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For over six decades, Tibet Relief Fund has been a steadfast beacon of hope for the Tibetan people. The unwavering belief of our supporters has been the driving force behind our mission to uplift and empower Tibetan communities.

The challenges faced by Tibetans are immense, yet your compassion has fueled our determination to create positive change. From preserving ancient traditions to addressing urgent humanitarian needs, your generosity has been the cornerstone of our work. Your support has enabled us to provide vital healthcare, education, and livelihood support, transforming lives in remote Himalayan villages and bustling urban centres.

A core part of our mission is to maximise the impact of your donations. We are steadfast in our commitment to increasing the proportion of funds that directly support frontline projects. By streamlining our operations over recent months and focusing on core programmes, we aim to channel even more of your generous contributions towards creating tangible change. This shift is allowing us to expand our reach, deepen our impact, and ensure that every pound donated continues to make a meaningful difference.

Your partnership is essential to achieving this goal. Together, we can work towards a future where Tibetans can thrive and preserve their rich cultural heritage. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and hope that you enjoy reading about the profound difference our work together is making in this edition of Tibet Matters.

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C. Butterworth

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Interim Charity Manager



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Bridging the Gap: Empowering Young Tibetan Readers

We're delighted to celebrate the impactful work of two projects which were the focus of last year's winter appeal: **Manjushri Educational Services Children's Library** and **Shatsa's Reading Space**. Both initiatives share a vital mission – fostering a love of reading and empowering young learners within the Tibetan community in the Tibetan language. In doing so, we aim to preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Tibetan language, which is at risk. This initiative plays a vital role in ensuring that future generations remain connected to their linguistic and cultural roots.

Manjushri Educational Services: A Sanctuary for Early Literacy Development

Located in McLeod Ganj, MES Children's Library serves as a vibrant hub for children aged 1-15. Here, literacy development goes beyond simply borrowing books. Throughout the year:

- Over **2,682** children visited the library, with **239** registered members actively borrowing a total of **3,147** books.
- A diverse **range of programmes** enriched their experience, including **storytelling** sessions, **read-alouds**, **creative art** activities, workshops, and a reader's' **theatre**. Collaborations with Active Nonviolence Education Centre (ANEC) and TCV Day School offered additional workshops and diverse perspectives.
- Special programmes like the Summer and Winter Reading Programmes catered to **different age groups**, promoting reading beyond the classroom. Activities like **reading hikes**, **photography workshops**, and **writing exercises** fostered a love of learning in a **fun and interactive** environment.
- Engaging activities focused on developing **early literacy skills**. These included workshops on reading fluency, book identification games like "Musical Book", and sessions where children explored the library collection through activities like "I Spy" and genre games.



Beyond the Library Walls: Empowering the Next Generation

MES understands the importance of early childhood educational resources. During this period, they successfully completed the production of an Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) Activity Booklet for children aged 4-5 years.

- Adapted from a Government of India resource and translated into Tibetan, this booklet features activities that develop basicfoundational concepts like size, shapes, colours, space, position, length, and distance.
- Engaging illustrations by Ngawang Dorji, art instructor at Petoen School, Dharamsala, further enhance the learning experience.
- With **600** copies printed, **150** have already been distributed to pre-primary schools and libraries in India and Nepal, reaching an estimated **6,872** children. The remaining copies will be sold at a nominal cost, with proceeds used to support future ECCE programmes like this one.

Shatsa's Reading Space: Vibrant Community Hub for Lifelong Learners

Nestled in Leh Ladakh, Shatsa's Reading Space transcends the definition of a library. It's a vibrant community centre where children can explore diverse stories, connect with others, and embark on a journey of learning and self-discovery.

