



THE TADRA  **PROJECT**

ORPHAN CHILDREN'S VILLAGES IN TIBET

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NEWSLETTER 2025





DEAR FRIENDS OF TADRA,

Twenty years of the Tadra Children's Village in Golok! On the second occasion since the coronavirus pandemic, two small groups of us have been able to travel to both our Villages and participate in this year's anniversary celebrations in Golok. A large part of this magazine is dedicated to this event.

Planning the Tadra project began thirty years ago. In 1997, the first children were admitted to Dawu, so that that the next „round-number“ anniversary will come up in 2027. At a time when such operations are not getting any easier in Tibet, we look back with gratitude and also a little pride on what we have achieved and been able to accomplish thanks to your help and support.

Particularly noteworthy are the many stories from and about our former „children“. Translation apps and the increasingly good English skills of some of our former charges enable those of us who don't speak Tibetan to receive authentic first-hand news from them. These show us how close the former residents feel to their Village, while time and again they express their gratitude to us visitors, knowing that without the project they would never have been able to obtain such an education. A most impressive aspect is the way the former residents play the role of mentor for the younger children, come to visit, bring gifts for the girls and boys, and make themselves available to them with advice and support, often via WeChat, the very popular messaging service in China.

The strong cohesion within the current population and the cross-generational networking that has developed over more than two and a half decades together prove that our Children's Villages are not limited to providing an opportunity for a school education and a career. The connection with Tadra has proved to be sustainable, with much support coming back from former pupils who are now gainfully employed, not only in material terms, but also above all in terms of ideas.

The many children in Tibet and we at the Tadra Association owe you all a debt of gratitude! Thug dsche tschhe (our sincerest thanks!). Please continue to remember us!

Dr. Youlha Tawo
First Chairperson
Tadra-Projekt e.V.

Dr. Klaus Vedder
Second Chairperson
Tadra-Projekt e.V.

Beat Renz
President, Board of Trustees
Tadra-DEMIGH-Foundation



MY THOUGHTS ON THE ANNIVERSARY

When my husband and I were given a new home with ten other children aged between ten and twelve at the Pestalozzi Children's Village in Wahlwies in southern Germany, we were lucky. We grew up in a Tibetan-influenced family atmosphere, but in a German environment that was completely foreign to us at the time. Thanks to this circumstance, we experienced these two cultures, and gradually came to know and appreciate the positive aspects of each of them. Looking back, we are extremely grateful for this.

As students, we remembered this period of our lives and wanted to thank those who had helped us so long ago. However, many of these people had already passed away. My husband said we should express our gratitude by taking up Pestalozzi's idea and, if possible, bring it to our old homeland Tibet. This idea gave rise to the Tadra Project, which came together with friends from Germany and Switzerland who have since become an important part of our lives.

At the 20th anniversary celebration in the second Children's Village in Golok this year, we were delighted to see how many children have found their own way and are looking to the future with hope.

Many of the former residents have come back to Dawu. They have not forgotten what their late father, my husband Palden, himself bound by fate, repeatedly told them: „You do not have the same parents, but you are siblings bound by fate. So you must be there for each other and help each other.“ They put this into practice and so share their joys and their sorrows. Locally, it is well known that the Tadra children stick together.

It was very moving to see how the children expressed their gratitude in various ways – with gifts, songs and so on – and expressly asked me to convey their deepest thanks to all the sponsors. One student told me that her life today would not be the same if it weren't for Tadra and these good people far away.

I am infinitely happy and grateful that life has been good to us, that we have reliable local staff and that so many wonderful people have supported us.

It is they who have made this project possible.

Chöni Tawo



These two sisters, Dondup Kyi (left) and Kunga Kyi (right) grew up in the most terrible conditions in a small stone hut. Below: Kunga Kyi (right) is now the mother of two children. Dondup Kyi is at the left of the picture.



20 YEARS OF THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE IN GOLOK

Two whole decades full of life, change, and connection.

When I look back on the past twenty years of the Golok Children's Village today, my heart becomes very still, filled with gratitude, joy, and deep pride. It is not just an anniversary. It is a milestone in a journey in which I have been privileged to participate from the very start. It is also a look back at a close, growing relationship with a very special community that has enriched my life and touched my heart.

