

Tashi delek and happy Losar

(Tibetan New Year)! In Tibetan astrology, 2021 is the year of the metal ox, symbolising relentless determination. This sounds just what we need for 2021 and I hope we can all use it to face the continued challenges of this extraordinary period.

In 2020, despite the testing times and difficulties we all faced, you showed great generosity and compassion towards Tibetans and our work. A huge thank you. Your support made an immeasurable difference at this time of crisis.

Our warmest and very best wishes for a happy, healthy and positive 2021 from all of us at Tibet Relief Fund!

Philippa Carrick

Philippa Carrick, CEO



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2020

a challenging year ...

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic had a severe impact on the lives of Tibetans in Nepal and India. Both countries imposed strict national lockdowns from March to June last year, and regional lockdowns remain in certain hotspots. The Central Tibetan Administration also issued guidelines in early March, calling on Tibetan monasteries, schools and care homes in India, Nepal and Bhutan

to cancel their activities. Tibetan schools are planning to gradually reopen from February onwards.

However, your amazing response and donations meant we could provide practical help to Tibetan communities through the lockdown.

Thank you



Left & right photos: Food preparation at the Delhi community kitchen

Economic impact

The majority of Tibetans work in seasonal, tourism-related and other informal jobs, this meant they had no source of income during lockdown. Thanks to your swift and generous response to our emergency appeals we were able to provide food parcels to 100 individuals and rent relief to 40 households in Kathmandu. You also helped provide an emergency grant towards essential dry food parcels for 700 Tibetans in Pokhara, Nepal. In Delhi we identified around 100 vulnerable Tibetans who were drug addicts, sex workers or elders without family members and income. With support from the local welfare office, we opened a community kitchen to provide two hot meals to these “invisible” Tibetans through the peak of lockdown. Your generosity will allow us to continue our work with this community in 2021.

Kathmandu food parcels



Those with special needs or disabilities

Thanks to Tibetan Ability Centre in Dharamsala we learnt that lockdowns disproportionately affect people with special needs. The Covid-19 welfare schemes put in place by the Indian government don't cater to their specific needs, and require proof of citizenship or disability, which many families don't have. Your wonderful response to our winter appeal enabled us to launch an emergency Covid-19 response programme with Tibetan Ability Centre, which ensures people with special needs are supported through winter.

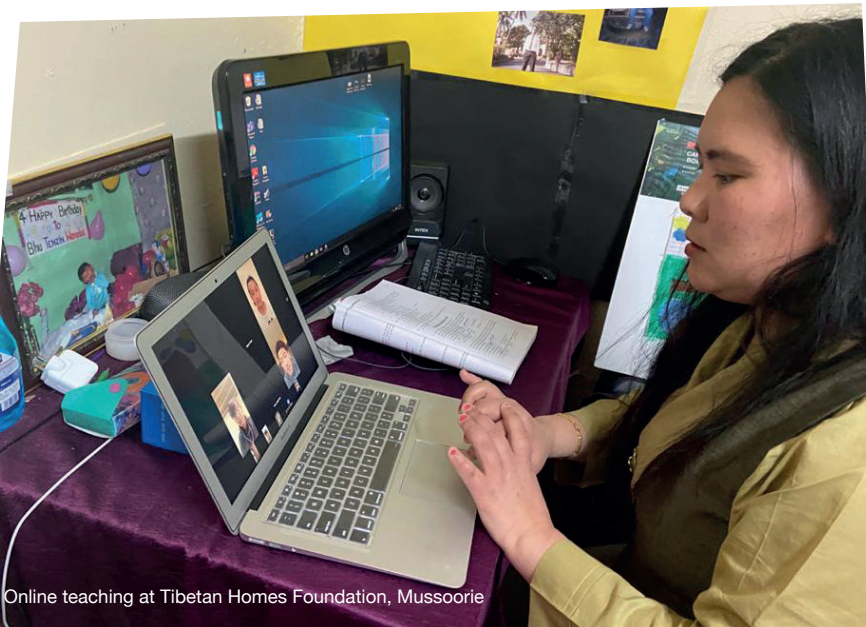
Tenzin Namdol at Tibetan Ability Centre, Covid-19 response

Healthcare

With rising cases of Covid-19, the healthcare system in India is under immense pressure and the cost of treatment is skyrocketing. Our project partners Tibetan Cancer Society in Delhi and Help On Hand in Chandigarh are helping Tibetan patients navigate the complicated Indian healthcare system and get appropriate treatment. Help on Hand have also been posting emergency prescriptions to patients in their settlements.

