



President's Message

As the holiday season approaches, I'd like to thank you for all your support, and for being part of TRAS. TRAS's approach to development in the Himalayas is to support long-term social change through relatively small projects over a long period of time, rather than massive projects over a short period of time. With limited resources, we focus our efforts in areas which will have a significant long-term impact: the education and health of children and young people. And we work with established partners in the region, who know what the most critical needs are and how best to address them, over the long term.

Our model is effective and sustainable — we know and trust our partners and journey with them through thick and thin. We are there when disaster strikes — sudden floods, landslides, pandemic crises — but we are also there long-term, helping them build resilience through the education and health projects. It's not glamorous or dramatic, but this long-term commitment results in more sustainable and self-sufficient communities.

We don't just fund one project and then move on — we stay with our major partners over many years to give them a chance to improve so many facets of life.

At **Munsel-ling School in the Spiti Valley** it can be toilets, a water supply, laundry facilities, a library, greenhouses, warmth — the overall goal being a healthier, well-educated community with graduating students returning to the Spiti Valley to work. The standard of living starts to rise.



In the **Voice of Children** villages in northern India it can be village libraries, driving lessons, computer classes, sanitary-napkin making, support for proper registration and *against* child labour and under-age marriage — so many small steps along with the ongoing educational programs to reach the goal of a healthier, more equitable, confident community.

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President's Message (cont'd)

For the **Tibetan community**, we continue to support eight nurses in training through the Central Tibetan Administration, as we have for decades, equipping them to work in their communities.

Read more about them all in this newsletter.

Thank you for being part of TRAS, and I hope you have a wonderful holiday season!

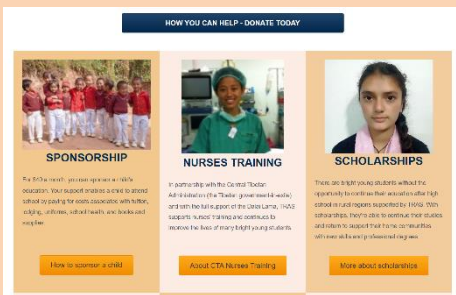
Russil Wvong, TRAS President



Our website sports a new look!

Clean, easy to read, cheerful and modern — past president Cheryl Sullivan has done a super job of updating our TRAS website. It will be much easier for first time users to grasp what TRAS is all about. It's a work in progress beyond the first page, as we figure out the best way to display everything we want to tell you, but you will find it all there! Thank you, Cheryl!

Go to www.tras.ca



TRAS Handicrafts

We are firmly in the grip of winter, heating costs are rising — so why not cozy up with a beautiful hand-woven woollen shawl from Manushi, the little shop in Manali in the foothills of the Himalaya! Manushi employs local women to weave these warm shawls with their traditional patterns. Manushi weavers also make woollen scarves to keep out the blasts of winter winds. TRAS has many lovely handicrafts displayed on the website (click the Handicrafts link on the front page at www.tras.ca), but we are particularly featuring these shawls and scarves either as a treat for yourself or as a wonderful gift! Contact Joanne at the office (604-224-5133) to visit her and choose which of the vibrant colours you would like — or to have your choice delivered (in the Vancouver area) or mailed.



Wool shawls (left): 38" x 86" (\$65) | Lightweight wool scarves (middle): 12" x 64" (\$25)
Angora and wool scarves (right): 12" x 64" (\$35)

The Scholarship Fund

by Lynn Beck, Scholarship Director

TRAS is very excited to be announcing new phases for all our TSF partners. Currently TRAS is supporting 20 students studying in the Scholarship Program.

Rinchen Zangpo Society for Spiti Development is entering Phase 4 which is the 10th year since the TSF was launched.

Two students are graduating from the program this year: Pesang Dolma has finished her third year of medical school and will continue her studies; Tenzin Tsokit graduated from St Stephen's College in N. Delhi and is busy preparing for her civil service examination.

An update on Tenzin Butith, who lost both her parents to Covid during the pandemic and has finished her first year of nursing: "I'm having a good time in nursing college and hoping to have a great career in the field of nursing. I'm highly thankful to you for being the helping hand to me."



The two new candidates selected for this year are Tenzin Zompa and Sonam Gakit who are both studying Bachelor of Science at Dharamshala College. (Pema Khando, the initial selection, has opted to prepare for medical entrance exams and delay applying to TSF!).

Voice of Children (VOC) currently has six students completing various stages of their studies and is in the process of selecting four new candidates this fall. VOC is based in Uttarakhand, N. India and is comprised of two NGOs, AMAN and VIMARSH. Because of the large catchment area and huge demand for post-secondary education TRAS has decided to expand the TSF for VOC.

