

TIBET MATTERS

Issue 38 | ANNUAL REVIEW 2021



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Tashi Delek!

Greetings from India and Nepal! Let us introduce ourselves; we are Tenzin Nyima and Penpa Tsering, Tibet Relief Fund's Project Liaison Officers in India and Nepal. We would like to welcome you to Tibet Relief Fund's annual review for 2020/21. We are really excited to be guest editing this issue of Tibet Matters.

Like everyone around the world, we've had an extraordinary year and wanted to share our experiences of working on our projects during this time. We hope you enjoy our insights into some of the work your donations have supported this past year.

On pages 4 and 5 you can read about how your donations are enabling us to respond quickly to the second wave of Covid-19 in India and Nepal, making sure our communities have as much support as possible.

Now, more than ever, we are aware of how important it is to have access to affordable healthcare. Thanks to you we were able to fund construction of a health post in Bakhang village, Nepal, something they've never had before. You can read all about it on page 7.

Even though things had to change a lot because of the pandemic, we have still been carrying on all our usual work wherever possible. On pages 8 and 9, you can read about some of our work with schools and the older generation.

You can also see how buying gifts and handicrafts through our online shop, enlightenedgifts.org, helps our work and lots of other ways you can get involved too!

We hope you enjoy reading about just some of the work we have done this year; it's thanks to your support and generosity that we have been able to achieve so much.

Thuk-je-che
(Thank you)

Tenzin Nyima
Project Liaison Officer, India

Penpa Tsering
Project Liaison Officer, Nepal

Financial information 2020/21

Total funds sent

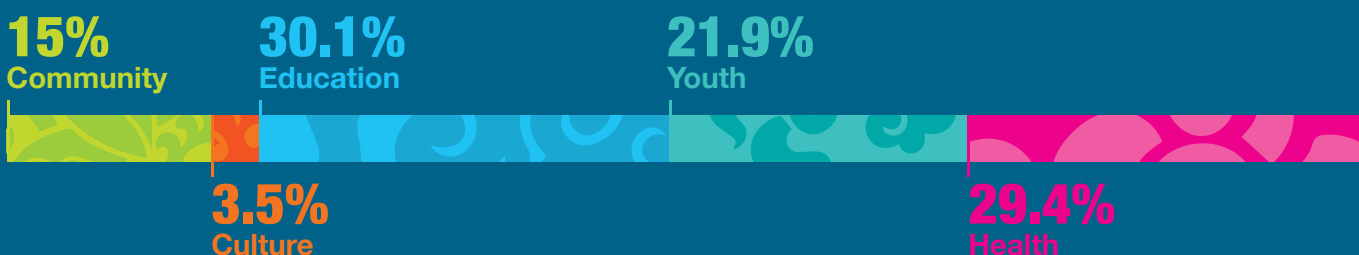


449 sponsors sponsored **658** individuals, **578** children and college students, **50** elders and **30** nuns and monks

13 sponsors supported our community sponsorship scheme

Areas of work breakdown

(Not including sponsorship)



Geographic breakdown

(Not including sponsorship)



We want to thank the following trusts and foundations for supporting our work this year:

Wallace Curzon Charitable Trust
Fieldrose Charitable Trust
The Freddie Green & Family Charitable Foundation
Paget Trust
JK Foundation
Marsh Christian Trust

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Community Foundation
Pennycress Trust
Robin & Henrietta Woods Charitable Trust
Himbleton Charitable Trust
Mrs E L Fleming Charitable Trust

Covid-19 response

The devastating second wave of Covid-19 in India and Nepal left both countries overwhelmed by the scale of the crisis. Luckily, thanks to the tireless efforts of Tenzin and Penpa and your swift and generous response to our appeals, we were able to react immediately to emerging needs in the Tibetan exile community.

Penpa's Covid-19 relief work

Many Tibetans in Nepal work in hospitality and tourism or do seasonal work, all of which came to a halt during lockdown.

