

TIBET MATTERS

Issue 35 | ANNUAL REVIEW 2020



TIBET
RELIEF FUND

60

YEARS WORKING
WITH TIBETANS



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Tashi Delek!

Welcome to our annual review for 2019/20. As ever, it is both inspiring and humbling to see what we achieved - all down to your generosity and support. Thank you. More especially in these straitened times. It was hugely moving that so many of you responded with great concern and kindness to our emergency appeal. Your donations enabled us to very quickly distribute much needed food packages in Nepal.

As you know, we have been working with Tibetans for 60 years! In the beginning Tibet Relief Fund was one of the very first agencies working in the field to meet immediate needs of Tibetan refugees arriving in India, often with little more than the clothes they were wearing. Sixty years later we are now working with Tibetan grassroots organisations to address needs within communities living in India and Nepal. This is testament to a remarkable resilience in adversity and adaptability to new challenges shown by exiled Tibetans.

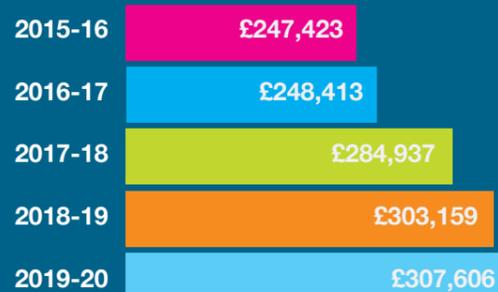
This year we made new partnerships in India and appointed a Project Liaison Officer in Nepal, Penpa Tsering. One of the positives from these lockdown times was holding our first international online meeting where Thupten, our Programmes Manager here in the UK, Penpa in Nepal, Tenzin Nyima, our Project Liaison Officer in Delhi, and I got together to discuss the impact of lockdowns in India and Nepal. It is this connectivity that enables us to respond quickly to emergency requests. And in these times this has never been so important.

I hope you enjoy reading about the breadth of our work and feel proud to be part of it - it's your donations that make it happen. You can also see how your donations to appeals have been used, how purchasing handicrafts through Enlightened Gifts makes such a difference for Tibetan artisans and how you can get involved in other ways!

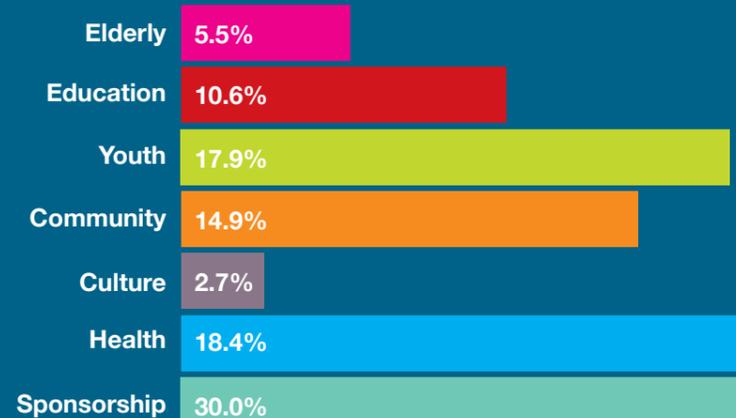
Philippa Carrick

Philippa Carrick, CEO

Total Grants sent



Areas of work breakdown



447 active sponsors who sponsored **642** individuals, most being children including little monks (560 children and college students, 53 elders, 29 nuns and monks)



