



From Earthquakes to Floods

You will all have been as horrified as we were by the catastrophic destruction caused by sudden flooding in the Nepalese Himalayas recently. And in particular our hearts go out to the Tibetan refugees living in several small villages along the flooded rivers. Many Tibetans lost their lives and others no longer have homes, while entire villages were washed away. The Snow Lion Foundation (SLF), the arm of the Tibetan Government in Exile in Nepal, told us that their old people's home was lost along with elderly people living there.

And 92 schoolchildren in particular have suffered.

These children – from Tibetan refugee families and other Himalayan peoples – had already lost their village school in the devastating earthquake in 2015. They were moved to the school run by SLF in Kathmandu – and now they have lost their families or homes as well, swept away in the floods.

The SLF says, "All the students belonged to the scattered villages of Rasuwa district, including four small Tibetan settlements and Syabru Besi where we had our old school and settlement office which were badly damaged and shifted to Kathmandu after the devastating earthquake of 2015. Now the old school, settlement building and all of Syabru Besi have been wiped out with no trace of life. We are trying our best to support these affected students after the unfathomable loss of their loved ones." The SLF wants to make sure these 92 children are fully supported for the rest of their school days. TRAS will help.



The Tibetan school in Kathmandu that took in the 92 students

\$6,000 will be sent immediately. Would you like to donate towards this small effort? Contact Joanne at info@tras.ca or 604-224-5133.

A Well-deserved Honour



Congratulations to TRAS board member Dr. Videsh Kapoor, recipient of this year's Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers, for her dedication to improving health care and quality of life in underserved regions of the world. Through the Global Health Initiative at the University of British Columbia, she trains and leads students participating in various health education projects in countries like India, Nepal, Kenya and Bhutan.

Videsh joined TRAS in 1998 after learning about the organization while doing her residency in the New Westminster clinic of Drs. Frank & Lynn Beck, also TRAS board members.

Photo: Videsh with the Right Honourable Mary Simon, former Governor General (credit: Government of Canada)

Videsh credits most of this award to her involvement with TRAS:

“Being a part of TRAS shifted my perspective to prioritizing sustainable development work in partnership with communities over transient clinic service (which still has a role in global health). My work with TRAS enabled me to develop programs with the UBC medical school to support global health curriculum development and scholarly projects for medical students and residents, as well as develop several community partnerships in low resource areas both in Canada and internationally.”

Face to Face with IDEA

We are delighted that Mr. R.C. Devkota, founder and director of the Innovative Development Education Academy (IDEA) in Pokhara, Nepal, has agreed to meet with us via Zoom on **October 27 at 7pm PST!**



TRAS holds this academy in high regard as it works to improve the lives of mothers and babies through its midwifery programs. Since 2019, TRAS has supported the academy's training of rural midwives and skilled birth attendants. The project has not been without obstacles, with changes in government policy. Mr. Devkota himself was injured in last September's protests but has recovered. It will be so interesting to meet the man whose vision is truly helping to save the lives of mothers and babies in rural Nepal.

Join us by registering with Joanne at the TRAS office by October 23 (info@tras.ca or 604-224-5133). She will then send you the Zoom meeting link.

The 64th Annual General Meeting of TRAS

The 64th TRAS AGM, covering the period from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, was held via Zoom on September 16, 2026. Here are the reports.

President Russil Wvong welcomed attendees and confirmed that TRAS continues to adhere to its overall mandate to help children and youth in the Himalayan region. He explained that TRAS works with local non-profits and Tibetan settlements (our partners) to improve health and education for the young, with the projects being selected locally according to the local needs and run entirely by these partners themselves. TRAS approves the selected projects and monitors progress. The three 'areas' TRAS works in are:

- sponsorship for children
- health and education projects, and
- scholarships for further education



"Our focus is on long-term development, but we have helped with emergency relief funding in the past. Two examples over the last few years were the Covid pandemic in 2020, and the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. We expect to do something similar to help in the aftermath of the floods on August 26, on the border of Nepal and Tibet. More than 5000 people are still missing.

I'd like to express our gratitude to our members and donors. The work that TRAS supports in the Himalayas happens only because of your generosity.

I'd also like to thank Joanne MacLeod, our Office Manager, and our volunteers, in particular our Board of Directors, who keep the organization running. Kevin Yuen, our long-time treasurer, will be stepping down later this year. Kevin joined us in January 2010, and over the last 16 years has done an excellent job of overseeing TRAS's finances, working with our office manager, and preparing our financial statements. Kevin, thank you very much for all of your hard work!"