VIMARSH and AMAN will each be able to select two new candidates each year going forward.

We are very pleased to be able to support this expansion of the Scholarship Fund, thanks to the generosity of *you*, our *donors*!

Dekyiling Tibetan Handicraft Center in Dehradun has chosen two new candidates this year "from poor and needy families", both of whom have been sponsored by TRAS for many years for their basic schooling.

Sangay Dolma has been accepted into a three-year General Nursing and Midwifery Program after receiving TRAS sponsorship since 2015.



Tenzin Kunsang is starting a four-year Bachelor of Hotel Management and has had TRAS sponsorship since 2011! This example highlights the importance of TRAS promoting early education through to high school graduation with our sponsorship program and then giving these bright students the opportunity to fulfill their dreams through higher education with the Scholarship Fund.

It is because of your support of these two worthwhile programs that TRAS is able to further the students' goals of a better life for themselves, their families and their communities.

Each student receives a grant of \$1,000 for each of three years.

Thank you for your support of the TRAS Scholarship Fund!

The Long-Term Projects

Munsel-ling: This year the school asked for warmth — from the daytime sun — to augment the rocket stoves which keep the cold at bay during the night. TRAS agreed to pay for a solar wall to be constructed against the junior girls' dorm and it is complete! Here is their report and photos of the girls outside and then inside the warm 8' wide space. Now TRAS has to pay for it!

Outcomes of the project:-

Solar Passive block provided very cozy atmosphere when the temperature dropped to -30c. It has saved 60-70% fuel wood in winter. It provided very warm air to bed rooms also and experienced warmness in cool night too as it stops cool wind also. The students took meals in this space.

It's also very useful to take baths and used to dry clothes during the snowy days. It's proved very useful to play and study here.

In sunny days it's very useful to enjoy sun baths. It's really proved very beneficial for the children. We all on the behalf of these children very thankful to Trans Himalayans Aid Society for this use full project.



Giving Tuesday donations paid for the many large windows (thank you, donors!) — now we need to pay for the rest of this warming multi-purpose structure! Building supplies and labourers were brought in from Manali in the few summer months when the road is open. To our (and their) delight, the construction went ahead without a glitch and was ready in time for the frigid winter weather. What a difference it is making!

The full reports from VOC and the CTA Nurses, Megha's talk, the handicraft store and more are all available on the TRAS website (www.tras.ca).

General Secretary
Rinchen Zangpo Society
for Spiti Development

Voice of Children: The numbers are up! More children are benefiting from the VOC programs in the villages surrounding Almora and Nainital. The 11 Education Centres, the heart of the project, are open daily, with an increase of 11 children for a total of 365 regular attendees. The two computer centres are now training 61 students. 212 children learn useful life skills at the monthly children's meetings, and 154 adolescent girls attend monthly meetings too.



Financial help for school fees and supplies is available where needed – and *that* number is down! Are more families back at work after Covid, or are they realising the importance of education?

Payal (right) loved school and did well up to Grade 8 (elementary education is free), then her parents, working for minimum daily wages, expected her to join them working. AMAN, our local partner, knowing how bright Payal is, offered to pay for the next four years of school and she excelled. She passed a government exam for help towards higher education. Her parents are so proud, and are saving for her university fees. She will be able to obtain a much better paying job.



Kiran Devi (left) goes to the local VOC mother's meetings. With newfound confidence she approached the local health authority to ensure children and pregnant women are given their vaccinations (this had not been happening). She then tackled the water board to complain about no water in the village taps. The line is now repaired and water flows one hour a day.

CTA Nurses: Seven of our current eight Tibetan nursing students are doing well. TRAS has just received lovely Christmas cards from them. The eighth student unfortunately had to withdraw because of ill health and another will take her place.

Tenzin Changchup Bhutia: She had completed the first sessional exam of the second year of GNM nursing before the holiday. She will be completing her course on 31 August 2023. She has plans to do a post basic nursing degree after her General Nursing course. Tenzin writes in her letter to TRAS "I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all the blessing and support that I've received from you, specially regarding my studies. I'm grateful for everything you have done".

Tenzin (right) attends to a new-born baby



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Sonam Yangzom: She is now in her third year and her classes started a little late, in March 2022. In May-June they attended community postings as a part of course completion. For postings they go to different places like community health centres, old age homes and a blind school. Through these postings she says she gets to learn lots of things and it helps her get new experiences which will be helpful in the future when she starts working. They have to do an internship which will be from 1st June to the end of November.

Sonam (far left) during one of her postings at the blind school

"I would like to thank my dear donor TRAS Canada and DOE (Tibetan Department of Education) for the scholarship provided during my three-year General Nursing Course. I am grateful for this scholarship."