In the course of these twenty years, it has been given to me to travel to Tibet 38 times. Each time was different, yet there was always a familiar feeling. Over the years, the children in both Villages have grown very dear to my heart. They let me get to know them, hear their stories and share their laughter, but also hear their worries and challenges. Children who started out as shy and curious became courageous young people with dreams, a sense of responsibility, and a firm place in life.

With each visit, I saw changes. The children were growing up, their personalities becoming more and more distinct. And one day, almost unnoticed, they were no longer standing in the long line to greet us. They were "elsewhere," going to secondary schools in distant cities. Certainly, more and more children were living in the Village, but I missed those who had flown the nest, but of course that too was a sign of progress, for they were ready to go out into the world. That is exactly what Tadra is all about, to offer them a good education and future and to give them wings.

Then, suddenly covid happened. For three years, I was unable to travel to Tibet. This was a painful time, not knowing how the children were doing, never being able to be with them during these important years. So it was all the more moving for me this year to meet a great number of former students again at the 20th anniversary celebration. I was excited, full of anticipation and also a little nervous. It was as though the years of separation had not weakened our bond, but strengthened it.



Dadrin and Damtsik surprised me with a visit the day after the party. They grew up together in the Golok Village, got married and are now the proud parents of two children themselves.

I was particularly moved to see that many of them have now started families of their own. Some proudly told me about their careers, their studies, the small businesses they have built up. And then there were those very special stories: at least six couples who had met as children in the Tadra village are now married. And so many of our former pupils arrived with their own children, who played at the festival where their mothers or fathers had grown up! A circle that has come full circle in a most wonderful way.

For me, this is living proof that we at Tadra have done many things right. What has been built here is much more than a children's village. It is a place of security, education, opportunity and hope. It is a space where children not only live, but can grow. A place where they can learn, trust and dream.

For me personally, these years with Tadra have been one of the most powerful experiences of my life. In both of the Children's Villages. I was able to experience what is possible when people come together to create something good, and to feel how the bonds created there remain strong over the years and across borders. I was able to see how small and often traumatised children are enabled to become self-confident personalities, full of courage, creativity and inner strength.

It fills me with deep joy and pride to be part of this story, knowing that we have not only built houses or provided food for them, but also opened up paths in life and given love. We accompanied them and let them go when the time was right. Time and again, we have seen that the trust we gave has come back to us, richer, more mature.

Today, after twenty years of the Golok Children's Village, I look not only back, but also towards the future. I see so much hope in the faces of the more than 700 children who live in our two Villages today. They are strong because they can put down roots and receive everything a child needs for a good future. It is also wonderful to see the support of the more than a thousand young members of the Tadra family who have since flown the nest. They too support the Tadra Project in every way they can.

Thank you, everyone who has accompanied us on this journey and supported us along the way. Thank you, the children for their trust, their openness and their love, and thank you life for allowing me to experience all of this and, may we hope, continue to do so for a long time to come.

Beat Renz

Endless
expanses in
northeastern
Tibet



MY INTRODUCTION TO THE TADRA WORLD

My eyes search for something to focus on in the endless expanse of the Tibetan landscape. The lush green is interrupted only by black and white dots – yaks and modern nomad tents. We have been sitting in the car for hours on our way to Golok – and my thoughts are racing.

The evening before, we're sitting at a round table in the back room of a small homestay. Bottles of wheat beer and barley liqueur are being passed around. Tibetan folk songs fill the room. I get a first impression of the daily balancing act between personal identity and the political power apparatus that the people here have to cope with.

Two days earlier, I had met Chöni and Tsering for the first time at Frankfurt Airport. Their arrival in Chengdu did not go quite as planned, but better than we had feared. After seven hours, both were allowed to enter the country. What a relief!

A few weeks earlier, my father had to cancel his long-awaited trip to Tibet. Suddenly, I found myself in a completely different role as travel companion – and with much greater responsibility.

The whirlwind of thoughts is interrupted when Chöni excitedly points to the first houses on the horizon: Golok. We'll be there soon.

An enormous throng of people await us at the gate – teachers and students all standing at the ready with good luck scarves. As we stumble through the crowd, they drape the scarves around our shoulders. Suddenly we are standing in our guest apartment, and Chöni comes in. There is a hug for every child.

