



## Health Matters



In this issue we are focussing on some of the amazing and life-changing healthcare projects we support. As some of you will already be aware, health is one of Tibet Relief Fund's main objects and over the last 55 years we have provided grants for a wide-range of projects making a huge difference for many Tibetans, both inside Tibet and in India and Nepal.

In our continued commitment to health matters we have recently distributed a number of grants including support for a community centre and clinic in Spiti, north-west India (see page 2), provision for supplementing salaries for doctors working in Tibetan settlements in India (see page 6) and a substantial grant to cover the Department of Health's Hepatitis B awareness and training programme.

In another update you can discover how a maternal training project facilitated through the maternity clinic in eastern Tibet is already saving the lives of nomadic Tibetans.

Check out our fundraising pages for some quick and easy ways to support us and to see our 2014 raffle winners; a big thank you to everyone who bought a ticket.

After 13 years in Finsbury Park our lease came to an end and, as you can see from the enclosed card, we have just completed our move to east London. Please hang on to our change of address card and make a note of our new phone number!

If you would like any further information on anything covered in this issue of *Tibet Matters*, please email us at [info@tibetrelieffund.co.uk](mailto:info@tibetrelieffund.co.uk) or call our new office on 020 3119 0041. To make a donation to one of our healthcare projects you can either call us or visit [www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk](http://www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk).

*Philippa Carrick*

Philippa Carrick and all at Tibet Relief Fund

## Tenzingang Ambulance Driver

Tenzingang settlement is situated in the foothills of the Himalayas in north-east India. At 45 kilometres from the nearest town along dangerous and landslide prone roads, medical emergencies in the settlement can easily become life-threatening.

Buses in the area are infrequent and taxis are both unreliable and unaffordable. For many years the people of the settlement had no other choice but to rely on these options when they needed to go to hospital. Thankfully the Department of Health, within the Central Tibetan Administration, now provide the settlement with an ambulance which is a life-saver to the community; however, they could not afford to employ a driver.

Thanks to a generous grant received from a trust in 2011, we have been able to provide the Department of Health an annual grant to cover the salary of a designated ambulance driver. Not only has this provided a new job opportunity, but the driver recruited, Lobsang Dhondup, can provide immediate on-site attention; if further treatment is required he drives patients to hospital in the nearest city. Dhondup now plays a vital role in emergency cases, from trauma injuries to cardiac arrests, often providing lifesaving support in the nick of time.

Having an ambulance driver in the settlement also means patients with non-life-threatening problems but who still require hospital treatment, such as pregnant women and out-patients, can be taken to hospital for regular check-ups. This has helped improve the overall health of the community.

We are delighted the grant received from the trust will cover the ambulance driver's salary until 2017, which gives long-term reassurance to the local community.

To keep up to date with the latest news from Tibet Relief Fund, follow us on twitter [@tibetrelieffund](https://twitter.com/tibetrelieffund), check out and like us at [facebook.com/tibetrelieffund](https://facebook.com/tibetrelieffund) or visit our website [www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk](http://www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk)

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# Spiti Clinic

We're delighted to introduce you to a fantastic new project Tibet Relief Fund is supporting in the Spiti Valley in north-west India.

Bordering Tibet, Spiti is a cold desert valley surrounded on all sides by Himalayan mountain ranges and is home to approximately 10,000 people. Due to its geographical location between India and Tibet, the vast majority of the population are of Tibetan descent; the valley is dotted with Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and a dialect of Tibetan is spoken throughout the area. Those living in the valley are poor as they rely on seasonal subsistence farming to make a living. Although Spiti sees around 300 days of sunshine a year, the winters are extremely harsh and long and its isolated position means for much of the year Spiti is cut off from the rest of India.

Our project partners have worked in the area for some years and are currently building an eco-community centre that will include medical and dental clinics and healthcare facilities to serve the people of the Spiti valley.

With the valley being classed as a high risk on the seismic scale of India, the centre is being built using earthquake resistant techniques. Solar technologies are also being incorporated to make use of the large amount of sunshine.

The resulting building will include a community hall serving as a valuable meeting space for locals during the long winter months and a space for young people to preserve their culture by practicing their traditional music and dance. As well as the community hall, the centre will feature a library, coffee shop, greenhouse, accommodation and ophthalmic and dental clinics.

Using some of the legacy left to Tibet Relief Fund by Vanya Kewley Lambert, we are sending a grant to cover part of the building costs as well as paying to fully equip the dental clinic. This will improve overall wellbeing by providing a vital service to local communities for both routine procedures and emergency treatment.

