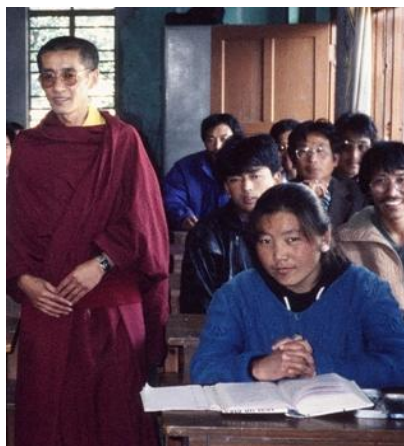




Trans-Himalayan Aid Society  
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President's Appeal  
December 2011



Chung Tsering (2nd row in black jacket) in 1994 in the TRAS-funded Tibetan teacher training program, Dharamsala

*"I am grateful from the bottom of my heart, not only because TRAS helped me and my family many times, but also because TRAS supported and helped many other people when they needed it. My family and I never wasted your help; both my wife and I are using our education and skills in meaningful ways to serve other people, and both of my children are studying very hard. Thank you, TRAS, for changing my life." Chung Tsering*



Chung Tsering today with his niece from Lhasa and two children, Dharamsala

Dear Donors, Sponsors, Volunteers and Friends of TRAS,

I met Chung Tsering in 2006, when he had been working as a research officer in the Department of Education (DoE) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamsala for a number of years. When I told him that I was a volunteer TRAS Director and that TRAS funded some of the DoE projects, he surprised me by asking what TRAS was. I simply assumed he would have heard of TRAS. So we talked some more, and were each amazed to discover the number of times TRAS has touched his life.

### **Chung Tsering's story**

In 1991, when he was a teenager, Chung Tsering embarked on a journey that many Tibetans take, fleeing from Tibet to northern India, leaving behind his family and everything he knew. In his own words, here is his story:

*In 1991, I escaped to Bir in northern India and studied at Bir's Tibetan Children's Village School. This school gives a special chance to those people who wish to study but are over aged. TRAS sponsors projects in this school, so I think my relationship with TRAS started at this time. After that I joined the Tibetan teacher training program in Dharamsala. Again, TRAS was the sponsor of this program. 95% of the teacher trainees, including my wife, are now still working as teachers in schools in India and Nepal. After finishing my teacher training, I joined the Department of Education of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamsala. We have organized many projects, such as teacher trainings and workshops with, of course, support from TRAS.*

*You may think that my relationship with TRAS ended there, but it continued even deeper than before. My wife and I needed someone to look after our two children because we both needed to work and we have no family in India to care for them and could not afford to hire someone. Again, thanks to TRAS, our children were well cared for. TRAS funds Little Flowers Crèche, a daycare centre in Dharamsala, and we were able to send our children there. Today they are both in school, studying hard and doing well. Thank you to each and every TRAS member for helping us. I deeply appreciate it.*

## So what?

Why does Chung Tsering's story matter? What does it tell us? For me, it exemplifies in a direct and personal way the long-term impacts of TRAS's work. TRAS's vision is to enable the self-sufficiency of people and communities in the Himalayas through supporting the health and education of their children and youth. But this self-sufficiency won't happen overnight. The "results" of funding schools, crèches, child sponsorship programs, vocational training initiatives, immunization programs, and health centres may not be seen for years. But, as Chung Tsering's story attests, results do materialize. TRAS has learned that a long-term approach to development works: investing in people's education and health over time is worth it.

## TRAS turns 50!

In 2012, TRAS turns 50 years old. The first NGO/charity in Canada to support Tibetan refugees in India, TRAS was founded in 1962 by Vancouver's George and Inge Woodcock after they met His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India and responded to his appeal to help Tibetans. Five decades later and with an expanded mandate to help Indian and Nepali as well as Tibetan children and youth in the Himalayas, TRAS is still going strong.

## A few things we've learned over 50 years:

- **Local communities know best what they need.** TRAS sends no staff or volunteers abroad, preferring to work with trusted local partners in the Himalayas, using local expertise and materials, to address social, economic, medical and environmental needs of the region.
- **Communities thrive when their children and youth are healthy and educated** – so we focus on health and education projects.
- **Healthy children learn better** – so at schools we've funded health-worker training, infirmaries, healthcare centres, toilets, improved water systems, greenhouses for growing nourishing vegetables ...and have seen children's health and school performance improve.
- **A long-term approach to development works** – it can take 12 years for a child to finish school, and an extra year or more to train in an employable profession and become self-sufficient. We commit the time.
- **Educating girls and giving women a voice in community affairs improves the community** – so we fund girls in school, support groups for teenage girls, health camps for girls, mothers' groups, maternal health....
- **Vocational training brings the prospects of paid work to an individual student** and improvements to the student's whole family. In a generation, TRAS will probably not need to support that family any more.
- **Crèches give toddlers excellent care and an early start to education, and allow parents to work.**
- **Literacy is contagious** – we've funded libraries where books were unknown. Children are leading the way in wanting books and learning to read; their parents, who are illiterate, are following and are interested.
- **A small organization of committed volunteers and dedicated donors does make a great difference.**

