

Helping those in need for **30** years



No. 1. 2010

Tibetans

Nepal

Zimbabwe

South Africa

UK

Overwhelmed by people in need

Last year's replacement of the Zimbabwean dollar by US and South African currency made it much more difficult for people to survive. Most people are unemployed and as a result have no money. The number of homeless, destitute and despairing people is increasing, often wandering the streets in search of anything that will help them and their families to survive.



Queuing for help.

ROKPA Support Network has an open door approach for those who need help of any kind, but there are extremely limited funds. Most people are looking for medicine and food and also school fees, accommodation, spectacles, bus fares home, hospital fees, artificial limbs and walking aids. We help as many people as our resources allow.

Food packs are limited to maize meal, beans & cooking oil, though occasionally flour and rice are added.

Medicines take a large part of our budget as the health services have collapsed. Last year a cholera epidemic killed over 4,000 people. It is feared this will return this year, especially since the water and drainage systems have not been maintained.

Pedzisai and Tinashe

Pedzisai and his three year old son Tinashe are a familiar sight at the ROKPA centre in Harare. Once Pedzisai worked in an accountancy office but now like 90 per cent of the population of Zimbabwe he is unemployed.

When he first came to the Centre in 2005, Pedzisai was sick, hungry and homeless. Now he is much stronger: "All I want is to work again," he says - but there are no jobs. He makes some money collecting used plastic bottles.

Today Pedzisai lives in an improvised shelter in a phone box - but he keeps himself busy doing odd jobs at the Centre, both paid and unpaid.

Like many others Pedzisai depends on ROKPA for help with food and medicines. When his son's mother walked out, leaving him the baby, he found the ROKPA training in Positive Living and Therapy helped him to cope with his situation. Now he has set up his own group based in the vegetable market near his home and shares the knowledge and skills he has gained at ROKPA.

Wiseman, ROKPA worker says: "Pedzi's material life is hard, but ROKPA has given him a place where he can be welcomed and respected, and where he has gained the strength to deal calmly and even cheerfully with his many difficulties.



Pedzisai and Tinashe

members of ROKPA here because they assist us in lots of ways.

So I say to you, please keep it up with your assistance to Zimbabwe. Thank you so much for helping where help is needed."

Pedzisai Shava Charumbira

Serving food in India

Last December marked the 5th annual ROKPA Soup Kitchen in Bodh Gaya, India. From offering food to 200 local poor people for one day it has grown to around 750 people for 7 days.

Bihar is one of the poorest states in India and home to the most important Buddhist holy site - Bodh Gaya. Beggars gather in their hundreds to catch pilgrims on their way to the Bodhi tree,



under which the Buddha sat to reach enlightenment. The soup kitchen is something tangible and positive to offer in between the prayers during the Kagyu Monlam, one of the Buddhist events, and there is no shortage of volunteers. They come from all over the world and have a natural wish to help, and it's a good way to connect with local people and treat them with respect.

Through fortunate circumstances, this year, we were able to have the support of Chyamsin-la, the sister of His Holiness Karmapa, and to combine our food provision with a medical camp run by the Malaysian Medical Foundation. Everyone was made welcome. They queued patiently to register and see the doctor, then were able to have a hot meal of rice, dahl and vegetables.

With careful spending, **£200 feeds around 750 people each day** and provides employment for 10 local cooks who start work at 4am each day.

We're planning to do it again in 2010, so please send your donations by November at the latest.

Tibetan education

In China there are thousands of Tibetan children who have little chance of an education. Although the government now pay the school fees for the 1st to 9th grades, children who can't raise the money for transport, books, medical expenses and clothes remain excluded.

The government provide 3-4 Yuan (33p), a day for food yet the actual costs are around 12 Yuan for a child in primary school, increasing to around 20 Yuan in lower middle school. ROKPA supports the poorest Tibetan children by paying all these expenses making their education possible and less difficult.

