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# NEWSLETTER 2016



✓ 2 TADRA-Children's villages  
✓ 568 Orphans  
✓ Der Verein arbeitet  
100 % ehrenamtlich



The stereotypical learning by rote in Tibet and China and the traditional teaching methods based on obedience have been replaced by a greater orientation towards the children themselves and individualized education, in so far as this is possible in the framework of the official regulations. What we saw as a major aim was to promote the sense of self-worth and self-awareness in our orphan children, something that is of course easier in an orphanage where the children are in the care of foster mothers or foster parents and so can be brought up in this way outside school hours too.

In a word: here in Golok a lively debate has now begun among intellectuals on the best method of educating children. This alone is already a significant contribution to society by the Tadra project.

As we reported on our Internet site it is likely that the Tadra Association will experience a change in its directorship before the end of this year. This results from our desire to gradually make the association younger without of course forgoing the experience of its founders, who will in any case remain active. Almost all members of the Association have been working with the Tadra project for some twenty years now.

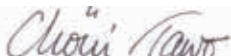
At this point we would like to put out an appeal to all our donors and godparents to continue with their for our Tibetan orphans despite all the humanitarian catastrophes that are happening in the world and increasingly have an impact on the children. The only way we can carry on this good work

is with your continued support. The individual articles are a testimony to how much our investment in schooling and vocational training is bearing fruit.


Thank you too for the many initiatives you have taken: school events, forgoing presents at birthdays and other occasions, and even making a request for donations on the occasion of the funeral of a loved one. Being backed up like this gives us continued grounds for optimism.

Our most heartfelt thanks to all concerned for your fidelity and magnificent support.

**Tashi Delek - Many many thanks!**



Choeni Tawo  
(1. Vorsitzende)



Helga Fuhrmann  
(Schatzmeisterin)

*WE WISH EVERYONE A MERRY CHRISTMAS*

*AND*

*A HAPPY NEW YEAR*

## *My incredible journey to the Tadra Villages*

by *Pauline Mottas*

Thanks to Beat I was able to take part in a humanitarian project, something I have been wanting to do for many years. To go away and take care of children in need is a good definition of a beautiful trip. When I learnt that I could accompany Beat to Tadra, it was clear to me that I would not let this adventure pass me by.

The journey became organized quickly. I realized very early in the process that I needed to be flexible and take each day as it came. Three weeks before departure, I learnt that we had to leave two days earlier!

So departure day soon arrived, and we landed in Chengdu. No time to waste, and we moved on to one of the largest supermarkets in the world to purchase pencils, paper and toys for the children. This was my first contact with the local Chinese, who seemed quite amused watching us pass through the different sections. After that, nothing is better than a good night's sleep to recover from jetlag.

The great adventure began the next day, when we set off for Dawu at 6 am, with some 700 km to go, in the good hands of our driver Onja. I was so looking forward to meeting all the children.

After several hours on the highway the road heads up into the mountains. Despite the rain, I found the landscape fascinating: think Switzerland, then add black dots for the yaks. Along the way, Beat prepared me with all the necessary advice on how best to get on with the Tibetan people.

We arrived at Dawu at 9:30 pm, and what a warm welcome we got straight away! I had been told about it, but how could I imagine that so much love and joy would await us! Singing, hugging us, they put white scarves around our necks to welcome us. Just the thought of it brings back shivers down my spine. A good meal of soup and noodles and we are on a tour of the village, just in time to kiss the little girls goodnight and get some rest ourselves.

We stayed six days in Dawu before leaving for Golok, and with that my dream came true. In both of the Villages we met really mature children. My aim was to help these orphans, but I quickly discovered how much we could learn from them, and that it is they who care about me. It is so difficult for me to put all the emotions I felt into words. They have all had the most painful past, but they keep it to themselves. They simply express a huge joie de vivre and gratitude. and they have so much to offer.

At first I was quite apprehensive with the idea of finding myself among these people, but the feeling disappeared the very first moment I met them. We were part of their family. And they called me „Atsché”, which means big sister. I learnt a couple of Tibetan words but most of the communication was in gestures, looks and smiles.

Daytime was spent playing together, or just hanging out on the grass. These children do not need much, and the older kids always take care of the little ones. In the evening we all met up in the courtyard to dance, sing and have fun. A light and pleasant atmosphere marked by love and joy.

At bedtime I accompanied Beat to wish the children goodnight. We just sat down and they suddenly formed a line to come and embrace us. That was an incredible moment, and we left full of love.

This journey was short but so intense that it felt much longer than two and a half weeks. The only difficulty was to remember all their names, and then of course to leave them all behind.

If I were to sum up this journey in a single word, it is magical. These children and these places were magical. They carry so much love with them. From them I learnt to put my worries aside and go forward with a light heart. They have little, but they give everything they have.

I would like to acknowledge Beat and thank him with all my heart for this unforgettable experience. He told me that it would change me, but I never thought how much of an impact these children would have on me. I can now go on my way with peace in my heart and a full tank of positive energy.