As TRAS enters its 50<sup>th</sup> year, join me in reflecting on and celebrating the profound impact TRAS has had over five decades on the lives of thousands of young people like Chung Tsering: girls and boys and young women and men struggling amidst economic and political hardship and geographical remoteness to gain a quality education, train in a vocation, secure a good job, provide for their families, and contribute to their communities. Young people determined to have a bright and healthy future.

## What you can do:

Thanks to dedicated and generous support from sponsors, donors and volunteers like you, TRAS currently sponsors over 200 children and funds 20 projects (see list on following page). While we've raised most of the funds to cover the costs of this year's projects, we need to raise more. Please donate to one of them or to TRAS general funds, where your donation will go to the project of greatest need at the time. To receive information on an individual project that sparks your interest, please contact Armila, TRAS's office manager (604-224-5133 or email [info@tras.ca](mailto:info@tras.ca) or [portal@tras.ca](mailto:portal@tras.ca)). To sponsor a child, please refer to the sponsorship section of the enclosed newsletter, email Russil at [sponsorship@tras.ca](mailto:sponsorship@tras.ca), or contact Armila. Thank you so very much.

**2011 and 2012 TRAS-FUNDED PROJECTS (see map on following page)**

PROJECT	Project cost \$
<b>TIBETAN</b>	
Little Flowers Crèche for children of Tibetan Government-in-Exile workers	p.a. 2,750
Dekyiling Tibetan Settlement crèche for children of weavers	p.a. 3,488
Central Tibetan Administration scholarships for 7 Tibetan student nurses	p.a. 5,085
Tuting region Mothers' Association – adult literacy classes for 191 women	4,620
Sikkim hostel for 50 Tibetan refugee children, third floor construction	9,036
Sikkim hostel repairs to earthquake damage	4,510
Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society children's literature publication in Umed script 20 books, 1,000 copies of each to be distributed to Tibetan schools (\$730 each)	14,600
Lhasa Institute of Eye Care (paediatric ophthalmology training and 16 cataract surgeries)	8,000
Mother Teresa comic book printed in Tibetan, 5,000 copies distributed	4,687
Dechen Chholing Nunnery – education and health for young nuns	10,000
<b>NEPALI</b>	
Buddha Academy, Kathmandu, infirmary maintenance	p.a. 3,600
Buddha Academy, Kathmandu, vocational training (tailoring, carpentry, electrical)	p.a. 11,000
READI Nepal, Humla District, Nepal: education project for 20 children, Year 2	13,764
READI Nepal, Humla District, Nepal: jackets and blankets for the children	839
<b>INDIAN</b>	
SHARE, Manali, north India: vocational training for 78 young people	p.a. 3,590
Voice of Children: education and health project for children and teens Year 3	17,292
Voice of Children: Women's Health Workshop (TRAS/Global Health Initiative)	1,126
Voice of Children: libraries for 6 remote villages	5,520
Munsel-Ling School, Spiti Valley, north India: solar water heating system	25,100
Munsel-ling School: science lab materials (physics, chemistry, biology to Grade 12)	14,570
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COSTS</b>	\$163,177
<b>FUNDS RECEIVED TO DATE</b>	\$99,818
<b>FUNDS NEEDED</b>	<b>\$63,359</b>

If you would like to make a "gift donation" in the name of a family member or friend, we would be happy to send a Himalayan card to the recipient. Please call or email Armila by **Thursday, December 15** to allow time for her to process your donation and send the card.

