been a difficult time enduring COVID-19 while still rebuilding following the 2015 earthquakes, but the resilience of the local people is admirable. I was impressed by some of the new elements of our work including a program that sees us provide goats to the most vulnerable women in the community who farm their small herd and soon return several goats to the project for the support of other vulnerable women. The goats are truly a sustainable way of providing economic development and opportunities within the community.



The kiwi fruit plantations, citrus plots, vocational training and agriculture support (amongst other things!) are making a real difference to the people living in this remote area who were very thankful for the support they received. I was also very pleased to see the new two-room community health post, which has been completed since our last visit in 2019. This is a great facility which will serve the community well into the future providing both proactive and emergency health support in the area.



My time in Nepal also established our relationship with Almost Heaven Farms in Eastern Nepal. Zac Barton and his team are experts in regenerative permaculture, an area that we are keen to see more focus on within communities in the east. This relationship has since been formalised with HDFA partnering with Almost Heaven Farms and the local government to further develop our work in Eastern Nepal.

The next financial year is an exciting one for HDFA and our journey alongside remote communities. As part of the Indrawati Community Project, we will repair and retro fit the local school to provide more classrooms, which will allow the school to additionally offer grades 6-8. This is important for the local community because a number of the young children currently walk a 4-hour return trip to attend school come rain, hail or shine. Local schooling is hoped to improve their education outcomes as well as enhancing attendance.

This is an important project for the community and essential to fulfil the HDFA aim to have all children in the area able to access education by 2030. We look forward to the new classrooms and office space being opened early in 2023.

We are also extremely happy to be extending our support in Eastern Nepal beginning in the next financial year. Partnering with Almost Heaven Farms and the local Municipal Government, we will be working to provide holistic development to the people of Hellok and surrounding areas. This new community project will see us working across education, sustainable agriculture, and livelihoods as well as health. Hellok has

high levels of subsistence farming and poverty, and will benefit from the support we will be able to bring via our new partnership. This is certainly an exciting next chapter for the foundation.



All of this does not happen though without the dedication of a small but very talented group of people, and I want to take the opportunity to personally thank the HDFA volunteer board members. Every single member of the board gives their time and expertise to help improve the lives of others in Nepal. They are a passionate and engaged group of professionals who I am thankful to work with.

Our project coordinator, Bikash Koirala and the team of people at PHASE Nepal have continued to work with us as our partner organisation in the Indrawati Community Project. Throughout the challenges of the last couple of years, Bikash has remained focussed on supporting the people we work with. I want to once again thank all staff at PHASE for the great work they do with us.

My thanks also go to Mingma Dandu Sherpa who has helped us stay connected with the community in Ghunsa whilst also ensuring that we are able to begin building a new and strong relationship with Hellok and the local government. His expertise and knowledge of Eastern Nepal is second to none. The Kanchenjunga Buddhist Social Service and Mingma Bhote also deserve acknowledgement for their ongoing support.

As we look back on the year that was and look ahead to the exciting plans for the year ahead, I want to thank everyone who has supported us on our journey to this point. HDFA is looking forward to continuing to support remote, disadvantaged communities in Nepal to Reach Higher.

1 Jaw

Andrew Stace BA(IntlStud), BEd, GCertEMS Chairperson and Co-Founder

#### **OUR OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

In 2021-2022 Himalayan Development Foundation Australia continued to support two local communities with an ongoing focus on health support to minimise the impact of COVID-19 and we have made the first steps on new education-boosting activities, enhanced livelihood training and support, and are embarking on a scoping study for development assistance in the Hellok community in Eastern Nepal.

#### Indrawati

Since 2016 we have been working with communities in the Indrawati region, in the Bhotang and Baruwa areas of Sindhupalchok, which borders Tibet – seven hours north of Kathmandu. This is a remote and poverty-stricken part of Nepal, hit very hard by the 2015 earthquakes. In 2016 we undertook a scoping study to find out what was needed for this community to rebuild itself and give their children hope for a brighter future. We commenced working to address urgent health and financial needs in the community so that families would become stronger – ultimately strong enough to properly support their children's education.

