



Nepal Earthquake

As I am sure you are all aware, in April and May, parts of Nepal were devastated by two massive earthquakes and a series of violent aftershocks.

Days after the initial quake, we launched an online appeal to raise funds to help those Tibetans and ethnic Tibetans who were affected. This was followed up by a postal appeal to raise further funds to help rebuild people's lives in the long-term. So many of you have donated to both appeals and we are immensely grateful for your support.

This issue looks at the impact the earthquakes have had on Tibetans and ethnic Tibetans living in Nepal, what we have done to help and how we plan to help going forward. We are proud to say that, despite not being an emergency aid organisation, we managed to distribute some emergency supplies to remote areas within days of the quake. You can read the full story on page 2.

The fundraising pages also give you a look at some of the events supporters have held in recent months to raise money for those affected by the earthquakes, from a solstice celebration to a 'Yogathon'.

Also featured are case studies of the children who need sponsorship because they have lost their homes and schools. Please do consider supporting them if you can.

For more information on anything covered in this issue of *Tibet Matters*, or any of the other projects we support, please email us at info@tibetrelieffund.co.uk, call us on 020 3119 0041, or visit us online at www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk.

Philippa Carrick, CEO, and all at Tibet Relief Fund

Beneficiaries and Projects Update

Tibet Relief Fund facilitates the sponsorship of 111 individuals in Nepal, including children, monks and elders. We also provide stipends for the elderly and fund the salaries of two Tibetan teachers.

Following the earthquake, there were a harrowing few days during which we did not know the fate of those we support. When we were finally able to establish communications with our various project partners, we got the incredible news that everyone supported by Tibet Relief Fund was unharmed.

Whilst we are very relieved to hear this, sadly, many lives have been turned upside down as homes, businesses, schools and monasteries have been destroyed or have sustained irreparable damage. See the back page of this issue to read about ways in which we plan to help with long-term relief.

Tragically, at least ten Tibetans were killed by the two earthquakes in Nepal. Inside Tibet, it is estimated that 17 people lost their lives, however, this estimate may be much higher in reality. Although this number does not compare to the enormous death toll of the Nepalese population, it is devastating for the families of the victims and we send them our deepest condolences.

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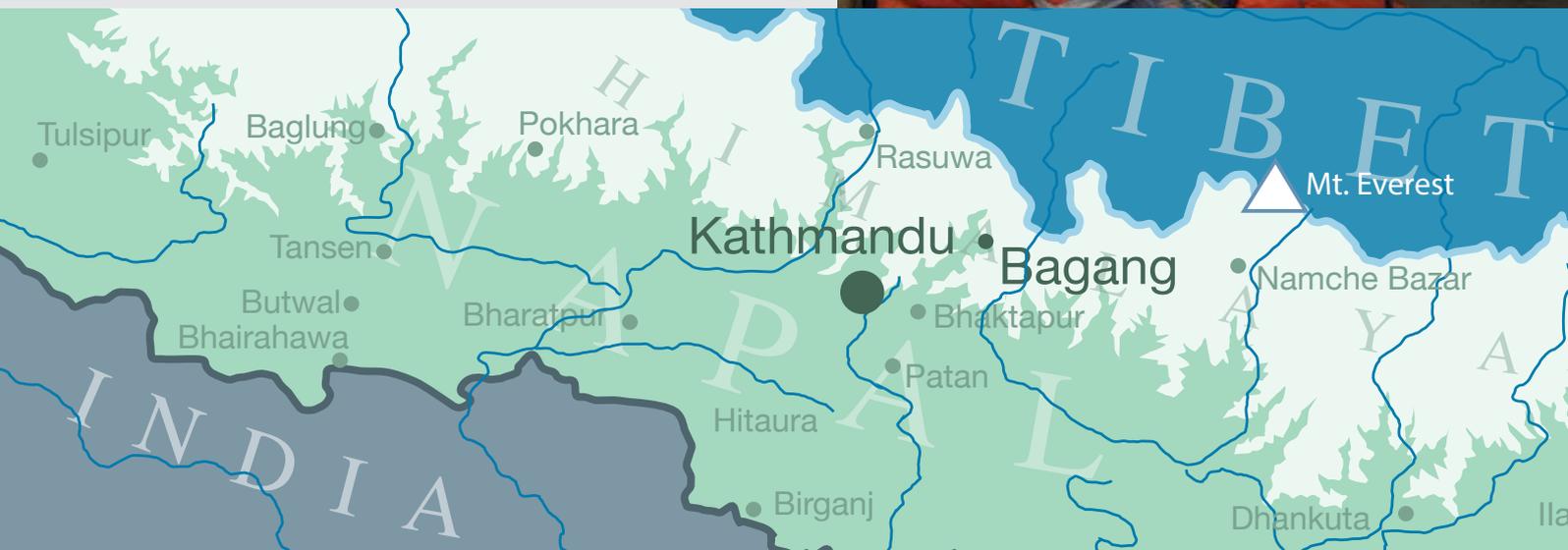
Emergency Relief in Bagang