After a short break, it's straight to business: the semi-finals of the annual basketball tournament are about to begin. The vastness of the landscape contrasts with the confines of the hall. I am surrounded by children. They run towards me in groups, ask questions in English and run away laughing, only to return with new questions. This game repeats itself for over an hour until the final whistle blows. Slowly, the hall empties – it's time for dinner.

The next three days are spent preparing for the 25th anniversary celebrations in the Children's Village. Klaus, Beat and Muriel arrive from Dawu. Groups of children keep passing by, their eyes shining with curiosity and liveliness. „Father Beat“ especially seems to know every child in the older age groups, and is greeted warmly everywhere he goes.

The anniversary celebrations run smoothly, in both political and organisational terms. At the close of the official programme, the tension visibly lifts from everyone. There is singing, laughter and celebration late into the night. The solidarity among all those present is truly impressive.

After another day of travelling, we reach the Children's Village in Dawu. The landscape is almost alpine, with its traditional architecture and the bright colours of the buildings. The Dawu Village is picturesquely situated by the river, with large old trees providing shade.

But the idyll is not untroubled: there has been a freeze on admissions for almost five years. The school has been closed, and the remaining children must attend the state boarding school during the week and are only allowed to return at weekends and for the holidays. We can imagine the long-term impact this will have on Dawu and the Tadra Project.



The residents
of Sunrise
House with
Mathias.
Sunrise House
was financed
by Mathias's
parents, Mr and
Mrs Rütten
and their
Foundation.

Nevertheless, we still find time here too for beautiful moments together. The celebration with the former pupils is exuberant, with much singing, dancing and laughter. Towards the end of the evening, the first verse of „What a Wonderful World“ rings out – a touching moment, and it's time to say goodbye.

My eyes search the green mountains for yaks and nomad tents. In vain. There is less and less nature to be seen. I have been sitting in the car to Chengdu for hours – and my thoughts are full of the valuable work that Tadra has been doing for so many years to give these children a future. I think of the respect I have for all the people who fight daily for the welfare of the children under difficult political circumstances. Also, I am so impressed by the hospitality, warmth and openness of all those who invited us into their homes and enriched us with their stories.

These encounters remain vivid in my mind long after I have left the mountains – and indicate how important it is to for this work to continue. Every contribution, every piece of support provides the children of this remote region with not only education, but also hope and life prospects.

Mathias Bähr





**20 YEARS
OF GOLOK -
A CELEBRATION
IN PICTURES**





MANTSO - A TADRA STORY

This is the story of Mantso, one of the many stories about our „Tadra children“ that touch our hearts and make us so proud.

When Mantso was born in 2000 in the picturesque Yukon Valley, the only way to reach her village from Dawu was via a dangerous track that wound its way over a pass at an altitude of more than 4,500 metres. Rockfalls and landslides were a constant danger, and the journey took many hours. Mantso is the youngest of three children in the family. But she is not blessed with a happy family. Her father had already abandoned them, and her mother died a few days after Mantso's birth, probably from childbed fever. When Mantso talks about how much it grieves her that she never knew what it felt like to have a mother, we listeners are deeply moved.

Mantso was cared for in her earliest years by her loving grandparents, who still offer her refuge and comfort in difficult times. But living far away in the Yukon Valley, her grandparents would not have been able to provide her with a scholastic education. One of her uncles, who had learned to read and write as a lama in a monastery, had heard about the Tadra project, and prompted them to apply for admission.

And so, at the age of eight, Mantso came to our Children's Village in Dawu. She was taken in at Andrea House along with other children who had all suffered a similar fate. When they said goodbye, her grandmother had pulled herself together so as not to make it too difficult for Mantso, but when later Mantso talked to her grandparents on the phone for the first time, she told us that her grandmother had cried bitterly.

Over time, the Tadra Village in Dawu became her new family. Mantso was a good, diligent student, and her excellent school grades enabled her to attend secondary school. While she had no problems getting through middle school in Dawu, the high school in Kanding was a huge challenge for her. The pressure to perform was enormous and she felt very lonely, far away from both the Tadra Village and her grandparents. All our high school graduates tell a similar story of those years. The extreme demands were always justified the requirements for getting a place at university.

But Mantso took this challenge in her stride too and went on to study Cultural Industry Management at



Sichuan University of Culture and Arts in Chengdu. In July 2025, she graduated with a Bachelor of Management degree. She is currently preparing for further exams with the aim of finding an appropriate job in the civil service where she can contribute to the preservation of Tibetan culture.

