



Another Year End...

... another few hundred children and youth in the Himalayas on their way to a better life!

The TRAS year ends on March 31, and a satisfactory year it was. We saw the opening of the large, well-stocked library at Munsel-ling School, more university students helped through the TRAS Scholarship Fund, a new group of Tibetan children to be sponsored, a new health initiative in six remote villages, and continued successes in our ongoing educational projects in Humla, Nepal (READI Nepal) and north India (Voice of Children).

Thank you!

A huge 'thank you' to everyone who responded to our Christmas appeal for funds for the READI Nepal project. We had asked for help with funding the food bill of \$12,470. **You sent in just over \$19,000!!!**

That meant that hostel rent, school fees, new clothes for growing children and other essentials were also covered by your generosity. **THANK YOU!**

Our Winter 2017 newsletter (www.tras.ca/newsletters) carried lots of information about READI Nepal and Voice of Children. Suffice it to say that their year-end reports show the good work continues. One thing we like about these two local NGOs is that they create the program to fit the circumstances, and as circumstances change, they adapt to give the children and young people what they actually need.



In this newsletter you will read reports of some of the past year's work, catch up with sponsorship and scholarship news, learn about Sara Shneiderman's talk and our own AGM — and welcome a new project at Munsel-ling School. Happy reading!

So much tumbled down — are they building it up again?

TRAS is thrilled to announce a talk by Dr Sara Shneiderman on
Nepal's post-earthquake reconstruction



Thursday, May 31, 2018

7.30pm (doors open at 7pm)

**Tsengdok Monastery
1502 Angus Drive (at Granville)
Vancouver**

Admission by donation | Handicrafts and refreshments



Dr. Sara Shneiderman, a socio-cultural anthropologist at UBC, has worked in Nepal for 20 years. In the wake of Nepal's April and May 2015 earthquakes, she was engaged in relief efforts focused on rural areas — it was through Dr. Shneiderman that TRAS was able to help rebuild 200 toilets in Dolakha, one of the areas worst-hit by the earthquakes. Her current research projects include a multi-disciplinary research partnership on Nepal's post-earthquake reconstruction.

Dr. Shneiderman has kindly agreed to give a talk on Nepal's recovery from the 2015 earthquakes. We're looking forward to hearing about the challenges facing Nepal — political as well as physical — and what TRAS can do to help.



If you would like to learn more about leaving a bequest to TRAS in your will,
please contact the TRAS office 604-224-5133 or email info@tras.ca

Sponsorship — A Great Need

The Tibetan Childrens' Village School in the Chauntra Tibetan Settlement, north India, is bursting at the seams! The children come from far and wide in the Himalayas and their parents are so grateful that TCV is giving them a well-rounded education, utterly impossible to achieve in the tiny villages they have come from. TRAS has just received 10 case histories of children for whom the School would dearly like a sponsor.

We don't have room to post all of them, but if you are interested in sponsoring and would like to see more, please email info@tras.ca or call Joanne in the office at 604-224-5133. The cost to sponsor a child is \$440 a year. Thank you!

**Kunjang
Angmo**

Kunjang was born May 13, 2002 at Tabo. This place is situated in Lahul Spiti. Parents are finding it difficult to pay for the education for their three children. There is no Tibetan school in the village. Special consideration is given for the children of the Himalayan region. She studied in the village day school. Her date of admission was March 13, 2009. She couldn't speak Tibetan language at the time of her admission. She can now read and write Tibetan language very well. Her future aim is to become a nurse. She likes reading books in her leisure.



**Tenzin
Yeshi**



Tenzin was born on September 8, 2007 at a place called Pokhara, Nepal. There is one small Tibetan settlement in that region. Tibetan people settled there when they came from Tibet in the early 1960's. She is the youngest of three children. Her parents have sought help from the Tibetan Welfare office and she received admission in TCV School, Chauntra. She is attending class IV, learning English, Tibetan, Mathematics, Science, Social studies and Computer. She likes to play basketball.

**Phurpa
Tsering**

Phurpa was born September 12, 2005 in Tawang. The village is near the Tibetan border and is very remote and backward. Moenpas are the main tribe in the region. They speak their own Moenpa language. Farming is the main source of income. There are four children in the family and his parents are finding it difficult to educate them all. He is very fortunate to get the opportunity to attend TCV School. He can now speak and write Tibetan very well. Math is his best subject and he wants to be a scientist. He likes playing football.



**Kunchok
Dorjee**



Kunchok Lama was born in Limi which is situated in Nepal near the Tibetan border. The village is very remote and underdeveloped. His parents are farmers and the income of the family completely depends on the small plot of land. There are two children in the family. His elder sister helps in the field. His grandmother is also staying with the family. His parents are facing a great problem in paying for education for their son. He is very happy in his new school and is learning all the different subjects. He loves playing football.

Check their website: www.tcvchauntra.org

THE TRAS SCHOLARSHIP FUND: We are now up to 16 university students being funded by the TRAS Scholarship Fund. We will bring you up to date on these smart young people when this year's exam results are received.

