

Newsletter

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**Health And
Development Aid
Abroad — Australia
Fund Inc.**

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HADA'S VISION

**To see medical, educational,
agricultural and sanitation
programs established in
countries as needed.**

All projects listed in our Newsletter are tax deductible. All monies for these projects and personnel working on them go in their entirety except for bank charges. HADA does not use these funds for administration.

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Snowstorms Devastate Village in Shiqu County, China

Shiqu is the most north-western county in China's southwest Sichuan Province, with an average altitude in excess of 4,000 metres. The population of 60,000 comprises mainly of nomadic herdsman, with some farmers living in the most southern part of the county.

Current Situation

In the whole county approximately 60,000 head of yak died due to nine separate severe snowstorms hitting the area since early February this year. Thousands of people were affected by frostbite and many died. Kham Health Associates (KHA) was only first made aware of the severity of the snow disaster in Shiqu County by television reports in the first week of March.

In one south-eastern village of the county, named Waxu, where Kham Health have had a multi-focused project since 2005, thirty people, mainly children, died and many were suffering without food and shelter. KHA personnel were particularly sad to learn that two of the old people in the dwellings constructed by SAI three years ago had lost their lives.

Government reports also stated that in the village and immediate areas 6,000 yak died. The loss of yak is a substantial set-back to the life of nomads since they are essential to their way of life by providing food (milk, cheese, meat, yoghurt), as well as weaving material for tents and for transportation.

The Government responded fairly rapidly when it realised the severity of the situation but to date it appears that the total amount of aid given has been relatively limited. In the

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NEPAL:

Some encouraging stories from . . . International Nepal Fellowship



Food for Patients

Too weak to walk and weighing only 28 kg, Ritha had to be carried into the *CATS (a local NGO) hostel when she arrived a month ago. A 27-year-old mother of two, she completed treatment for tuberculosis one year ago, but her symptoms returned causing fever, cough, chest pain, loss of appetite, lethargy and weight loss. To cure her tuberculosis Ritha needed eight months of treatment, including three months of daily supervised pills and injections. However her home was over four hours walk from the nearest treatment centre and she could not be carried there every day by her husband as he has to work hard as a labourer in another man's field in order to provide enough food for the family to survive.

So, Ritha came to Ghorahi where CATS provide supervised accommodation for patients who require treatment at the local hospital and are too poor to afford a hotel in the bazaar. Staying at the hostel only a couple of minutes walk from the hospital, Ritha has markedly improved. Her cough, fever and chest pain have gone, her appetite has returned, she is putting on weight and able to walk around and take part in activities again. Her face lights up as she talks of the love and care she has experienced from the hostel staff and her relief at being able to take the medicine that has literally saved her life.

* *Community Awakening and Transformation Society*

Education Support

Sixteen-year-old Amrit is an only child; his father died 12 years ago in India when he was only four years old and his mother then married again and left Amrit with other relatives in a remote part of Rukum (several days walk from the nearest bus route) when she went to live elsewhere with her new husband.

Rukum is one of the poorest and most conflict affected areas in Nepal; many teachers are afraid to work there and Maoists frequently close down the schools and abduct students to forcibly attend 'Maoist re-education camps'.

Donations have enabled Amrit to attend a government school in Ghorahi and given him a chance to break out of the cycle of poverty. Amrit studies science, maths, social studies, health studies, population and environment, English and Nepali in Class 8 at school. His favourite subjects are English and science and he hopes to become a teacher or an office worker.

While studying in Ghorahi, Amrit is staying in a children's hostel run by the local church which provides him with loving care in a stable environment as well as food and shelter. Thank you for giving Amrit the hope of a better future.

Management and staff of **Entreaide Globale** in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China, are excited as they move into their new Community Centre. It will have an area for children's activities, a recreational room for table tennis and other sports, a library (pictured), counselling rooms and areas where English classes are held. In the future they plan to also teach Mandarin to the Mongolians. There is always a need for native English speakers to assist long or short term. If you are interested please email hada@pobox.com.