*Yanchen Wangmo:  
„How the TADRA Project changed my life for the better“  
by Beat Renz*

The TADRA children receive excellent schooling at the Children's Villages, and all appreciate this opportunity enormously and take full advantage of it. In school they all apply themselves and are very keen to learn. So it is not surprising that they regularly obtain the best results throughout the region, and that more than 90% of them satisfy the requirements for further education. In these higher classes too, our students regularly come top. Most of them are able to obtain a good job when they have completed their studies. And once they are able to stand on their own feet, many of the TADRA children want to give something back and do something useful for the TADRA Project and their brothers and sisters in the Villages. With that, many of them come back after completing their studies to serve on a volunteer basis for a time.

Yanchen Wangmo was one of these young people who came back to the TADRA Village immediately after her studies. As a small child her name was in fact Tenzin Lhamo. Because she had frequently been a victim of misfortune, a monk simply renamed her - a very common practice in Tibet. And indeed her early childhood was anything but easy. Her father died shortly before she was born, leaving her mother and her two-years-older sister Sonam Chinzo in extremely difficult conditions in a nomad tent. Their poor mother did her best to earn a living with some 30-40 yaks and two horses. But when Yanchen Wangmo was only a year-and-a-half old, her mother became seriously ill, and as she had no access to medical help, she too died. Fortunately, Yanchen Wangmo and her older sister were quickly taken in

by their grandmother, who lived in very primitive conditions in a stone house in Drango. When Yanchen Wangmo became of school age, her grandmother entrusted her to the TADRA Project. Thus in 2000 both children were taken in at the Children's Village of Dawu.

Yanchen Wangmo very well remembers her first day in the Children's Village. She was scared, and also sad that her grandmother could not stay there. But very soon she began to feel at home and was happy to have all these new sisters and brothers. As she told me, „All of us in the Village are like real sisters and brothers and we are one big family. The Village was my home, where I felt good and I am so grateful for this wonderful time in my life. The Project changed my life for the better“.

For Yanchen Wangmo it was very important to give something back in return for her good fortune. Upon finishing her studies she applied to the head of the Village to work for a year as a volunteer there. At the present time she is on a placement year at the Dawu Children's Village teaching maths and English in second grade. The project does not of course wish to take advantage of her generosity and pays her a small salary as pocket money with which she can buy something for herself from time to time, as otherwise she would have no money at all.

The Lions Club of the Swiss town of Biel financed Yanchen Wangmo's studies. In the event of student sponsorships such as this a personal exchange also sometimes develops. For several years she has been

receiving letters from Thomas Burkhart, the then president of Lions Club, and she wrote back as often as she could. She is still greatly impressed how people in far-away Europe could have offered her such a fantastic chance, and is profoundly grateful for such generosity.

After her placement year Yanchen Wangmo would like to work in her home town of Drango. „As soon as I have enough money, I will support the TADRA Project in that way,“ she told me. It makes me ext-

remely proud to see how these children have grown up into sensitive and responsible individuals. This is without a doubt the fulfilment of the highest aims of the Project. The children become independent, earn their own keep and have fond, grateful memories of their time in the Children’s Village. Today more than a hundred of our former charges now lead independent lives, have jobs and sometimes a family of their own. They all come back regularly to their big family in the Tadra Villages and do everything they can to support their brothers and sisters and the project.



After the death of their mother, Yanchen Wangmo (right) and her sister Sonam Chinzo (centre) were taken care of by their grandmother.



Yanchen Wangmo teaching in the second grade class at Dawu.

## *How the TADRA children changed my life*

*by Dominic A. Zuber, Switzerland*

I learned about the TADRA project a little more than six years ago through Beat Renz. Over a pleasant lunch he told me about the two Children’s Villages in Tibet with quite extraordinary conviction. It was clearly much more than a „mere“ social commitment, for I felt his enormous connection with the project and the children. At that time I was manager of a quite large hotel, and Beat’s passionate words truly affected me. And so together with all the hotel staff we organized a TADRA gala evening. Thanks to a large number of donations in kind from our suppliers and partners, it was possible to donate the entire proceeds to the Foundation. Two years later we organized a second event.

Since that time I have had many conversations with Beat about the Children’s Villages. I was fascinated by the passion and loving energy he put in for these children. I very quickly felt that this was no political engagement, but that the children and only the children stood at the centre of his efforts.

Beat always kept discreetly in the background and never sought to make a show of his commitment. I praised his work and told him that I found it fantastic, what he was doing. Whenever I spoke like that he always became a little embarrassed and assured me that he got much more from the children than he gave them. At first I did not understand him, and

he told me I needed to go to one of the Villages with him, and then I would understand. At that time, unfortunately, I did not think I could take the time off, for who does not feel „indispensable“ at work?

In 2013 I at last felt ready, and I travelled to Tibet together with my sister Binia and Beat and his wife. That journey was to change my life for ever.

I won't speak of the journey itself and all the sights we saw on the way. As Beat had rightly told me in advance, the children were what it was all about. On our first journey we were fortunate to be able to visit both Villages, starting with Golok. In my somewhat naive mind I had the impression that an orphanage must be a rather sad place, but I soon learnt better, starting with the reception we were given there. All the children showed curiosity, although some of them were quite shy about meeting us for the first time. After settling into my room we took our first walk around the Village, and there we saw happy, playful, laughing children who were interested in learning. Their original reticence (and ours too indeed) was soon overcome and at every walk through the Village each of us was soon holding hands with at least two children. A number of adolescents took the opportunity to show off their knowledge of English and the older ones immediately invited me to a game of basketball. But at 4000 metres altitude I did not last very long and soon left the court to these hardy boys.