ROKPA's main focus is the education of orphans and those from severely disadvantaged backgrounds. Girls in particular are a priority as we believe that their education is the best way to bring about long term social change.

With no other support beyond lower middle school, we are the only hope for young adults seeking to reach their academic potential, so ROKPA pays the full costs through higher middle school, college and university.

Lhamo Gyab



The story of Lhamo Gyab, a 19 year old who came to Luchu School from the small farming village of Alla, is typical of the many children we support.

"My mother died seven years ago in a car accident and my father is ill. He has a problem with his lungs and also suffers from low blood pressure. Because of this he can't do any physical work and so my 17 year old brother supports my family. He does the farm work and also takes on work locally. On average he earns 500 Yuan per month (£55) and this is what my family live on.

"In order to help them I spend my holidays working at construction sites, usually digging foundations or drains.

That can earn me 10-15 Yuan per day which makes about 350 Yuan per month (£34). Sometimes I manage to get jobs at travel agencies as a translator, which helps me practise my English and Chinese.

When I was little, the most difficult thing for me was having no food. We often lived on just tsampa (ground barley flour).

Then, three years ago our house burnt down. With help from other families we managed to rebuild some of it but now the whole family lives in one room. After that my father became very depressed and he still has not recovered.

I am now in my final school year and am top of my class in my favourite subjects: Tibetan and English. I really want to study these at university so I can become a translator, but I have no money. I hope that ROKPA can help me."

A letter from Nepal

The following report was written by Ram Hari to Lea Wyler, Nepal Project Manager:

"Since you left Nepal a few weeks ago much has happened. We celebrated Darshain (Nepal's largest annual celebration in honour of the goddess Durga, which lasts ten days). The children were on holiday from school. Some travelled to their relatives and we celebrated with the 15 children who stayed behind, serving momos, chicken and samosas.

The older children and the new ROKPA employees Sagar and Hemraj carried out night duty.

We kept Pemba here with us, since his mother isn't doing so well at the moment. Little Rajen travelled home but soon returned, as his mother is addicted to drugs.



Pemba and Little Rajen

Kedar (16) is helping his mother rebuild their small hut, which was swept away during the last monsoon. We are helping him out with the work, which is being financed by a generous donor.

Ganesh Dai (our doorman), Radha Miss (our secretary), Parbati (who cares for the little ones), Shiva (the guesthouse doorman and soup kitchen cook), as well as all the workers at the ROKPA women's workshop also had a holiday.



Kelsang, best in college

Some children have already begun school again, while others have a whole month free. We paint a lot with the children who have holidays. Parbati (22) was accepted into college and is now completing a bachelor's

degree in tourism. To sum up, the children at the ROKPA Children's Home are all doing well.

Kelsang (20) left today and says goodbye to everyone. As the best student at the hotel college in Kathmandu, she has been chosen to complete an internship at the Hilton Hotel in Malaysia!"

Ram Hari was a 'ROKPA child'. Now 26, he is married and has a daughter and has been working at the ROKPA Children's Home for five years. He was recently made the Guesthouse manager and ROKPA has just named him a Trustee Manager in Nepal as well.



Tibetan historic and cultural sites

Sites of Tibetan historic and cultural significance are being identified by ROKPA before they are lost to memory. These are being marked in a number of ways: with a Choten or Stupa, a plaque or by a statue. These sites will draw pilgrims and tourists and so will be very beneficial to local economies as well as hugely culturally important for Tibetans.

Donors towards cultural projects can, on request, receive a card with a picture of one of these sites.

of helping those in need

How it began

1980 Akong Rinpoche, is inspired to help other Tibetan refugees in India, helped by Lea Wyler and her father Dr Veit Wyler. ROKPA is born.

1989 The first three Tibetan project agreements signed.

1990 Soup Kitchen in Nepal began and Lea Wyler rescued the first 7 children off the streets.

1995 Soup Kitchen began in Johannesburg, South Africa.

1996 Number of projects supported for Tibetans in China rose to 35.

2002 The first food distribution began in Zimbabwe.

2005 Opening of new-built Children's Home in Nepal for 80 children.

Who we help now

Tibetan areas of China

Over 150 education, health, social and cultural projects supported.

