



In stitches!

The projects behind Enlightened Gifts

The past couple of months have been eventful; following a trip to India at the beginning of May to visit a number of our merchandise suppliers, I was reminded of just how inspiring these projects are. Not only do they produce fantastic merchandise they also benefit local Tibetan communities by providing sustainable employment, health care, education and skills training.

In this issue, we wanted to share the background stories of the projects behind the goods we sell in our merchandise catalogue and on our Enlightened Gifts website. We take you behind the scenes of the Rogpa and Dolls4Tibet workshops in northern India, as well as the Clean Upper Dharamsala project.

Find out how your support has helped the Gu Chu Sum tailoring centres that help ex-political prisoners who would otherwise have nowhere else to go. We also give you a glimpse of some of the exciting new products we'll be stocking in 2014!

Get motivated by our fundraising pages and find out how you can get involved this summer.

Don't forget to send your raffle tickets in by the end of June to be in with a chance of winning one of our amazing prizes. We will be drawing the winning raffle ticket on 6th July, the Dalai Lama's birthday.

Make sure to follow us on twitter @tibetrelieffund or like us at facebook.com/tibetrelieffund to keep up to date with all the latest Tibet Relief Fund news. Or, if you would like any information on any of the subjects covered in this issue, please email us at trf@tibetrelieffund.co.uk or call us on 020 7272 1414.

Philippa Carrick

Philippa Carrick and all at Tibet Relief Fund

Maternal & child health

Project update

Tibet Relief Fund has been supporting maternal and child health projects for a number of years and, as featured in our last issue, with your support we have funded the building of a maternity clinic and provided a grant for maternal health and hygiene training. Following a huge interest in the article on pregnancy & childbirth in eastern Tibet, we asked our project partner to update us on their plans for the coming year.

“ With the completion of the building of the maternity unit due by September this year, we hope to continue with birth attendant training. The plan is to have the building and training running side by side. Once building is complete and the birth attendants trained we hope to find funding for a doctor to manage the project on the ground and trained birth attendants to provide a service for their communities based from this clinic. This project hopes to serve nomadic and semi-nomadic populations of around 14,000.

In the long run, we want to extend this further into other communities, with our activities being guided by what we have learnt from carrying out the present project.

Our main role and priority is to carry out the training annually in the nomadic and semi-nomadic communities as we receive requests. These trainings have the potential to benefit a population of 37,400. The key strategy for reducing maternal and child deaths in the remote high altitude environment is through maternal and child health training. Ensuring funding for this is our top priority. ”

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Rogpa

Tibet Relief Fund began supporting the Rogpa Women's Craft Centre in 2011 with the introduction of the charming hand-embroidered mini cushions, which can be seen in our 2013 catalogue.

Established in 2004, Rogpa means 'trusted friends and helpers'. We are delighted to be able to support this inspiring project which continually strives to preserve Tibetan culture, integrity and independence for generations to come through three key projects.

Womens Craft Centre (WCC)

The WCC is focused on providing economic empowerment for low-income Tibetan women who have few opportunities for education and employment, by helping them develop tailoring and sewing skills. At the centre ladies receive fair wages, good working conditions and free childcare as well as social support from each other.

Rogpa Baby Care Centre (BCC)

Currently caring for more than 40 babies under the age of three, BCC takes care of children during working hours, enabling parents to work full-time so they can improve their own living conditions.

Rogpa shop & café

A not-for-profit community space which aims to promote ethical consumerism and showcase the work of local Tibetan artists

and designers. Rogpa shop & café stocks products made in the Women's Craft Centre and accepts donated clothes which are then sold on – and can even be used as material to make some of Rogpa's products.

With Rogpa goods available in our merchandise catalogue, Tibet Relief Fund followers are able to support this fantastic project directly. And, following a recent visit to the Rogpa workshop by Tibet Relief Fund CEO Philippa Carrick, we are delighted to announce our 2014 catalogue will feature even more Rogpa products, all in support of Rogpa's fantastic and innovative projects. The Rogpa key rings and card holders are already hit here in the office so keep an eye out for them in 2014!

The walnut story

Whilst visiting Rogpa our CEO Philippa learned that after walnuts are used to make walnut cake for the Rogpa cafe, the shells are collected and passed on to the Womens Craft Centre who use the shells to make the mini walnut cushions.

A brilliant example of instant recycling.



Clean Upper Dharamsala

The Clean Upper Dharamsala Project (CUD) was established in June 1994 when the local Tibetan Settlement Office initiated an innovative environmental programme to provide Upper Dharamsala with an efficient and environmentally friendly waste management system of rubbish collection and recycling.