Your donations enabled us to provide food parcels and rent to 800 of the most vulnerable Tibetans who were struggling. Penpa says *"Those days were very hard, people were scared and didn't know how long it would last... landlords were not giving any discount so our help was really important."* Thanks to you, some households could also repair essential household items like water boilers. *"That was a nice feeling, that we not only looked after the household but improved things for them."*

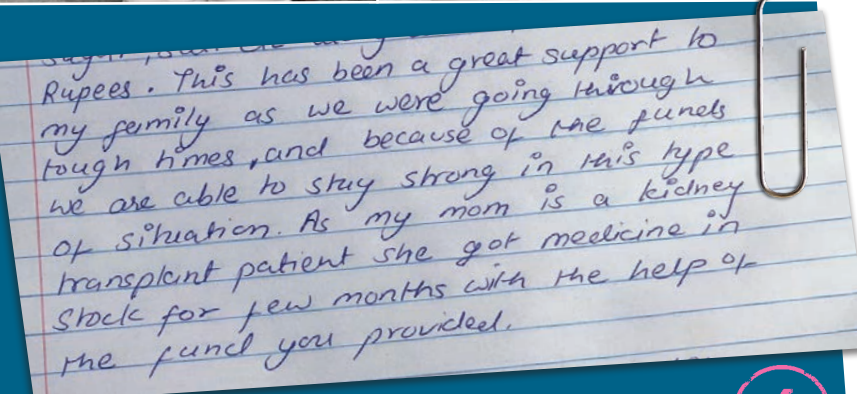
During lockdown all flights within Nepal were cancelled. Young Tibetans studying in Kathmandu were stranded, unable to return to their villages and families. Your donations supported their rent during this lonely and difficult time. Penpa received letters of thanks from many of these students: *"They felt that it was wonderful for them."*

Penpa is now working with a Covid-19 response team in Kathmandu, coordinating with other NGOs to provide virtual medical consultations, source supplies and find hospital beds for those who are seriously ill.

Communities need other forms of support too - things like internet and data costs for students who can't go to school, rent and food are all essential and we are covering these costs for many Tibetans in Nepal, with Penpa's help.

If you would like to support this vital work, please fill out the donation slip attached to your welcome letter and return it using the Freepost envelope provided. Thank you.

Top: Penpa (right) preparing emergency food parcels, Kathmandu
Centre left & right: Emergency food relief, Pokhara, Nepal
Bottom: Thank you letter



North India's scattered settlements

The scattered settlements of Pandhra Mile, Kullu and Manali are located outside of the main towns in a remote part of Himachal Pradesh in north India. For the Tibetan community, accessing the hospitals in the region is difficult at the best of times; now it's virtually impossible. The single Tibetan health clinic in the area is staffed by one nurse unable to provide care to everyone who needs it. Tibetans living in these communities were in desperate need of support during India's second wave of Covid-19 and your donations provided urgent funds.

Tenzin has visited these settlements so knows how difficult it is to access essential medical supplies. Thanks to you, our project partners in the area have been distributing Covid-19 toolkits containing thermometers, pulse oximeters, KN95 masks, gloves and sanitiser. Your donations are also supporting the cost of safe quarantine centres and emergency medical funds for those who are sick. Thank you.

Distributing Covid-19 toolkits to scattered settlements



Right: Preparing meals at the Community Kitchen



Delhi Community Kitchen

During last summer's lockdown in Delhi we worked with Tibetan Cancer Society to set up a community kitchen. This provided two hot and nutritious meals a day to a large community of marginalised Tibetans including the unemployed, those with substance abuse problems and sex workers. Tenzin told us your generous and heartwarming response meant the community kitchen could also employ some of those previously unemployed young people: *"It really helped them ... [it was] a wonderful experience!"*

Read about our future plans for the community kitchen on page 12!

Left: Tenzin with the Community Kitchen volunteers and Tibetan Cancer Society staff

Healthcare



Though Penpa and Tenzin's work this year was of course dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, they highlighted some other health projects which made a real difference for Tibetan communities this year.



Tsultrim Kelsang (centre) received lung cancer treatment in Delhi thanks to the emergency medical fund

H-Pylori testing and health camps

This groundbreaking project run by Tibetan Cancer Society has been visiting Tibetan settlements in north India, including remote and nomadic communities, to test people for H-Pylori, a common gut bacteria which can lead to stomach cancer if left untreated. Thanks to your support, 2,369 people have now been tested; over a thousand were found to have the bacteria present in their stomachs. This early diagnosis meant these patients were provided with the necessary medication, ensuring it doesn't develop into a serious health condition.