14 new homes built in Bakhang



53 children receiving extra nutritional meals in Bakhang



41 emergency medical grants in Pokhara



16 people received six-months' Hepatitis B medication



9 Fellowships for further training through Empowering the Vision



533 people accessed Empowering the Vision careers service



102 lockdown food parcels in Kathmandu

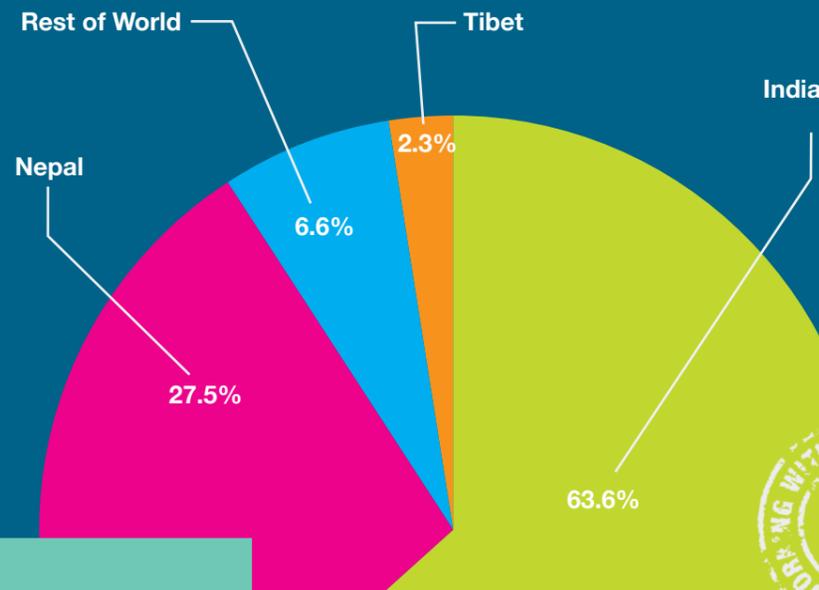


700 lockdown food parcels through Lodrik



117 elders received Losar gifts

Geographic breakdown (exc. sponsorship)



We want to thank the following trusts and foundations for supporting our work this year: Wallace Curzon Charitable Trust, Fieldrose Trust, Calpe Trust, Himbleton Charitable Trust, Matthews Wrightson Charity Trust, Paget Trust, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Community Foundation, Harbinson Charitable Trust, King's College Cambridge



Youth & Education

Empowering the Vision project

Our Delhi-based youth empowerment project, Empowering the Vision (EVP) offers careers services, leadership training, mentorship and networking opportunities to young Tibetans in India. Over the last year they ran 14 different programmes that saw 800 students and young people take part!

Karma Gyurme was supported by EVP's career help desk and is now back in further education:



Photos: Top: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

“ I still remember the day when I visited EVP's career help desk... with my mum. I was demotivated and unsatisfied with myself... as I was not able to continue my schooling. The team... recommended Ritinjali Second Chance Programme so that I can continue my formal education and also learn a life skill at the same time. This is my second year at Ritinjali and I feel really lucky to be able to get back on track. I have learnt a lot including things I have missed whilst in school. ”

Creches

Access to flexible, affordable and enriching child care is vital for working parents.

Your donations have supported a creche at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) in Dharamshala since 2016. It has been a huge help to the Library staff, particularly for single parents, as they can work and support their families while knowing their children are being well taken care of.

The success at LTWA has led us to commit to supporting two new creches this year. The first in Bir, a Tibetan settlement in northern India, and the second in the remote Choenphelling Tibetan settlement in north-east India.

Our grant will ensure a living wage for the creches' caretakers, cooks and nannies as well as covering running costs, and providing nutritious meals and toys for the children!



Photos: Top: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dolma Foundation

Since the devastating earthquakes hit Nepal in 2015, we have worked with the Dolma Foundation to support the education of six of the most vulnerable children in the small Himalayan district of Rasuwa.

Sadly, two of the children left school unexpectedly last year due to family problems. However we have been able to help two new students: 13 year old Anita Tamang, who lost her mother during the earthquakes and 11 year old Anil Tamang, who lost his father. Thanks to your support they have been able to continue their education and are delighted to be back in school!

The four other children are doing really well in their studies and Passang Tamang and Lai Sangmo Tamang both came top of their classes last year!



Photos: Top: Lai Sangmo Tamang Bottom: Passang Tamang

Tibetan Ability Centre

We are proud to be the core funder of Tibetan Ability Centre (TAC) in Dharamshala. A groundbreaking initiative that provides invaluable support to children and young people with special needs, as well as their families, through early intervention therapy, physiotherapy and counselling.

TAC also run community programmes to tackle disability-related social stigma and promote inclusion. Their resources on social media have been viewed over three million times!

In the past year your generous support enabled them to develop and publish a bilingual booklet of guidance and strategies for Tibetan schools in India. This encourages developing inclusive education settings that respect and value diversity, promote belonging for every student and ensure they receive a quality education in a common learning environment.

A wonderful success story and the first of its kind within the Tibetan exile community!



Photos: Top: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



Elders & Lodrik



Comfort & Care

The older generations of the exile community in India and Nepal often lack the traditional family support once common in Tibet. This means a lot of elders, many first generation refugees, find themselves without the care they need in their later years.