10,678 students in education and many thousands more benefiting through our health care projects.

Nepal

80 children at the Children's Home, up to 800 people a day at the Soup Kitchen in the winter, 10 at the Womens' Workshop, up to 50 'start-up' funds for small businesses every year.

Zimbabwe

Up to 1,000 of the most vulnerable: the sick, orphans, the disabled and the desitute are helped every month. An orphanage for 900 children can now be supported through ROKPA.

South Africa

Food and training for up to 300 in the streets of Johannesburg. Social support & skills training for 200 around Groot Marico.

India

Up to 5,000 meals at Bodhgaya. We also continue to support a number of Tibetan refugees.

UK

Currently 5 students in Edinburgh.

What we do

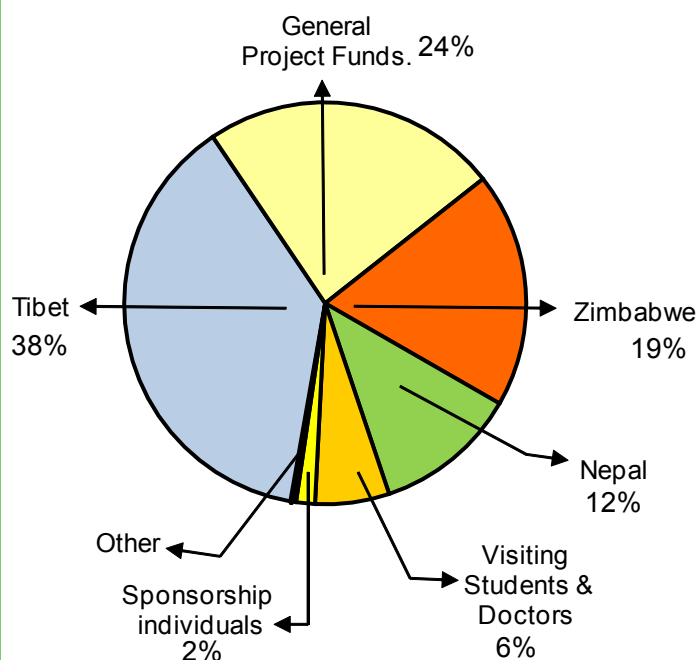
ROKPA is able to work in some of the most remote and difficult regions of the world, such as the **Tibetan areas of China** and **Zimbabwe**, locations with extremely low income environments and well publicised political difficulties. We also work in **South Africa, Nepal and India**, as well as parts of **Europe and the UK**.

ROKPA's aim is to help people in need, regardless of nationality or religion and to give practical help and sustainable assistance to individuals and communities so as to improve their lives and help them become more self-supporting.

In order to achieve this goal, ROKPA concentrates on **education and healthcare**, but also recognises the importance of **culture and the environment** as well as giving aid where no long-term solution is possible.

In the words of our motto, ROKPA seeks to **"help where help is needed"**, but we do this in the full knowledge that the people we work with are fully capable of helping themselves, and that all they need are the resources to make it possible.

What ROKPA UK does with all the funds we receive from you.



UK admin costs are raised through sales and bank interest.

UK Income in 2009: £297,765.

What your help can do

Tibetan areas:

- £10 a month at primary school.
- £20 a year for a child's health care.
- £25-50 a month at secondary school.
- £487 a year's study at university.
- £723 pays a Tibetan Medical Doctor's salary for a year.

Zimbabwe:

- £6 a month for food for one person.
- £7.50 for a doctor's visit & medicines.
- £81 per child for a Life Skills Camp.
- £159 per year for secondary school.
- £126 per person for training on HIV/AIDS protection & care.

Nepal:

- £47 for a meal at the soup kitchen for 400 people.
- £124 for a child care & education at the children's home for a month.