Tibet Relief Fund has supported this initiative for a number of years now through the sale of products from the Handmade Paper Recycling Workshop.

The handmade paper recycling workshop

The waste paper, cardboard and cotton collected by 'green workers' is used to create 100 percent handmade recycled paper. Here all kinds of paper styles, colours and designs are made into a range of products from letter writing sets, books and notepads to photo albums, greeting cards and lampshades. The CUD project not only acts as a 'role model' centre for other villages and projects but also actively promotes sustainable economic, social and ecological development. The project also raises environmental awareness on the importance of recycling by educating and actively disseminating knowledge and skills to other Tibetan settlements, communities, schools and colleges.

The Green Shop

Products created at the recycling workshop are also sold at the CUD small Green Shop which provides jobs for a further ten employees. The proceeds generated from product sales provide a salary for the workers and help sustain the project as a whole.

The Green Shop also provides the public with refills of boiled and filtered water, offering a safe healthy alternative to local water as well as providing a desperately needed solution to the alarming 'mountains' of plastic mineral water bottles discarded by tourists.

Another initiative run by The Green Shop provides environmentally friendly and locally produced alternatives to chemical-based goods by selling chemical-free, herbal and Tibetan toiletries and teas, and locally made peanut butter and jam – even using recycled paper shopping bags to reduce plastic bag consumption!



Photos - Top: Sonan Tentso at cylinder machine workshop: The cylinder machine workshop. **Centre:** Recycled paper; ready to be turned into merchandise. **Bottom:** Workers in the books & binding room.





Dolls4Tibet

Nestled on the hillside between upper and lower Dharamsala is the Dolls4Tibet workshop where the unique Tibetan Bopa Dolls are made, each one individually named by the women who make them. The dolls have been a great hit in our merchandise catalogue in previous years and this year is no exception.

Aiming to empower women by training them in new skills, offering enjoyable work opportunities to generate income within a homely and supportive environment - we are proud to support the Dolls4Tibet workshop through the sales of the Bopa Dolls as well as Himalayan Angel mobiles and cards; we look forward to supporting the project for many years to come!

The workshop itself is the brainchild of Mona Bruchmann, who lives in Dharamsala with her husband, Tibetan artist Karma Sichoe and their two daughters. The story goes that whilst making the first Bopa doll as a Christmas gift for their daughter Samdol, the idea of setting up a doll-making workshop for the local Tibetan women slowly took shape.

From humble beginnings, the idea has gone from strength to strength and in spring 2007 Dolls4Tibet employed their first Tibetan trainee. Since then, the workshop has grown and grown and now employs 14 craftswomen.

Mona is often approached by women who are in desperate financial need and are very keen to work but who, unfortunately, have little or no skills or training. Some, especially new arrivals from Tibet, speak very little Hindi or English. Dolls4Tibet are able to address these different needs by creating employment with flexible working times and training individuals in accordance with their abilities.

Dolls4Tibet has achieved a great deal since its inception in 2007 and this work has been made possible, in part, by the support its workshop has received from the purchase of their wonderfully innovative Bopa Dolls.

From the hills of northern India, these dolls with a soul made by this small-scale, self-sufficient, socially aware enterprise are what Tibet Relief Funds merchandise is all about!



▲ Top: Tibetan children enjoying the Bopa dolls ► Bottom left: stitching in the workshop ▼ Bottom right: making Himalayan Angels in the workshop

Donate a doll to a Tibetan child

To live as a refugee is emotionally hard for anybody, most especially for an innocent child.

Here at Tibet Relief Fund we are offering a new virtual gift; the Dolls4Tibet donate a doll. This fantastic initiative offers Bopa dolls as gifts to Tibetan children in exile.

By purchasing this virtual gift, you can send a Bopa doll to children who will benefit the most; either to children who arrive at the Tibetan refugee reception centre in Dharamsala or to orphans in Tibetan schools across India.

Visit www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk/donate-a-doll to support these children by giving them a precious new companion for their childhood years.



Gu Chu Sum

The Gu Chu Sum movement was established in 1991 both to look after the welfare of former political prisoners and their family members and to increase awareness on the situation in Tibet.

Gu Chu Sum achieve their aims in a number of ways; through providing free health care, computer and language courses and vocational training.

Gu Chu Sum has two tailoring centres which not only offer training but also provide employment for 30 tailors. As well as the tailoring centres they have a Japanese restaurant in Dharamsala where all the chefs are Gu Chu Sum members who have been trained in the art of cooking. The Gu Chu Sum teaching centre also provides educational courses in basic Tibetan, English and computer education.