The dental clinic is a particularly valuable addition to the centre as, at present, there are no dental facilities in the valley. Any dental issue requiring treatment entails a two-day journey to either Manali or Kullu; an arduous journey that is particularly challenging during the winter months. With no easily accessible dental facilities, tooth loss is very common in both adults and children, as are infections and facial disfigurement caused by un-treated dental conditions or dental trauma for which no treatment is available.

As is common in such remote communities, the majority of people living in the Spiti valley have little or no knowledge of oral hygiene. With the area becoming more open to the outside world, junk food and carbonated drinks are more readily available leading to a rapid decline to oral health. The lack of information on the dental problems associated with such foods and drinks means more and more people are suffering unnecessary dental problems. One of the aims of the project is to address this by running oral hygiene workshops for parents and children in the valley.

The first phase of building has already been completed and work on stage two has just started. Keep an eye out in future *Tibet Matters* to see how the centre is progressing and learn more about the benefits it is bringing to communities across the Spiti valley.



Photos - Top: Completed first floor of the Community Centre  
Bottom: Building work using rammed earth technique



# Maternity clinic & maternal training in eastern Tibet

Update

Since we first began supporting this fantastic project in 2008 there have been many developments. Following on from previous articles, here we bring you an update on the impact the project has had as it has grown over the last year.

As previously reported, large numbers of Tibetan women in the area succumb to serious sickness and, all too often, death resulting from pregnancy and childbirth. Through the construction of a maternity clinic for remote and nomadic communities, as well as the provision of basic maternal health training for mothers, fathers, families and communities, our project partners are working to prevent these unnecessary deaths and sicknesses by improving the maternal health of these nomadic communities.

Although ten per cent of the building is still to be completed, over the summer months, the existing structure has already been used for training purposes. This training focuses on basic health and hygiene, nutrition, reproductive health and the importance of pre-natal and post-natal care. Mothers are taught to recognise any danger signs that occur in pregnancy and communities are supplied with the skills to be able to act in a safe way to protect the lives of mothers and their infants.

In a recent project report we learnt how two students, Yeshi and Lhadon, put their training skills to great use.

As heavily pregnant Tashi Nima prepared to give birth, Yeshi and Lhadon, following guidance they received at their training, persuaded the expectant mother to give birth in their family home rather than the usual cattle shed!

When Tashi had difficulties with the delivery of the placenta and was bleeding heavily

the two attendants arranged for her to be taken to hospital. En-route they followed the correct procedures to ensure the safety of mother and child. Following a blood transfusion and further care, both mother and son are alive and well.

Tashi said, *“If it was not for these two women, and the community leader with the project car, my son and I would not be here.”*

## In Tibet, 90 per cent of Tibetan women give birth without a skilled birth attendant.

In the coming year, the project will focus on continuing maternal health training for locals that will impact on over 14,000 nomadic Tibetan people. This summer the maternity clinic building should be completed and, after this, the clinic will be seeking to fund a Tibetan doctor and birth attendants to work in the maternity unit.

It’s great to be able to share stories like this; thank you to everyone who enabled us to support this project. We look forward to updating you on the progress of the maternity clinic building and future training successes.



Photos - Top: Teaching  
Bottom: Mother Tashi Nima and her son



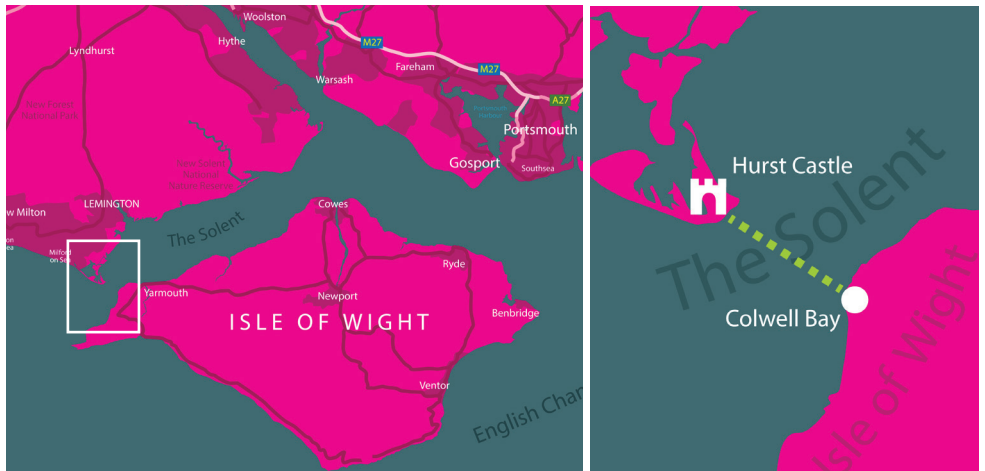
# Fundraising



## Thank you Joe!

On 6 July 2014, the Dalai Lama's 79th birthday, Tibet Relief Fund supporter Joe Biscroe swam across the Solent from the south coast of England to a beach on the Isle of Wight to raise funds for Tibet Relief Fund.