With your support, we have been able to provide stipends to over 180 Tibetan elders in the last year alone! At Tibetan Homes Foundation in Rajpur and Mussoorie you also helped fund refurbishment projects so the elders can live more comfortably.

At Clement Town and Dekyiling settlements, you have provided vital support to retired and vulnerable handicraft workers like Mrs Phuntsok Dolma:

“After the death of my husband I was under full pressure for my survival and now with... support I am mentally relieved and thank you for the stipend for meeting my daily needs.”

Water for Nangchen

Nangchen Old People's Home in Kathmandu has been looking after elderly Tibetan refugees since 1968. There is an ongoing issue with access to clean water in Kathmandu and the residents can't rely on public services to provide it.

The well for the home recently dried up and there are no other water sources easily available.

Your donations are funding deliveries of water to the home, ensuring the elders and staff have safe drinking

water throughout summer. We have also established an emergency medical fund and employed a cook/helper, giving the elders peace of mind and the care they need.



Lodrik

Your support has allowed us to continue our work with Lodrik Welfare Fund.

Based in Pokhara, Nepal, they address issues highlighted by the local exile community. In the last year our education, skills training and healthcare projects helped more than 2,000 people.

The emergency medical fund is a vital safety net for many vulnerable members of the community. This year you helped 41 people with a range of health problems including Mrs. Pema, a widower from Paljoring settlement. Thanks to the medical fund she had eye surgery and can now see much better and take care of her aging mother.



In response to Covid-19 the Nepal government announced a nationwide lockdown on 24 March. At the time of going to print this has not yet been lifted. The lockdown has disproportionately impacted many Lodrik residents, whose income depends on tourism. Your swift and generous response to our emergency appeal provided immediate food relief to those affected by the prolonged lockdown. Thank you!

By the first week of June, Lodrik had distributed food parcels to over 700 residents in the three settlements. Everyone received 5 kg of both rice and atta (flour), 1 kg of both red and black dal (lentils), 0.5 kg of salt, 1 kg of sugar, 1 litre of cooking oil and 250 grams of tea.

Thanks to your incredible support the community hasn't had to worry about where their next meal is going to come from during this unprecedented global emergency. Tsering Dolma from Jampaling settlement tells us what the food parcel has meant to her:



“The emergency food supplies have been a great relief to so many of us here during this lockdown. Moreover knowing that we are not alone in this has had a positive effect on my physical and psychological health during this pandemic.”

Enlightened Gifts

Enlightened Gifts gives us a great opportunity to find and sell unique items and support Tibetan businesses, Tibetan craft creators and entrepreneurs.

As part of our mission to empower Tibetans to build sustainable communities we have supported many Tibetans over the years to build a future for themselves and generate their own income and opportunities. It's not just investing in vital equipment or providing a start up grant, it's also ordering their products to offer to you, our supporters.

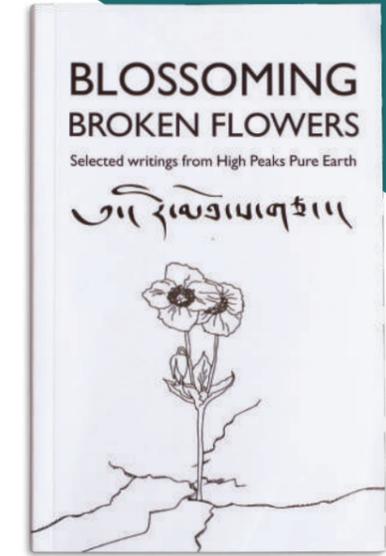
An example of this can be found at Dekyiling Handicraft Centre in India. We purchased an incense press machine for them and ever since, we've been buying their products to sell to you. Other examples include Dolls4Tibet with their yaks and fairies, Exile Creations' beautifully produced glass beads, and Clean Upper Dharamsala's handmade and printed paper and cards.

Photos - Craftswomen at Dolls4Tibet

Painted thangkas

A new initiative coming later this year is to sell thangkas painted by students at Tibetan Homes Foundation.

The talent of these young Tibetans usually remains unseen in their classrooms, but we wanted to recognise their skills and hopefully inspire other students to pursue the arts. We will sell a thangka accompanied by a photo of the student who painted it. We hope you will take this chance to buy a truly unique work of art.