When Mantso told us her story in fluent English during our visits in 2024 and 2025, we got to know an impressive young woman with an open and cheerful laugh, enthusiasm and a great willingness to help.

Mantso, we congratulate and are proud of you!

Klaus Vedder



The taste of their childhood

Below: Children need children



FROM ESSENTIALS TO FULFILMENT

In this article, I would like to share my experiences of meeting the Tadra children this year by looking at human needs through the lens of Maslow's pyramid, with which he developed a psychological model that ranks our needs from the most essential to the highest.

Physiological needs and the need for safety come first. When a child comes to Tadra, these are the basic criteria that obtain. From the moment of their arrival, they can be sure of a varied meal every day and a roof over their heads.

One evening, I was sitting at table together with a youngster who had returned for holiday. He asked me if I liked the food, because for him, he said, it was the flavour of his childhood, his „Madeleine de Proust“. It was slightly sticky noodles in a kind of soup with a few pieces of cauliflower, with no seasoning. He told me that all the children here appreciate this food so much because it is proof that they will have something to eat every day.

Next in the pyramid are social needs, a sense of belonging and love. Every child who arrives in the Village is welcomed by his or her peers. While their stories are all different and they come from great variety of backgrounds, they have several things in common: they have all experienced hunger, poverty and cold. As soon as they arrive, they are surrounded by other children who understand what they are going through. They are given time to settle into this new family. At first, they often sleep in the same bed as another child so that they don't feel alone. Very quickly, they become part of the Tadra family. They call each other brothers and sisters.

We were fortunate to share a meal with Samdrup Dolma and Nyima Rangshar, who both had grown up in this Tadra Village. Each of them moved to a different city to study. One day, they met again in a bar. Since then, they have been inseparable. They even told us about their wedding plans with rosy cheeks and blissful smiles! In the photos that Klaus showed him, which went back almost 25 years, Nyima Rangshar recognised his own brothers and told us all about them. Many have remained in close contact.

Next to last in the pyramid is the need for appreciation and recognition. Like every child in the world, they too need recognition and appreciation in order to flourish and develop.



Best in the class

Below: Encouragement through visits and shared time

On several occasions we observed how much appreciation they receive from their teachers at school. But also from the housemothers and the Village head. Some introduced us to their classmates and told us how intelligent they are and how proud of them they are,

They all want us to remember their names, but unfortunately, that is very difficult to do. But a broad smile spreads across their faces when Beat, with his phenomenal memory for names, calls them out one by one!

A very moving moment was when Dawa Pomo and Sonam Dorje, both aged 11, received a report card testifying to their being the best in their class, and looked over at us to make sure we had really seen it. Such pride!

It is very important for both the smaller children and the older ones that we spend time with them. They are happy to show us what they can do. We take the time to watch them, listen to them and make them the centre of our attention. Some tell us about their school, their family, their history, or ask us very different questions such as „Why do you have a funny nose?“ or „Is there discrimination against minorities in your country?“ In such moments, these children are really important to someone who has travelled across the world to meet them. They have an inbuilt motivation to learn and to discover! Their horizons broaden and their self-esteem develops.

Finally, the tip of the pyramid, or the icing on the cake, is the need for self-actualisation. To achieve this, everyone must follow their or own path. As mentioned above, the foundations have been put in place. Each young person has the potential to become the best version of him- or herself.

We were also fortunate to meet many of the Tadra children who are now adults. They all impressed us with their maturity, ambition and zest for life! And, of course, with their gratitude to Tadra, which gave them such an enormous opportunity in their lives.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who is involved in or financially supports the two Tadra Villages so that this wonderful impulse for life can be maintained.

Muriel Chatagny



Nyima Rangshar (2nd line from the front, 5th from the left) in front of a family house under construction in 2001

Samdrup Dolma (l.) und Nyima Rangshar (r.)



HOW A SINGLE PHOTO BROUGHT UP A WEALTH OF MEMORIES

Twenty-five years ago, in 2000, and once again in 2001, I was able to make my first trips to Dawu, the homeland of our Tadra Children's Villages, or more precisely to Kham, in southeastern Tibet. The first three houses in the Dawu Village had just been completed, the school was under construction and lessons were still being held in some old barracks. Our Village in Golok did not yet exist. So the number of children we had taken in at that time was still manageable. In addition to the group photos, we photographed each individual child as a portrait and to document the construction of further family houses and the school.