In the evening I accompanied Beat on his goodnight round with the children. The rooms housed six to eight children and were simply but comfortably furnished, and were occupied by a mix of younger children and adolescents. The older kids helped the smaller ones to brush their hair and wash. It was a moving sight for me to see how they helped one another mutually. I was also surprised to see two children sleeping together in some of the beds. Beat explained to me that some of them were brothers and sisters. They did of course all have their own beds, but after the awful start to their lives they enjoyed the newly found sense of security and wanted to share it with others. Some of them also remembered how they would huddle together during the icy winter nights.

Personally I had trouble finding out which children

really were brothers and sisters, for they all spoke of themselves as one big family, and indeed they functioned as one.

A number of scenes fascinated me in the four (much too short) days we spent at each Village. The children always shared things between them fairly, without being supervised by a teacher, and at mealtimes the older children made sure that the younger ones had enough to eat. There were hardly any quarrels, and these children's desire to learn was unbelievable. Between classes they would sing, dance and play together. They had very few toys, but huge inventiveness and fantasy for that all that. There is no way I can write about everything I experienced. My impressions were just too intense, without Internet or TV. From the first day I knew that I would be coming back, for at last I had understood Beat's words.

At first I hesitated to ask about the children's past. During the journey there Beat had already told me some of their stories, which I took, and still take, greatly to heart. But I soon discovered that most of the children had no problem with their past. They are now happy, enjoy their newfound security and many of them able to talk about their earlier lives without great anxieties. I was not used to such an attitude in my life back in Switzerland. It is impossible for me to recount all my experiences, but the following story and the child's reaction brought about a real change in me.

One evening a girl with scars on her arms told me how after the death of her parents she was sent to live with relatives. Her uncle was apparently not too happy to have another mouth to feed and exploited the girl with household chores. The scars were due to burning cigarettes that her uncle pressed onto her arms when he was drunk and thought she had not worked hard enough. Tears came to my eyes. She laid her hand on my arm to comfort me: „You don't need to be sad, I have been so lucky. Now I can live here, and the early lives of some of my new sisters and brothers were much worse.“

I was speechless ... A little girl had understood life far better than I could. She was able to deal with trauma that I find unimaginable and despite her tragic past sees the positive side of her life. She does

not compare herself with people who have more or appear to have more. That was a lesson I shall never forget, and one that changed my life for ever.



Dominic Zuber visited the Children's Villages in 2013 and 2015. Here he is with children in Golok.



First contact with the TADRA children. Binia and Dominic Zuber were overwhelmed by their heartfelt welcome in Golok

## *Gratitude from deep in my heart*

*by Beat Renz*

**Some years ago a celebration was held in the Children's Village of Dawu to which many visitors came, including some of the children's relatives. On this occasion I had an experience that has remained with me ever since, and which I shall try to tell in this report.**

Suddenly I felt a hand on my arm, and when I turned around I found Tsomo, one of the TADRA children, standing in front of me together with a wizened old lady with grey hair, who walked with a stick and seemed to be suffering from considerable back pain. The old lady was wearing a beautiful Tibetan costume and smiled at me in a friendly way. She took hold of my hand with both of her own, pressed it tightly and bowed before me. She began to speak, and there was just one single word I was able to understand: Katu, which she repeated endlessly. The word means Thank You. At first I did not know what she was thanking me for. She looked deep into my eyes and kept on repeating „Katu, Katu, Katu“. When I saw

the tears running down her cheeks I realized how important this message was to her. I looked down to Tsomo and asked her, „Who is this lady and what is she saying to me?“ Tsomo seemed to understand my question and called to her two brothers who also lived in the Village. Together they were able to explain to me that the lady was their grandmother and that she wanted to thank me, for she was infinitely grateful that the TADRA project had taken in these three children after their mother had died. As representative of the Village, I acknowledged her thanks and tried to tell her that she could be very proud of her three grandchildren. I will never forget the look on this lady's face as she held my hand so tightly. It was as though I was looking deep into her heart. That look on her face spoke more than a thousand words, it was pure gratitude.

Such enormous gratitude is something I encounter almost every day in the Children's Villages, above all from the children themselves. They express it in so



many ways, starting with the loving, caring way they treat me, help me, and read my every wish from my eyes. For most of the TADRA children, their situation from which the project released them is still very present. Generally the living conditions they have experienced are unimaginable to us. Children who, after the loss of their parents, had to fight for their very survival in the streets in the most awful conditions. Some of them had been abused, all had suffered from hunger, poor nutrition or terrible diseases. Many were still under the thrall of existence angst. All the TADRA children had something in common before they came to the Village: they had lost their ability to smile, their love of life and their hope. I regularly have tears in my eyes when I hear their terrible stories. The TADRA project has changed their lives from darkness to light, from grief to love of life refound, and from hopelessness to optimism and confidence. As witness to their transformation are the „before and after“ photographs and the indescribable joy these children have found again in so short a time. Such impressive transformations are the most important motivation for the project and reward more than anything the voluntary work undertaken on their behalf.