Education

The closure of schools and universities in India and Nepal has been challenging for Tibetan students. Most schools have organised online classes on Zoom or Whatsapp groups to keep children studying. In areas like Bakhang village in Nepal, which has poor internet connection, teachers have visited children within the community to give lessons. Our youth project in Delhi, Empowering the Vision, moved many of their programmes online as well as providing twice weekly online yoga classes.



Online teaching at Tibetan Homes Foundation, Mussoorie

The future

As of mid-December 2020 there were nearly 1,500 Covid-19 cases in the Tibetan communities in India, Nepal and Bhutan. At that time there had also been 1,158 recoveries and sadly 34 deaths. The majority of exiled Tibetans in these areas depend on the winter sweater selling business for their livelihood. As winter progresses we are assessing the impact caused by the disruption to this seasonal business.

Sadly, there is no quick-fix solution to Covid-19 and the devastation it has caused to Tibetans we work with. We will work to develop long-term solutions to address the impact of the pandemic in the coming months. It is clear the impact of Covid-19 on the poorest Tibetan communities is likely to be long-lasting and far-reaching.

Thank you for supporting our work and being there for Tibetan communities when they need you most. It makes a real difference.



Appeals Update

Thank you for supporting our appeals. In such uncertain times, and with the UK government's decision to cut the foreign aid budget, we appreciate your help more than ever. We simply couldn't do our work without you. Here's how you are making a difference...

Preventing deadly stomach cancers in Tibetan refugees

We're happy to report that the first health camp and screening programme was held in Ladakh by our partner, Tibetan Cancer Society. They tested 949 Tibetans for H-Pylori and over half were found to have the bacteria in their stomachs. They have now been treated, avoiding potentially fatal consequences.

Screenings were also carried out in the remote Chang-thang region, where 72 nomadic Tibetans were treated for H-Pylori. Free face masks were distributed, which everyone was delighted to receive as they are expensive in such isolated areas. Thank you for supporting our autumn appeal, which featured this important work. You ensured it could happen.

Nomadic Tibetans at the health camp in Chang-thang, Ladakh



Bakhang village: the community building their health post

Despite difficulties posed by Covid-19, severe lockdowns in Nepal and a heavy monsoon, progress on the much-needed Bakhang health post has been amazing thanks to the skills of the villagers and your support! We are expecting the health post to be open very shortly, which is a fantastic achievement considering the year we have all endured.

We are also very pleased that there have been no reported cases of Covid-19 in the village and the children have been working hard at home, supported by their school teachers as the school is currently closed due to the lockdown. Thanks to your generosity we have been able to support teachers' salaries and extra food for the children during the lockdown.



Above and below: the health post under construction



The forgotten community - Pandhra Mile

You might remember from your last copy of *Tibet Matters* that the Pandhra Mile community had increased their flood defences. However this settlement, home to 53 mostly first-generation Tibetan refugees, still needs much more help, including access to better toilet and hand washing facilities.

We are working with their new settlement officer, who we know from his previous post at another settlement, and look forward to planning with the community on how to improve these basic amenities. Pandhra Mile is hidden between a river and a road in the foothills of the Himalayas and without your support this elderly community would remain forgotten.



Panda mugs!

We've partnered with a UK print on demand service to offer you unique Tibet themed mugs, t-shirts, water bottles and more. So if you want a mug with a panda waving a Tibet flag, you can now buy it from us! Visit shop.tibetrelieffund.co.uk

ART
TIBET

Last autumn we launched *Art Tibet*, our online art auction, and your response was amazing! Your bids raised over **£18,000**. If you bid on a piece or helped to spread the word, thank you so much.

The auction brought some much-needed positivity at the end of a difficult year and ensured that we can keep helping Tibetan communities through the pandemic and beyond.

We especially want to thank all of the artists who donated such fantastic pieces and made Art Tibet a resounding success.

Look out for our next online auction coming soon: Tibet Bazaar! This auction has a fun, flea-market feel and you'll have the chance to snap up something truly unique, all while raising vital funds to support our work with Tibetans. To stay informed make sure you sign up for our emails and follow us on social media [@tibetrelieffund](https://twitter.com/tibetrelieffund).



Get Involved

Hope Givers

Did you know you can support a specific project with a monthly gift? You can be a Hope Giver for just £3 each month. Choose to support elderly refugees, give young Tibetans the chance to follow their dreams, or help Tibetans in India access vital healthcare:

tibetrelieffund.co.uk/HopeGivers



Raffle

We're pleased to bring you a bit of good news - our new year raffle! You can win some fantastic prizes this year including £1,000, ethical beauty and clothing vouchers, tea and chocolate. Those of you who enter each year will notice the change of date: this year we are moving the draw from July to 30 April 2021. Please return your tickets by 27 April.

