

Child Sponsorship



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SathSath



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Preface

Firstly, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude that you have come so far as to open this booklet and begin learning about SathSath's child sponsorship programme.

We hope that the following few pages will provide you with sufficient information and answer any questions you may have about sponsorship, what it means and how it will help offer these children the chance of a better life.

By choosing to sponsor you will play a key role in determining the future of a child that would otherwise face a life of uncertainty and hardship. You will be offering some hope in this child's life, arguably the most precious gift of all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bisu Raj Bajaracharya'.

Bisu Raj Bajaracharya,
Chief Executive Officer

What is SathSath?

SathSath (meaning together) supports children who live and work on the streets of Kathmandu, Nepal. We assist the children to develop skills, build confidence and learn how to use their rights in society.

We believe that each child deserves the chance of a bright future, regardless of caste¹, religion, or socioeconomic background. Street children are only children, but through misfortune beyond their control they remain trapped in a life of uncertainty and hardship.

SathSath operates three drop-in-centers in Kathmandu. These centers offer a safe environment for the children to learn, play and receive support to improve their quality of life.

At the drop-in-centres we provide educational and skill development programmes that accommodate children of all ages. We also offer art and drama classes, sports activities and social programmes, which play an important role in boosting the children's social confidence and sense of belonging within their community.

SathSath's major programmes include:

- Non-formal education & vocational training
- Drama and art classes
- Basic welfare services
- Counseling and emergency medical support
- Legal aid
- Advocacy and lobbying on child rights²

1 The Hindu caste system is widely practised throughout Nepal and India, particularly in village areas. This traditional system of social hierarchy dictates a person's position in society as a result of their family background. The caste system remains an important cultural practice amongst many peoples of the subcontinent, but unfortunately it has also led to the suppression of large numbers of dalits – “untouchable, low caste people” – who invariably struggle to access the same opportunities as people from middle and high castes.

2 Whilst it is vital to work directly with the children, assisting them to develop skills and empowering them to take control of their lives, it is also imperative to work with the broader community. SathSath is actively involved in advocating the rights of street and working children, there by helping to promote social understanding and acceptance of these minority groups.





The Street Children Of Nepal

There are more than 5000¹ children living and working on the streets of Nepal. These children are among the most vulnerable in society, frequently falling victim to some of the worst forms of child labour and exploitation. Street children live in a relentlessly volatile environment; they carry the burden of an unnatural adult responsibility and are forced to grow up very fast.

Alone in their life, and without the guidance and protection of adult guardians, street children are denied the most significant element of their growth – they are stripped of their childhood.

Typically, street children find themselves either begging or working as ‘rag pickers’ (scrap collectors), scouring through piles of rubbish in search of recyclable items they can trade for money. Petty theft and street crime also play a role in the lives of street children, leading to the additional problem of conflict between the children and police.

CWIN (Child Workers in Nepal) 1995 - Since this time, there has been no census conducted to determine the number of children living and working on the streets of Nepal. Due to a range of factors (population growth, urbane migration, political instability and armed conflict), the number of street children has increased significantly over the last decade. SathSath’s current estimate is that the figure of 5000 has doubled.

As with many disadvantaged groups, street children almost invariably face drug and alcohol addiction from a young age. Solvent sniffing is widely practised by Nepal's street children, the consequence of which results in high levels of damage to the children's lungs and developing nervous system.

Once children are on the streets, life continues to get harder. The vulnerability of their situation and the social isolation that they face results in a mostly bleak future. The sad truth is that most street children never manage to break free from this lifestyle.

Regardless of how you look at it, the causes leading to the devastation in these young lives is far beyond the children's control. Economic struggle and political instability place extreme pressure upon thousands of families in Nepal, the result of this sees many such families unable to accommodate even the most basic needs of their children. There is often little other choice - the children are unable to remain at home, so they end up on the streets.

Clearly, street life places an enormous burden upon any child. Unfortunately, widespread social misunderstanding only serves to compound the struggles these children face on a daily basis - street children are negatively viewed and stigmatised by many people, seen more as a an annoyance than anything else.

As the population grows, and urbane poverty spreads, the number of children living and working on the streets of Nepal is increasing. If society, the government and the global community do not act with urgency, this situation is destined only to become worse. Every day, more and more children find themselves dependent on the streets. Seldom do they escape.