Because since 2008 I have become the only person who may and can visit the Villages regularly (3 or 4 times a year) a considerable part of this gratitude is projected onto me personally, and I am regularly showered with it. But of course I am always aware that only a small portion of this gratitude actually concerns me. Rather, it needs to go to the founders of the project and all the members of the founding association, the innumerable helpers, the godpa-

rents, donors and supporters who have made this dream at all possible and who keep it alive. But how can one pass on this gratitude to all these people? For years I have been trying to report to the founders as accurately as possible, I take an enormous amount of photos, make films and set down many experiences in the Travel Reports. But I remain aware that I can pass on only a fraction of the gratitude that is projected onto me. There are no words, for example, that can describe the way this grateful grandmother looked at me...

This report is a desperate attempt to communicate at least a small measure of the heartfelt thanks from so many children, relatives and people here in Tibet to the people in Europe. Anyone who has not seen the squalor in which the street children and orphans of Tibet live with his or her own eyes can never imagine the incredible depth of the gratitude of all these people.

Over all these years, these children have give me indescribably more than I have been able to give them. They are magnificent, unique and profoundly grateful beings. I can assure you that these children will never forget how importantly the project has changed their lives for the better. With these words I present to everyone who in any form whatsoever has contributed to the TADRA project, the deep gratitude of all the children, their relations and other involved people. My sincerest thanks for your help and your compassion, may it come back to you a thousand fold!



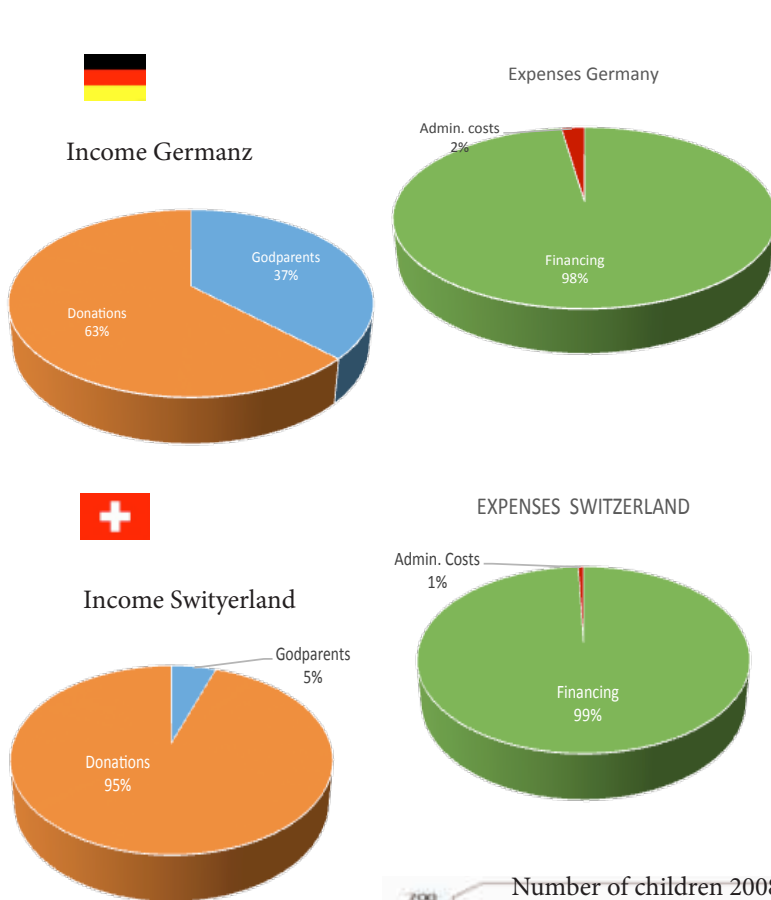
Tsomos Grandmother

# Das Tadra-Projekt in Zahlen

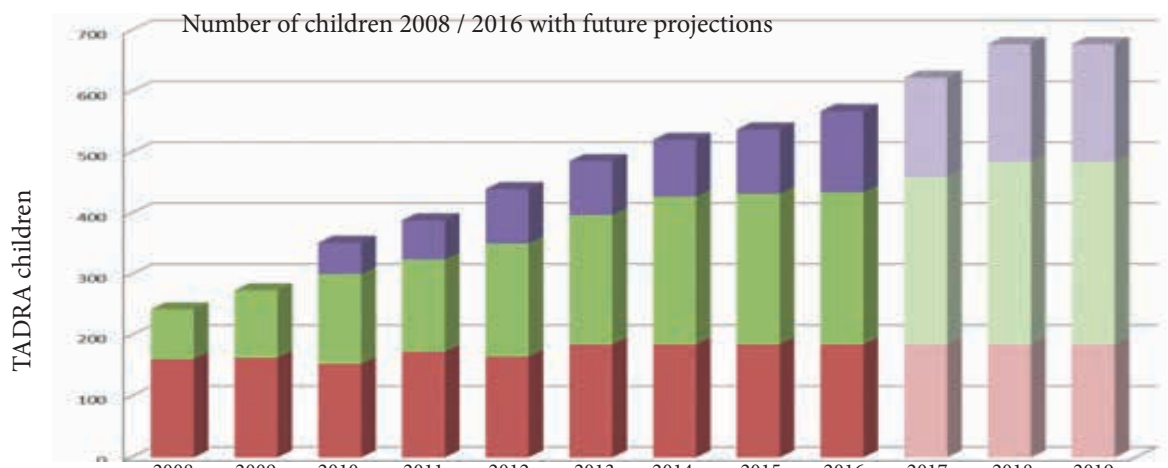
First, some basic information: for organizational and tax purposes we obviously need to keep the book-keeping of the Tadra association in Germany, "Tadra Projekt e.V." and the Swiss association "Tadra DE-MIGH-Stiftung" separate. In Germany, we are under the control of the finance office in Lüdenscheid and in Switzerland the Foundation Supervisory Authority.