TRAS Lecture Series 2023

Although we are still not back to in-person talks, we do have two 'events' lined up for you!

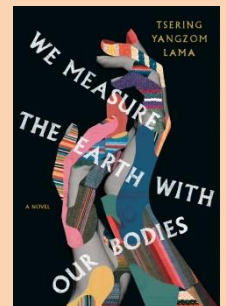
The Status of Technical and Vocational Education in Nepal

TRAS Director Megha Shakya has written about the history of education in Nepal and the stumbling blocks the young people face. He wrote it a few months ago and we have been waiting for updates from READI Nepal and IDEA in order to have the latest to share with you. Conditions in that country have thwarted our communications, but Megha is currently in Nepal and we hope he can get the latest news in person. Meanwhile, you will find his background lecture on the TRAS website (www.tras.ca) under *Latest News*.



Meet Tsering Yangzom Lama

Breathtaking, powerful, gorgeously written — just some of the praise for her debut novel about Tibetans in exile, a story of colonization, exile and the importance of family. Tsering's book, *We Measure the Earth with Our Bodies*, was shortlisted for the Giller Prize this year. A perfect gift for lovers of Tibet. And even better, Tsering is willing to join us in a virtual conversation sometime in the spring!



Thank you, Tsering! Keep watching for more details about Tsering's talk! Make sure TRAS has your email address if you would like to hear this inspiring author.

(photo credit: Paige Crichton)

How much will all the projects cost?

Voice of Children education project: the overall costs for the coming year are **\$37,825**

- \$39 will pay for one of the monthly village meetings for adolescent girls
- \$41 will provide one year of school fees and supplies so that another child like Payal can stay in school from Grade 9 to Grade 12
- \$50 pays the monthly rent for one of two computer centres
- \$123 pays a computer teacher's salary for one month.
- \$80 will pay for one of the 365 children to attend an Education Centre daily for one year (plus other events)

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Munsel-Ing School solar wall construction	\$18,436 (\$1,400 already donated)
CTA Nurses Training for eight students	\$6,600 (\$2,000 already donated)
Kunphen Dawa Rehabilitation Workshops (drug and alcohol)	\$5,738
Manjushri Library books and Tibetan alphabet blocks	\$10,000 (already funded)
VOC Remote libraries	\$9,814 (already funded)
IDEA Skilled birth attendant training	\$15,000 (already funded)

Your donations to projects, sponsorships and the scholarship fund will mean so much to the children and youth! Please use the donation slip in this newsletter or click on a *Donate* link on the TRAS website (www.tras.ca) for a variety of ways to donate.



Sponsorship

If you would like to sponsor either of the children below for as little as \$40 a month, please e-mail us at info@tras.ca with your contact information.



TENZIN KARMA

Tenzin is from the Hansa Village in the Spiti Valley. His father is a farmer and his mother is a housewife. He has four brothers. He is a good student at Munsel-ling School and is good at sports. He is 6 years old and needs your support for a quality education.



TENZIN

Tenzin is a 5-year-old Tibetan refugee attending Tibetan Day School in the Tibetan Refugee Settlement, Dekyiling. Presently she is in stage III of Montessori School and will be in class 1 in 2023. Her parents do some seasonal business with no work in the summer months. Her grandmother works at the Dekyiling Handicraft Centre which helps support the family. Your support is needed to help meet school expenses for this little girl.

And here's a lovely story of a young woman who has been sponsored by a TRAS member, and rather than asking for further help, she is suggesting the funds go to another child.

Kunsang began her education at the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) in Suja, in northern India, when she was 11 years old. Her TRAS sponsor supported her studies for eight years until her graduation. Kunsang's parents had been diagnosed with TB and had to leave home to attend the Tibetan Delek Hospital in Dharamsala for treatment. They approached the Tibetan Settlement Welfare Office for help, and as their request was genuine, Kunsang was admitted to the TCV in Suja under the classification of 'destitute'. Luckily, her parents slowly recovered. Kunsang has written to her sponsor:

"First of all, very warm greetings to you. I got admission for a BBA degree and I do not need help as all the expenses in college will be paid by my parents. Now I don't need support from you, so I request you to support another needy child in place of myself. Today, taking this as an opportunity, I want to thank you for all this immeasurable good deed you have done in raising me till graduating 12th grade class — I feel so blessed to have you in my life..."

TRAS

Supporting health and education for
children and youth in the Himalayas

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YES! I want to help children and youth living in the Himalayas

Name: _____
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- ☐ Please send event information and newsletters by e-mail
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Please allocate to:

- ☐ Sponsorship \$ _____ for (name of child/youth) _____
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Thank you for your generous support to TRAS!