In 2009 Joe spent some time filming a series of secret documentaries inside Tibet and returned feeling compelled to help the Tibetan people. We are delighted Joe chose to support Tibet Relief Fund for his fantastic and challenging swim; well done Joe and thank you!



## Quick fundraising ideas

As the season of sponsored events draws to a close, we've found some quick and easy ways you can support us!

**Recycle 4 Charity.co.uk**

If you're planning a clear out this summer there are ways in which you can help Tibet Relief Fund and the environment with your unwanted items.

You can recycle your mobiles, inkjets, laser or toner cartridges and raise money for Tibet Relief Fund.

Simply email [info@tibetrelieffund.co.uk](mailto:info@tibetrelieffund.co.uk) or call 020 3119 0041 to request a personalised Tibet Relief Fund freepost envelope or go to [www.bit.ly/trf\\_recycle](http://www.bit.ly/trf_recycle) to order your freepost envelope online.

Then send your unwanted items to recycle4charity who will convert them into donations for Tibet Relief Fund.

**Give as you Live™**

By signing up to Give as you Live, you can support Tibet Relief Fund whilst going about your usual online shopping. The Give as you Live site works by installing a simple widget on your desktop which recognises Tibet Relief Fund as your chosen charity; each time you make a purchase through one of over 2,000 registered stores – the store will give a commission to Tibet Relief Fund, at no extra cost to you. On average, 2.5 per cent of each purchase is donated.

To sign up or find out more, simply visit [www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com) and select Tibet Relief Fund as your chosen charity.

[www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com)



# Events



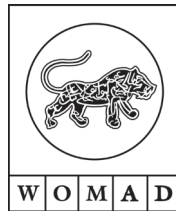
On 13 July Tibet Relief Fund supporters Anna Ray, Cristina Cardarelli and Federica Mirto ran the British London 10K run to raise money for Tibet Relief Fund. Thank you to all this year's runners for your fantastic efforts!



Spare a thought for four Tibet Relief supporters who, on the 10th August, took on the huge challenge of cycling 100 miles to raise money for us!

The event started in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, then followed a 100-mile route on closed roads through the capital and into Surrey's stunning countryside. With leg-testing climbs and a route made famous by the world's best cyclists at the London 2012 Olympics, it was a truly spectacular event for all involved.

A huge thank you to Adam Goff, Paul Golding, Natasha Smyth and Ryan Wills who cycled 100 miles for Tibet Relief Fund! See [www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk/ride-london-2014](http://www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk/ride-london-2014) page on our website to sponsor them and show your support! We will report on their achievements in the next *Tibet Matters*.



Over the last weekend of July, Tibet Relief Fund was at the WOMAD (World of Music and Dance) festival in brilliantly sunny Wiltshire!

It was a swelteringly hot weekend and festival goers were out in force. With the Tibet flag hoisted high and lots of prayer flags, our stand was hard to miss. It was really encouraging to see the attention our merchandise received and the interest in the stories behind so many of our goods.

Despite two sudden and enormously heavy downpours that caused a rapid pulling in of all our tables, we had a fantastic time welcoming lots of new friends as well as catching up with old ones.

Thank you to everyone who came and visited our stand and directly supported Tibetan initiatives through purchases and donations. We are already looking forward to next year!

# Raffle 2014

## A WINNING SUCCESS



As you may know our 2014 raffle was drawn on the 6 July, the Dalai Lama's birthday, and we are thrilled to let you know that this year **it was a huge success!**

The winning ticket number was 006176 and the winner (who wishes to remain anonymous) has very generously donated the £1,000 prize back to Tibet Relief Fund. The money will be used to fund projects in both Nepal and India. We are so grateful for this act of generosity, thank you!

**We raised over an astonishing £8,000;** we would not have been able to do this without all those who bought raffle tickets this year and, of course, the fantastic prizes so kindly donated by both individuals and organisations. A big thank you to all those who have made the raffle the success it has been.