Each £1 ticket you buy will help support Tibetan communities. If you didn't receive tickets with your *Tibet Matters* and would like to in future, or want to stop receiving tickets, email us at raffle@tibetrelieffund.co.uk or call us on **020 3119 0041**.

You can also buy tickets online at enlightenedgifts.org/raffle

Thank you to our prize donors:

PHB Ethical Beauty, Komodo, ethicalWARES, Arc'teryx, Yogi Tea
The Basket Room, Ocelot Chocolate and the Body Shop!





Our annual mass meditation for Tibet will take place this summer on Saturday 3 July 2021 at 3pm. You can join from anywhere using our short guided meditation, suitable for everyone and recorded especially for Tibet Relief Fund.

New for this year! Join our live stream on Youtube, led by Tenzin Phuljung! Make sure you sign up for our emails and follow us **@tibetrelieffund** on social media to stay informed. We'll send you details closer to the time.

In the meantime you can buy our new guided meditation for £10 and support Tibetan communities.

Visit **enlightenedgifts.org/meditatefortibet** or send a cheque, made payable to Tibet Relief Fund, to **99 Kentish Town Road, London NW1 8PB**.

We'd like to thank our Meditate for Tibet partners Mindfulness UK and Soul Stretch for raising funds for us throughout the year from their meditation and mindfulness sessions. If you could do something similar, please do get in touch with us by email: **caroline@tibetrelieffund.co.uk**



Callout - Sunday 3 October 2021

Do you want to run the London Marathon for Tibet Relief Fund? This year we have one place available! Register your interest by 30 April 2021, telling us why you want to run the marathon for Tibet Relief Fund and how you would raise £2,000.

Email **caroline@tibetrelieffund.co.uk**, call us on **020 3119 0041** or write to us: **Tibet Relief Fund, 99 Kentish Town Road, London NW1 8PB**.

Gifts in wills

It's a new year and many of us will be thinking about our wills at this time. Although it can seem a daunting task, in many cases it is simpler than you might think. Tibet Relief Fund has partnered with Make a Will Online so you can write your will online, absolutely free, just by answering a series of simple questions. You have the option to leave us a gift after you have provided for your loved ones.

Visit **makeawillonline.co.uk/tibetrelieffund** to get started. If you don't have internet access, you can request a free *Gifts in Wills* information pack from us by writing to **99 Kentish Town Road, London NW1 8PB** or calling **020 3119 0041**.



Sponsorship

Our sponsorship programme brings transformative education and life-saving healthcare to hundreds of exiled Tibetans every year. Unfortunately, there is no shortage of children, elders and little monks needing support. This year, more than ever, we hope you consider sponsoring one of the people below who will truly benefit from your support.

Thank you

How To Sponsor

If you would like to sponsor Lobsang, Mr Jayang Chopel or Tenzin please call our sponsorship coordinator, Terri, on **020 3119 0041** or email sponsorship@tibetrelieffund.co.uk

Or visit our sponsorship pages on our website for others who are hoping to be sponsored: tibetrelieffund.co.uk/be-a-sponsor



Tenzin Jungnhe

Tenzin Jungnhe is three years old and lives with his parents, two brothers and grandma in Rajpur, India. Tenzin's mother runs a small stall and his grandma works as a yarn spinner while his father looks after the household. As a large family with few financial resources it would mean the world to Tenzin's family if he was sponsored before starting school next year. With a gift of sponsorship today, you would be changing his life forever.

£30 a month or £360 a year



Lobsang Tsekyi

Lobsang is five and lives in Pokhara, Nepal. She loves playing with her dolls and skipping outside her house. Lobsang's family would like to give her the best start possible as she goes into her first year of school. Her father has two jobs but due to his low income can barely afford his family's daily expenses let alone education for his daughter. Will you give Lobsang the gift of sponsorship today?

£30 a month or £360 a year



Jayang Chopel

Mr Jayang Chopel was born in the Lhodrak region of Tibet but, like so many, was forced to flee to safety in India. For many years Mr Chopel worked building roads so he now suffers from crippling arthritis and can't see very well. Sponsoring Mr Chopel will ensure he receives the medical care he needs, comfortable clothing and good food. Through sponsoring Mr Chopel today you can give him peace of mind knowing he will be cared for through his twilight years.

£30 a month or £360 a year