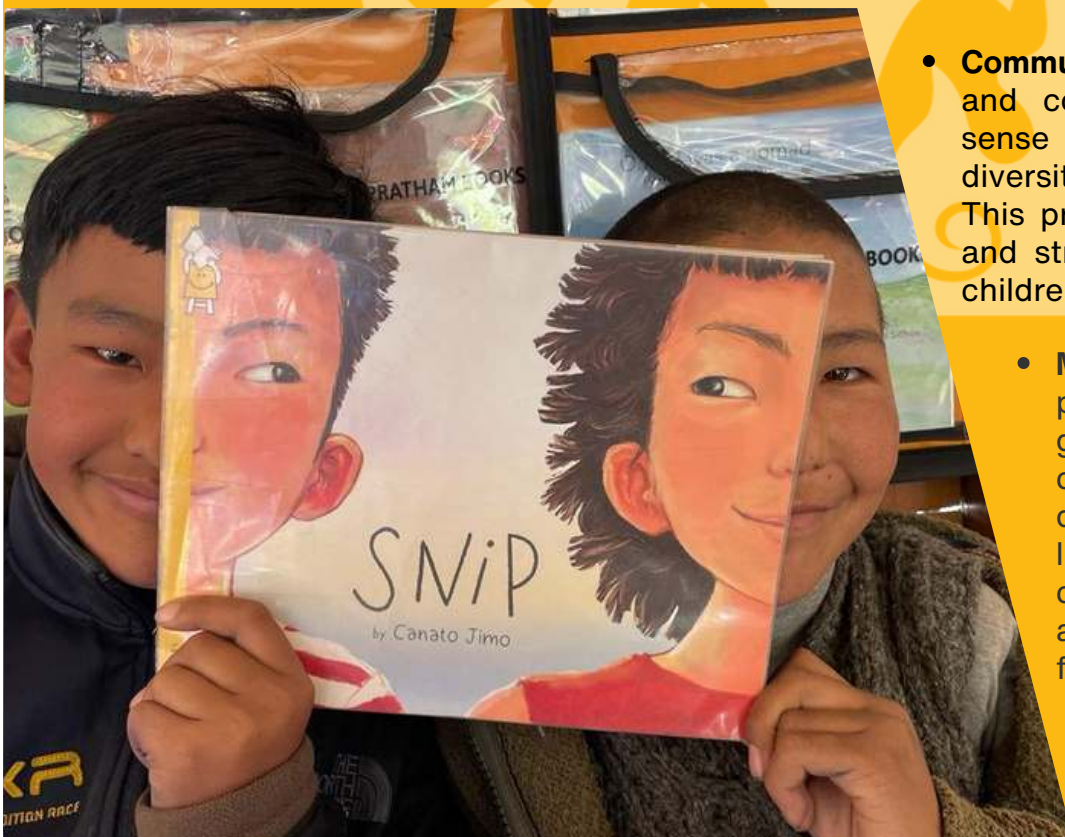
Shatsa's core values align perfectly with TRF's commitment to empowering young Tibetans:

- **Diverse Storybook Access:** The library offers a wide selection of books encompassing various cultures, languages, and genres. A special emphasis is placed on stories from Tibet, allowing children in exile to connect with their heritage. This ensures every child finds stories that resonate with them and fosters a sense of inclusivity.
- **Innovative Approaches:** Reading becomes an interactive experience with storytelling sessions, sharing circles, and creative activities like arts and crafts, role plays, and author talks. This approach sparks imagination, critical thinking, and a love for reading.
- **Safe and Welcoming Environment:** Shatsa's Reading Space provides a tranquil retreat where children can relax after school, unwind, and immerse themselves in books. It serves as a sanctuary where they can explore, connect with others, and foster a love of learning.



- **Community Hub:** Events, workshops, and collaborative projects create a sense of belonging and celebrate diversity through the power of reading. This promotes a sense of community and strengthens social bonds among children and families.

- **Mobile Library:** This innovative programme bridges the physical gap, reaching children who cannot access the library due to distance. It brings books and literacy programmes directly to communities, promoting equity and access to the joy of reading for all.