South Africa

- £66 feeds 270 people a week in Johannesburg.
- £1,600 per annum for local community needs in Groot Marico.

UK

- £500 a month for bed, board & health care for a student in Edinburgh.

See above how you can change a life ... Get in touch to make a difference

ROKPA

Registered Charity No.
in England & Wales (1059293)
and in Scotland (SC038628)

Tibetans

Nepal

Zimbabwe

South Africa

UK

Training to preserve endangered species

Tibetan Doctors Droni and Tenpa are doing really well at the Scottish Agricultural College. Studying alongside them at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, is Palden whose main focus is on improving his English at the Institute of Applied Language Studies. All are gaining vast amounts of knowledge to be used at home in the challenge of saving Tibetan medicinal plants from near extinction.

It is amazing what these young Tibetans have been able to achieve given the language and cultural difficulties. Mark Hocart, a senior tutor at SAC wrote: "Droni is a hard working student who has done well to adapt to the learning



Palden, Droni and Tenpa

environment. She has progressed well at her academic studies and proved herself able to comprehend and use the scientific knowledge the course provides."

There are similar comments about Tenpa and Palden, all of which confirms that their hard work and dedication is inspirational, and that all the 'investment' made in them is truly worth it.

The students give presentations of the documentary 'Blue Poppy' by Sitar Rose which describes their lives from their Tibetan backgrounds to Edinburgh. The film is available from ROKPA.

Celebrating 30 years of ROKPA

ROKPA Dance Tour 2010 in London



The Dance Tour group

ROKPA in London invite you to celebrate our 30th anniversary!

The centrepiece of the celebrations will be a dance tour featuring ex-street kids from the ROKPA children's home in Nepal. The children will be touring through various European countries and we are proud to be hosting them in London with a performance at the **Cochrane Theatre on Sunday June 20th at 6pm**. Please, put this date in your diary!

All tickets will be £10 and available soon. If you want us to let you know when the box office will be open please e-mail us at london@rokpa.org.

Help Kanze Girls' School reach £1,000 from 50 donors:

ROKPA UK has joined the GlobalGiving UK Project Challenge, which could, WITH YOUR HELP DURING APRIL 2010, make it possible for us to raise enough to support the Kanze Girls School. We could win up to £1,250 extra funding as well as gain a permanent place on their website. Go to www.globalgiving.co.uk/5018, and make your donation.

What is Rokpa?

ROKPA means to help or serve in Tibetan. Founded in 1980 by Tibetan Doctor Akong Rinpoché, it is a non-political humanitarian aid organisation, helping people in need irrespective of their nationality, religion or cultural background.

Make 2010 the BEST YEAR YET!

Here are some ROKPA fundraising supporters who have taken up this challenge:

Ali Glenny for a fundraising yoga day on Easter Sunday at her yoga studio in London – check out her website www.movingprayer.co.uk.

Susie Brattesani for a 4 day Aromathon from Inverness to Eskdalemuir via Aviemore, Dundee and Edinburgh between 14th-18th July. Donate £1 to ROKPA towards a Prize Draw. One lucky winner will be given an aromatherapy treatment and Indian head massage at each venue, ending in a 'Taster' Session of various therapies in Eskdalemuir. Contact: aromathon@live.co.uk

Thank you to:

Mick Lawlor & Friends held a music evening at Hotel Deux, Nottingham. The venue was given free by Rob, the owner, who also donated champagne for the raffle. It all raised £350.00.



Gomba Sherpa

Gomba Sherpa who did the Walk For Scotland in Edinburgh and raised £210.00.

Mark Ralston who raised over £200 by having a collection tin in his Post Office in Tyne & Wear.

Many others are raising funds by having our Collection tins in their shops and clinics and we would like to express our gratitude to you all.

ROKPA can support your event by providing T Shirts, sponsor forms, advertising on our www.ropkpa.org/events page, posters and publicity.