The tables report the income and expenses of the Tadra association and Swiss foundation for the year 2015. The pie charts show the costs of the project for 2015 in the two Children's Villages and the financial trends over recent years together the cost trends and the evolution of the number of children at the schools. No distinction is made between sources of income. The expenses for 2015 include earmarked items financed by the local authorities.

Prices are rising extremely rapidly in our own region as well as all over China and this has had an impact on all aspects of our costs, whether it be for staff, maintenance or food. The cost of keeping children at other schools or university or who are in training elsewhere also represents a considerable portion of our expenses.



	Tadra-Projekt e.V.	Tadra-Demigh Stiftung
<b>Income 2015</b>		
	EUR	CHF
Godparents	70,672	20,039
Donations	118,673	355,425
Interest		222
<b>Total</b>	<b>189,345</b>	<b>375,686</b>
<b>Expenses 2015</b>		
Administration cost	228,000	315,050
Breakdown of admin. costs	5,414	1,922
Postage	1,838	
Telephone to Tibet	753	
Printing costs	712	
Bank fees	782	879
Office equipment	660	
Website I&I Internet AG	362	
Third party insurance	222	
Publicity	85	
Withholding tax		71
Verification		972
<b>Total</b>	<b>233,414</b>	<b>316,972</b>



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
External students			51	64	89	88	93	105	133	163	193	193
Golok	82	111	148	152	186	213	243	248	250	275	300	300
Dawu (up to 2010 incl. ext. students)	161	163	153	173	165	185	185	185	185	185	185	185

## Financing Dawu/Golok 2015 EUR

(exchange rate RMB - CHF 6.5 / EUR 7.15)

### Operating costs 270,951

Food	135,927
Insulation of buildings	78,022
Energy (heating / electricity)	28,440
Treatment expenses	12,214
Kitchen equipment	3,662
Clothes/Hygiene	3,612
Repairs	2,384
Other	6,690

### Education 126,507

Grammer/High scholl (external)	70,983
Student University (external)	32,030
Vocational training center (internal)	1,172
Transportation of external students	12,894
School equipment	9,428

### Staff (81 Employees in Tibet) 130,770

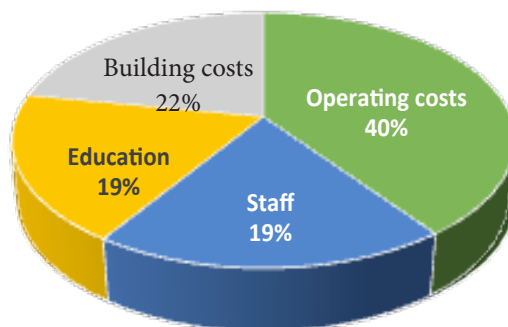
Salaries	129,239
Further training	538
Travel expenses	993

**TOTAL EXPENSES 528,228**

**TOTAL INPUT (New Building) 150,289**

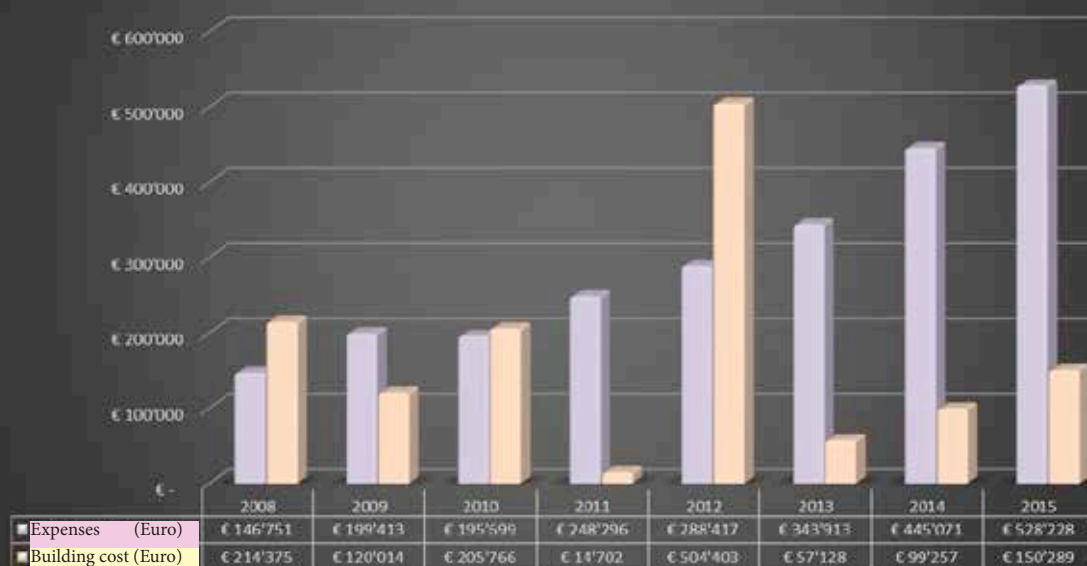
**TOTAL EXPENSES 2015 678,517**

## Project costs 2015 in detail



The children of the Golok Children's Village forming the Tibet word "Tsewa", Love

## Evolution of general and building costs 2008 - 2015



## *Larung Gar – More than a spiritual centre*

*by Annette Zahnow*

As we told in last year's Travel report, we (families Vedder and Zahnow), visited the Children's Village in Golok, Amdo Province, in the summer of 2015, where we described these fascinating, wonderful children. Perhaps some readers, like ourselves, are also interested in the rich Tibetan culture, which is steeped in a spirituality that remains alive and without which the lives of our children would have been very different.