#### Healthcare

HDFA, in partnership with PHASE Nepal, has continued to provide basic primary healthcare and a 24 hour emergency and maternity service from the Bolgaun Clinic. This operates from a well-maintained permanent birthing room for emergency deliveries and facilities for minor injuries, immunization and family planning, made possible by the joint effort of PHASE Nepal, Local Government and HDFA.

During this reporting period many patients were seen as part of the clinic and outpatient's program, with a strong focus on COVID-19. Women were assisted by trained health staff who utilised the delivery services part of the clinic. There is widespread appreciation for the health services provided as part of our programs.

As well as the services provided at the health clinic, the nurses continued to visit the remote houses in the area providing health education and care. Other key health initiatives were focused on COVID-19, family planning, nutrition workshops and school education programs.

#### **Livelihood improvement**

2021/2022 has seen the maintenance and slow building of our livelihood initiatives in Indrawati despite challenges due to illness. This agricultural improvement initiative, which focuses on empowering women and the community's most needy, serves to fill the gap in daily nutrition for families, especially for young children and pregnant and post-partum mothers. Field visits show that without exception all projects appeared very successful with potential for further deployment to the wider community.



The project has continued its farmer support program, coaching farmers to improve their knowledge and skills in producing seasonal and extended-season vegetables such as cabbage, sponge gourd, beans, capsicum, and tomatoes for better nutrition and food security for their families, as well as income from surplus produce (like 200kg of tomatoes!).

Another important element of the program is in training lead farmers to plan and conduct more commercial ventures, and these have begun to literally bear fruit and yield a financial benefit.

This year we continued the support of oyster mushroom farmers to produce 250 kilos of mushrooms for family consumption and sale. Six model farmers are maintaining their kiwi plots in Baruwa and Bhotang (60 plants each) with support from PHASE Nepal agricultural technicians to manage the plants, maintain their trellising and harvest the ample fruit. The plots give these vulnerable farmers an annual source of alternative income by selling high value fruits both locally and to hotels in the city. PHASE Nepal and HDFA have been the pioneer organization for the introduction of kiwi fruit in this region of Nepal.

A self-sustaining program of goat breeding has been really successful, with farmers successfully raising their small herds and returning goats so the program can expand to others. This project has the potential to support the community in a number of significant ways. All the supported farmers are trained and the goats are insured to minimise risk. Farmers of 5 trial lemon plots of 20-30 saplings have received technical guidance and the trees are bearing early fruit.

Occupational training for the Indrawati community has also been effective (e.g. barbering, phone repairs) and new opportunities continue to be considered for agricultural activities and other sustainable local businesses. People of the community and the local government are supportive of the project and there is a good co-ordination with them while implementing the various projects.

#### **Education**

Our health and livelihood education activities have been supporting the immediate health and financial needs of those most vulnerable in the Indrawati communities. As families regain strength in the wake of the earthquake and COVID-19-related school closures for roughly two years, they are increasingly in a position to properly support their children through school. HDFA and PHASE Nepal are excited to be planning for increased education-related activities in 2022, including improved school conditions, teaching and governance training, intended to increase school participation rates in an area of low literacy.

I am not afraid of Covid-19 when I see the project's sisters ready for us to provide services and suggestions. PHASE/HDFA project's presence in the village have helped us fell less panicked and more resilient during this time of pandemic crisis.

#### Ward Chairperson, Baruwa

Its delighting to see those kiwi fruits growing in my own garden. It's very surreal though, I have worked and waited for 3 years.

#### Furwa, a kiwi plot owner, Baruwa

I remember 2 years ago, a team of HDFA members visited my place for tea. I am a young single woman. I lost my husband in the earthquake, the project has been a big support to me and my daughter. Thank you for selecting me to support goat farming. I plan to work hard and expand my farm and make a good business out of it.