This year the Village head, Thubten Nyima, tasked me to bring my photos from that time to add to the documents on the history of Tadra, so I scanned a number of slides onto my tablet and took them with me on the journey there.

As luck would have it, after arriving in Chengdu, our small group met two former Village residents, Samdrup Dolma and Nyima Rangshar, who had only recently met up again. Each of them has a different history with Tadra, as they grew up in Dawu at different periods. Both have now found their place in society and a livelihood. Nyima manages two restaurants in Chengdu, while Samdrup works as a lecturer at the University for Minorities in Chengdu.

When we were eating dinner together that evening, I learnt that Nyima had come to our Children's Village in 2000 and he immediately pointed to himself in the group photo on my tablet, triggering an avalanche of memories. Nyima recognised every single child in the picture, knew something about their background and when and where they had last met. He could hardly tear himself away from the photos, so immersed was he in the memories of his Tadra story that had begun 25 years earlier.

Klaus Vedder



THE TADRA PROJECT IN FIGURES

In the financial year 2024, we were able to implement a number of renovations in both of the Children's Villages. Material and labour costs have also risen enormously locally, so that whenever possible, our employees and in some cases the older children contributed their own labour to save money.

The increase in costs were particularly noticeable in school and tuition fees, as well as for the accommodation and meals for our many secondary school pupils, students and trainees from outside the Village. Here too, the expenses were reduced by some of the older children taking over small jobs.

Although our 2024 profit and loss statement inevitably closes with a deficit in both Germany and Switzerland, the lacking finances were fully covered by our provisions.

2024 TADRA-PROJEKT E.V. GERMANY

2024 Income and expenses
01.01.24 to 31.12.24 (in Euros)

INCOME

Sponsorships	55.035,51
Donations	79.502,81
Earmarked donation for postage	1.000,00
Total income	135.538,32

EXPENSES

1&1 Internet AG (Homepage)	1.088,89
Bank charges	590,64
Office equipment/postage	1.788,95
Lexware bookkeeping	64,90
Project financing Golok	157.690,00
Tax advisor	307,62
Telephone calls to Tibet	538,68
Total expenses	162.069,68
Total expenses less income	-26.531,36

Administration costs 4.379,68 € = 2,7 %

2024 TADRA-DEMIGH-STIFTUNG SWITZERLAND

2024 Income and expenses
01.01.24 to 31.12.24 (in CHF)

INCOME


Sponsorships	14.480,00
Donations	239.038,22
Accrued interest	1.708,12
Total income	255.226,34

EXPENSES

Bank charges Credit Suisse	125,50
Bank charges Raiffeisen	2.509,65
Project financing Dawu	190.927,41
Project financing Golok	100.000,00
Treuhand- u. Revisions-AG	972,90
Total expenses	294.535,46
Total expenses less income	-39.309,12

Administration costs 3.608,05 CHF = 1,22 %

We did not incur any costs for the printing, layout or postage of the 2024 Annual Report. Many thanks to our donors again!



**...AND BY THE WAY,
YOU CAN ALSO
SUPPORT US
THROUGH PAYPAL !**

SPECIAL THANKS

TO MR. BRIAN LEVIN

**SPECIAL THANKS TO BRIAN LEVIN,
WHO VOLUNTEERS EVERY YEAR TO
DO THE FULL ENGLISH TRANSLATION
OF OUR ANNUAL REPORT**

TADRA-PROJEKT E.V. - CONTACT

GERMANY

Tadra-Projekt e.V. // Chöni Tawo
Im Rübengarten 5 // 53773 Hennef (Sieg)
T 02242-9057723 // info@tadra.de // www.tadra.de
Registered office: Hennef / Deutschland

DONATION ACCOUNT

Tadra-Projekt e.V.
Sparkasse an Volme und Ruhr
IBAN: DE94 4585 0005 0000 1212 02

SWITZERLAND

Tadra-DEMIGH-Stiftung // Beat Renz
info@tadra.ch // www.tadra.ch

DONATION ACCOUNT

Tadra-DEMIGH-Stiftung
Credit Suisse // Zürich
IBAN: CH44 0483 5005 0453 2000 0