Sponsorship - What It Means

By choosing to sponsor a child through SathSath you are providing a child with care, safety and an education. You are giving this child a future.

Everyday, SathSath comes into contact with children who come from extremely poor backgrounds. Some of these children have no home, little family contact and hardly a place to turn to when the going gets tough. At a critical crossroad in their development, it is now that these children need help, in a few years it might well be too late.

In essence, you are taking a child under your wing. You are opening up possibilities in his or her life and showing this child a way out of the desperate existence that is life on the streets.

SathSath's Sponsorship Programme

Our child sponsorship programme was developed so that in-need children coming through SathSath can be given a chance to improve their lives. Through this programme we aim to enable these children with the opportunity to reclaim their childhood, to learn and grow in fairness and with dignity.

Through a process of consultation with our field staff, councilors and outreach workers, a child will be matched with a sponsor. Once the child is selected to receive sponsored support, SathSath will remove the child from the streets or, depending on the circumstances provide support for the child in their home.

Immediately following the commencement of sponsorship, SathSath will work closely with the child, providing professional services and support to ease the challenges of this process as much as possible.

After the child is settled at SathSath, support staff will assist the child to become involved in one of SathSath's educational / skill development programmes. Depending on the individual's age, interests or abilities this may be informal education, vocational training or formal schooling.

Simply put...