#### A single women famer, Bolgaun





#### Ghunsa/Kanchenjunga

In remote Ghunsa we have been working with the community since 2014 to improve education for local children. The Ghunsa Village lies at 3,400m altitude in what was formerly the remote Mechi Zone. This area in the far north east of Nepal in Phaktanglung Municipality, Taplejung District, borders India and Tibet. Ghunsa is the highest permanent settlement in the valley.

When we first visited Ghunsa in 2013, up to eight students lived on a concrete floor with only a piece of wood and a 5mm foam mat between them and the ground.

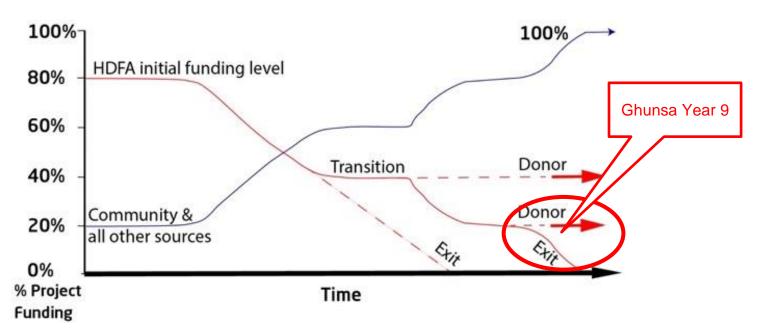


School attendance for students in the valley was at only 25%. Back in 2015 we worked alongside the people of Ghunsa to rebuild and refit their school and hostel facilities, providing a safe and inviting place for students to both live and study.

A few years later school attendance was at 100%, and other sustainable sources of revenue to pay for the school, hostel and health post were secured by HDFA and the Ghunsa community working together.

Schooling and tourism employment have been impacted by long COVID-19 closures but HDFA is supporting the community to continue to improve its own resilience, for example working through the hydrocommittee. We also acknowledge that for some families some level of support will be required over an extended period and thank the ongoing support of our donors to support impoverished families to give their children an education over an extended period and scholarships for students past year 9 to study in larger centres down the valley and in Kathmandu.

Heading into the 2022-23 financial year HDFA will work with the community with a significantly reduced financial input as we shift focus to the village of Hellok to the south of Ghunsa. Our goal is to work with communities in a manner that allows them to take charge and responsibility of their own future.



#### Hellok /Kanchenjunga

Hellok village is tucked off to the side of the main walking trail to Kanchenjunga BC and Ghunsa. It has been partly overlooked by government and has some of the same issues Ghunsa faced in 2013, but at a slightly larger scale.

As the pressures of COVID-19 have relaxed, in 2021-2022 HDFA commenced work on scoping studies and engagement with the Hellok community to determine the next steps to improve the education outcomes for the children, health for the wider community and understand the



Community representatives

needs of the community and assess how HDFA can assist. We intend that this will be a big chapter for HDFA starting in 2022.



Hellok primary school 2021



#### Independent Audit Report - Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Inc

#### Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the attached special purpose financial report, comprising the Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2022, Statement of Income & Expenditure and Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended on that date of Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Incorporated.

#### The Responsibility of the committee for the Financial Report

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations). This responsibility includes designing, implementing, and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

#### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of the trust.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### **Auditor's Opinion**

In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in accordance with the accounting policies, the financial state of Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Incorporated as at 30 June 2022 and the results of its operations for the year then ended.