The Impact: Fostering Literacy, Creativity and Community

- **Promoting Literacy and Communication:** Both projects actively promote literacy development through engaging activities and programmes. Shatsa's storytelling sessions and workshops enhance communication skills, while MES's focus on reading fluency empowers children to become confident readers. Stories become a tool for fostering understanding, empathy, and meaningful dialogue.
- **Encouraging Creativity and Critical Thinking:** Exposure to diverse stories and creative activities like arts and crafts, role plays, and author talks at Shatsa's Reading Space sparks imagination, critical thinking, and self-expression in young minds. Similarly, MES's workshops on creative writing and photography within the Summer Reading Programme encourage children to think beyond the text and express themselves creatively.
- **Fostering Community and Belonging:** Both MES and Shatsa's Reading Space serve as vital community hubs. MES's collaborations with schools and organisations create a network of support for literacy development. Shatsa's events, workshops, and mobile library programme foster a sense of belonging and celebrate diversity through reading. This strengthens social bonds among children, families, and the wider Tibetan community.



Looking Ahead: Building on Success

Both MES and Shatsa's Reading Space are committed to continuous improvement and expanding their reach:

MES plans to:

- **Expand outreach** by collaborating with more schools and libraries, ensuring a wider reach of their literacy programmes and resources.
- **Develop additional ECCE resources** like activity booklets and teacher training workshops to further support early childhood education within the Tibetan community.

Shatsa's Reading Space aims to:

- **Establish partnerships** with schools and community organisations to strengthen their programming and reach more children.
- **Develop targeted programmes** for young adults, addressing their specific needs and interests. This could include book clubs, creative writing workshops, and career exploration events.
- **Further expand the mobile library service** to reach even more remote communities, ensuring equitable access to books and literacy programmes.



The Power of Reading in Action

- **Tenzin T.**, a 12-year-old member of MES library, highlights the library's role in fostering not just reading, but also communication, play, and relaxation. He finds a space where he can connect with others and enjoy moments of joy.
- **Tenzin Y.**, a 16-year-old member of Shatsa's Reading Space, appreciates the opportunity to share her love of reading and Tibetan stories with others. The library's welcoming atmosphere allows her to be herself, build confidence, and expand her reading horizons.



- **Dolma Y.**, a mother of two sons, describes Shatsa's Reading Space as a dream come true. She highlights the dedication of the staff and the positive impact on her children. Having a welcoming and enriching library space fosters their love of learning and community engagement.
- **Thinley C.**, a young adult, sees Shatsa's Reading Space as a way for Tibetan children to experience a rich reading environment. This access to diverse stories and activities allows them to explore and develop their creativity.



Empowering the Vision Project (EVP)

EVP continues to be a beacon of hope for Tibetan youth. In the past year, we reached an impressive 673 young people through a variety of programs, equipping them with skills and opportunities for success. From securing nine Tibetans in their dream jobs through the Fellowship program to providing career guidance and mentorship to 98 youth through Tibetan Career Services, EVP is making a tangible impact.

Our new hub in Majnu Ka Tilla is rapidly becoming a vibrant centre for the Tibetan community, fostering collaboration and inspiration. The Lhakar Meet and other events are bringing young Tibetans together, creating a strong support network. We're thrilled to share that our Building Bridges program has facilitated meaningful cultural exchanges, promoting understanding and unity. The Global Tibetan Professionals Network summit resulted in concrete action plans to strengthen community engagement.



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Healing and Recovery: Rewa Recovery Centre

Rewa Recovery Centre continues to provide vital support to those struggling with addiction. With a focus on holistic well-being, the centre has helped 57 individuals embark on a path to recovery and secured employment for 10 young men. Their unwavering commitment to healing and reintegration is truly inspiring and is the reason that our summer appeal raised funds for Rewa. You can still support the centre by donating via our website or by post.



Building Sustainable Futures: Nepal Project

Our Sustainable Livelihood Project in Nepal is gaining momentum. In partnership with Volunteer Corp Nepal, we are working to empower Tibetan families by providing essential support and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. The project's focus on preserving cultural heritage while addressing economic challenges is a testament to our commitment to holistic development. In the first phase of the project, generous funding enabled the provision of essential food aid to 82 households, supporting over 320 individuals, including monks who received packages lasting up to 8 weeks.