Tenzin says *"Especially in remote settlements there is little knowledge of this bacteria and people think they can treat cancer with health tips that aren't going to help. This work demystifies the disease and saves lives."*

Emergency medical funds in India

Tenzin spoke about the much-needed emergency medical funds your donations have provided at Tibetan Homes Foundation and Tibetan Women's Centre. *"There is a lack of knowledge about health avenues so people will wait until their problems get severe. Huge amount is needed to pay for the hospital so this support is really important."*

Mental health virtual sessions for young Tibetans

During the lockdowns, our youth project, Empowering the Vision, based in Delhi, has been running monthly online meetings to help young Tibetans deal with anxiety and stress during the pandemic. Tenzin says *"the sessions are popular and numbers are growing, at the moment about 30 young people attend each month."*



Bakhang's new health post

Thanks to your tireless support of this remote community in Nepal, they have a school, houses for the families most in need, and now a brand new health post.

450 residents have already received vital treatment. Penpa says,

“Bakhang is not very far from Kathmandu, maybe six or seven hours' drive, but it is almost impossible to access during the monsoon time because there is only one road which gets washed away. This means during any health emergency it is difficult for villagers to get help, especially for seniors. People have to go on foot and keep getting referred on, with little food and money, eventually they reach a city and have suffered a lot and spent all their money, and no telecommunication so can't borrow money.

Now all the people of Bakhang can get services from the health post. The right treatment at the right time will definitely help and save their life. I can't express in English how the local people enjoy the beautiful comfortable health post.”

Education



Language and culture preservation in Bakhang village, Nepal

We have been working with the Bakhang community since 2008, where your donations fund two Tibetan teachers who have the important task of teaching Tibetan to local children. Penpa met with Bakhang's teachers who explained why this is so crucial:

“ [Bakhang is] very close to the Tibetan border. Their ancestors are from Tibet so are very close to Tibetan language and culture and

practice Tibetan Buddhism. They share a common culture but the younger generations are forgetting. Tibetan language is the medium to save it.

I feel very happy that part of the region wants to preserve their language and culture. In the next few years it will give a fruitful result. ”

Supporting teachers through Covid-19

The pandemic has disrupted education around the world, with teachers going above and beyond so students are still able to learn.

In India and Nepal many teachers have been struggling to get by. Tenzin explains, “*teachers have the same expenses even though schools are closed.*” Through your generosity, we could help.

Snow Lion Foundation (the main educational body for Tibetans in Nepal) lost a lot of donors due to the pandemic, so at Tashi Pakhiel settlement near Pokhara we are funding salaries of five teachers at risk of losing their jobs.

In India you supported salaries for crèche staff in Miao and Bir settlements and, at Sermey Thoesam monastic school in Bylakuppe, you funded teachers' salaries as well as weekly deliveries of nutritious food for the 643 young monks. Thank you.



Early years literacy

Access to child-friendly, culturally relevant books is vital for developing literacy skills at a young age. However, there are still very few books in Tibetan for young children.

Tenzin explains “*[There is] an existing gap in Tibetan communities. Parents know the importance of education but don't know which part. They often invest a high amount in college and university but don't invest much in primary education or crèches.*”

With your support, Manjushri Educational Services in Dharamsala is filling this gap. They have published five baby board books in Tibetan and are distributing them to Tibetan childcare centres and the wider community.



Left: Food deliveries at Sermey Thoesam monastic school, Bylakuppe

Elders



The older generation of Tibetans made great sacrifices for future generations. Penpa says *"We always had a big impression in our minds of respecting our elders, who have suffered much more than us with the loss of their country, and who have fought for their country too, so we should help them now."*



Help for the elderly in India

Tenzin says *"Covid-19 really affected the elderly in India, even if they are not infected it has a mental effect because they aren't able to go out, they worry and have anxiety. Elders in old people's homes don't have any family to visit them or to give them any special occasion like Losar. So it was very wonderful to give the elders in Mussoorie Homes a special Losar meal this year."*

A special thank you to everyone who bought a Gift of Hope or makes a regular donation. Through your generosity this special meal could happen. Your donations also funded emergency medical care, food and clothing for the elders, making them feel cared for and safe during the pandemic.



Nangchen Old People's Home, Kathmandu

This year your donations supported regular deliveries of water to address ongoing supply problems as well as stipends for the residents and extra funds to help them through the pandemic.

Penpa says *"This is a wonderful project and sends a humble, genuine and peaceful message to our generation."*



Enlightened Gifts



Did you know you can support our work with Tibetans while shopping for unique, ethically-made gifts and homeware? Through our online shop Enlightened Gifts we source and sell a wide range of products all while supporting Tibetan businesses, entrepreneurs and craftspeople. Thank you to all of you who have shopped with us in the past year. Your support has made a huge difference.