This £8,000 will be used where it is needed most; supporting urgent projects that bring sustainable and practical help to Tibetans in India, Tibet and Nepal.

**Thank you to Rainbow Wholefoods, Global Soul, Speakaboo and Kailash Momo for donating this year's prizes.**





# Settlement Doctors

We are excited to tell you about a grant we have sent to another new project that will boost healthcare in Tibetan settlements in India.

There are 39 Tibetan settlements throughout India of which ten have their own hospitals. Whilst it is fantastic these hospitals are in place, there is a worrying shortage of Tibetan doctors available to staff them. Earlier this year only four out of the ten hospitals had doctors. This is especially problematic as many of the settlements are remote and rely on resident doctors for not just routine, but also emergency treatment. When no local doctor is available, Tibetans living in these settlements have no choice but to travel to expensive Indian private hospitals for treatment, which they often cannot afford.

In theory, staffing the settlement hospitals with fully trained Tibetan doctors should not be a problem. On average three Tibetan students graduate as doctors each year. As a recent report from the Department of Health suggests, many of these young doctors have a strong desire to work in Tibetan communities. However, despite this, it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain Tibetan doctors. Many of the settlements are in remote locations away from family and friends. As the only doctor in the hospital, doctors are required to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As well as the pressure of these working hours, new doctors are faced with the daunting prospect of having sole responsibility for their patients as there are no senior doctors to consult.

These circumstances all combine to put huge pressures on settlement doctors; sadly many feel it necessary to leave their posts to work in Indian hospitals where the workload is less intense, the salary almost double and there are greater opportunities to further their

career. When asked, Tibetan doctors who previously left their jobs in settlements have explained their reasons were due to location, poor salary and lack of career opportunity. Many also said a more competitive salary would have encouraged them to stay for a longer period.

The Department of Health seeks to address these problems through two initiatives: the introduction of a supplement to boost salaries by around 47 per cent for doctors working in settlements and to increase the use of technology for remote consultations using video web links.

Based on discussions with previous settlement doctors and newly qualified doctors, it is believed the suggested level of increase in salary, along with utilising the opportunities given through modern technology to enable settlement doctors to consult with senior doctors in other towns, will provide the necessary incentive to both attract and retain doctors for ten settlements.

Tibet Relief Fund has agreed to provide salary supplements for seven doctors annually for three years. Since sending our first grant we have learnt new doctors have been recruited and there are now seven doctors working in six settlements (Kollegal, Hunsur, Mundgod, Bir, Deyyiling, and two in Bylakuppe). The Department of Health are looking to secure further doctors to work in the more remote settlements such as Miao, Odisha and Mainpat.

It is thanks both to your generous support and funding through Vanya Kewley Lambert's legacy that Tibet Relief Fund has been able to commit to this life-changing programme over the next three years. We will be further reporting on the progress of this project in *Tibet Matters*, so keep a look out!



# A day in the life of a settlement doctor

We interviewed three Tibetan doctors from Bylakuppe and Kollegal settlements to find out what daily working life is like for them. Dr Jigme Kalsang (Kollegal) (JK) has been working at Dhondenling Van Thiel Charitable Trust Hospital in Kollegal for one month. Dr Tsering Choedon (TC) has been at Tso Jhe Khangsar Charity Hospital Society in Bylakuppe for five years. In May, she was joined by Dr Sonam Dhondup (SD). All three doctors will be recipients of the new salary supplement programme. We asked just what this will mean to them and about their daily routine.

## Can you describe your daily working routine?

**(TC)** "Daily routine starts at 9am through to 5pm seeing outpatients, inpatients and day-care patients. After 5pm I'm on call through till 9am. In case of inpatients admitted I make a round at 5pm and then at 8pm also as required in case of emergency. So basically I'm needed round the clock."

## How many hours do you work a day?

**(SD)** "Officially I work for eight hours a day excluding Sundays and second Saturdays. But, we are on emergency call 24/7."

## What are some of the main conditions that you treat?

**(JK)** "Gastroenteritis, Typhoid and Osteoarthritis."

**(SD)** "Mumps among un-immunized patients from monasteries. Tuberculosis as always, but I've seen a perceptible dip in the incidence. Many monasteries have their own TB program and visiting consultants which has diminished the role of this hospital for those particular monasteries."

## Is it important for you to work in a Tibetan settlement? If so, why?

**(SD)** "It is essential for me or any other Tibetan doctor to serve in a Tibetan settlement. Most importantly, it's the same culture that the doctor himself belongs to so a big barrier is eliminated between healthcare provider and beneficiary. The language barrier won't be there. The sense of belongingness to the community is a significant factor. The people will always need health care. So, healthcare provided to our people by our government and our own doctors sounds good."