Snowstorms . . . Continued from page 1

case of Waxu, for example, the only aid given was in the form of two large truck-loads of barley. Given that the staple diet of nomads is tsampa (barley flour), KHA considers that this response was well short of meeting the real needs of the villagers.

KHA's Response

Kham Health Associates was established in 2007, as a successor company to Stichting Assistance International (SAI) that operated in the field of aid and development (including medical work) amongst the Khamba Tibetans. It is relevant to note that SAI came into existence in response to an international appeal, following a snow disaster in the winter of 1995-1996. The current Chief Representative of KHA (Barbara Richardson), was a founder member of the original company.

KHA took the initiative to contact the Waxu village leader to ascertain the effect of the snowstorms on the village and what assistance may be required. Consequently, the leader advised us of the severity of the situation described above. Help was requested in the form of food, blankets, shoes and shelter.

KHA met together as a board and decided that food, blankets and shoes would be priority in the first phase. The second phase would focus upon yak-purchase in early summer when suitable breeding stock is first available and when weather conditions are suitable for moving animals from areas unaffected by the snowstorms.



Another encouraging story from Nepal . . .

***Aiti Maya's Story**

Sixteen year-old Aiti Maya from Rukum came to our Ghorahi centre with a left claw-hand and mild contracture of her fingers. Due to her disability she was unable to properly carry out activities of daily living. She was also feeling ashamed among her friends as well as with the community people because of her bent fingers. Her deformity was obvious every time she

greeted someone, and her chances of marriage and a normal life were slim. After six weeks of pre-operative physiotherapy in Ghorahi, her affected hand was mobile with no contracture and she was ready for reconstructive surgery. We referred her to Green Pastures Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre in Pokhara where she had successful hand surgery and was referred back to

us for postoperative care. After returning to Ghorahi she shared her feelings that she is very happy indeed. She also assured us that she would keep doing hand self-care and physiotherapy regularly. She is very thankful to the staff of INF and now has a chance to lead a normal life in her community.

**Name changed for privacy reasons*

Bridgewater Care — more than just wheelchairs!

Thanks to the gifts received through HADA, Bridgewater Care (BWC) in China has continued to reach out with rehabilitation assistance in China's southwest province of Guizhou. Last month, the third wheelchair donation project began, only this time we gave more than just wheelchairs. Walkers, canes, crutches and sets of ten community rehabilitation booklets went out to ten community offices who expressed their needs to us. The director over these communities is delighted that BWC came forward with this proposal to better equip a few of their small community offices with assistive devices to loan out to those in immediate need. Along with these resources each community office is receiving two hours of personal community-based rehab training from a BWC staff person.

It really seems to be a hand-in-arrangement as China continues to require the establishment of community-based rehabilitation in all of their major city communities by 2015. The problem they face at the local level is the lack of adequate training to reach their deadline. Rehabilitation is a nice idea to many leaders who gave the mandate and we are very pleased to hear of the initiative, but without appropriate training necessary for each community office, how will they learn? How will effective rehabilitation assistance come about?

Bridgewater Care works on a daily basis in the communities of the city. Rehab aides trained and paid by BWC go into the homes and offer simple exercises geared for each person's disability. We meet people who have had strokes or spinal cord injuries, or who have neuromuscular diseases or cerebral palsy. Most of these people have received no rehabilitation since their disability and often have suffered secondary problems due to poor positioning and lack of mobility and exercise.

To us each person is a special friend and the number of relationships that have been built over the years have opened the eyes of many hospital workers and family members, not to mention the person with a disability, to the benefit of rehabilitation. We presently visit fifteen individuals in their homes and many of them two, three and sometimes up to five times a week. The



rehab aides are supervised by a local Chinese BWC therapist as well as an American physical therapist. We anticipate more short-term visits in 2008 from overseas therapists who are eager to come and add to the skills and knowledge-base of the BWC staff and surrounding hospital rehabilitation workers. Opportunities are growing and we hope visiting volunteers and funds for training and hiring new BWC local workers will too. One area we could use more assistance with is in our office in China with all the logistics of running a foreign representative office.