Please visit enlightenedgifts.org to browse our full range and look out for our catalogue in the post this autumn.

New supplier: Mapcha

A highlight for last year was the introduction of a new Tibetan business, Mapcha, providing our customers with some very special items. Mapcha was founded by Lhanzey Palden who recently opened a shop in Delhi where we discovered their products. Impressed with the quality and unique nature of the items, we knew we had to offer them to you! Lhanzey takes inspiration from Tibetan culture as well as the wider culture of Himalayan communities.

One item that especially caught our eye were the beautifully illustrated playing cards with Tibetan numbers, and characters in traditional clothing for the face cards. It is unlike any other deck of cards you are likely to see.

Another really special item is the tin prayer carousel, a delightfully colourful variation of a prayer wheel. There is a pleasing satisfaction in getting the *Om Mani Padme Hum* buttons twirling!

Covid-19 restrictions

The restrictions on exports from India that affected our 2020 catalogue are still in place, which sadly means we are still unable to stock Sorig herbal items (teas, creams and oils). However we have been able to get incense from Nepal.

Despite these challenges Enlightened Gifts generated more income than the year before, so a big thank you to everyone who shopped with us. Your purchases mean we can keep supporting Tibetan businesses while using the proceeds to fund our vital work at this critical time for Tibetans.

Thank you for your understanding and patience. And a huge thanks to our Liaison Officers, Tenzin and Penpa, without whom we wouldn't be able to get anything to sell!



Tenzin (right) got the treatment she needed for intestinal tuberculosis thanks to Help on Hand (pictured with Tsering Dolkar from Help on Hand)



Receiving medical care in Chandigarh, India

Gifts of Hope

One of our most popular items, Gifts of Hope, gives you the chance to directly support one of our projects and make a real difference. When you buy a Gift of Hope, you receive a photo, a letter and a *rangzen* (freedom) bracelet.

The money raised goes towards three projects including Help on Hand who support Tibetans struggling to access healthcare in India. Their work has been particularly vital this year as hospitals have been overwhelmed and medical costs skyrocketed due to the pandemic. Thanks to your support, Help on Hand has been sending medicines to people in remote communities, helping with transport to hospital and providing home care and shopping for vulnerable Tibetans who have to self-isolate.

You can also gift days out to children without family in India who have to stay at school through the holidays, or give elders the joy of being treated to a picnic during Losar. These projects will resume once lockdowns ease. In the meantime the elders in homes we work with are receiving extra funds to support them through Covid-19 and celebrated Losar in style at home.

Thank you to everyone who has bought a Gift of Hope this year. You have provided life-saving support and hope to Tibetan communities.