Annual Report from READI Nepal

Major highlights of the year (2017/18)

Here is the report received from the READI Chairperson, Raj Hamal. Raj and his fellow directors are all volunteers — the only paid staff are the warden, cook and helper at the hostel.

“TRAS continued to support READI’s efforts for educating 20 children. Academic progress of these children was announced recently and all of them were promoted with excellent first division and distinction scores. READI Home offered full care for the children. Parents and children are satisfied with the facilities provided by READI. The hostel staff conducted regular house meetings with the children to discuss regular issues, their school performance and also helped make the children aware of their rights; taught them life skills and how to face different situations. The hostel warden organized individual meetings with children when needed and to discuss the house cleanliness responsibility, daily routine and focus on their studies.

*The headmaster of Balmandir School expressed his full satisfaction with our kids,
as they are the ‘toppers’ and the most disciplined students in school.
Out of 500 children, the READI-supported are always the shining ones.*

Most of the parents are contributing firewood/ cereals to show that they are also investing in their children. This has created a sense of ownership and sustainability of what we are doing. READI Home always encouraged the parents to cover part of the expenses by empowering themselves. Our aim was gradual phase out of direct support to individual kids by focus in enhancing the capacity of parents to improve their livelihoods and generate income. This has been a good success and decreasing dependency on supporter/donor.

The 10 children who were handed over to their parents in 2016 were monitored this year as well. They go to a local school and have been partially supported with cloths and stationeries. Parents have no regrets about bringing them home as they are now capable financially of educating and looking after them and also have opportunity to live together with their children at home. However the connection with READI Home will be maintained in future by regular counselling and tailor-made services.



READI received five laptops as a donation. Two of them were given to Balmandir School where our children study, one computer to the hostel warden, one for the children at READI Home. With this we have now six computers for the children. We have donated one computer to the school where our earlier supported children are studying. This will help teachers to acquire knowledge and students to learn computing.

Vocational trainings for children and parents are integral part of READI’s interventions. READI distributed apple and apricot saplings to the parents a few years ago which are now beginning to produce fruit. This will be one of the bases for earning their livelihoods and educating their children. Some parents are doing small lodges along the Simikot Hilsa route. Now the bridge at Hilsa border (with Tibet) is constructed, there will be more flow of tourists and domestic

travellers. It will create opportunities for the lodge operators to sell their services. We have employed 2 parents in our READI Café in Simikot. The Café is doing really well, with profits going to the READI hostel, and we are happy about it.

READI has started maintaining first aid in the hostel. We have necessary medicines and equipment. READI Home conducts regular curative and preventive activities in consultation with District Health Office, Humla. READI distributed essential medicines and first aid kit to Sita Secondary School in Humla and oriented them for efficient utilisation. Some of the medicines were donated by Medicines for Nepal. This was well received and appreciated by the teachers and parents.”

(First Aid Training →)

READI has accepted the TRAS desire to reduce our funding by 10% this year, so that the NGO does not depend solely on TRAS support. READI is well-regarded locally, and has the backing of the new mayor, and the District Education and Health offices. With its excellent 7-year record of co-operation with TRAS, we feel READI is in a good position to increase its funds from Nepal and elsewhere.



This is the Way We Wash Our Clothes...

Remember the old action rhyme from childhood days? You certainly wouldn't smile at the way the students at Munsel-ling School in Spiti have had to wash their clothes! But with the generosity of our members and supporters, we hope to change this for the better.

The wonderful Munsel-ling School in the harsh, far-off Spiti Valley now houses upwards of 500 students, and the school and its satellite schools are doing remarkable work. With early and ongoing support from TRAS and many others, the academic results are astonishing, health has improved and the new library is a great success. But look behind the scenes and it's not so rosy — yet. In that arid desert-like landscape water is at a premium and has to be shared with the nearby little town of Kaza. Traditionally the main water sources, from two mountain springs, are used by the town. Now that the school has grown so large, it has also been granted use of these two Government water sources. The sharing of water seems to be working, BUT a pond of runoff grey water from the school is all that has been available to the children in which to wash their clothes.

Ugh! And to make things worse, the soap then creates problems for the farmers who are the next users of this grey water.

So the School has asked TRAS for two laundry stations, one for the girls and one for the boys. A large water storage tank will be built to store the spring water, so that there will be a year-round supply. It will then be piped to the two laundry stations. Next the dirty water will be collected in a soak pit where the water will percolate through the earth, removing soapy residue before the water reappears in the farmers' fields.

The laundry stations will be solid structures — rather like the mediaeval ones you see in old French villages — and will make life easier for the children. They will be more inclined to wash their clothes regularly and thoroughly— thus helping to stop the constant plagues of lice and scabies. Miles of pipe will need to be laid, and the large storage tank and soak pits built. The cost will be \$19,000.

Result: cleaner clothes, healthier children and happier farmers! Please help TRAS make this a reality!



Please
Support
US!



No money laundering here — but money to help the laundry happen! The Great Canadian Giving Challenge is about to start!

Help TRAS have a chance to win \$10,000!

Donate to TRAS through canadahelps.org or givingchallenge.ca during the month of June — and you will automatically enter TRAS in a draw to win the grand prize of \$10,000!