All the members of our travel group were agreed to make an excursion from the Children's Village to the Buddhist Institute at Larung Gar, some 460 km away in the vicinity of Sertar in the Autonomous Region of Gardze (in the Chinese Province of Sichuan). Because of the elevation difference the journey would take at least ten hours, so that we planned an overnight stay.

Larung Gar is one of the largest institutes of Tibetan Buddhism in the world. It was founded in 1980 by the Nyingma Master Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok at a site where enlightened masters were said to have lived in earlier times. The aim of the project was to create a bridge between the various teaching traditions and thus to facilitate a complete Buddhist training in the "five great sciences" (philosophy, logic, art and handiwork, medicine and grammar) and the "five minor sciences (synonymies, mathematics/astronomy, theatre, poetry and rhetoric).



Our tour group in Larung Gar

We were offered a fascinating view as we slowly wended our way up to an elevation of 4000 metres. The main monastery, flanked by several smaller monasteries and a huge golden prayer wheel, doubtless one of the largest in the world, is situated in the centre of the settlement. All around, like a honeycomb, were huts built of wood, corrugated iron or stone by the monks themselves, in brilliant vermillion. We that something between ten and twenty thousand monks and nuns (no one new the exact figure) of various ethnicities and geographical origins lived there. We were particularly surprised by the considerable number of Chinese students. In addition, some 40,000 short-term visitors stay there. Visitors from the West are relatively rare, but many Chinese now travel as tourists, arriving there in the Tibetan hinterland in huge tour buses.

On one of the many hills is a stupa with more prayer wheels which are turned by the devout people, and the number of blessing mantras continues to accumulate. One always walks round the stupa (chörten in Tibetan) in a clockwise direction (it is not exactly explained why), and only the Bön, devotees of the pre-Buddhist nature religion, go in the opposite direction. Many pilgrims wish for good fortune, healing or a better reincarnation. Prostration is common, in order to show humility before the divine or in the hope of obtaining good karma.

The monks live extremely modest lives, and at midday a simple communal meal is cooked for everybody. They need to fetch water themselves from one of the many fountains, and in winter the temperature in the unheated huts is bitter cold. We nevertheless experienced this place to be very peaceful with a strong spiritual and bustling energy.

But this peace is not forever... Since 2001 the Chinese police has been destroying part of the settlement, including many homes. But over time everything has been rebuilt and more people than before came to Larung Gar. With that it was hoped that all would be well, but now the Chinese government has officially announced measures to tear down the

monks' and nuns' homes and to limit the population of the community to a maximum of five thousand by 2017. Surveillance cameras had already been installed when we were there (August 2016) and now the destruction is in full swing.

We who have seen and marvelled at Larung Gar are extremely sad that part of this unique Tibetan culture site, which has so much to offer to the world, is now being desecrated.



## *Kunga*

*von L.Palden Tawo*

Kunga came to the Children's Village as a young boy in 1997, a half-orphan from the region of Drango. His father had died when he was one year old, after which he lived alone with his mother as a nomad and took care of the cattle. Before he came to us he had never attended school. When he was eleven years old his mother asked us to take her son into the first of our Children's Village in Dawu.

Kunga first lived in Patrick House under the care of the housemother Tserong and later in Unna House with housemother Tashi, where he attended primary school. After that he was sent to the middle school in Dawu and later to a senior school in Dartsedo.

After his successful completion of twelfth grade he showed an interest in working as a volunteer at the Village, serving there as a teacher from 2010 to 2012, for which he was paid pocket money. Since 2012 he has been working together with Jampa in the management of the first Children's Village and is paid an appropriate salary. The two work together very well. Thanks to his long experience Jampa can guide his young apprentice and give him good advice. Kunga for his part sees Jampa as a surrogate father who until now brought him up at the Village as a foster parent.

At the present time we are gradually grooming Kunga to take on more and more responsibility, given that Jampa is getting on in years and it is urgent that

he get support with the increasingly varied tasks that need to be dealt with. Apart from the financial management, taking care of the external Tadra children and the quest for new orphans, all of which still fall to Jampa, Kunga has now taken on all management tasks in a very responsible manner, for his social commitment and a good slice of gratitude are helping to make him want to make a long-term commitment to the project.

For our part, we are very happy to give such responsibility for one of the Village to an ex-Tadra child, and indeed it has always been our desire to put such a project into practice.



## Activity + News 2016

### TIBET IN TRANSFORMATION

Class 8a at the Lippetal School in Westphalia, Germany, once again became involved in the Tadra project in 2015.

