

NEPAL TRIP REPORT 2017

What?

The TeamMed Nepal trip is a fantastic opportunity to partake in international medical volunteer work under the guidance of your peers and the Himalayan Guge Organisation (HGO). The trip involves setting up temporary medical clinics in remote villages to provide medical aid to locals who may not have sought medical attention for many years. Part of the trip will also involve the running of a health promotion campaign. In 2017, we partnered with the Days for Girls organisation to provide education and support around women's health issues. This was a highly successful program and the 2018 group will have the opportunity to continue this partnership or establish a new health promotional activity.

Who?

Each year TeamMed sends 10-12 students from across all the medical school year levels. While on the trip you will be working with HGO leader Tashi Phuntsok (absolute legend) and his staff. A Nepalese doctor will also be there, along with Translators, Porters and Sherpas.

When?

Typically takes place in the first 2-3 weeks of December. Dates for the 2018 trip TBC.

Where?

The majority of the trip will be spent in the rural village of Bigu – home to a Buddhist nunnery and the epicenter of the 2015 earthquake. Bigu is a beautiful village set deep in the Himalayas, northeast from Kathmandu towards the Tibetan border.

Why?

Healthcare in Nepal continues to be significantly under-resourced with high mortality rates from many preventable illnesses. Due to geography and the lifestyle of the locals, access to healthcare is extremely difficult. The lasting impact of this is evident and the TeamMed Nepal trip goes a long way to helping provide medical care to those who would otherwise struggle to make the journey to Kathmandu.

Nepal is without a doubt one of the most beautiful countries in the world. The backdrop of the Himalayas with many 7,000m+ peaks in the distance makes the hiking incredible. Many people from around the globe make the pilgrimage to Nepal to immerse themselves in this amazing country. The Nepalese people are extremely grateful and are some of the most welcoming generous individuals you could ever wish to meet – I cannot begin to explain the kindness they have within their hearts!

2017 Trip Summary

The 2017 group made their way to Kathmandu in groups of 2-3 over a 24-hour period – simply due to personal preference for flights etc. Once arriving we were welcomed by Tashi (HGO) who had arranged transport from the airport to the hotel in Kathmandu. We rested overnight and met the next morning to discuss the trip with Tashi and check over the medications we had ordered and planned to take on the trek. We spent the remainder of the day getting a few extra personal supplies and visiting the Nepal headquarters of the Days for Girls Organisation. This was a great experience because we could see where the sustainable sanitary products were made that we would be taking to distribute during the trip.

The following morning we began the trip to the village of Dolangsa – this involved a long 7-hour jeep ride out of Kathmandu through many rural communities. It remained a highlight for a number of the group simply due to the many many sites witnessed along the way. The day finished with a short 1-hour hike to the village and setting up camp. The porters set up tents and arranged all the meals for the trip so don't stress about having to do any of that!

We then ran a medical clinic for 4 days. Locals came from all over and we saw approximately 200 patients over this time with many ailments – from musculoskeletal, dry skin & eyes, respiratory infections and dental issues. Each day included some personal time to read, explore and getting to know each other well. After completing the clinic in Dolangsa we began the trek over Tinsang Pass to Bigu. This was simply incredible! We camped towards the top at 3,500m with the temperature dropping below zero overnight. By no means do you have to be an adventurer to get through the hike and everyone loved the challenge.

The village of Bigu is home to a Buddhist nunnery and the effects of the 2015 earthquake were still visible. One of the long-term projects of TeamMed is the building of a medical clinic in Bigu, which I believe is well on the way. In a similar fashion, we set up clinic and continued to help as many people as we could. Some other highlights included – attending prayer with the nuns, hiking around Bigu and generally just enjoying the beautiful views.

Overall, the trip was very successful, enjoyed by all and I cannot recommend this experience enough. If you want to take a leap of faith and put yourself out of your comfort zone, the Nepal trip is for you!

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