Tibet Relief Fund are proud to have supported Gu Chu Sum for a number of years both through providing grants to the teaching centre and selling merchandise crafted in the tailoring workshop.

Anything created at the tailoring centres are known as “Products of Lungta”. Lungta means a strong or powerful horse and the products of Lungta are hugely successful due to their excellent finishing and strong traditional design.

Having stocked Lungta products in previous years we are excited to announce, we will be re-introducing a number of Gu Chu Sum workshop products in the 2014 Enlightened Gifts catalogue.



Tibetan Entrepreneur Kalden Aukatsang

In 2003 Kalden Aukatsang was awarded a business start-up grant through Tibet Relief Fund’s youth empowerment programme. Kalden quickly established a small tailoring centre for sampling and production of export orders – Auka Exports. From humble beginnings with just one client, today Auka Exports has over 15 clientele from across the continents and employs ten people. Ten years on from the youth empowerment programme, we are immensely pleased to be working with Kalden to produce some amazing new fold-away backpacks and holdalls. These bags are sure to be a hit, so keep a look out for them in our next merchandise catalogue.



Running Man

An interview with Tibet Relief Fund's six marathon man Graham Titcombe

As you may have read in our New Year issue of *Tibet Matters*, this March, Graham Titcombe took on the incredible challenge of running one of the toughest footraces in the world – the Marathon des Sables - a six-day, 156 mile series of marathons across the Sahara desert, in aid of our work. Graham completed the race in just 42 and a half hours. Intrigued to hear about his challenge, we asked Graham what motivated and inspired him to take on this enormous marathon, and why he chose to support Tibet Relief Fund in doing so.

How did you first get involved with Tibet Relief Fund?

I can't remember the route precisely, but one thing leads to another doesn't it? My interest in Tibet was first sparked almost at random when I happened to take out the Dalai Lama's autobiography as a library book. Other books etc. followed and I also became aware of Tibet Relief Fund. I've been a supporter of Tibet Relief Fund for many years and, once I'd decided to try and raise some sponsorship for my jaunt, it was the obvious choice.

For most people the idea of doing one marathon is enough ... what made you want to do six?!

I've asked myself that question many times! It's probably got a lot to do with having a slender grip on reality!

This is your second time doing the event, was it any easier this time around?

Many people who were also 'returners' seemed to think that the course, terrain, temperature and humidity were harder this year. There was certainly a lot more climbing involved. It also felt harder to me because I was a bit cautious for my first time last year, but this year I really wanted to push myself as hard as I could, and I think I did.

What was the worst obstacle you had to face?

Er, the whole course? Soft sinking sand which saps all your energy. Very hard rocks which always seem to find your toes. Big hills. I could go on...!

Did you feel like giving up at any point?

Not really. In fact, remarkably few people drop out. This year only about 50 did out of over 1,000. It's very hard work and sometimes painfully slow but you just keep plodding it out. Also, it's more expensive if you don't finish, as you don't get your "security deposit" back!

What was it that kept you going?

I knew I'd trained for it and could do it because I had before. Pride in toughing it out. And the fact that a blind man was taking part and a team of French firemen were carrying handicapped children in a chariot over the course. Last year an 80 year-old man did it. They all finished. It puts your own grumbles into perspective!

Can we expect to see you doing the Marathon des Sable for Tibet Relief Fund again next year?!

Oh dear, I'm afraid not. I'm delighted to have done it twice, and that this year I can give Tibet Relief Fund a small benefit from it, but twice is enough. There are other things to do. That's not to say I won't try and raise some more money for TRF, of course.

What would you say to anyone considering doing a sponsored challenge for Tibet Relief Fund?

Absolutely go for it. Nothing you'll do is likely to be harder than fleeing your own country and slogging across the Himalaya to safety, so what's stopping you? You'll be doing good and feeling good about it too.

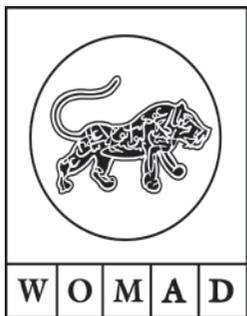
We cannot thank Graham enough for his invaluable dedication and support. No matter how big or little the challenge, sponsorship raised from challenges makes up a vital part of our income and provides much needed support.

