



# From Bath: with love

A Bath chiropodist runs a charity in her spare time that's raising smiles among children on the roof of the world in the remote villages of Nepal – find out how you can get involved

**I**t was a little beggar boy, no more than three years old holding out his bowl, his baby sister at his side that turned Lisa Whitehouse from merely a tourist with compassion for the child's tears and the rocking motion of distress, into the founder of a charity which changes the lives of dozens of children. The charity's purpose is to provide education for Nepalese children who live in some of the most remote villages in the world.

Lisa runs the successful Bath Chiropody Clinic in central Bath, where for the past 17 years she has been making her clients happy by looking after their foot aches and pains. She's busy running the business but manages to find the time, along with husband Peter, to run the Charitable Foundation for the Education of Nepalese Children. The charity's current major project is the re-building of a primary school for around 50 children high up in the mountains. Lisa also organises for people in the UK to sponsor individual children so they can go to school.

When you hear Lisa talk about how she came to found the charity you can understand that notion of something that was destined to happen. Like many young people the mountains of Nepal were a mysterious place which Lisa was curious to visit – even the name Kathmandu conjured up something in her imagination. But it was a chance conversation with a friend at her home in Colerne which led her as an adult to Nepal. The friend is married to a Nepalese man, Bho, who said if she wanted to visit his homeland he would help her organise the trip and arrange for his brother to meet her at the airport.

As the lone traveller got off the plane to be warmly greeted by Bho's brother, Lisa began a love affair with Nepal which has grown with every visit.

"They are a poor people, living at subsistence level, the children helping out on the land and with the animals," she said. "There is no electricity, most parents can't read or write and they are so desperate for their children to get an education."

Lisa became friendly with one family by accident, being greeted unexpectedly in English by a boy called Kishor, aged about 11 who approached her in a quiet village and invited her proudly to visit his school, and then to meet his family.

That little beggar boy who galvanised her into action was actually in Tibet, but the political situation makes it impossible for a small British charity to operate there.

Lisa and Peter's project won official charity status in 2009. Neither of them takes a salary, they pay their own flights to Nepal whenever they visit, to ensure that every penny goes directly to the cause. She shows me photographs of a smiling little boy, who fatherless wouldn't have been able to attend school without the sponsorship of around £10 a month from his British supporter. Lisa brings back photos showing the children's progress for those sponsors who want to communicate with their youngsters.

Another photograph shows a whole school of children all proudly wearing smart uniforms Lisa has ordered for them. Education is valued by even the tiniest child, says Lisa. "They will walk for two hours to get to school, and that's after doing their chores at home. Kishor told me his greatest dream was to go to Kathmandu, train to be a teacher and then come back to his village and educate other children."

Fundraising tirelessly takes up a lot of Lisa's time. She has started importing beautiful, bright bags, slippers, scarves and other hand crafted items from Nepal which she sells around Bath. This month she is organising a gala recital and reception at St Swithin's Church in Walcot to boost the

charity's funds – see our What's On pages for full details. She'll also have a stand at the Frome Cheese Show on Saturday 14 September.

"I really enjoy giving talks about life in Nepal and about what we're doing out there, so if anyone would like me to talk to their club or group, please get in touch," she said. There is also a 14 minute film on You Tube and viewers are invited to click 'share' to help raise the profile of the charity.

Lisa doesn't have any birth children of her own, but when you see the smiling faces of the Nepalese children in their school uniform on the rooftop of the world, you can see that she's making a huge, life-changing impact on a new generation. ■

Visit: [www.nepalchildrenseducation.org](http://www.nepalchildrenseducation.org).

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** children from the remote rural Nepalese area where Lisa Whitehouse's Bath charity is building a new school

**Inset, happy to go to school is Khomeni—often the children will walk up to two hours each way to attend lessons, so valued is their education**

