



## SAI "Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund Heidelberg"

Dear Friends and Colleagues

In response to the disastrous earthquake that struck Nepal and the neighboring countries on 25 April, we approach you with the humble request to help and support one of our initiatives. The SAI has just set up a temporary "Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund Heidelberg" for this purpose. We appreciate if you spread the word about our initiative, if you find it convincing.

What is this Relief Fund about?

Based on our longtime experience in Nepal, we want to provide both instant help and help with a long-term perspective.

Since the earthquake, there have been numerous aftershocks, and even another earthquake just a few hours ago. People across the country, in the cities and the countryside, lack medical help, there are talks about contaminated groundwater in wells, and the human and cultural aftermaths only surface now, and will over the next weeks and months. Increasingly, some help and expertise reaches the sites of disaster.

Since the 1960s, the South Asia Institute has several research activities spread across different disciplines and themes, among which are earthquakes, urbanization, ritual and textual studies, and history. Our branch office, established in 1987, is based in Sanepa, Patan, a part of Kathmandu, and run by Nadine Plachta, M.A. She is one guarantee for the funds to arrive safely. All our contacts are personal.

### 1. Support groups in need for instant help

In this light, we realize how important it is to instantly contribute to the relief of

human suffering. One of our friends [Pushpa Basnet \(CNN 2012 hero\)](#), is running a children's home called 'early Childhood Development Center' in Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu. The residential home that was being newly built for the children and teenagers, was badly damaged in the context of the earthquake and right now, the children are put in a plastic greenhouse (photo).



left: Pushpa Basnet to the left, with the children from the home.

“ECDC is dedicated to helping the children of imprisoned parents in Nepal, many of whom were living inside the jails alongside their mothers. This is no place for children and we are committed to giving them the shelter and education needed to break the cycle of crime and poverty. ECDC's Butterfly home provides these children a safe and nurturing environment where they can spread their wings to discover a brighter future.” (ECDC website)

Since there are other organisations related to the support of people in need in the earthquake context, who might be in instant need of support, we appeal to your trust that we also take the liberty to donate to such recipients in case we hear of their urgent need. We will try to inform you about this, if you let us know that you would like to know. Our friends and colleagues at the site will ensure the clean and direct transfer of money.

## 2. Long-term reconstruction work needed

Along with the other royal palace squares in Bhaktapur and Kathmandu, Patan Darbar Square is part of UNESCO world heritage. It is a major attraction for international tourism, a crucial economic motor for the small country. But it is also a nodal point for the local cultural intangible and tangible heritage of the Kathmandu Valley's rich and long history and religious traditions. Until today, the Patan Darbar Square is less a museum but a place for all, lived, loved and vibrant. People identify with it, it is a space where deities live(d), and humans mingle.

Based on our own research experience in Kathmandu, we are also aware of the importance of tangible and intangible heritage there, not only for tourism but for the ritual, social and cultural life of the local communities. Many conversations we have had in the last hours, with friends who survived, were marked by the relief to have been saved, along with most family members, but also by the worries about the collapsed temples, the deities who are now equally homeless as the humans.

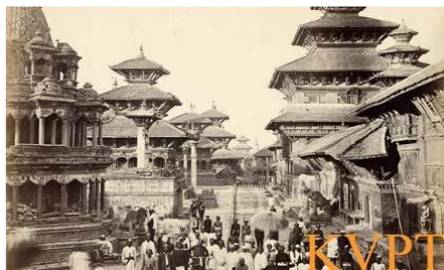
This is why we want to collect money that will directly go towards the reconstruction of Patan Darbar Square, one of the places where the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT, <http://www.kvptnepal.org/>) whose dedicated and professional team we know since decades is situated.

Cynical as it seems but the KVPT has been majorly involved in the preservation and reconstruction of many sites that now have collapsed.

“The Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT) was founded in 1991 with the mission to safeguard the extraordinary and threatened architectural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley in

Nepal. The negative impact of today's development pressures poses a threat not only to individual monuments but to the future of public space and urban life in the valley at large.

Over the past two decades, KVPT has saved over 50 historic buildings including temples, stepwells, monasteries, palaces, and homes, and has launched three major campaigns for preservation on an urban scale. KVPT collaborates with community groups, local and international specialists, educational institutions, and the Department of Archaeology of the Government of Nepal. Restoration and conservation operations have initiated key research and training programs, and the KVPT office in Patan Darbar Square has become a resource center for architecture and urbanism in Nepal.” (From [www.kvpt.org](http://www.kvpt.org))



We can grant reliability in how the money will be used towards restoration of the dilapidated structures. Since Nepal depends to a great extent on tourism, we must make sure that this central source of income is guaranteed as fast and professionally done as possible. But we also want to make sure that the rich local social and ritual life is restored, along with the hope thereof, since this will last many years. Moreover, we want to use our regional competence to help the Nepali people and their unique heritage. And we want you to know that you can trust that the money you donate is securely invested.

If you want to donate, please transfer it to

Vereinigung der Freunde und Förderer des Südasien-Instituts e.V.

Sparkasse Heidelberg

Stichwort/title: "Erdbeben Nepal", or, if you want to specify your donation, add: "child-help" or "longterm reconstruction"

IBAN: DE37 6725 0020 0001 3006 95

SWIFT-BIC: SOLADES1HDB

A Spendenbescheinigung/donation receipt will be issued on request. If you let us know your email address, you will be regularly informed about our relief.

Heidelberg, 27. April 2015

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