

Our mission : To open the eyes of young people in Northern Ireland and India to their unique potential to change the world through working together

Message from Christine



This summer we were delighted to have 90 young people and teachers on Saphara teams to India. Read about the impact of the trips in these poignant articles.

Huge thanks to Dominic Breen and all the teachers who gave up their summer to give the young people such life changing experiences. And thanks to all you who supported us in both fundraising and in your prayers. We were delighted to give an amazing £75,000 of support to our Indian schools – including building two new classrooms at SNEHA.

Saphara is passionate about giving adolescent girls from poor communities the self-belief they need to achieve great things in their lives. Saphara board member Linda Thompson and I are heading off to India in early December to further develop our Girls Flourishing programme – read our blog.

Christmas is coming – so make a real difference this year with Saphara Christmas gifts! <http://www.saphara.org/get-involved/christmas-gifts>

E: christine.burnett@gmail.com

M: 07747611156

If you would prefer an electronic newsletter please email Flo at Flo.Adair@saphara.org

Inspirational children

Andy Bell – Sullivan Upper

Saphara was a challenging, eye-opening experience for us all - many tears were shed, thoughts provoked and elements of lifestyle reconsidered. One day really stood out for me – we were hiking to Donk Primary School in the Himalayas and on the way we bumped into some Kaplani pupils that we had taught the previous week. They insisted we visit their houses where they were genuinely proud to give us an idea of their day-to-day lifestyle. There wasn't a hint of sadness or inferiority as they showed us around, it was so refreshing to experience! We were so inspired with the lengths to which they go to receive an education. 'Taking for granted' is the most overused phrase I've ever heard but it really did make me value the education which I get and encouraged me not to spurn my opportunity. These children hike miles every day to be taught while some days I find myself unable to motivate myself out of bed to do a few hours of work.

Saphara, as well as allowing me to do my bit to help others, gave me a vital experience in how fortunate I am. I had heard that for 17 years of my life, it took me until July of 2015 to really believe it!



Manisha's determination

Toni Dinu, Down High

In India I met many inspirational people, but for me one little girl stood out from the crowd - Manisha who was new to Kaplani School and could speak little English. I loved every individual in my class, but for me Manisha was special. You could see that although she was scared and sometimes alone she had the determination to overcome any challenge thrown her way.



It came to our last few days and presentation day was soon, every child had their part to play including Manisha. With lines to learn and only one day to go, excitement was high within the class. One last practice and they were nearly close to perfect, except for one little girl who still struggled. Presentation day arrived and it was show time - nerves were building as our class was last to go. Hannah and I stood nervously back while our class stood forward. Each child had gone and it was Manisha's turn. She stepped forward and without using her lines spoke perfect English, it was beautiful.

The determination within Manisha was incredible, more than I myself have ever had. I only hope she keeps moving forward with the same determination I had witnessed. If one small, shy yet determined girl can overcome her fear and pushed to be better - then why can't we?

My favourite moment

Jack Venables – Belfast Royal Academy

During my time in India I went through so many amazing experiences and have gained invaluable memories. It's almost impossible to single out one special moment out of the whole 16 days as a special moment in my life – but this is one.

On the last day at SNEHA, the farewell assembly had just finished and the whole team was saying goodbye to all the kids. Up on the balcony above, I saw the young people from my conversation class and Suhail (one of my favourite people) calling me to come up which I did. When trying to leave the balcony the kids begged me not to go and held me back. I was so touched by this moment and I began to cry a little. I finally got down the stairs to leave with the Saphara team. When I looked up, all the kids on the balcony were waving goodbye to me, leaving me feeling so humble and grateful for getting the chance to meet these amazing children.

Even though this moment was life changing - the whole experience was so memorable that I can't even begin to describe how grateful I am to have been picked to experience this – and with an amazing group of people. Thank you.

Beyond our wildest dreams!

Dara Burns – Aquinas Grammar School



Teaching the children was the highlight for me. Our first school was Kaplani High, a tiny rural secondary school in the heart of the Himalayas. We all instantly fell in love with our classes and enjoyed every second teaching them through art, songs and games. At the end of the week, all our hearts were broken and many tears were shed as we left our adorable classes. We will all never forget their smiles as they opened their farewell gifts of soap and a toothbrush.

Our next school was SNEHA in the heart of the slums. This was a total change from Kaplani as there were 1000 pupils but the sense of love and happiness filled the school as they sang for us every morning. We also had the opportunity to visit the marginalised communities where the pupils showed us their homes. Though we were worried beforehand about what we would see, the children and their families were so happy and proud to show us their homes – how could we not admire them?

For all of us India was a life changing experience where we accomplished things beyond our wildest dreams.

Celebration day at Kaplani!

Emma Lynch – Saphara Student Team

My first Saphara experience was as part of the Belfast 2013 school team – we had such an amazing time that I was keen to get back – which I did this summer as part of the Saphara Student Team.

Although most of our time was spent at SNEHA – a school that is an oasis for their pupils living in disadvantaged backgrounds, on one special day we were thrilled to head to Kaplani High school for a special celebration day with the Class of 2015. Those of us who had been lucky enough to be on Saphara school teams couldn't wait to go back for a visit and to introduce its outstanding pupils to other team members. The main purpose of our visit was to celebrate the outstanding achievements of the Class 10 pupils in Kaplani – each obtaining exceptional results, with three girls achieving 1st division!

After an introduction from the school principal, the celebrations began with dancing – both Irish and Indian. Despite our best efforts and determination to join in, I don't think we really grasped the art of traditional Indian dancing! We had bought some western treats for the students but we were certainly outdone by the amazing spread of traditional Indian nibbles provided by the Kaplani staff. This was a well-deserved treat for the students whose appreciation was clear from the smiles on their faces.

When I had been to Kaplani in 2013, I had luckily taught the Class 10 Students that we were celebrating with, so it wasn't long until I got out some old photographs of both 2013 and the other years that Saphara has visited the school which resulted in slightly red faces and lots of giggling.

The day concluded with an award ceremony to fully recognise their achievements and give them a small token in which they could take home to proudly show their families. We had Saphara medals made along with personalised collages of each student's time at Kaplani High School, which were presented by the student team leader Niamh Lynch and myself. When Christine announced that the top five students would receive Saphara scholarships to continue their studies – they were thrilled.

It was a privilege to be involved in such a special day and it is one in which I'll never forget!