Blossoming Broken Flowers

Last year we were delighted to work with High Peaks Pure Earth (highpeakspureearth.com) to publish Blossoming Broken Flowers: Selected Writings from High Peaks Pure Earth, the first print publication of their work!

High Peaks Pure Earth translates contemporary writing from within Tibet and the People's Republic of China, accompanied by discerning commentary, to present a unique and vital insight into Tibet today transcending barriers of language and censorship. Through poetry, articles, interviews and beautiful illustrations, Blossoming Broken Flowers is a vibrant and honest insight into life in 21st century Tibet, which we hope will reach a wider audience.



To further its reach and impact, we also distributed copies to older students in the Tibetan schools we work with in India and Nepal, as well as to the UK's Tibetan community.

High Peaks Pure Earth creates an invaluable link between the global Tibetan community in exile and their brothers and sisters within Tibet. After nearly 70 years of occupation, we hope Blossoming Broken Flowers can play a part in bolstering this sense of connection between Tibet and the younger generations of the exile community.

Thank you to everyone who has already bought a copy. If you would like to support the book you can currently buy one for the special price of £4.99!

enlightenedgifts.org/blossoming-broken-flowers

Gifts of Hope

Our Gifts of Hope give you the opportunity to buy a charity gift. We send a photo, a letter and a rangzen (freedom) bracelet to each person receiving a Gift of Hope.

These gifts really make a difference. The money raised goes towards providing hepatitis medication, enabling children to have a day out when being so far from home and family, and providing elders with the joy of being treated to a picnic during Losar. They have been very popular, and we'd like to thank everybody who has bought one so far.



You can visit our shop at enlightenedgifts.org

Appeal updates

Thank you for supporting our appeals this year. Without you we simply couldn't do our work. Here's how you are making a difference...

Bakhang community build their health post

Bakhang village is close to having a much-needed health post which will serve the 2,000 people living in this remote Himalayan village and surrounding area.

A large part of the funding came from your donations to our Spring Appeal. So it is thanks to you, our supporters, that the community will soon have direct access to life-saving healthcare for the first time. This is the next step on the journey for the people of Bakhang to enjoy happy, healthy and self-sufficient lives. Without your support this wouldn't have happened. **Thank you.**

“Having a medical post will be like a dream”
Pasang, Bakhang resident

“The medical post will be a life-saver for the community”
Tsering Chodon, Bakhang resident

You can read more about Bakhang on pages 8 & 9!



The elders of Chushi Gangdruk settlement enjoy a comfortable winter and a happy Losar!

Thank you to all of you who donated to our Winter Appeal for the elderly Tibetans under the care of the Chushi Gangdruk Society.

Many of these elders are ex-freedom fighters who escaped Tibet many years ago. Now they are living out their final years at the old people's home in Clement Town or within scattered communities. Some are now blind, others have hearing problems and many have ongoing medical conditions.

Thanks to your generosity they had a more comfortable winter and a happy Losar (Tibetan New Year) too. They were able to buy warm clothing, extra bedding, butter for their lamps, new prayer flags and special food, like khapse - a beloved, deep-fried pastry eaten and offered most commonly at Losar.

We also asked you to send messages to the elders and you did not disappoint - it was wonderful to receive so many. Thupten, our Programmes Manager, translated and recorded the messages. We sent this to the old people's home where the elders gathered to listen. They were visibly moved. Here are just a few of your messages:

“Although we are miles apart, you are in my thoughts.”

“We are all connected and I wish you well.”

“The people of Tibet are not forgotten.”

The forgotten community - Pandhra Mile

Our Autumn Appeal focused on the Pandhra Mile community, a settlement built in the foothills of the Himalayas, hidden between a river (that is prone to flooding) and a road.

Its 53 residents - mostly first-generation Tibetan refugees - have never had proper access to electricity or medicines. Nor have they ever had a safe, reliable supply of clean water.

Your support has now enabled us to go back to the settlement and ask them how they would like to see it develop, so as a community they can discuss and plan. Since our first visit they have increased the flood defences, but much more needs to happen.

It may be clear to us that the Pandhra Mile community needs to find a new location, where they can live in safety. But we don't know if this is possible, and of course to its people, many elderly, Pandhra Mile is their home and they don't want to leave. We are building trust with the community and through yoursupport, we will help them take the next steps. Watch this space...