Many of you will have heard via our email newsletter that Tibet Relief Fund sent £2,000 worth of emergency relief to one of the worst affected areas of Nepal after the first earthquake. Although we are not a disaster relief charity, we will help when an opportunity arises via a local contact or agency to get emergency aid to disaster-stricken Tibetan areas as quickly as possible.

Bagang is located 125km from Kathmandu in a remote mountainous region inaccessible by car. Sixty Tibetan families live in Bagang and the neighbouring village Tsagam. Tibet Relief Fund currently supports a project employing two Tibetan teachers for the local school.

Immediately after the first earthquake struck on 25 April, we got in touch with a local contact in Pokhara who was able to source over 100 plastic sheets for shelter, dry food and medicine, and transport these by helicopter to Bagang. This emergency aid was distributed by the nuns from the local Tibetan nunnery. Thank you so much to Sonam Sangpo and the Lion's Club for your heroic efforts which undoubtedly saved lives and gave great reassurance to the people living there.

We are currently looking into the situation in Tsagam and Bagang to assess what further support we can offer communities in the long-term.



Weaving looms for Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre

Located near Patan, just south of Kathmandu, Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre has been providing training and employment for local Tibetans since 1960.

Before the earthquake struck, the centre was busy with the weaving and production of carpets, jackets and other handicrafts. When the first earthquake hit, the building was badly damaged. Subsequent aftershocks and the second earthquake of 12th May have further damaged the building and, although still standing, it is now beyond repair. The foundations and walls have been cracked so badly that it could collapse at any time.

With such a high risk of collapse, the 500 Tibetans employed at the centre cannot return to work and are left without a livelihood. Many of them have also lost their homes and are living in temporary shelters and tents. One of our supporters, Eli Wakamatsu (who has links

with the handicraft centre), approached us to see if we could fund the purchase of 50 mini weaving looms to send to the centre. Even though the looms are much smaller than the ones they are normally used to working on, a local Nepalese project will be training the workers to make patchwork items on the new mini looms. These will then be turned into products such as mobile phone cases and bedspreads which will then be sold through a variety of international outlets, including Tibet Relief Fund!

The looms will give many families a temporary means of working and earning money whilst plans for the long-term are developed. They will also provide some therapeutic benefit by giving people something to fill their time and get their lives back to as close to normal as possible.

We now have plans to send out some larger looms which will enable the women to make complex items and increase their earning potential.

Photos: Mini weaving looms arrive at Jawalakhel



Sponsor Education in Nepal

Our sponsorship programme is a fantastic way to get involved in helping those who have been affected by the disaster in Nepal.



The lives of many Tibetan students studying in Nepal have been turned upside down. Even if their loved ones escaped uninjured, many of their homes have been destroyed and their parents' livelihoods ruined. Families who struggled to make ends meet before will now find it impossible to pay school and university fees.

These six students are in urgent need of sponsors to help them through their education. Each has their own story of how the earthquakes have impacted them and their parents' ability to provide for them. By sponsoring a student, you will ensure the earthquakes need not ruin their chances of a good future.