This support ensured access to nutritious food for vulnerable individuals, bringing hope and relief during challenging times. In the second phase, 378 beneficiaries have been identified, with ongoing activities aimed at enhancing livelihood options, providing training, and improving market access for Tibetan-produced goods. The project places special emphasis on empowering women and youth, ensuring their active participation in community development.



Nepal Spotlight

Our Programmes Manager, Thupten, went to Nepal on a field trip in May this year to visit and assess some of our projects and the sponsorship agencies we work with in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Tserok.



Kathmandu: Nangchen Old People's Home

The Nangchen Old People's Home in Kathmandu provides a safe home for elderly Tibetans in exile. We've been working with the Home since 2010 and our focus is on addressing the home's critical needs, like providing a supply of clean water, medical and healthcare support, and a fair salary for the carer there. Thanks to you, residents also receive a stipend each year, which goes towards their daily living expenses.

Solukhumbu District: Sustainable Livelihood Project

The "Sustainable Livelihood Project in the Himalaya – 2024" aims to help Tibetan families by providing food aid and promoting sustainable practices like eco-tourism, handicrafts, and improved farming methods. The first phase supported over 320 people, and the second phase will focus on helping 378 more, with a special focus on empowering women and youth in these communities. Thupten recently visited the Delekling Tibetan settlement in Nepal's Solukhumbu district, where he observed the process of selecting beneficiaries and met with local families. Established in 1960, this community faces many challenges, including frequent natural disasters and the loss of government support after Nepal became a republic.



Mustang: Tserok Settlement

Another community Thupten visited was the Tserok Tibetan settlement in Mustang, nestled at the foothills of the Himalayas. With a population of 160, most residents rely on farming for their livelihood. The settlement, accessible by an eight-hour drive from Pokhara or a short flight to Jomsom, faces significant challenges.

Community representatives shared concerns about land erosion caused by the nearby Kali Gandaki River, which threatens the sustainability of their homes and farms.

During the visit, Thupten also toured the local primary health centre and school, which highlighted the community's need for better infrastructure. A major issue was the lack of a proper irrigation system, which is crucial for farming productivity. Following discussions with the community, we have subsequently provided support to improve the outdated irrigation canals to better meet their needs.



Kathmandu: Snow Lion Foundation

Thupten, visited the visited the Snow Lion Foundation in Kathmandu and met with their sponsorship team and sponsorship recipients.

The Snow Lion Foundation was established in 1972 in Kathmandu to look after the health, education and social welfare of Tibetan refugees in Nepal and strives to preserve traditional Tibetan culture, language and religion. The Foundation follows policies from the Central Tibetan Administration's Department of Education and manages 12 schools in Nepal.

Today, there are 50 children and elders at the Snow Lion Foundation who benefit from Tibet Relief Fund's sponsorship and silent sponsorship programmes.



Pokhara: Lodrik Welfare Fund

Lodrik Welfare Fund was set up in the 1970s to look after Tibetan ex-freedom fighters and their families. The former guerillas are now elderly and unable to work; many never married so don't have families to help them in their old age. Most live in Jampaling and Paljorling settlements near Pokhara, but some live in Kathmandu and India.

Tibet Relief Fund has worked with Lodrik for many years to provide essential care for elderly Tibetans, emergency medical treatment and skills training for young Tibetans. Through our sponsorship programme, we support over 70 children and students with their education.

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.



Lezam D.

Lezam was born in Manila and is an only child. Described as extroverted and inquisitive, she enjoys singing and dancing. Lezam's parents both work odd jobs where they can find them due to lack of full-time employment opportunities where they live. As their combined income is low, they are not able to afford the fees associated with Lezam's ongoing studies.



Tenzin C.

Tenzin was born in Mundgod and is described as well-mannered and kind. He enjoys listening to Tibetan music, playing basketball and spending time with his friends. Tenzin lives with his grandparents as his parents are separate and are unable to look after him. As his grandparents are retired, the family are unable to afford the costs of Tenzin's education.