Get Involved



We are so excited to announce our very first art auction!

Our two-part Art Tibet auction will showcase work from a diverse pool of established and emerging artists from Tenzing Ringdol and Lydia Corbett to Simon Pearsall of Private Eye and Antony Gormley. It's a unique and exciting opportunity for you to buy a special piece while also funding our vital work.

Art plays a vital role in Tibetan culture, and has long been a powerful tool for social change. So it seems fitting to commemorate 60 years of our work, over 30 artists have so generously donated their art to support Tibet Relief Fund. We would like to thank all of the artists involved.

The first auction will be held in September, with a second auction following in December. The auctions are online-only so do sign up for our emails at tibetreliafund.co.uk and follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (@tibetrelieffund) to make sure you don't miss out.



Earth by Antony Gormley



Loving Dance by Lydia Corbett



Resilience Human Rights by Simon Pearsall

Meditate for Tibet

Thank you to everyone who joined our annual global meditation on Saturday 4 July. Whatever you did to take part - buying our guided meditation, or simply sitting quietly for a moment - thank you for helping to build support for Tibet and connecting with others.

We are delighted to report you raised over £1,000 for our work with Tibetans through purchases of the guided meditation and kits. Though group events weren't possible this year due to the lockdown restrictions, you have still made a difference. Thank you for being part of Meditate for Tibet 2020.



Gifts in wills

Have you made your will yet? You can make a free online will at any time using our service, with no obligation to leave Tibet Relief Fund a gift: makeawillonline.co.uk/tibetrelieffund

If, after providing for those closest to you, you are able to leave us a gift, we promise to use your gift responsibly and where most needed to help Tibetans build a brighter future. Even just 1% of a modest amount of money makes a real difference to our work.



Raffle

We want to let you know that we have decided to move our raffle until the New Year.

As we're sure you understand, we don't feel it is the right time to be asking you to buy and sell raffle tickets. As we have secured such wonderful prizes we really

want the raffle to feel more of a celebration of the work we are able to do thanks to you, our supporters. This is why we have decided to postpone to a time when, hopefully, our own day-to-day lives are more certain and positive. Look out for our special raffle mailing in the New Year!



RideLondon



The RideLondon Surrey100 cycle event has been cancelled this year due to the ongoing coronavirus situation. Places will be rolled over so you will have another chance to join the team in 2021. Do email us if you would like to take part: caroline@tibetrelieffund.co.uk

Change of address

We have moved! Our new address is 99 Kentish Town Road, London NW1 8PB. Our phone number (020 3119 0041) remains the same.





Appeal updates

Can you change a life through sponsorship?

Thank you and welcome to all of you who have joined our sponsorship programme through our 60 Lives initiative, marking our 60th year working with Tibetans. For less than £1 a day, you have changed a life. Ngawang Choejor is just one of so many Tibetans who would love to have a sponsor. Take a moment to read his story or go to tibetrelieffund.co.uk/60-lives to find out more and read about others whose lives would be changed by sponsorship.



Ngawang Choejor

12 year old Ngawang lives in Kathmandu, Nepal with his parents and three siblings. The family run a small restaurant, with a low seasonal income so can't afford to send Ngawang to school but really want him to have a good education. You can help Ngawang have a bright future with real choices.
£360 per year



Nyima Deckyi

Nyima is a nursing and midwifery student who lives in Mussoorie, India; the rest of her family are in Tibet. She just completed her undergraduate degree and now has the chance to study for her masters. She would love to be able to do this, making her family back in Tibet proud and giving back to her community.

To cover the course fees costs £1,884 per year or £157 per month.



Tenzin Urgyen

Tenzin is 16 years old and has aplastic anemia. He has been taking medication for his condition for the last nine years. Recently his condition has deteriorated, with his platelet count falling dramatically. He now needs weekly red blood cell and platelet transfusions which are costly. His family cannot cover these costs; could you?

At £3,780 per year or £315 per month, the cost is understandably higher, but your support would bring comfort and security to Tenzin and his family in heartrending circumstances.

How to sponsor

If you would like to sponsor Ngawang, Nyima or Tenzin, please call Terri on 020 3119 0041 or email sponsorship@tibetrelieffund.co.uk

Thank you to all our sponsors, you really are making a difference to so many lives.