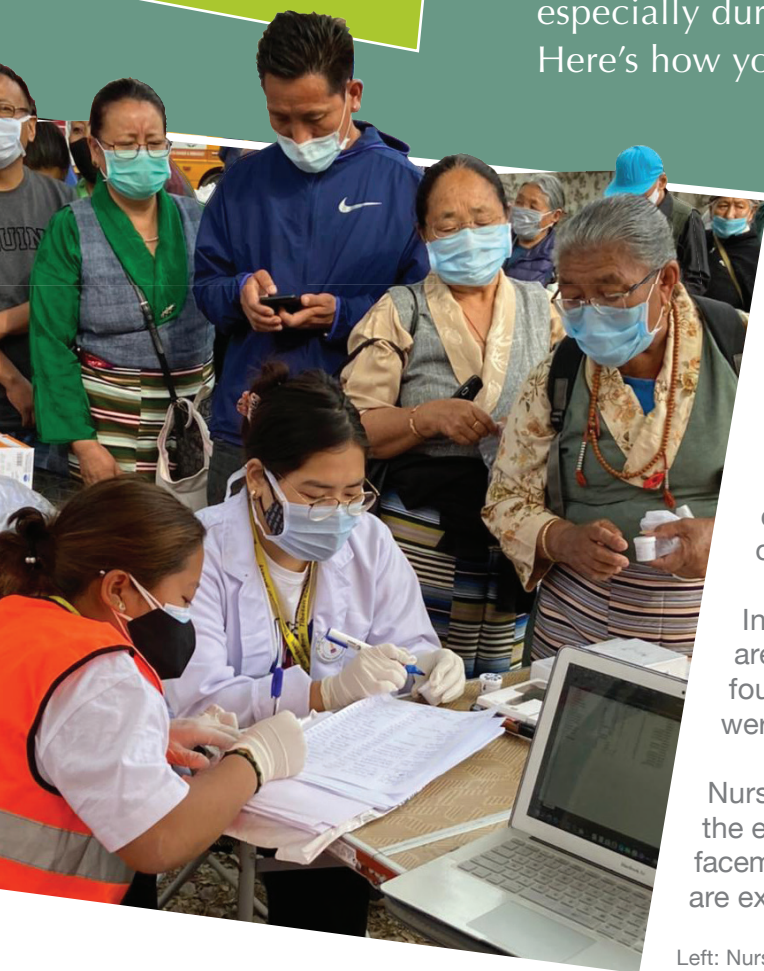
enlightenedgifts.org/virtual-gifts



Appeal updates



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



Preventing deadly stomach cancer

Your donations to our autumn appeal made it possible to screen 2,369 Tibetans for H-Pylori, a bacteria which can lead to stomach cancer - the number one killer of Tibetans living in the Himalayan belt.

In Dharamsala, Delhi, Dehradun and the remote nomadic area of Chang-thang, more than 40% of those tested were found to have H-Pylori in their stomachs. Those people were treated, avoiding fatal consequences.

Nurses also showed cancer awareness films explaining the early warning signs of stomach cancer, and distributed facemasks which everyone was delighted to receive as they are expensive and hard to come by.

Left: Nurses screening residents for the presence of H-Pylori bacteria, Dehradun

Delhi Community Kitchen

Lockdown has been challenging for Tibetans living in India. Last summer our friend and colleague, Tsultrim, who runs Tibetan Cancer Society, did a survey of the Delhi community. He was stunned to discover around 100 Tibetans struggling to survive on the margins of Delhi's society.

With your support we worked with Tsultrim and his team to open a community kitchen, employing three Tibetan cooks and two delivery drivers, who provided hundreds of hot meals each day to these marginalised Tibetans.

Now, thanks to your support of our spring appeal, we are making the Delhi Community Kitchen permanent. Our vision is for the kitchen to become a thriving community hub – a place that nourishes both body and soul, where people of different ages and from different cultures can come together to share a meal and get to know one another.

Right: Community Kitchen volunteers delivering meals to the Tibetan community in Delhi



Emergency Covid-19 food relief

Lockdown is a challenge for all of us, but life is really tough for vulnerable Tibetans living in Nepal.

Nepal locked down at the same time as the UK last year. Since then casual workers and those working in hospitality and tourism have been unable to earn much, if any income. These Tibetans have no official papers, so can't apply for government food relief, and any savings they had ran out long ago. Many had run out of food too.

Thanks to your support we provided emergency food parcels to 800 Tibetans in Kathmandu and Pokhara during the first lockdown, and are continuing this vital work through the second deadly wave of Covid-19.



Emergency food distribution in Pokhara, Nepal

Tibetan Ability

Covid-19 had put the lives of Tibetan children with disabilities in grave danger. While the Indian government launched a Covid-19 support programme for families with disabled family members, Tibetan families rarely have the correct paperwork and so aren't entitled to any help.

Thanks to your response to our winter appeal we worked with Tibetan Ability to provide a Covid-19 response programme for Tibetan children with special needs living in India. This ensures families can afford the rising costs of medical care and can access it safely when they need to.



Above: Tibetan Ability's Covid-19 response programme provided medical and other essential supplies to families

Pandhra Mile

We wanted to update you on an older appeal for Pandhra Mile - a settlement in the foothills of the Himalayas. Thanks to your support we are installing two toilets and washbasins (with a solar panel for hot water), as well as replacing the septic tank at nearby

Dhobi settlement. Work will be completed once lockdown restrictions allow. In the meantime we are providing extra support to the community during the latest wave of Covid-19 in India.

Get Involved



We want to say a huge thank you to all of you who did any kind of fundraising for us this year. A special mention goes out to the fundraisers below, who went above and beyond to support Tibetan communities through the Covid-19 pandemic.



Steve walked 900 miles

£1,172 raised!

Fantastic fundraiser Steve Glass walked the entire 900 mile journey from Lhasa to Dharamsala to raise money for Tibetan communities! Of course, he did this close to home due to the lockdown restrictions. It took Steve five months (January to May 2021) and we are in awe of his achievement.