On March 11, 2016 the class organized a campaign day, „Tibet in Transformation“, to mark the closing of the project „Tibet, the Third Pole“ facilitated by social studies teacher Dr. Ulrich Vedder in the context of the World Climate Conference held in Paris in December 2015.

In addition, the class had invited their teacher's brother to give an audiovisual talk with the same title, „Tibet in Transformation“. The orthopedist Dr. Klaus Vedder of Bonn has travelled to Tibet for several years and showed photos of his trips to the capital Lhasa and as far as the Changtang province, against a background of music and spoken commentaries. More than a hundred visitors came to the lecture, a great success testifying to the commitment of the students. In his welcoming speech, the mayor of the municipality of Lippetal, Matthias Lürbke, did not fail to praise the political interest and engagement on the part of the the class in respect of human rights.

The students manned information booths on Tibet to show how topical this subject is against the background of the many terrorist actions and worldwide religious conflict. As Jan Luthmann, a student in class 8a, put it, „Even though the ‚roof of the world‘ is far away we have once again made a commitment to this culture and are proud that this lecture has given people here more about this fascinating culture.“

All donations received at the event, as in 2015, were passed on to the TADRA project.



### Benefit concert for the Tadra project (2015)

On December 5, 2015 a benefit concert was held in the Christuskirche in Munich, conducted by Felix Möller at the piano with Isabella Neulist, soprano, and the Pestalozzi High School Children's Choir under the direction of Andrea Görgner.

The concert was very well attended and the church was packed down to the last seat. The performance of well-known musicals was received by the public with uproarious applause. We (Palden and Chöni) had been invited as special guests, and were given the opportunity to present the Tadra project to a wide public. Great interest was shown in the project and we received very generous donations.

Our heartfelt thanks to all involved for their support to the Tadra project, and above all to Felix Möller for his unflinching support over the years.

### **Presentation of Tadra in Canada**

We (Palden and Chöni) were invited as guests of honour by the Tibetan Association to a major celebration in Toronto, designed to make the Tadra project known to a wide public. More than 2,200 people participated in the event. Three large screens in the hall projected a film about the project and we were invited to speak about it. We received a most enthusiastic reception and the promise to promote the project in the future. This gave an opportunity to make our contact people in Canada, Jigme Gyaltzen and Tsering Yangchen, better known to a large number of people. We bore all our travel expenses ourselves.



### **Founding of the Tadra Foundation USA in New Mexico**

Until recently, the Tadra Association was represented in the United States by just one person, without a legal status that could enable the Tadra project to be actively promoted. This summer, therefore we set up the Tadra Foundation USA so as to create the necessary legal conditions for such a development. The parent organization in Germany will continue to take care of general management.

The Foundation has now been established under the direction of Dr Sonam P. Kundeling and Peter Lukes. Both are highly motivated and confident that they can provide us with effective support in the future. We are truly grateful for this, as the growing weight of our responsibility in Tibet and the huge increase of costs in China foretell financial difficulties in the near future (see the charts). Additional financial income is therefore now essential.



### Former Tadra children come back to the village after completing their training

Some of the Tadra children from Dawu have taken up a variety of jobs since leaving the Village, a number of them in important state agencies, and they have now created a forum with the primary intention of staying in contact with one another and to discuss how they can best support the the Tadra Children's Villages in the future. As a first symbolic gesture they collected funds in the summer and offered a great feast to the present community of children there, cooking for them, entertaining them and handing out many presents. The group will continue to grow in the future, and so will support for the project among the general public. Such moral support for the Villages is becoming increasingly important. We are extremely pleased with this development, and the individual initiative and commitment that has been made.



### Namkha's literary project

Our former Tadra student Namkha has set up a small medical practice in Drango supporting the local poor population in the spirit of Tadra, and has now published a book in German with the help of Sandra, telling of his childhood and his time at the Children's Village.

We find this book extremely interesting, above all too because we knew few details about his life before he came to the Village, and he also speaks of his time there in a very personal way.



### News from the Children's Villages:

Woeser Lhamo came to the Village in Golok in 2010 as an orphan. She was extremely handicapped on account of an infection of her left hip that had been neglected, and she was quite unable to use the diseased leg. A first operation was carried out in 2010, and then this year a follow-up operation involving stretching the leg was performed at the Red Cross Hospital in Xining by the very experienced Swiss surgeon Dr. Juxe. The operation was performed without incident and the result is very gratifying. Lhamo can now stand on both feet and walk normally (see the photos on our website). As the clinic only charged us the material expenses, the cost was very reasonable. We were most fortunate that the Jung family from Switzerland took over the expenses of the operation. Our very sincere tanks to Dr Juxe, Mrs Piri and Mr Manfred Jung for their most generous support!





**Former Tadra student Lhakar Dolma**

is now completing her training as a stewardess in the Chinese city of Chengdu, where she is also studying Chinese calligraphy.