Sponsorship Report

by Joanne MacLeod

The sponsorship program began in May 1964 with 13 sponsors. Today we have 71 sponsors supporting 120 children in Tibetan settlements and Munsel-ling School near the border between India and Tibet. Over the years our sponsors have helped over 838 children graduate with many of them going on to post-secondary studies.

During 2025/26 we had 17 children graduate, and all are pursuing a secondary education. One child did not return to school and two transferred to another school. We have fortunately been able to find new sponsors for two children whose sponsors were no longer able to support them.

School reports, letters and cards were forwarded to many sponsors during the year. Many sponsors send cards and letters, and they have been warmly received by the children.

Sponsorship disbursements are sent to the schools and settlements twice a year and we thank everyone who paid for the 2026 year.

Projects Report

by Russil Wvong

Innovative Development Education Academy (IDEA)

Pokhara, Nepal | Megha Shakya, Project Officer

Last year's batch of 15 students for the **Skilled Birth Attendant training** completed their training, and a new batch of 15 students was selected for this year. This will help to reduce maternal and infant mortality during childbirth. IDEA is planning an intensive Skilled Birth Attendant refresher training course for November, for past graduates of the program.

Unfortunately, IDEA was also affected by the widespread protests in September 2025. Protesters on the roof of the IDEA office building threw petrol bombs to set fire to a politician's house next door. When they were gone, the staff of IDEA found that their four computers had disappeared, but fortunately there was no vandalism to the office. TRAS donors generously provided funds to help replace the computers.

Munsel-ling School

Spiti Valley, India | Videsh Kapoor, Project Officer

Munsel-ling School is upgrading their solar water heating, installed 15 years ago. Having hot water available for bathing the hundreds of young children is very important for their health and hygiene! At our September 2025 meeting, the board voted to commit to providing \$10,000 towards the project, or 50% of the total budget. This funding was generously provided by UBC's Global Health Initiative.

Water tanks heated throughout peak solar months (winter) under construction



Hope for Children Project

Uttarakhand, India | Sanjeev Singh, Project Officer

Launched in November 2023, the Hope for Children project aims to improve the lives of children from marginalized families across nine remote villages in Almora and Nainital districts in the state of Uttarakhand, India. Educational support programs for children in the villages are a key part of the project. But it's more than just education. The project seeks to offer not only academic guidance but also essential health services and a network of support that can nurture children's growth and potential in these underserved communities. Sanjeev visited the area when he was travelling in India last year, and he reports that the children in both Almora and Nainital asked for indoor and outdoor sports equipment.



Educational support programs for children in the villages



Mothers learning to defuse domestic violence

(continued on Page 5)

TRAS heartily thanks the donors whose thoughtfulness allowed these projects to flourish.

Scholarship Report

by Lynn Beck

The TRAS Scholarship program is thriving. Since 2013 TRAS has supported 84 students. It has been interesting to watch the evolution of the program over the years and how it has been impacted by world events. The first graduates overwhelmingly chose to become teachers. This involved completing a two-year training program after completion of their degree and our funding had ended. They were determined to give back to the community that had chosen and enabled them to pursue their dreams of higher education.



This illustrates what we think is key to the success of the scholarship program. Partners who are based in these remote Himalayan villages are choosing the candidates who are best placed to give back to the local community. We have heartwarming pictures of our graduates in socially distanced classrooms teaching in remote Spiti at the beginning of the Covid pandemic.

Then we noticed a distinct difference in the professions being chosen. More are opting for professions in the health sector and sciences, hoping to fulfill a need made apparent by Covid.

The two recent selections from **Munsel-ling, Spiti** are: Tenzin Desal who has been admitted into a Bachelor of Science(B.Sc.) in Nursing and Chhering Angmo, pursuing a B.Sc. Honors degree.

Of the previous six female students chosen by **Dekyiling** five have chosen studies in the field of health care. Four students are studying in a general nursing midwifery program (GNM) and one student is in a four-year Bachelor of Pharmacy degree. Tenzin Dekyi is finishing a Bachelor of Commerce degree. We are awaiting their new selections for this year.

The Hope for Children project, run by our local non-profit partners Vimarsh and Aman, has also chosen four new candidates, keeping in mind merit and need: two are in the healthcare field.

VIMARSH: Vishakha is pursuing a Bachelor of Computer Applications and Lakshita is enrolled in a four-year Paramedical course, in her words "aspiring to help others in need". Both women were involved in the local volunteer community group and plan to continue their community involvement.