Sponsorship rates vary depending on whether the student is at boarding school or university; payments can be made in monthly instalments to spread the cost over the year. As a sponsor you will be able to communicate by letter with your sponsored student and receive annual reports.

If you are able to help out by sponsoring any of the people featured here, or any of the other students still in need of sponsorship, please do get in contact with our Sponsorship Co-ordinator, Tsering Passang at Tsering@tibetrelieffund.co.uk, 0203 119 0041 or online at www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk.



Tenzin Choekyi

**£200
per year**

16-year-old Tenzin Choekyi is one of six siblings. Their parents came to India from Tibet 30 years ago and have worked hard to build a new life for their family. Their dad, Jamyang, works as a cook at Jawalakhel Old People's Home and their mum, Rinchen, spins wool at the handicraft centre. Despite suffering from Hepatitis B, Tenzin's father often takes on extra work to earn money to pay his children's school fees.

The earthquake has had a big impact on Tenzin Choekyi's family. Like many others, work for Tenzin's mother came to an immediate halt when the Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre was damaged. Months on, their family is still living outside under tents made of tarpaulins and will do so for the foreseeable future.



Tsering Choedon

**£200
per year**

Seven-year-old Tsering comes from the remote village of Manang and is currently studying at school in Pokhara. Her father runs a small tea shop where tourists and porters come for a cup of tea during the cold winter months.

Amazingly the village was not majorly affected by the quakes; Tsering's house suffered cracks but luckily her family are able to continue living there. However, even in the short time since the earthquakes struck, tourism in the region has dramatically decreased and it looks like it will stay like that for some time to come. This means the family's main source of income is no longer available to them and her father will have to do what work he can to keep the family going.



Mingchung

£200
per year

16-year-old Mingchung comes from Samdo in Gorkha, one of the worst affected areas. At the time of the earthquakes, Mingchung was away studying at school in Pokhara which, thankfully, was not too badly affected.

Whilst neither Mingchung nor her family were injured, their home was very badly damaged; her mother and brother have

had to live out in the fields for weeks.

When Mingchung's father died seven years ago, her elder monk brother disrobed to return home and help his mother farm the land. During the weeks following the disaster, they lived in constant fear for their lives and were unable to work.

When asked about the earthquake, Mingchung said she had been very distressed because she was unable to communicate with her family for many days and was unsure of their safety.

They now have less money than ever to pay for Mingchung and her sister to go to school.



Tenzin Yougyal

£450
per year

Tenzin Yougyal from Jawalakhel has just turned 22 and is in his first year of a bachelor's degree at United College in Kathmandu. Tenzin's mother, Sonam, became a widow with three young children when her husband died suddenly from a severe illness. She struggled to

raise the children by herself and works as a carpet weaver at Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre to support her family.

The earthquake has made a huge impact on their lives. Sonam has not had any work for two months because of the massive damage sustained by the carpet factory, the only source of

income for many of the people in the settlement. Having no work means no income for the family. Like the other settlement residents, Sonam and her family have been living out in the open under tents made out of tarpaulins.

Being without work and living outside has had an enormous financial and emotional impact on the family.

At the best of times, Sonam's meagre income is not enough to both meet the family's basic needs and pay for Tenzin's university fees. Since the earthquakes, the situation is even more critical. Sonam and her family would be very grateful if you could ease their situation by helping support Tenzin through his studies.



Tenzin Dolma

£450
per year

Tenzin Dolma is in her second year of a Business Studies degree. For the past few years she has suffered a series of major

health issues including TB arthritis and hip replacement surgery.

But Tenzin is a strong willed young lady and did not let a battery of x-rays, MRI, CT-scans and daily medicines get in the

way of her schooling. She took her class XII exams whilst still on crutches and managed to achieve a 1st division result (the equivalent of a 'Merit' in the UK). Determined to do something with her life and not let her illnesses stand in her way, she enrolled at United College – not far from the Jawalakhel settlement where she grew up and still lives.