A place to call home

Education

Safety & security

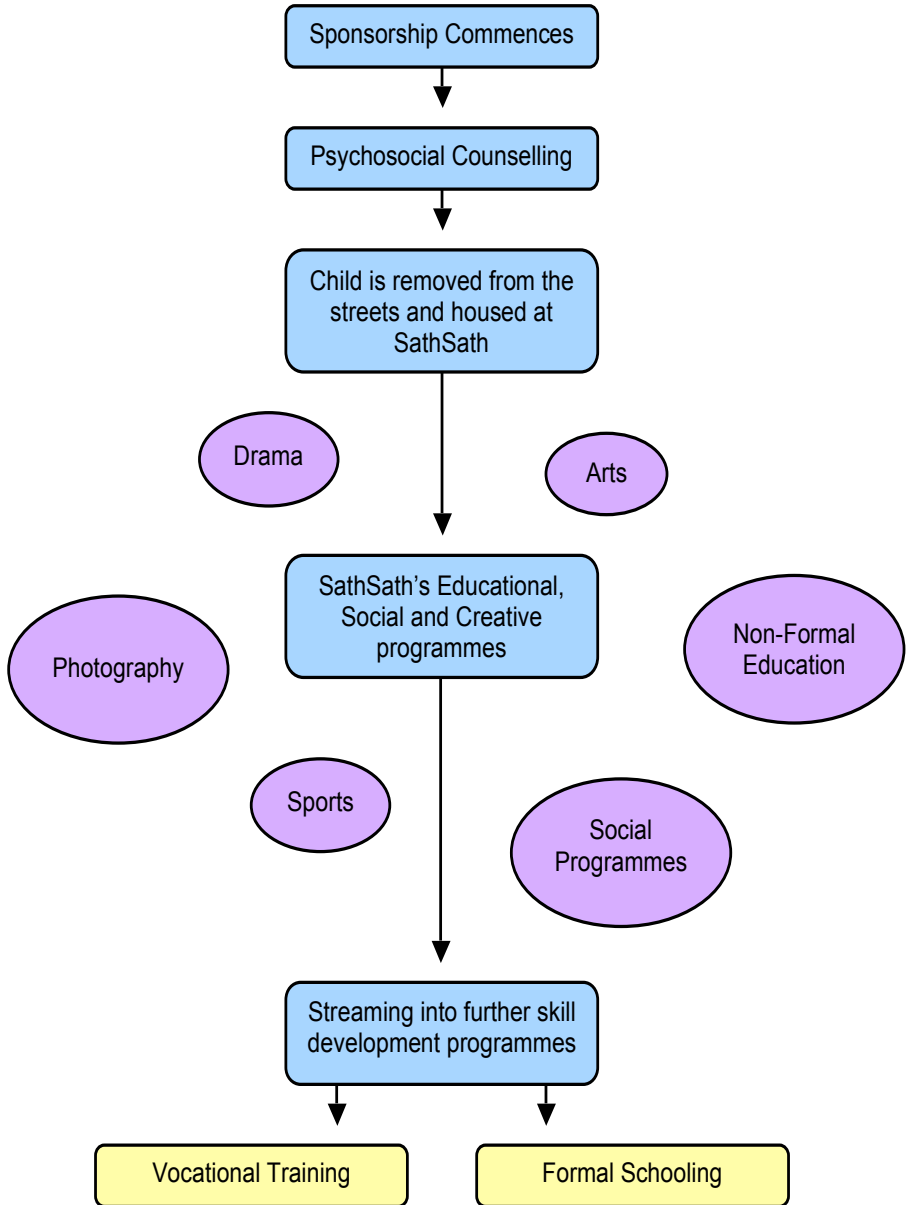
Enough food

A bright future



How It Works

This flow chart shows the process of integrating a child from the streets into SathSath's Sponsorship Programme.



Some Commonly Asked Questions

How Much Does It Cost?

To Sponsor a child through SathSath will cost \$1.10 per day, or \$400 per year. This payment can be made annually, or periodically if this is preferred.

How Long do I need to commit for?

By taking on a sponsorship, you are taking on the exciting commitment to help change the life of a severely disadvantaged child. Ideally, the sponsorship will last as long as the child needs support at SathSath, i.e. until he or she has completed his or her education / training and can live independently without relying on the streets for survival.

We do however understand that there may come a point where you will need to terminate the sponsorship, this is okay. We encourage you to, at a minimum, make a year by year commitment and provide us with at least 3 months notice before withdrawing from the sponsorship. This is important as we will need time to seek alternative arrangements to support the child.

How old will my sponsor child be?

SathSath comes into contact with children anywhere from about 5 years of age onwards. Street children need help regardless of their age. Years on the streets has a devastating effect on children, so we always try to intervene as early as possible. The specific information relating to your sponsor child will be provided upon commencement of your sponsorship.

What will I receive?

As a sponsor, you will receive quarterly reports from SathSath, outlining the progress of your child and a summary of any issues encountered. As well as this, we will encourage your child to write to you, send drawings etc. Upon commencement of your sponsorship, we will provide you with a profile of your child, specifying their age, interests, dreams and aspirations. All sponsors will receive a current colour photograph of their child.



Setting Up Your Sponsorship

Once you have made your decision and have chosen to commit to the rewarding, enriching experience of sponsoring a child, the next step is to set the programme up.

1. Contact SathSath and register to sponsor a child
2. SathSath will arrange to match your sponsorship with a specific child and payment methods will be discussed
3. You are provided with documentation relevant to your child and your first payments are made¹
4. Your sponsor child is removed from the street and housed at SathSath - we will be in contact during this process and inform you as soon as the child is settled in his / her new environment
5. We will provide you with quarterly reports and keep you up-to-date with your child's development
6. If you have any concerns at all throughout the process, we invite you to contact us any time, either by email, phone or letter

¹ SathSath has an established arrangement with the registered Australian charity, World Youth International (ABN 52 060 813 541) to auspice any financial transactions or donations intended to support SathSath's work in Nepal. Any funds direct to SathSath will be forwarded to World Youth International and hence forth transferred to SathSath. All donations to SathSath, including child sponsorship, are tax deductible.



Can I Visit My Sponsor Child?

Yes, SathSath supports you wanting to visit your sponsor child. However, if you do plan to come, we ask that you contact us prior to your arrival in Nepal so we are able to prepare the children for your visit.

Contact Us

For more information, or to register for child sponsorship, please contact Ben Gough (Australia) or Biso Bajaracharya (Nepal).

Ben:
E-mail: ben.gough@sathsath.org
Phone: 0403 141 339

Biso:
E-mail: biso@sathsath.org
Phone: +977 9851 084 876



 साथसाथ
SathSath

“Together With Children”

© 2008 SathSath
Sangamchowk, Naya Baneshowr
GPO Box: 11823, Kathmandu, Nepal
PH 977-01-4472349

www.sathsath.org

World Youth International (Aust.) Ltd.
PH 061-8-8340-1266
www.worldyouth.org.au



Booklet designed and produced by Ben Gough