This would go more than half way to making the laundry stations a reality!

Please support TRAS in the Great Canadian Giving Challenge — and help TRAS support the children at Munsel-ling School!

Every dollar donated in June = 1 chance to win

Voice of Children's Health Awareness Project

If you don't know anything about the causes of the illness in your village, or why so many of the girls are malnourished, how can you begin to know what to do about these problems?

Thanks to our wonderful partners AMAN and VIMARSH, the two NGOs which jointly run the **Voice of Children (VOC)** Education project in villages around Nainital and Almora, the first step has been taken to resolve the problems by raising health awareness in 6 even more remote villages in the region.

A gift of over \$4,000 from a Vancouver couple, who asked for donations to TRAS in lieu of wedding gifts, has led to a remarkable program of education and action. Here is the VOC report from the 6-month long health awareness initiative:

"The project area is situated far away from town and road head, and proper health care facilities have been a mirage for villagers. AMAN and VIMARSH initiated a health awareness campaign in this area with the support of TRAS to teach the rural community about sanitation, toilets, unsafe drinking water and menstrual hygiene. Health camps were organised to provide free medical examinations and the whole community was sensitised to these health issues. The result is that especially the children and adolescents have learned that to be healthy, good hygiene and water sanitation habits have to be adopted.

In this campaign we have reached 333 women and 737 children and youth. 357 villagers benefitted through the health camps and 67 girls increased their knowledge on menstrual hygiene and general health.



Sanitation and Hygiene campaign. Water borne diseases are the major health issues of this area. The main sources of drinking water are natural springs in each village. Lack of maintenance, open defecation and unhygienic catchment basins are the main causes of contamination. The campaign organised 21 water sample collections and analysis, most were heavily contaminated, and now VOC volunteers are sharing the results with the village leaders, local ANMs (auxiliary nurse midwives) and women's groups. They are arranging monthly meetings with women's groups on the issues of water purification, hand washing, personal hygiene and against open defecation. Information on hygiene during menstrual periods, nutrition, pregnancy and precautions was given at the meetings.

School Awareness Workshops. 14 school awareness workshops were held, 9 in primary schools and 5 in high schools. 737 children got the message that good personal hygiene is essential for good health. Topics of discussions were: personal hygiene, hand washing, dental care, the negative effects on health of the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco and the prevention of substance abuse. Reproductive health topics were also discussed. The teachers appreciated the initiative and discussions.

Health camps. these were organised by VOC teams with the support of the Health Department. 357 villagers were examined and doctors provided advice, medicines and referrals. Lack of local doctors, specialists and paramedical staff is a huge problem in this area. Six doctors in all, a dentist and midwives attended the villagers at the camps. Preventive health care tips and nutrition advice were also given.

Workshops on reproductive health for girls. Two workshops were held, covering mental, emotional and physical changes during puberty, general hygiene, care and nutrition. 67 teenagers attended in all.



Voice of Children Health Awareness Project (cont'd)

What an eye-opening experience for these villagers! VOC teams of a skeleton staff and many volunteers did such an amazing job, and thanks to their experience, hard work and clout, were able to tap into Health Department help far beyond what the villagers themselves could have hoped for. And this is just the beginning! VOC will now continue these health awareness initiatives under the ongoing VOC Educational activities in the future, as a cross cutting theme.

VOC does so much with so little!
TRAS is eager to continue the funding
for this incredible NGO.
We would appreciate your help!



56th TRAS Annual General Meeting

Your attendance at the TRAS AGM on September 12 is very important! President Russil Wvong writes:

"The BC government has replaced the 1977 Society Act which governs non-profits in BC with a new Societies Act. TRAS has until November 2018 to transition to the new Act. Basically, this means that we need to file an electronic copy of our constitution and by-laws with the provincial government, and our constitution and by-laws need to comply with the new Act.

We've posted a copy of the draft constitution and by-laws, along with an overview of the changes, at <http://tras.ca/societies-act>. Summary:

- Because the rising cost of postage is making it more expensive to send out mailings (like our newsletter), while it's basically free to send emails, we'd like to distinguish between *members* and *supporters*. Members pay annual dues, receive mailings, and can vote at general meetings. Supporters are more of an informal category: they're people who support TRAS and receive our emails, but are not members. The by-laws describe the role of members, but not supporters.
- Under the new Act, TRAS is required to maintain a register of voting members, with contact information (email or mailing address). To protect the privacy of our donors, access to the register will be restricted. If a donor would like to remain completely anonymous, they can be a supporter rather than a member, because supporters are not required to be in the register of members.

In order to submit our new by-laws, we'll need to make sure that we have a quorum at our September AGM, so that we can have them approved.

Please plan to attend if you can!

TRAS AGM

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

7.30pm (doors open at 7pm)

**TRAS Office
1183 Melville Street
Vancouver**

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: _____

Address: _____

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- ☐ 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) _____
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Mail to: TRAS, 1183 Melville Street, Vancouver BC V6E 2X5
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Thank you for your generous support to TRAS!

A tax receipt will be issued for all donations.

Charity Registration #130620743RR0001