Tenzin Dolma and her family have been living outside in the open since the first earthquake struck. With the settlement houses in the area so tightly packed together, a crack in one house poses

a huge threat to all the neighbouring houses.

Living under tarpaulin tents has been far from ideal yet Tenzin has still kept up her studies; often studying under the tarpaulin during heavy monsoon rain storms whilst friends and neighbours held down the corners to stop the shelter from blowing away.

Tenzin feels that her family have already supported her so much during her illness that she doesn't want them to feel any further pressure by having to pay her university fees too.



Tenzin Mentok

£200
per year

15-year-old Tenzin Mentok also comes from the remote village of Manang where her widowed mother runs a guest house and her grandfather is a farmer. With high school fees, earning enough income was always a struggle for the family.

The abrupt drop in the number of tourists since the earthquakes threatens to leave a huge mark on all the families in the area who rely on tourism as a source of income. Tenzin's family is no different. To allow her to continue her education and have better

opportunities in life than her mother, it is essential that Tenzin finds a sponsor to help her through her education.

Fundraising heroes



We were overwhelmed by your amazing reaction following the recent Nepal earthquakes which affected many Tibetans living in Nepal. Supporters sprang into action organising events across the UK and abroad to raise money for those whose lives were destroyed. Here are just a few highlights – and remember, if you feel inspired it's not too late to organise your own event!



YogaThon

Jo de Rosa, who runs the Inner Guidance Yoga & Meditation Retreat Centre in Suffolk, is holding a YogaThon on 29th August to raise money for the Nepal earthquake appeal.

The participants will each complete 108 sun salutations led by a group of yoga teachers, each with their own personal style of salutation. This is no mean feat and we hope they will raise lots of money for the Tibetan communities devastated by the earthquakes.

At the time of publication there were still spaces left – you can sign up at <http://innerguidance.co.uk/innerguidance-retreats/yogathon-2015>

Radlett Preparatory School

The Year 6 children of Radlett Preparatory School in Hertfordshire have raised £484.85 for our earthquake appeal simply by shaking buckets in the playground at the end of the school day and being very persuasive!

**£484
RAISED**

Congratulations to all of the children on this amazing effort.



Summer Solstice Celebration

Sarah van Leer held a summer solstice celebration in Albany, New York, with a fire, prayers and pot luck dinner, to raise money for the earthquake appeal. Thank you Sarah!



**£800
RAISED**

Congratulations to our British 10k runners!

On a cloudy Sunday morning in July, seven of our supporters took on the British 10k run in central London to raise money for Tibet Relief Fund.

The cheering point on Victoria Street had a large Tibet flag on display, which was seen by 25,000 runners as well as the surrounding spectators, ensuring Tibet was represented on the day.

Thank you to Ellie, Kit, Panos, Maria, Ivan, Caroline (our own Fundraising Manager) and Stanley (who joined the team with one week to go and got round the route successfully!). Between them they have raised nearly £800 for Tibet Relief Fund's vital work. **Go team!**

Martial Arts

Susan Lacroix has raised a fantastic £780 and counting for elderly Tibetans living in Dehra Dun, India, by teaching martial arts. We are really grateful to Susan for doing this on such a regular basis.

**£780
RAISED**

Blooming Good Time

**£414
RAISED**

Pamela Holliday of Low Hall, Dacre, raised £414 for Tibet by opening her beautiful gardens to visitors, many of whom came via the Washburn Heritage Centre in North Yorkshire. Thank you to Pamela and all her visitors for helping our work with Tibetan communities in need, and to Rachel Batchelor of the Washburn Heritage Centre for co-ordinating so many visitors.

Toys for Tibetan Homes

The children at Tibetan Homes Foundation were thrilled to receive our delivery of toys and games, funded by your donations!

This has transformed their plain, institutional environment into a cheerful place where they can play, have fun and enjoy their childhood. This is vital for their development into happy, healthy adults. **Thank you to every one of you who donated** – you have made a real difference to these children.