AMAN: Nitin is enrolled in B.Sc. Nursing "with the dream of serving society in the health care field". Rekha is pursuing a B.Sc. in Biology. She dreams of becoming financially independent, supporting her family, and encouraging other girls in her community to continue their education and break social barriers.

Thank you for supporting these bright, inspiring students to fulfill their dreams through education.

In case you missed it...



.....in Victoria, BC, or on Knowledge Network on October 13, 2026, the fascinating film about the Tethong family – *Far From Home* – can be viewed on YouTube.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=jogG59acwFg>

Judy was already helping Tibetan children in India in the early 1960s when she heard of the Woodcocks, who founded TRAS and she has been a supporter ever since. She met her husband, TC Tethong in Dharamsala, where he was working for the Dalai Lama. Together they have spent their lives working for Tibetans.

Treasurer's Report

by Kevin Yuen

TRAS received \$185,000 in 2025/26, and disbursed \$136,000. Designated funds still to be disbursed are \$108,000. The total amount held by TRAS is \$423,000, made up of the \$108,000 designated, and \$231,000 already committed to future years of projects and scholarships, leaving \$85,000 unrestricted.

The full AGM reports and the financial statements can be found on the Society's website at tras.ca.



TRAS is currently working to recruit a Treasurer to replace Kevin when he leaves. It will be hard – but hopefully not impossible! – to match his careful, professional skills. Please contact the office if you are interested in this volunteer position.



Current Sponsorship News

by Joanne MacLeod

Sponsorship renewal letters for 2027 will go out in December via email. We would like to help give as many Himalayan children as we can a chance to grow up healthy and with enough education to improve their lives and those of their families and communities. Currently we have nine children (including those two below) waiting for sponsors.

Please contact the office (604-224-5133 or info@tras.ca) if you would like to sponsor a child. Sponsorship costs \$480 a year.

Tenzin Khyentse



Date of Birth: September 12, 2019

The Tibetan Children's Village School in Lower Chauntra Tibetan Settlement writes:

Tenzin was born to a poor family in Manali and goes to the school in Chauntra. His parents are from Mugu tribe. There are only a few Mugu people originated from Nepal. They work as roadside labor. There are three children in the family. Both Tenzin and his elder sister have been admitted to the TCV school where they can get a full education as well as learn the Tibetan language and culture.

He is very happy in his new school and needs a sponsor which will give him the opportunity to graduate Class XII.

Pema Chokey



Date of Birth: August 16, 2022

The Tibetan Women's Centre, Rajpur, writes:

Pema recently joined Montessori, Class 1 here, and has adjusted well in her new environment. Pema has one elder sister who is currently studying in Class 2. Her father serves in the army and is the primary source of income for the family. Her mother is engaged as a weaver at the Tibetan Women's Center and earns enough to support the daily household needs. Educational sponsorship would greatly assist the family in providing Pema with continued access to quality education. This little girl has no support from any other organization so sponsorship will greatly help her and her family.

TRAS

**Supporting health and education for
children and youth in the Himalayas**

1183 Melville Street | Vancouver BC | V6E 2X5
T: 604 224 5133 | E: info@tras.ca | W: tras.ca



Let's support the kids!

Patrons

Dorothea Leach, Tony Phillips

Board of Directors

President — Russil Wvong
Treasurer — Kevin Yuen

Directors

Frank Beck, Lynn Beck, Catherine Douglas,
Abby Fitch, Shelley Guardia, Daphne Hales,
Jennifer Hales, Videsh Kapoor,
Megha Shakya, Sanjeev Singh

Office Manager

Joanne MacLeod

Newsletter

Daphne Hales, Shelley Guardia

Newsletter Design

Beck Lamb

Website

Maria Rubinchik

Social Media

Shelley Guardia

Printers

Chris Slykhuus, Prompt Printers
265 East 2nd Avenue, Vancouver, BC

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

- ☐ Please send event information and newsletters by e-mail
☐ Please send me information on Planned Giving

- ☐ attached is my cheque # _____ for \$ _____ (all cheques payable to TRAS)
☐ charge my VISA/MasterCard No. _____ Expiry Date ____ / ____

Please allocate to:

- ☐ Sponsorship \$ _____ for (name of child/youth) _____
☐ Project Donation \$ _____ for (name of project) _____
☐ TRAS Scholarship Fund \$ _____
☐ General Donation \$ _____ for wherever it is needed most

Mail to: TRAS, 1183 Melville Street, Vancouver BC V6E 2X5
 ☎ 604 224 5133 E: info@tras.ca W: tras.ca

Thank you for your generous support to TRAS!