Tenzin Y.

Tenzin is an active child and loves helping other children. She knows a little bit about cooking and is very good at keeping her bedroom tidy. She is one of three children in her family and has lots of friends at school.

How To Sponsor

If you would like to sponsor Tenzin C, Tenzin Y or Lezam D please call our sponsorship coordinator, Harry, on 020 3119 0041 or email sponsorship@tibetrelieffund.co.uk.

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

Silent Sponsorship

Silent Sponsorship differs to a sponsorship of a specific child, elder or monk. Instead, it provides essential and vital funding to a school, a monastic school in Nepal or a care home in India.

The programme enables schools, a monastery for student monks and care homes to provide those under their care with essential resources like clean water, furniture, electricity, food, classroom materials and other necessities.

Donation options for joining our Silent Sponsorship programme include giving a monthly amount that suits you from £5 up to as to aid us in ensuring no Tibetan ever gets left behind.

Sponsorship Success

Pema B. - Tibetan Nurse at Cambridge University Hospital

Pema, 29, moved from a Tibetan Settlement in Nepal to India to pursue a degree in Nursing at the Jamia Hamdard University, Delhi. Tibet Relief Fund supported Pema and another nurse, Kalsang D., from 2014 with a grant to help cover the cost of their education.

After completing her degree in 2018, Pema worked as a Nurse Mentor Supervisor in Bihar, India where she helped train midwives in practising safe delivery and neonatal care.

Pema then moved to the UK in 2023 and she now works in Cambridge University Hospital as a theatre practitioner and is the lead nurse for the Tibetan Nurses Group.

Pema said: "Getting sponsorship from the Tibet Relief Fund was one of the best things that happened to me. Nursing schools particularly in Delhi have high tuition fees and cost of living. So, the support I received from Tibet Relief Fund lifted that financial burden off my parents, and I was able to concentrate and perform better in class."



outside Westminster Abbey



training fellow nurses



"I vividly remember the day when I donned the mortarboard and gown on my graduation day. It was such an emotional and proud day as I became the first in our family to receive a Bachelor's degree."

"As I look back on my journey, I would not be where I am today without the generous support I received from Tibet Relief Fund."

Other ways to Get Involved

We are deeply grateful for the unwavering generosity of our supporters. Your contributions, no matter how large or small, have a profound impact on the lives of Tibetans. Thank you.



Gifts in wills

At this time of year many of us will be thinking about our wills. 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.

To get started, visit makeawillonline.co.uk/tibetrelieffund or contact us at fundraising@tibetrelieffund.co.uk, 020 3119 0041 or 99 Kentish Town Road, London, NW1 8PB.

Inspire and Fundraise

Your passion can ignite a movement. Organise a fundraiser, challenge your network, or host a cultural event. By mobilising your community, you can raise funds and awareness for Tibet.

Have an idea? Share it with us at: fundraising@tibetrelieffund.co.uk

Hope Givers

Did you know you can choose to support all of our work or a specific project with a monthly gift? Your monthly donation will directly fund vital projects, providing healthcare, clean water, education, and sustainable livelihoods to Tibetans in need. Your simple action can create a lasting impact.

tibetrelieffund.co.uk/hopegivers

Corporate Partnership

Does your company share a passion for making a positive impact?

Partner with Tibet Relief Fund and become a champion for change. From employee engagement programs to corporate sponsorships, there are countless ways your business can empower Tibetan communities. Join us in transforming lives. Contact us at chris@tibetrelieffund.co.uk to start the conversation.



Shop with us!

Explore the beauty of Tibet at enlightenedgifts.org! Discover a curated collection of Tibetan-inspired products and unique items handcrafted by Tibetan artisans. As the official shop for Tibet Relief Fund, every purchase directly supports our vital work in Nepal and India, empowering the Tibetan community. Find a one-of-a-kind gift that reflects the spirit of Tibet and makes a lasting difference.