2015 Raffle

This year we had a terrific response to our annual raffle that raises vital funds for our work - through ticket sales and donations it raised over £12,000. The draw took place on 6 July, the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday, in front of a special birthday mural created by Dalston artist Panos Antonopoulos. The eight lucky winners have all been notified!



A big thank you to everyone who bought tickets and to the following amazing companies who donated prizes: Arcola Theatre, ethicalWARES, Floating Sensations, Global Soul, Kailash Momo, Rainbow Wholefoods, SpeakaBoo and Stokes Sauces.

You could be a winner next year - look out for your 2016 raffle tickets in the February issue of Tibet Matters!

Photo: Sponsorship Co-ordinator Tsering Passang and Fundraising Manager Caroline Petersen draw the winning tickets, overseen by a special 80th birthday mural of the Dalai Lama outside the Tibet Relief Fund office.

Nepal Earthquake... Looking forward



An enormous thank you to everyone who responded so quickly to our appeal for funds in the aftermath of the earthquakes in Nepal. We knew as soon as the first earthquake struck that support would be needed for many years to rebuild communities and infrastructure, as well as for immediate emergency relief. With this in mind we began to raise money for Tibetans living in Nepal.

Tibet Relief Fund is not an emergency relief charity, however, after the first earthquake we had the chance to send a small amount of emergency aid to Bagang (see page 2) and help for workers at Jawalakhel carpet factory (see page 3). Our main work, however, will be to help rebuild lives in the long-term in areas that are home to Tibetan refugees or ethnic Tibetans.

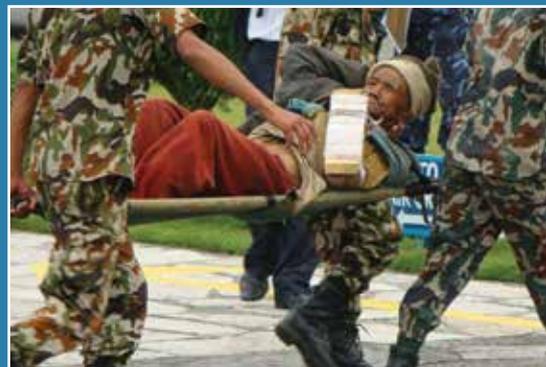
Tibetan refugees in Nepal live in uncertain circumstances. With little or no official status, many live in very poor, remote areas with rough terrain and few amenities. Before the earthquakes, they were already in a vulnerable situation; now many have lost their homes, livelihoods or both.

We are reviewing the best ways to help both them and the many ethnic Tibetans also living in remote areas. We will be working with local project partners on the ground to help rebuild lives.

One of the most vital ways for people to move forward after this disaster will be to have their businesses back up and running so they can support themselves. Part of our remit is to encourage self-sustainability and we plan to focus on helping people rebuild their livelihoods.

If earthquakes strike again in the future, we believe earthquake-resistant buildings are the key to preventing the widespread devastation and high death toll caused by this year's earthquake and we are looking to support projects which prioritise this.

We also plan to expand the loom project (see page 3) by sending larger looms and training a group of people to use them. They will then go on to train further groups. This will expand the reach of the project and provide Tibetans with skills which will allow them to earn money for years to come.



Please keep an eye on our website and future issues of Tibet Matters for further updates on projects we will be supporting.



Patron: Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama
Chairman: Fredrick Hyde-Chambers, OBE
Reg. Charity No: 1061834

Tibet Relief Fund
2 Baltic Place
287 Kingsland Road
London N1 5AQ

Telephone: 020 3119 0041
Email: info@tibetrelieffund.co.uk
www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk
www.enlightenedgifts.org

Staff Contacts:

Chief Executive Officer: Philippa Carrick
Programme Co-ordinator & Deputy Director: Kat Smith
Fundraising Manager: Caroline Petersen
Fundraising & Social Media Officer: Lindsay Butler
Sponsorship Co-ordinator: Tsering Passang
Bookkeeper and Office Administrator: Jampa Gyaltsen