Jaya led 10 hours of chanting

£5,000 raised!

Thank you so much to Jaya Deva, who put an incredible amount of time and effort in to organise an online chant of the *Om Mani Padme Hum*. Jaya and many others including Bob Thurman, Krishna Das and Namgyal Lhamo each led 20 minutes of non-stop chanting, watched by people all over the world, to raise money for our Covid-19



Gemma climbed Everest

Gemma Cox, a long time Tibet supporter, climbed Mount Everest (virtually) for Tibet Relief Fund in April 2021!

Taking part in The Mount Everest Virtual Challenge, Gemma ran, cycled, walked and climbed her way to the top over a distance of 40 miles - the journey to the summit of the highest peak in the world. Well done Gemma, and a huge thank you.

Want to try the virtual challenge yourself? Head to theconqueror.events/everest

Even better if you raise funds for Tibet Relief Fund!

response work in India and Nepal. We would like to thank everyone who chanted, watched or donated to our GoFundMe page.

You can still watch the videos on Facebook - head to tinyurl.com/chantingfortibet



Graham is running the London Marathon

This year the Virgin Money London Marathon is on Sunday 3 October and we have a runner in the race!

Graham Lewis is bravely running the 26.2 miles to raise money for Tibetans. If you'll be down there please do cheer him on, or sponsor him at totalgiving.co.uk/mypage/boostgraham



Meditate for Tibet 2021

This year we were delighted to welcome Tenzin Phuljung, a Tibetan filmmaker and former monk, to lead our annual worldwide meditation for Tibet on 3 July 2021. At 3pm BST many people joined Tenzin's online stream to meditate for Tibet with beautiful collective energy - together with those meditating away from a screen of course. Tenzin stayed on for a Q&A afterwards which was illuminating and a great chance for everyone to connect.



Tibet Bazaar

This autumn we are running another online fundraising auction: Tibet Bazaar!

You'll be able to tour our virtual flea market and bid on lots of fascinating trinkets, toys, pieces of art and more - all with a link to Tibet. It's online only, so please do join our email list to get notified when it launches at linktr.ee/tibetrelieffund

Raffle

£8,000 raised!

Thanks to all who entered this year's raffle. Your tickets and donations raised over £8,000 for Tibetan communities. Congratulations to Palden from London who won the first prize!

Sponsorship



Thank you to all our sponsors, you really are making a difference to so many lives. In these uncertain times Tibetans in exile need your support more than ever. Through our sponsorship programme you can bring security and better futures to Tibetans, young and old, across India and Nepal. Please consider one of the three candidates below who would truly benefit from your transformative gift of sponsorship.



Pema L.

£30 a month or £360 a year

Pema is seven years old and lives in Mundgod Tibetan settlement in Karnataka, India. Inquisitive and bright, Pema loves reading her favourite storybooks and learning Tibetan, her favourite subject at school. When Pema grows up she wants to teach the Tibetan language to children just like her. She also loves singing and dancing. Pema's father works as a farmer within the settlement. He works long hours in extreme weather conditions which often only yield meagre harvests, so his income is not nearly enough to support Pema's education. Will you give Pema the gift of education and help her achieve her dreams?



Tenzin C.

£30 a month or £360 a year

Tenzin is six years old and lives near Pokhara, Nepal. Tenzin enjoys going to school and is excelling in maths, science and music. Tenzin's father Tashi makes ends meet by working long hours in a carpet factory, but his monthly income barely covers the cost of everyday household items, let alone his daughter's ongoing education. Can you sponsor Tenzin today and change her life?



Tenzin N.

£30 a month or £360 a year

Tenzin is three years old and from Kathmandu, Nepal. He is kind and playful and hopes to start school later this year. Tenzin's father ran a stall selling *laping*, a cold mung bean noodle dish, but due to the pandemic it has closed down. Tenzin's mother worked as a weaver of *pangdens*, traditional Tibetan aprons, but is currently also unable to work. This young family is struggling to cope and can't afford to give Tenzin the education he deserves. By sponsoring Tenzin you can give him the start in life that all children deserve.

How to sponsor

If you would like to sponsor Pema L., Tenzin C. or Tenzin N. please call our sponsorship manager Terri on **020 3119 0041** or email **sponsorship@tibetrelieffund.co.uk**

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