## What are some of the challenges you face working in a refugee settlement that you might not perhaps face working elsewhere?

**(JK)** "In our hospital, since I am the only doctor I don't have senior doctor to guide. Moreover, we don't have basic laboratory facility like X-ray."

## What do you enjoy most about your job?

**(SD)** "When patients ask me to stay for more years brings joy to soul. When patients leave my department smiling makes me feel good. With the bare minimum facilities, being able to manage successfully patients in big pain and fear fills my heart with joy at times."

## Do you think it is important for the young people in the settlements to see a Tibetan doctor working there?

**(TC)** "Yes it is very essential to morally encourage the upcoming generations to see doctors who are happily serving in the Tibetan community so that that image is imprinted into their subconscious and that will definitely help motivate them to work and use one's talent for the needy population."

## What difference will receiving a more competitive salary make to you?

**(TC)** "Money is secondary to me, as long as I get a decent pay and respect and appreciation of the positive aspects and efforts, I'm happy. Though with the progression of the hike in price of daily needs and accommodation, it's very healthy to keep updating the pay to the national level."

Photos - Top to bottom: 1) Dr Tsering Choedon at work  
2) Daily rounds at Tso Jhe Khangsar Charity Hospital  
3) A young girl being seen for treatment 4) Doctor's clinic in Bylakuppe 5) Dr Jigme Kalsang treating an elderly patient





# Sponsorship

Tibet Relief Fund's sponsorship programme currently benefits over 800 children, monks, nuns and elderly Tibetans. Nearly half of those beneficiaries are under the care of Tibetan Homes Foundation in Mussoorie, northern India.

Following a decrease in the number of children coming over from Tibet, Tibetan Homes Foundation extended their remit to include providing schooling and care for children from poorer settlements in India and Nepal. Earlier this year, Tibetan Homes Foundation welcomed 300 children from the settlements to receive residential schooling.

Here we introduce four children who have recently arrived. For £200 a year you can make a real difference to their lives.

Sponsors receive updates and reports as often as possible and a greetings card over the winter holidays. Please consider sponsoring a child today and transform their lives.



## Kunga Samdup

**Age: 11, boy**  
Tibetan Homes Foundation,  
Charlmount School

Kunga was born to a poor Tibetan refugee family in Nepal. He is the youngest of four siblings and his father ekes out a living in a local restaurant to support his family's basic needs.

Kunga is an active young boy and loves to play football with his friends.



## Lekshey Dolma

**Age: 10, girl**  
Tibetan Homes Foundation,  
Charlmount School

Lekshey Dolma was born in Choephelling Tibetan Settlement, in remote north-east India and has one older brother. Her mother works at a small farm in the settlement which is home to about 3,000 Tibetan refugees. Lekshey's mother finds it hard to support their education as her only source of income is from the family farm, which does not even produce enough food to feed the family.

Lekshey's admission to Tibetan Homes Foundation means her mother doesn't need to worry about her schooling. Lekshey is in Class V and has adjusted well to life at her new school.



## Sonam Tenpa

**Age: 7, boy**  
Tibetan Homes Homes,  
Rajpur School

Sonam Tenpa was born in Norgyaling Tibetan Settlement, Maharashtra state. Home to 1,000 refugees, Norgyaling is the least developed Tibetan settlement in west India due to its remote location. Sonam's mother and one of his brothers still live at the settlement. During the business season his mother works as a street vendor to support her family.

Sonam secured admission to Tibetan Homes School in Rajpur after his father died. Sonam is in Class I and lives in a smaller family home with 12 other children. He has adjusted well into the new environment and is described as 'a jolly boy, who likes playing football with his friends'.



## Ngawang Nyingpo

**Age: 11, boy**  
Tibetan Homes Foundation,  
Rajpur School

Ngawang Nyingpo was born one of four brothers in Rabgyeling Tibetan Settlement, south India. After his father died, at the recommendation of the Central Tibetan Administration's Destitute Committee, Ngawang was given admission to Tibetan Homes Foundation.

He is in Class IV and enjoys playing football and basketball with his friends.

**If you would like to sponsor a child at Tibetan Homes Foundation, or require further information about our sponsorship programme, please contact our sponsorship co-ordinator: [tsering@tibetrelieffund.co.uk](mailto:tsering@tibetrelieffund.co.uk).**



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