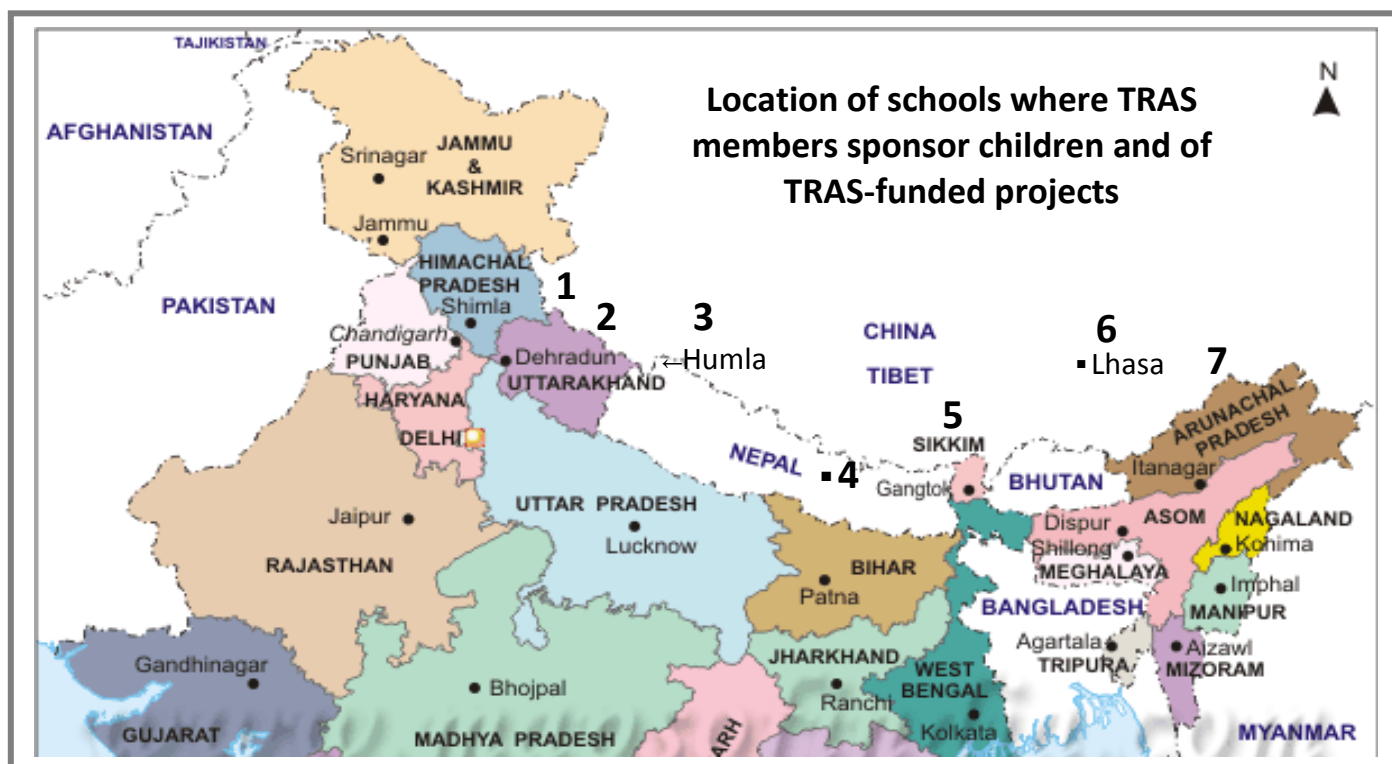
Thank you for everything you do and have done for the children and youth of the Himalayas! With your help, TRAS can continue its work and help enable more people like Chung Tsering and his family to be self-sufficient.

I look forward to seeing you at our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebratory events over the coming year! (details in the newsletter and on the TRAS website [www.tras.ca](http://www.tras.ca))

On behalf of the TRAS Board of Directors, I wish you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy 2012.

With my warmest wishes,

Jennifer Hales  
TRAS President



Key to map:

REGION	SCHOOLS WITH SPONSORED CHILDREN	PARTNERS WITH TRAS-FUNDED PROJECTS
<b>1. Himachal Pradesh, India</b>	Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV) Dharamsala TCV Suja, Bir Munsel-Ling School, Rangrik, Spiti Valley	Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Department of Education, Dharamsala Sambhota Schools Society, Dharamsala Little Flowers Crèche, Dharamsala Society for Holistic Action in Rehabilitation and Ecology (SHARE), Manali Munsel-Ling School, Rangrik, Spiti Valley
<b>2. Uttarakhand, India</b>	Tibetan Women’s Centre, Rajpur Tibetan Homes Foundation, Mussoorie	Dekyiling Tibetan Handicraft Centre Voice of Children, Nainital and Almora
<b>3. Humla District, Nepal</b>		Rural Empowerment and Development Initiatives (READI) Nepal, Simikot
<b>4. Kathmandu, Nepal</b>	Buddha Academy Boarding School	Buddha Academy Boarding School
<b>5. Sikkim, India</b>		Sikkim Hostel
<b>6. Lhasa, TAR</b>		Lhasa Institute of Eye Care
<b>7. Arunachal Pradesh, India</b>		CTA Department of Education (Tuting Adult Literacy)
<b>8. Karnataka, South India (not included on map)</b>	Tibetan Women’s Centre, Mundgod Doeguling Mundgod Incarnation Convent, Mysore	