Ben Reynolds

Oreon Partners
Date: 1 / 11 / 22



## Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Incorporated Financial Report 2022

#### COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The members of the Committee of Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Incorporated have determined the association is a non-reporting entity and the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies detailed in Note 1 to the Financial Statements. In the opinion of the Committee:

- The financial statements present fairly the state of affairs of Himalayan
  Development Foundation Australia Incorporated as at 30 June 2022 and its
  performance for the year ended on that date and are in accordance with the
  Australian Charities and Not- for-profits Commission Act 2012.
- Complying with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.
- At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.
- No officer of the association has received directly or indirectly from the association any payment of pecuniary value other than as disclosed in the Financial Statements.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

Duncan Chessell - (Volunteer) CEO, Board Member and Co-Founder

Dated: 14 / 11 / 2022

## **Profit and Loss**

## Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Incorporated For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Trading Income		
Donation Income (not to Public Fund)	3,080.00	-
Interest Income	39.68	55.53
Membership Revenue	330.00	
Other Revenue	×	10,003.02
Public Fund (HDFA) Donations	164,831.64	167,783.95
Total Trading Income	168,281.32	177,842.50
Gross Profit	168,281.32	177,842.50
Operating Expenses		
Audit Fees	3,080.00	
Bank Fees	2.20	2.80
Computers, Software, email & hosting	366.48	475.28
Consultancy Fees	3,355.00	-
Distribution Nepal in Country Delivery Organisation ICDO	148,554.00	140,063.00
Insurance - Business	1,888.48	1,829.38
Interest Expense	0.39	
Marketing & Fundraising (for Donations)	45.76	145.07
Project Management & Evaluation	4,412.89	
Project Management Nepal Staff	2,035.93	
Total Operating Expenses	163,741.13	142,515.53
Net Profit	4,540.19	35,326.97

## **Balance Sheet**

## Himalayan Development Foundation Australia Incorporated As at 30 June 2022

	30 JUN 2022	30 JUN 2021
Assets		
Bank		
ANZ Business Advantage	11,734.22	17,978.88
ANZ Public Fund	202,480.42	192,282.94
HDFA Visa Debit Cheque Acc	955.17	367.80
Total Bank	215,169.81	210,629.62
Total Assets	215,169.81	210,629.62
Net Assets	215,169.81	210,629.62
Equity		
Current Year Earnings	4,540.19	35,326.97
Retained Earnings	210,629.62	175,302.65
Total Equity	215,169.81	210,629.62

#### HIMALAYAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION AUSTRALIAN INCORPORATED

## NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

#### NOTE 1 - SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial report has been prepared as a special purpose financial report to satisfy the requirements of the constitution. The final report is prepared on the basis of historical costs and in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. No Australian Accounting Standards have been applied. The financial report shows the receipts and payments of the association and its bank balances at year end.

#### Taxation

The association is exempt from income tax on income derived from members.

#### NOTE 2 - RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The following people held Voluntary positions on the Association's Committee of Management during the year:

Andrew Stace Chairperson

Anne Skipper Vice Chairperson (Kathryn)

Ella Price Secretary
Ed (Edwin) Parker Treasurer

Duncan Chessell Board Member, Volunteer CEO

Joanne Arnold Board Member Chris Miller Board Member Melissa Westgate Board Member

Except where stated, transactions with related parties are on commercial terms and conditions.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & THANK YOU**

To all that have supported, donated, given time and effort – THANKYOU!

To our implementation partners:

- PHASE Nepal. A particular thank you to Mr Bikash Koirala, our Project Manager
- Kanchen-junga Buddhist Social Service and Mingma Bhote
- Mingma Dandu Sherpa, our Nepal coordinator for the Kanchenjunga/Ghunsa region and Bikash Koirala, our program manager at PHASE Nepal.

#### **Donors**

To everyone who has supported us with donations in the past 12 months – Thank You! We are forever grateful to our donors; it is because of them that we can support the communities in Nepal that we do.

Without your support, we would not be able to complete the important and ongoing work that is needed to help secure a brighter future for children in remote Himalayan communities.

#### Corporate & Community Partners – pro-bono work

McCormack Accountants and Advisors | Accounting work
Oreon Partners | Ben Reynolds and Petar Tatic for conducting the annual audit
Brighter | Creative communications - Ben Murray and the team
Piper Alderman | for Legal Services

#### **Volunteers**

Doreen Ho All HDFA Board Members A big thanks to Ella Price, HDFA Association Secretary

#### **CONTACT US**

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