



ALTITUDE PROJECT

Community Support Foundation

Dear Friends, and Friends of Friends,

Thank you so much to all who have generously donated to the 2019 campaign to support schools in the remote Upper Dolpo region of Nepal! And for those who have been considering a donation to Altitude Project, or who have donated previously and perhaps forgotten, please let this be a gentle reminder that there is still time to make a difference for 2019!

In this Newsletter:

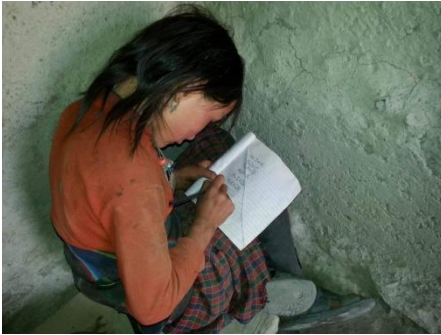
- Schools supported in 2019 – we have added a one-time grant for a fifth school this year
- Dorje Dolma “Yak Girl” author, artist - West Kootenay and Okanagan tour - recap
- ENPHO - Public Health – Safe Drinking Water – Training for 16 people
- REED - Teacher Training Initiative
- Solar Lights by LuminAID
- Medical Care Ambitions – Long Term Initiative
- Ways to Donate

Schools:

- Our primary mission is to support education in the Upper Dolpo region of Nepal.
- For 2019, we are providing support to 5 schools:
 - Saldang – where we began and in conjunction with Freunde Nepal of Germany
 - Komang – our second school and in conjunction with Tripod of Koma from Sweden
 - Karang – the third school added with a grant in 2016; we are now the primary sponsor for this school with some ancillary support from Switzerland and the US
 - Ku – in 2018 we gave Ku a one-time grant. After meetings with the school coordinator in December we have decided to continue our support. The school coordinator is hard working and ambitious and is doing good things for his community. This school has multiple sponsors.
 - Tiling – this is a new school for us. I met recently with the people from Tiling and learned that they have lost one of their primary sponsors. For 2019, we have agreed to a one-

time grant to fund the transport of all supplies and to purchase food supplies for teachers and for student lunches.

- A huge thank you to Peter Werth who contributes not only his expertise to provide solar / wind power to the schools but also fills in the funding gaps at many schools.



Tiling School – Mukot Himal Basic School

Dorje Dolma – Yak Girl

In late January and early February, Altitude Project sponsored author and artist Dorje Dolma's "Yak Girl" book and multimedia tour in the west Kootenay and Okanagan valley. We also screened a movie about her family called "The Only Son" at the Civic Theatre in Nelson BC.

Dorje was extremely well received at each event (9 events in 7 days!). At venues in Nelson, Vernon and Kelowna attendance records were smashed. We offer a huge thank you to the many people that helped spread the word and especially to Craig in Kelowna and Clive in Vernon. Clive not only spread the word but gave us a place to stay and offered us terrific hospitality at his home.

One of Altitude's goals with this project was to broaden our audience about our work in the Dolpo. Mission accomplished! It was such a perfect way to introduce our work to more people by having such an interesting and entertaining author talk about the place she was born and lived as a child; a place where Altitude Project now sponsors a school! Thank you Dorje – it was great fun to travel with you for a week. Thanks to David R. Gluns as well for installing his amazing photos of students and villagers of Saldang at each event – it really added a lot of interest to the events and made people feel like they were in the Dolpo!



We were fortunate to get some good press thanks to Anne DeGrace of the Nelson Public Library and Bill Metcalfe of the Nelson Star. Nelson Coop radio also had us on the morning show and Ana and Jeff who host “Shift Happens” interviewed Dorje and me on their show – thanks to all of you for helping to make Dorje’s tour in our part of Canada a great success!



Dorje’s passion is to fund a desperately needed year-round health centre in the Upper Dolpo region. Funds raised during this tour will be applied to that goal. Dorje sold all the books that she brought and is shipping some extras to fill additional orders. She also sold DVDs of the movie and her truly amazing art prints! You can learn more about Dorje and view her work at dorjearts.com

ENPHO – Public Health NGO – a three-day training program for 16 people will be held on Feb 25, 26 and 27. The focus of the training is to provide education about water quality – safe drinking water; proper use of toilet facilities; and general hygiene practices. The program is called “WASH” – water; sanitation and hygiene and was started by a Calgary based Canadian NGO – CAWST. They operate in about 80 countries and ENPHO is their affiliate in Nepal. I met with them recently and am very impressed with the training they can provide and the practical options / solutions they offer as well. The people receiving the training are school coordinators, teachers and some nurses – all from the Upper Dolpo. We are also providing an allowance for the purchase of up to ten simple water filters that can be used to provide safe drinking water at the schools.

Although our primary purpose is to provide education, it has become clear that just keeping children alive and healthy is a necessity. Too many children get sick from contaminated drinking water and some die – we can help with this problem. