



Sunrise Children's Association Inc. Australia (SCAI)

2009

www.scai.org.au



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Above & Below: Sunrise children in traditional costume



The need in Nepal

Nepal is the home of the great Sagarmatha (Mount Everest), and was the birthplace of Lord Buddha. Until April 2008 it was the only Hindu Kingdom in the world.

- Land area smaller than Victoria (147,181sqm)
- Population 26.3m
- First opened to the outside world in the 1950's
- Over 40 different ethnic groups and tribes
- Hinduism 87%, Buddhism 8%, Muslim 3% and other such as Christianity make up 2%
- Common to all these religions is the integration of religious expression into every day life, resulting in over 50 brightly coloured festivals and numerous forms of daily worship.

Amidst the warm hearts, joyous smiles and celebrations, the Nepalese people have faced great struggle and turmoil under corrupt government administration, political conflict, poor economy, health care, welfare support and limited access to new knowledge and education.

Today,

- Average yearly income is **\$US240**
- **49%** of the population live in absolute poverty
- **47%** unemployment rate
- Literacy is generously estimated at **29%**
- Over **13,000** killed in the Maoist's Peoples War since 1996, with thousands of children being forced into armed conflict, left orphaned and abandoned, left to beg or sold into various slave trades
- **Over 2.6m** child labourers
- Over **150** orphanages in Kathmandu alone
- Infant mortality rate of children under 5 years **10.4%**

Sadly, the governments to date have done little to help these poor children and their families, providing limited health care, education, training, or welfare support, resulting in far more cases of unemployment, poverty and tragedies such as death and illness than necessary. Tremendous responsibility continues to be taken on by local and international NGO's (non-government organisations) to provide these much needed services.

Below: Some of the needy children living in the Kalimati slums



Introduction to SCAI

SCAI is a young and dynamic charity, established in Australia in July 2005 with a mission to provide a brighter future to impoverished children and their communities in Nepal. It now cares for almost eighty orphaned and abandoned children at **Sunrise Orphanage in Nepal**, who may have otherwise faced a bleak future of starvation, poverty, slavery, trafficking, being forced into armed conflict, or simply end up on the streets of the increasingly crowded Kathmandu.

Whilst providing basic care such as a loving home, food, education, medical care and clothing, SCAI are committed to developing the skills of the staff and children of Sunrise Orphanage and the local community in which they live to empower them to become employable and independent in the long term. SCAI are working in partnership with various local people and organisations in Nepal on various training, development and income generating programs to achieve this.

Buying land and building “**Sunrise Children’s Village**”, a permanent, energy efficient, self sustainable, replicable home, is the next major step towards establishing self-sufficiency and sustainability for the current and future children of Sunrise Orphanage and members of the local community.



SCAI is a **volunteer run, not-for-profit, non-government** organisation. It does not receive any government funding, and as such depends entirely on the generous donations of businesses and individuals. We continually strive to keep administration costs in Australia and Nepal to an absolute minimum and what small expenses we do incur we fundraise separately, so donations and sponsorships go where they are intended and are needed most, the children and SCAI's community training and development projects.

The establishment of **Sunrise Orphanage** in July 2005 was SCAI's first major project. Both Sunrise Orphanage and SCAI are registered in Nepal, as a local NGO and INGO (International NGO) respectively.

SCAI is run by a team of five Australians, headed by President and co-founder Emma Taylor. Emma lives and works full time in Nepal with the children. The 4 supporting committee members are based in Melbourne and Adelaide working full time in professional careers and volunteering their time with SCAI on a part time basis.

Sunrise Orphanage is run by nine live-in Nepalese carers, managed by co-founder Sangita Bhandari, and supported by seven Nepalese committee members.

Below : Sangita & Emma & carers at Sunrise Orphanage



Mission and Philosophies

Mission

SCAI is committed to helping alleviate poverty amongst underprivileged children and youth in Nepal and the communities in which they live. Through working in partnership with local communities to provide education, training, development and income generating opportunities, SCAI aims to co-create long term sustainable solutions, with improved standards of living and reduced dependence on external assistance.

Philosophies

- **Empowering** the locals in need to help themselves, through providing training programs whereby they can develop relevant skills, leading to employment and self-sufficiency in the future.
- **Facilitating** projects and various programs by working 'with' local people and communities rather than creating projects in isolation, doing the work for the local people or simply giving handouts.
- **Active participation** by the local community in identifying needs, developing the project, decision making and implementation, in order to give them a greater sense of ownership, responsibility, and sense of achievement.

- **Working in partnership** with local people and/ or communities to identify and tackle the **causes** of poverty rather than simply relieving the symptoms, through open, honest, mutually respectful and transparent communication.

- **Focusing on youth** as leaders and facilitators of change

- **Equality** amongst people of any religion, gender, political preference, ethnic group or background.

- **Creating replicable sustainable solutions;** bring about permanent change and produce benefits to the community that are ongoing once our assistance has ceased, and that can be replicated within the local and broader communities.

Below: Blossoming Sunrise children from various backgrounds



Projects

SCAI's work focuses on the following key underprivileged groups:

- Orphaned/abandoned children
- Otherwise underprivileged/ disadvantaged children/teens
- Girls at risk of various forms of exploitation
- Disabled
- Families from slum areas

SCAI 's five main projects in Nepal are:

1. Sunrise Orphanage
2. Sunrise re-integration /Education Scholarship program
3. Sunrise Training and Development Centre
4. Kalimati Slums
5. Sunrise Children's Village (SCV)

These projects vary significantly in size, and have varying degrees of hands on involvement and financial support from SCAI. All projects have been or are being co-developed with local partners in line with our mission and philosophies.

Photos: Children at Sunrise Orphanage & Thanka painting training



1. Sunrise Orphanage

Sunrise Orphanage is SCAI's first major project in Nepal. It was founded in July 2005 by Emma Taylor and Nepalese friend Sangita Bhandari, in close collaboration with a dedicated team of Nepalese people who shared the same vision of educating and empowering innocent victims of poverty and injustice, to become happy, confident, inspired future leaders within their communities.

Sunrise Orphanage, set on the outskirts of the Kathmandu Valley, is now a benchmark that other orphanages and children's homes aspire to.

After starting with nine children in July 2005, Sunrise now provides a safe, loving home for **76** children. Several of the children came to Sunrise from other very poorly run orphanages that were closed down in emergency rescues by the Child Welfare board, Police, Human Rights organisations and other local authorities. Several of the children suffered malnutrition and other illnesses before coming to Sunrise. Some had not been to school before, but with basic medical treatment, a well managed nutritious diet, a bit of love and a good education they are now thriving!

Below & right: Sunrise children & rehabilitation therapy at Sunrise

Rehabilitation Program

We also provide specialist care for the disabled children at Sunrise, with a fully equipped rehabilitation therapy room and local therapist treating seven of our children on almost a daily basis. The children, who suffer from cerebral palsy, polio, epilepsy and some bone and muscle deformities resulting from malnutrition and neglect as young children, have improved significantly over these past months.

With a relatively poor welfare system in Nepal and lack of facilities and support for disabled people we intend to maximize the use of our range of equipment and expand this program to provide rehabilitation opportunities to the broader community as part of SCV.



1. Sunrise Orphanage....

In addition to their regular schooling in Kathmandu, we provide extra-curricular training and development and income generating programs to develop their skills in a variety of areas to increase their chances of regular employment and lead independent lives once they leave Sunrise. The children attend school 5.5 days a week and show a tremendous amount of responsibility and dedication to their education as well as these further opportunities. Training includes;

- **Basic life skills training;** Housekeeping and basic hygiene; health treatment and prevention (general, dental and re-productive health); nutrition; first aid; child behaviour management

- **Vocational training and skill development;** Computing, sewing/tailoring/knitting, thangka painting, dancing/singing/music and candle making are a regular part of the program. Foreign volunteers also bring a range of skills they share with the children during their stay e.g. Art, craft, photography

- **Income generating programs;** Goat breeding, thangka painting, sewing and candle making, producing goods which are now being sold both within Nepal and overseas.

Below: & right Training programs at Sunrise & Sunrise Outreach Team

- **Sunrise Community Outreach Program;** Older youth from Sunrise Orphanage regularly volunteer their time in the Kalimati slums, where they talk to the local people about their past, the current issues they face, their needs and their dreams. They counsel the children, share their own experiences, values and opportunities, focusing on the importance of education, in the hope of helping these poor children along a path to a better future.

- **Educational field visits and work experience;** The Sunrise children participate in trips to museums, zoo, historic places and as they reach their final years at school will be involved in practical work experience in sectors within the local community that will provide potential employment opportunities in the future e.g. Tourism

* We are currently seeking sponsors for these programs



2. Sunrise Re-integration/Education Scholarship program

Sadly, thousands of children in Nepal are sent from their homes by their parents or other family members to orphanages and various institutions in Kathmandu in the hope of a better future for their children. Primary motivations are safety, due to many children in rural areas being at risk of being kidnapped or recruited into the Maoist army, or simply a desire for their children to have better food, medical care and education.

In order for children to be accepted by some orphanages parents may bribe local government officials or relevant authorities to sign false paperwork stating they are dead, whereabouts unknown or are too ill or poor to care for their children. This often then tragically means that the parents cannot or do not then see their children again.

The Sunrise re-integration program supports local families, in particular single mothers who face great hardship, with education for the children at a local school and some basic needs for the family to encourage the parent/s to keep the children at home with them rather than abandoning them.

*** We are currently seeking sponsorship for the education of more local children in need**

Below: One of the families that Sunrise supports and the small tin shed they live in. The 3 boys now attend the same school as the Sunrise Orphanage children.



3. Sunrise Training & Development Centre

The Sunrise Training and Development Centre is located about 5km from Sunrise Orphanage, near the children's school. The centre is open to predominantly underprivileged people from within the local community who lack skills, employment and income opportunities.

We currently offer **computing, sewing, candle making and English language** classes on a daily basis. We are planning on expanding this to include incense making, jewellery making and potentially other new classes in the near future. The candles are being sold from the centre to the general public, leading to sustainability for the program long term.

Sunrise library, a very exciting new project located in the training centre will be greatly beneficial to the English language students, local community members as well as school children. **If anyone has any educational books to donate please let us know!**

Support for divorced, single or widowed women, disabled, poor and people of the lower castes is limited in Nepal so the training centre with the library is a very exciting initiative, providing people who are likely to have remained unemployed, often illiterate and suffering great hardship long term, with an opportunity to develop their skills in relevant fields where they can then go on to earn a basic salary for themselves and their children.

*** We are currently seeking financial support to continue expanding these programs.**

Below: Computing, sewing, candle making at Sunrise Training Centre



4. Kalimati Slums

Kalimati is the location of one of the largest slum areas in Kathmandu, where over 300 families live in make-shift bamboo and plastic homes along the filthy, polluted riverbank of the Kalimati River. As well as the counseling/training program we run with our Sunrise Outreach Team (made up of Sunrise Orphanage youth), we have also sponsored **67** children to attend the local government school this past year. The sponsorship has included tuition, books, uniforms, bags, shoes and stationary. This year our sponsorship has increased to 95 children.

Sadly many of the parents of the remaining children do not allow their children to go to school as they use them for begging on the streets. We hope to include some of these parents in some training programs and hope to encourage their children to go to school, both building a foundation for a better future for themselves and their families.

Many of the children in this slum area suffer illness and disease on an ongoing basis due to a severe lack of clean water, good food and medical care. Working in conjunction with a local Nepalese team, our plan is to increase the number of children attending school, and include a healthy lunch as well as clean drinking water through the assistance in the construction of a community well. This will dramatically reduce the numerous cases of water borne illness and disease amongst this community.

As well as educating the children we have recently opened a Training and Development Centre in the slums and current provide training in sewing, English language and candle making.

- We are currently seeking sponsorship of both the children's education and the well.

Below: Children that Sunrise sponsor at school (in uniform), typical homes in the slums, other children still in need of support



5. Sunrise Children's Village (SCV)

SCV will be a purpose built, energy efficient, self sustainable, permanent home for the current and future children of Sunrise Orphanage. We plan to house up to 100 children at a time, with the following facilities that both the Sunrise children and the local community can benefit from:

- Living quarters for Sunrise Orphanage children
- Computer centre
- Training and development centre for sewing/tailoring, candle making, thanka painting and other saleable goods
- Library and English language centre
- Hall / Music centre for singing, dance, music, performances
- Rehabilitation centre for disabled , including basic medical facilities
- Multi-purpose sports field for soccer, volleyball, badminton, basketball & sports area for table tennis, caramboard
- Playground - swing, slippery dip, seesaw, climbing equipment
- Courtyard/ quiet area for reading, yoga, meditation , talking
- Vegetable and herb garden for Sunrise consumption and horticultural/ permacultural training

Sunrise School

We also plan to build Sunrise school on nearby premises to service both the Sunrise Orphanage children, local community children as well as a providing a hostel/boarding home for poor children from surrounding villages. Good educational facilities in villages are very limited so this project will provide a much needed service to those people and help reduce the number of families sending their children to Kathmandu to poorly run orphanages.

Sustainability

Renting properties on an ongoing basis is unsustainable and the orphanage faces constant hardship with a severe lack of water and power, hence the urgent need to build a permanent facility.

To maximise the sustainability of these projects we plan to minimise the impact on the environment and where possible use renewable energy sources. Local materials, resources and labour will be used in order to provide employment, boost the local economy, encourage greater ownership, responsibility and sense of achievement by the locals and produce a model that can be replicated in other communities.

The following initiatives will be considered:

- Solar energy for heating water, power, recharging
- Environmentally friendly rubbish and sewerage disposal and practicable recycling methods such as compost heaps
- Water catchment , storage and effective use
- Other alternative heating, cooling , power e.g. wind
- Permaculture opportunities

*** We are currently seeking services from architects/planners, engineers, builders and experts in environmental and alternative energy planning, as well as financial support for the building and all facilities at SCV, as well as Sunrise school.**



Photo: Orphaned siblings at Sunrise Orphanage, future residents of SCV

How To Help

We would greatly appreciate your financial support in the following ways:

Sunrise Orphanage

- General Sponsorship \$39 per month for emergencies, specialised medical , other ad-hoc and general expenses
- One-off donations for emergencies and other general use

Sunrise Training and Development Centre

- Educational books , novels, children's story books for Sunrise Library

5. Sunrise Children's Village

- Monthly sponsorship for land/building fund (min \$20/mth)
- One-off donation for land/building fund
- Sponsorship for construction of children's rooms, library, music centre, training and development centre, rehabilitation centre, sports field, playground, courtyard, vegetable/herb garden, building materials

To enable us to plan ahead we request a minimum of 1 year sponsorship of any project or program

Sunrise would appreciate donations of any of the following materials:

Educational

Books (new or good quality second hand), stationary (pens, pencils, notebooks, coloured pencils, textas, crayons, erasers, rulers, paint/paintbrushes, drawing/painting books, sticky tape, scissors, geometry sets), calculators, laptop computers, school backpacks. Please ensure books do not contain violence or inappropriate language or graphics.

Medical

Headlice treatment, handiplast/strong bandaids, bandages, gauze/cotton roll, Paracetamol, Savlon, Betadine (liquid,gel), Dettol, throat, ear, eyes, nose, flu, fever, cough, cold,medicines, stingose, burn cream, anti-inflammatories, Vaseline, moisturisers. tinea/ anti-fungal creams, wart ointment, itamins (B,C, other), worm tablets.

If you are interested in sponsoring one of SCAI's projects or simply finding out more, please contact :

Emma Taylor

President SCAI Australia/ Country Director SCAI Nepal

Sunrise Children's Association Inc.

Email: emma@scai.org.au

Telephone: +977 1 98033 70997 (Nepal)

We invite you to visit www.scai.org.au and ask you to please help us spread the word about Sunrise and our work in Nepal.

Thank you for your interest in the needy children of Nepal. Your contribution will make a significant difference to their lives as well as the communities they live in, and help make their future much brighter.

Emma Taylor and the Sunrise Family



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Clothing/Personal

New or good quality second hand clothing and shoes (for 5-18 yrs) boys and girls, new toiletries such as head lice treatment, moisturizer, shampoo/conditioner, anti-bacterial hand gel, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hair-oil, brushes, combs, talcum powder, anti-perspirant deodorant, nail clippers, hairbands/clips, photo albums.

Recreation

Sporting equipment - Soccer balls, soccer boots/clothing, volleyballs, basketballs, badminton, table tennis bats/balls, tennis balls, rubber balls, caramboard, other sporting equipment, skipping ropes, hula hoops, kites.

Toys - jigsaw puzzles, board games, cards (uno), dolls, figurines, lego, toy cars etc. Toys that are safe and can be washed are preferred. Other – art/craft, facepaints, birthday party supplies,

Training Programs

Sewing - Sewing machines, overlocker machines, needles, thread, material, buttons, wool, knitting needles, scissors

Computing - Desktop computers and laptops, computer training manuals, educational software, anti-virus software, USB sticks, blank DVD's, mousepads

Music/Dance/Singing – DVD/CD/MP3 player, speakers, microphone, recording equipment, digital camera, video camera, musical instruments (keyboard, madal, tabla, flutes, guitars, violin – there are Nepalese versions of these which can be bought in Nepal very cheaply)

Thanka painting – oil paints, paintbrushes, metal thanka frames, cloth, thread (these materials can be bought in Nepal relatively cheaply)

Outreach Program – digital cameras, hand held tape recorders for interviews, notebooks, pens, backpacks, folders.

How To Help...

We would greatly appreciate your financial support in the following ways:

Household

Wooden table/bench sets, metal bunk beds, mattresses, blankets, sheets, pillows, material for curtains, rugs, mats for inside and outside home. Cleaning products, cooking equipment (large pots, cutlery, plates, cups, utensils), gas stoves, gas cylinders (bought in Nepal). Black plastic water tanks (1000l-5000l), buckets, brooms, mops, metal washing bowls. Bookshelves for children's books and clothing. Metal cupboard for office supplies and first aid, metal filing cabinet for children's personal and medical files.

Vehicles

Sunrise currently has no vehicle, so the children and youth currently utilize crowded public transport to go to doctor/hospital/other medical treatment (including the disabled), for their Outreach work (1.5-2 hours on local buses each way to main project in the slums), for dance performances at various locations around Kathmandu, for radio and other programs the children are involved in, for picnics and other outings.

Sunrise would benefit greatly from one large bus and one small van.

Many of the above listed items can be bought in Nepal for a considerably cheaper rate than in Australia, so if you are visiting, you may like to buy some items in Nepal on arrival. An excess baggage allowance can generally be sought from most airlines to carry things over from Australia, but this should be organized at least a month in advance.

Please do not post anything to Nepal without prior consultation, as the postal system can be unreliable, and Sunrise will get charged a customs duty for release of the goods in Nepal, so we need to make sure the donated goods are worth more than the postal and customs charges.

Occasionally we are able to get visitors or volunteers to carry donated goods over for us. In the event this is not possible, the shipping/postage and customs in Nepal would be the responsibility of the donor.

All donations of goods will be examined by a member of the SCAI or Sunrise Orphanage Management committee prior to distribution to the children. If you have any queries regarding whether something you would like to donate is appropriate or not, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your support!

If you are interested in sponsoring one of SCAI's projects, donating materials or simply finding out more, please contact :

Emma Taylor

President SCAI Australia/ Country Director SCAI Nepal

Sunrise Children's Association Inc.

Email: emma@scai.org.au

Telephone: +977 98033 70997 (Nepal)

We invite you to visit www.scai.org.au and ask you to please help us spread the word about Sunrise and our work in Nepal.

Thank you for your interest in the needy children of Nepal. Your contribution will make a significant difference to their lives as well as the communities they live in, and help make their future much brighter.

The Sunrise Family

Who We Are

Emma Taylor, President SCAI Australia, Country Director SCAI Nepal

Emma lives and works full time with Sunrise in Nepal after 10 years in the advertising/media industry both in Australia and overseas. Emma co-founded SCAI Australia and Sunrise Orphanage in Nepal in July 2005, inspired by the sad plight of a group of Nepalese children she volunteered with in early 2004 at a locally run orphanage.

Kumaran Yogaranandan, Secretary

Kumaran has volunteered at Sunrise Orphanage Nepal every Christmas/New Year period since Christmas 2006. Over this period, he has developed a sound understanding of the evolution and intended future direction of the orphanage and SCAI's other projects. Kumaran is a Principal of Mercer (Australia) Pty Ltd and has worked within the Retirement, Risk and Finance department for over ten years. Kumaran became a child sponsor in January 2007 and joined the committee in November 2009.

Moira Fogarty, Treasurer

Moira works full time as a Strategic Investment Manager for a multinational infrastructure and investment company in Melbourne, predominately working on corporate acquisitions and operational structuring. Moira became a child sponsor and joined the SCAI committee in September 2008.

Sarah Thom, Committee Member, Volunteer Co-ordinator

Sarah works full time as a Strategy Director at Australia's largest media buying agency in Melbourne. She has worked in the advertising industry for the past 13 years both in Australia and overseas. Sarah has been involved with SCAI as a child sponsor since mid 2008, has visited twice and joined the committee in September 2008.

Angus Sobels, Committee Member

Angus Sobels is an Adelaide businessman whose interests span environmental consulting, commercial property development, commercial landscape contracting and property investment. Angus' strengths are in the business management and financial growth sectors of these industries which he has specialised in over the last 10 years. Angus joined the SCAI committee in January 2008 and became a child sponsor in mid 2008.



Above (clockwise from top left): Emma, Kumaran, Sarah, Moira

For further details see
www.scai.org.au

Sunrise Children's Association Inc. Australia
6/84 Westbury St, St Kilda East, VIC 3183,
Australia
ARBN/ACN: 135 797 643

SCAI News

Over the past few years the Sunrise team have been recognised for their hard work and unwavering commitment to the children of Nepal.



Above: Emma receiving a **Special Honorary Award** for her ongoing dedication and support for the children in Nepal, at a ceremony attended by many local dignitaries, well known singers, dancers, actors, poets, authors and other social workers. All of the Sunrise children attended as special guests and had the chance to meet and dance with some of their local heroes in Nepal! **Below:** With co-founder Sangita Bhandari.



A glimpse into SCAI over the past 18 months...

Today Tonight Melbourne: Sunrise features in 'Unsung Heroes segment' 28th December 2009

Today Tonight Adelaide: Sunrise features 7th August 2009

ABC Radio Adelaide: Morning Show with Sonya Feldhoff, 10th July 2009, 'Beyond the Backyard Morning Segment' 12th Jan 2009, 26th August 2008

Listen to the interview on website www.scai.org.au/Newsand Events

The Today Show: The Australian Elephant Polo Team visits Sunrise Orphanage with Nine's 'The Today Show', November 2007

The Unley Rotarian: 7th July 2009

SA Life: 1st July 2009

Adelaide Confidential: July 2009

Eastern Courier Messenger: July 2009

The Adelaide Annual: January 2009

Marie Claire: Winner of the Marie Claire/Garnier 'Taking Care of the World Around You' competition 2008

The Adelaide Magazine: November 2008



Sunshine of my life

Sunrise Children's Association Inc (SCAI) is a volunteer run, non-profit, non-government organisation established by Adelaide's Emma Taylor who, after a decade in the corporate world, felt called to volunteer to work with children in Nepal. Sunrise now cares for almost 80 orphaned and abandoned children at Sunrise Orphanage in Kathmandu, and also runs a training and development centre for more than 100 underprivileged people from within the local community, sponsors the education of 95 children from one of the major slum areas in Kathmandu, and provides support for 34 other needy children and their families within the local community through their reintegration programme.

Sunrise relies solely on donations from the public, and keeps administration costs down with a volunteer workforce, the personal contribution of committee members, and support from the local community, so Emma (pictured with Bishu Sharma at Sunrise Orphanage) is back home for a fundraising event at Annesley College on Saturday, July 25. Tickets are \$100 and guests will be provided with a taste of Emma's life overseas with dinner catered by Beyond India, Bollywood dancers and footage of the children and projects in Nepal, as well as guest speaker mountain climber Duncan Chessell.

"My life in Nepal is truly wonderful. I love it, I love our kids, I love my work, I love the culture, the mountains and the beautiful environment in which we live," Emma says. Needless to say, while she is away from home Emma does miss her family and friends and the SA beaches – not to mention a decent roast dinner.

Details: Emma Taylor
emma@scai.org.au or www.scai.org.au

SA Life: 1st July 2009

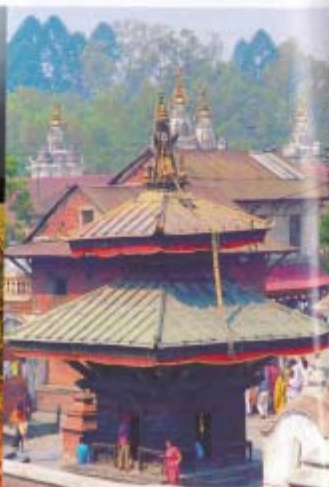
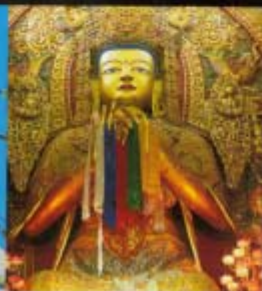


EMMA TAYLOR HUMANITARIAN

Former Adelaidean Emma Taylor won't be taking the holiday she won this year from the Marie Claire/Garnier Take Care/Taking Care of the World Around You competition for her work with orphaned children in Nepal. Instead, she plans to raffia it off to raise funds for the children she adores. This kind of selfless generosity and her motto that "the only smile on your life are those that you set yourself" have driven Taylor in her work at the Sunrise Orphanage in Kathmandu and her charity, Sunrise Children's Association Inc in Australia. Since 2005, the orphanage has grown from nine children to 78. Taylor is now working towards building the Sunrise Children's Village to permanently house 100 children and has also plans to grow crops and graze animals.

The Adelaide Annual January 2009

CLOCKWISE from left: intricate carvings in Kathmandu's Durbar Square; the children of Sunrise; Emma Taylor with some of the 80 orphans in traditional dress in her care; happy faces in the Sunrise playground; the poor streets of Thamel in Kathmandu; a Hindu temple; Golden Buddha; spiritual monument, Bouddhamath Stupa; a street seller; the Himalayan range, part of the Everest region.



HAND OF HOPE

Emma Taylor left a high-flying career and sold her worldly possessions to save orphans in Nepal.

words by horrie

On a dirty river bank outside of Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, is an orphanage in a small, run-down brick building. It has no doors and windows, exposed electrical wires hang from the ceiling and there's no regular water supply. It's 2004 and Adelaide girl Emma Taylor has just arrived for a three-month stint as a volunteer. She speaks little Nepali and the people speak no English, which is a problem, because they weren't expecting her. It's at this point Taylor starts to wonder if coming here has been a good decision. Then, several shabbily dressed children poke their heads around the corner and as she sees their beaming smiles, she knows this is where she's supposed to be.

Fast forward to 2008. Taylor is surrounded by almost 80 children at the Sunrise Orphanage, which she set up on the outskirts of Kathmandu Valley in 2005, after saying goodbye to an international advertising and media career. The facilities are still basic, but unlike the other orphanage, the children are well cared for and the place is filled with laughter and love.

"I love everything about the children and the orphanage," Taylor, 36, says. "They are so full of love and have such vibrant spirit. It never ceases to amaze me, despite receiving little, if any, love in their past, they so freely give it."

Most days, Taylor is on hand to welcome the children home from school – a 15-minute walk away – and to help with their homework and share the evening meal. Depending on the heat, mosquitoes and power supply (it's cut for

40 hours each week), the children sing, tell stories, poems or jokes after dinner. Then we all wish each other sweet dreams, share lots of warm hugs and kisses and head off to bed."

It's a long way from home for this former Adelaide girl, whose dedication to these needy Nepalese children earned her the Marie Claire/Garnier Take Care/Taking Care Of The World Around You competition in July.

"We weren't surprised when Emma gave up everything to set up the orphanage," says her sister Georgie Speakman.

"Emma always knew in her heart that there was more to life than what the corporate world had to offer. She's one of the great ones as she makes it happen rather than just daydreaming about the possibility."

Taylor had a relatively uneventful childhood with her parents, Pam and Phil Speakman, sisters Mandy, 38, and Georgie, 26, and brother Tom, 24. She attended Mitcham Primary School and Annesley College and spent time as an exchange student in Denmark before doing a Bachelor of Business (Marketing) at UniSA.

After uni, she started working in advertising and media, at Young and Rubicam in Adelaide, and Ogilvy and Mather in Tokyo. However, it was during a two-month contract as associate media director with Leo Burnett advertising in Vietnam when Taylor realised her true passion – helping children in need.

"I have always loved children and, in high school, when I saw a documentary on squalid orphanages in Romania, I knew I wanted to work with children in a Third World country at



The children, with Taylor, learn *thangka* painting as part of their education.

“DESPITE EVERYTHING... I COULD SEE THE LIGHT SHINING INSIDE EACH ONE OF THEM. THEY JUST NEEDED SOMEONE TO LOVE THEM”

some point,” Taylor says. “Then, in Vietnam, I found myself hanging out with poor, disabled, homeless children on the streets. I had reached 30 and was not inspired to go any further with my career and just felt in my heart it was time to move on to the next chapter of my life.”

And move she did, starting with her 2004 visit to that first orphanage, where all wasn't as it should have been. “As well as poor facilities, the children were deliberately kept in poor conditions to gain pity, and therefore money, from visitors. Most [of that money] was used to line the pockets of those running it.”

With many children suffering severe neglect, malnutrition and, in many cases, physical and mental abuse, Taylor says it was incredibly difficult to leave when her three months were up. Yet the experience only strengthened her resolve to return and open her own orphanage, with the idea of transferring the children to it, as well as taking in other orphans.

“Despite everything they had been through, from being abandoned by their families, then living through the daily struggle they faced at this orphanage, I could see the light still shining inside each one of them. They just needed someone to love them and give them a chance at life,” Taylor says.

Within six months, she was back, setting up the Sunrise Orphanage with Nepalese friend Sangita Bhundari. Her original plan had been to work in China for 18 months to save enough money to return long-term, but found she couldn't stand being away from the children for that long. Sunrise Orphanage opened in July, 2005, with nine children. At the same time, Taylor set up Sunrise Children's Association Inc (SCAI) in Australia to support the orphanage and its programs. Yet after only five months in Nepal, visa restrictions sent Taylor home.

“I did my last stint in media to save enough to stop going back and forth. I sold my house in Adelaide and my car, and decided to go with what I had and live a very basic lifestyle in

Nepal. That was March 2007 and I have been here ever since.”

When Taylor says basic, she means it. Her first flat was a small room with a single bed and side table, and a shared bathroom with a cold shower and squat toilet. It cost her \$9 a week, but she had to upgrade to an upstairs flat for \$9 as the locals were always at her window, curious to see what belongings a ‘foreigner’ had in their room.

“Living like a lower class Nepali person gave me great insight into the struggles that many people face and a greater understanding of the culture, the people, the family bonds, the sense of brotherhood and what is important to people here. The sense of community spirit, sharing and not clinging to material possessions resonated with me deeply,” she says.

Nepal is known for its peace-loving people and ruggedly beautiful landscape, but also for its corrupt bureaucracy, conflict and extensive poverty. Infant mortality rates are higher than 10 per cent and there's little welfare support for the disadvantaged. This places the children in Taylor's care among the lucky few.

Even for those with families, children in rural areas are expected to work from a very young age. Of those who go to school, they may have to walk up to four hours a day to get there and back. The less fortunate are sold into the sex trade, trafficked to India or forced into armed conflict. Those who live on the streets spend their days searching through rubbish heaps for food or plants they can sell.

“Life is very tough for children here. They combine school, homework, travel and chores and, with increased migration to Kathmandu and a lack of employment opportunities putting pressure on parents, the number of street children is increasing – Kathmandu now has about 2500 permanent street kids.”

Through SCAI and the orphanage, Taylor and her team are doing their best to change that. SCAI lists its mission as helping to alleviate

poverty among the underprivileged in Nepal and the communities in which they live.

They aim to do this by working in partnership with local communities to provide education, training, development and income-generating opportunities and work towards long-term sustainable solutions aimed at improving living standards and reducing dependence on other assistance. Disadvantaged teens, girls at risk of exploitation, disabled children, families from slum areas and street youth/school drop-outs are just some of the marginalised groups they want to help with SCAI programs. An example is Sunrise's Outreach Team Social Work program, which takes groups of teens out to learn about social work and the broader community.

Another is the scholarship program, which enables 70 children from the main slum area in Kathmandu to attend school. Sunrise staff and children provide counselling, guidance and income-generating ideas to participants and their families. There is also basic life-skills training, such as housekeeping, nutrition, health and first aid, as well as educational training in computing, sewing, jewellery, income and candle making, goat breeding, singing, dancing and *thangka* painting.

“*Thangka* painting has been a particular success and is something the children can fall back on to earn an income for themselves. We've already sold some paintings in Australia and 75 per cent of the proceeds go into bank accounts for those children,” Taylor says.

Keeping all this going takes a lot of work – when not hands-on with the children or organising Sunrise programs, Taylor spends her time raising awareness, liaising with sponsors and stakeholders and fundraising to keep SCAI and the orphanage going. She is helped out by a management team of local businesspeople and live-in carers, who fulfil the roles of aunt, uncle, cook, cleaner and friend. Taylor herself is known as ‘Ammas’ meaning ‘mother’, while the locals call her ‘Meye’, meaning ‘lowl’.

In Adelaide, Taylor's sister Georgi Spasman also helps SCAI and the orphanage with marketing, public relations and fundraising. She's hoping to make a documentary on Nepal with filmmaker Mark Dubring in the future.

While Taylor says working in Nepal has its challenges, she stays focused on what she has achieved and the lives she has helped transform. “I try and live each day to the fullest. It's important to appreciate every moment and every milestone, no matter how small it is.”

Clearly she has many milestones to appreciate and by the sounds of it many more to come. She plans to buy more land to build the Sunrise Children's Village, a permanent and fully self-sustainable home for up to 100 children on the outskirts of Kathmandu Valley. “Love is the foundation on which we have built Sunrise and it will continue to be the core that holds us together so strongly,” she says. “The greatest way to teach the children about love and happiness is to demonstrate it through our love for them and through the way we live our lives.”

READERS' CHOICE WINNER TAKING CARE OF THE WORLD AROUND YOU

EMMA TAYLOR, CHILDREN'S CHARITY FOUNDER

Giving up a lucrative media career for basic living conditions in a Nepalese orphanage, Emma hasn't regretted her decision for a minute

EMMA'S STORY

Throwing it all in and doing something good for the world is a dream many harbour but few have the courage to follow. Emma is someone who took that step, and now 77 Nepalese orphans have her to thank for their schooling, health and safety. Emma's Sunrise Children's Association organises sponsorships in Australia and ensures the donated money is used to directly improve the lives of the orphans. Now dividing her time between Melbourne and Nepal, Emma is still striving to make the world a better place.

Do I miss the glamour of my former life? Sometimes, but the satisfaction with what I'm doing now is immeasurably greater



The Winner's Lunch was enjoyed by all the *Taking Care* finalists. Opposite page, top row from left: Centre: Emma Taylor, Tash Fisher, Gail Goss, Jackie Frank, Cynthia Lockwood, Marie Muirhead, Georgia Reid. Bottom row, from left: Sandra Kelly, Carolynne Gowen, Milly Parker, Nina Funnell, Caitlin Williamson.

AN INSPIRING OCCASION

Garnier flew the finalists to Sydney, where they enjoyed an overnight stay at Star City followed by hair and make-up styling the next day. They then attended a delightful three-course lunch at Sydney's Otto restaurant, located on Woolloomooloo's glamorous Finger Wharf. In attendance was *marie claire* publisher and editor Jackie Frank, advertising director Carolynne Gowen, and representatives from Garnier. A lovely and inspiring lunch was had by all, with many tears flowing when the winners were announced!

Marie Claire: Winner of the Marie Claire/Garnier 'Taking Care of the World Around You' competition 2008

ABC Radio: Morning Show with Sonya Feldhoff, 12/01/2009

Listen to the interview on website [www.scai.org.au/Newsand Events](http://www.scai.org.au/NewsandEvents)

ABC Radio "Beyond the Backyard" segment: Emma Taylor - Nepal 26/08/2008

"Emma Taylor hadn't always dreamed of setting up an orphanage in an underprivileged country, but now that it has happened, she will never look back. After growing up in Adelaide and working here in advertising for a number of years, Emma got the passion to travel and started working in different media agencies around the world.

It was in Vietnam, where Emma used to hang out with poverty stricken kids on the streets in her spare time, that she started seriously thinking about permanently moving to a third world country to live and work with those most in need.

Now Emma unselfishly devotes all her life to working with orphaned kids in a orphanage she set up herself in Nepal. She says the kids are her family and there isn't anything else in the world that she would rather be doing.

Listen to Emma tell her story to Matthew Abraham and David Bevan on www.scai.org.au/NewsandEvents or here:

www.blogs.abc.net.au/sa/2008/08/beyond-the-ba-2.html

You can find out more about Emma's charity Sunrise Children's Association Incorporated at www.scai.org.au "

The Today Show: The Australian Elephant Polo Team visits Sunrise Orphanage with Nine's 'The Today Show', November 2007

In November 2007 the Australian Elephant Polo Team came to Nepal with The Today Show's Sports Presenter Cameron Williams to participate in the World Elephant Polo Championships. The team visited Sunrise Orphanage and very generously presented SCAI with a cheque for **AUD\$10,000** towards the land/building fund.

The boys received a very special and warm welcome from the beautiful Sunrise children, dressed in traditional Nepali costume, and were entertained by our very talented dancers and singers.

Cameron Williams and The Today Show then ran a piece on Sunrise on air over two mornings on their return.

Footage can be viewed on www.scai.org.au, posted soon