**This time we unfortunately also have to report a very sad piece of news:**

Shekar Lhamo, an 18-year-old student who came to us in Golok eight years ago and successfully completed ninth grade last year, has now died suddenly. Like a number of other children at the Children's Villages she had been suffering for a long time from a worm disease with involvement of the liver, a condition that is very prevalent in the region. She and the other affected children were under medical care and were given the appropriate drugs, and while the therapy was successful in the case of all the others, it was unfortunately not effective for her. But until the end she did not have the impression of being ill, and lived a normal life. During the school holidays her mother (Lhamo was a half-orphan) took her home and without consulting us took her to doctors in Xining. The doctors decided that an operation on the liver was necessary and suggested this procedure to her mother. The operation was performed at a large hospital in Xining, but sadly it did not proceed as planned, and Lhamo died two days later. Our Association gave the mother generous financial support and also took full care of the religious funeral. We, our staff and the children of both Children's Villages mourn this lovely heartfelt generous girl of high intelligence. She was a model student.



## News from Switzerland

### Switzerland's longest scarf for the TADRA children

Marthe Fontana has been supporting the TADRA project with all sorts of creative ideas for many years. And so, together with the knitting group Les tricoteuses du quartier d'Alt in the Swiss canton of Fribourg, countless warm articles of clothing for TADRA have come to see the light of day and are also sold at the numerous markets in favour of the Children's Villages. Attracting many knitters, Marthe has ensured that the TADRA children never want for warm bonnets, socks, gloves, scarves and other items.

Last autumn she organized a very special project, and she and a large number of helpers have created the longest scarf in Switzerland - more than four hundred metres in length! The whole scarf was first displayed at a street festival, and then split up into some three hundred pieces and sent to Tibet, where it now keeps all the Golok children warm and is greatly appreciated

in the long cold Tibetan winters. Together with the children we say, „Thank you Mrs Fontana!“. For those who wish to support this wonderful woman's work, they will find these products in the small wool and knitting shop "Aiguilles à malices" at 53 Grand Rue in Fribourg.



Mrs Fontana at her post

### Indefatigable Binia Zuber and her TADRA stalls

On visiting the TADRA Children's Villages in 2013, Binia took the children to her heart, and now she puts all her heart into the project in a variety of ways. She holds a market stall every year in several places and passes on 100% of the proceeds to the TADRA children. Thanks to the many knitted goods that we are offered without charge, Binia regularly brings together a sizeable sum of money for the project every year. She is greatly supported in her enterprise by her parents and friends. We express our most heartfelt thanks to Binia and all her helpers.



Binia at the Christmas Market in Murten, Switzerland

### Great success of the TADRA stand at the Fribourg Trade Fair!

With some eighty thousand visitors, the fair is the largest exhibition in Switzerland's canton of Fribourg. The organizers put a stand of 50 square metres at the disposal of the project and with that offered us a wonderful opportunity to make TADRA known to a wide public. A large number of helpers offered their time free of charge during the ten-day event, informing visitors about the Children's Villages and selling a variety of knitted goods, photos, scarves and much more. The entire proceeds were passed onto the TADRA project.



Binia, Doreen und Beat am Messestand

### **Celebrating the altruistic way**

What about celebrating one's birthday differently, and forgoing presents in favour of children in need? This unusual idea has given rise to several such celebrations this year. Dr François Godat of Murten, Councillor Thomas Rauber of Tifers and François Chatagny of Grolley have organized large parties in which they requested all the guests to support the TADRA children instead of bringing presents. This amazing initiative has produced large sums of money that have been donated to the project, enough to cover all costs of taking care of twenty children for a whole year! What more sensible and valuable a gift can one give? Our sincere thanks to all those involved in this wonderful gesture.

### **A talk with projection of a film as a powerful tool**

The costs of the TADRA project increase by some 50,00 Swiss francs every year, a major difficulty that needs to be overcome by our small team every year. Over the past year we have now held more than twenty film-talks all over Switzerland. These events have evoked great interest, and no less than 850 people attended the nine talks in the canton of Fribourg. A true blessing for our project, these events have brought in more than a hundred new donors and enormously enhanced the public's awareness of TADRA. In the meantime several individuals, associations and other organizations have offered to host similar talks elsewhere in Switzerland. If you know of such a possibility in your own area, please contact the Swiss TADRA team. The total time of the talk is 80-90 minutes including a 40-minute film.

### **A generous donation from the Madeleine Foundation**

The Madeleine Foundation of Fribourg helps disadvantaged children and those in need in Switzerland and abroad. This year the foundation donated the generous sum of 20,000 Swiss francs to the TADRA project. We have also learned that the foundation favours long-term support and is studying a second donation for next year. Many, many thanks for this wonderful gesture!

### **Vielen Dank – Merci beaucoup – Thank you very much!**

The TADRA Travel Reports are now published in three languages, German, French and English. All the translations are done by volunteer helpers, and we should like to thank them with all our hearts for their precious invisible contribution to TADRA! Their names are mentioned each time in the corresponding issue. We should like to extend here quite special thanks to Brian Levin, who undertakes many translations for the project and is also strongly committed to supporting the TADRA children. For several years now he has translated the entire Travel Reports into English by himself and has also undertaken various support campaigns in France.



Brian with children in Golok





Herzlichen Dank für Ihre wertvolle Unterstützung!

You can help the Tadra project by purchasing a TRINKHOR CD



**TRINKHOR CD + DVD**

We would be happy if you were to further support the project by buying a music CD or a DVD.

Trinkhor CD **III** and CD **IV** for 7,00 €

Trinkhor DVD **V** for 12,00 €

All proceeds of course go to the Tadra project!

### Special thanks to Mr. Brian Levin

from Michel Levin Communication who annually volunteers to do the english translation.

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