If you've been inspired by Graham's story and would like to take up a sponsored challenge of your own, please email georgina@tibetreliefund.co.uk or call 020 7272 1414

Introducing our new Head Fundraiser, Georgina



“Having taken up the role of Head Fundraiser in mid-April, moving from a very similar position as the Fundraiser at the Green Party, I have spent the past month getting to know this fantastic charity, its supporters and all the people who make it what it is. I am delighted to be part of the Tibet Relief Fund team and look forward to working with all our supporters in the future.”



Events

WOMAD

We are delighted to announce from 25th – 28th July we will be at the WOMAD festival - the World of Music Arts and Dance.

This internationally established festival aims to excite, inform and create awareness of the worth and potential of a multicultural society. Tibet Relief Fund will be in the global markets section, informing people of our work and selling merchandise featured in our Enlightened Gifts catalogue – including many items as seen in this edition of *Tibet Matters*. If you're there, please come and say hello!



Calling all runners!

British 10K run

With the 10k course passing the Houses of Parliament, Tower Bridge and the river Thames this iconic London route makes for an enjoyable and challenging event. We have three places available for Tibet Relief Fund supporters. Runners will receive a free running vest or t-shirt as well as plenty of help fundraising. The Tibet Relief Fund team will be there on the day to cheer you on and we'll also be organising our annual picnic in St. James park for our runners and supporters to relax and celebrate after the event. Please contact georgina@tibetrelieffund.co.uk if you're interested in taking part.



Give as you Live™

Give as You Live

www.giveasyoulive.com

By signing up to *Give as you Live*, you can support Tibet Relief Fund simply by going about your usual online shopping.

The *Give as you live* site works by installing a simple programme 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 make a commission to Tibet Relief Fund and support one of our vital projects. This commission is already included in the price of what you're buying, so you can support Tibet Relief Fund, at no extra cost to you. On average, 2.5% of each purchase can be donated. Simply visit www.giveasyoulive.com to sign up or find out more.



eBay for charity

eBay for charity is an easy way for buyers and sellers on eBay.co.uk to support Tibet Relief Fund. Buyers

can shop knowing they're supporting Tibet and sellers (whether individuals or businesses) can donate a percentage from any sale to Tibet Relief Fund, and can even add gift aid to their donations too. Visit www.bit.ly/trf_ebay to get started!



Recycle4charity

Recycle your old mobile phone, inkjets, laser or toner cartridges and raise money for Tibet Relief Fund.

Simply email georgina@tibetrelieffund.co.uk or call 020 7272 1414 to request a freepost envelope or go to www.bit.ly/trf_recycle to order your freepost envelopes online. Then, send your unwanted items by free post to recycle4charity who will convert them into donations for Tibet Relief Fund.

▲ Photo: The 2011 TRF 10k running team

Have you been inspired by the products featured in this issue of Tibet Matters?

Both our merchandise catalogue and our online gift shop feature products from all of the projects mentioned. By purchasing our enlightened gifts, you can directly support these fantastic schemes and ensure that they are able to continue their work for many years to come!

We currently stock 'walnut danglies' direct from the Rogpa workshop; note books and picture frames made from the recycling workshop at Clean Upper Dharamsala, as well as dolls, angel cards and angel mobiles all handcrafted at Dolls4Tibet.



In a Nutshell ▲

Charming hand-embroidered mini cushions set into an empty walnut shell with a threaded hanging loop. Each design is unique!

£2.50 each *Buy five for £10!*

Cotton Coasters ▶

Unique drinks coasters made from Indian cotton and jute - each patchwork coaster is double sided, using different patterns. Pretty and practical, they can be machine washed and come in a delightful cotton bag.

Set of four. Size (each coaster): 100 x 100mm

£8.25



▲ Bopa Dolls

Unique handcrafted Tibetan dolls in traditional dress.

Large doll 340mm high £40
Small doll 250mm high £25

▶ Himalayan angel card

These unique cards with a Himalayan Angel floating above mountains and clouds are crafted in the Dolls4Tibet workshop using hand-combed sheep wool. The Angel can easily be detached to brighten any room all year round.

Size: 125 x 178mm

£3.95



◀ Photo Frames

A great, inexpensive way to display postcards, mementos or family snaps on your walls. Ideal for any room in the home they come in a variety of colours. Made from 100% recycled cotton and paper.

Display area - 140mm x 88mm

£3.50



Purchase any of these items from Rogpa, Cleanup Upper Dharamsala, or Dolls4Tibet through our website and receive a 10% discount. www.enlightenedgifts.co.uk

Discount code: TM10

For a closer look at the full collection of Tibetan merchandise we have to offer, and a free copy of the 2013 catalogue, phone us on 020 7272 1414 or go to www.enlightenedgifts.org



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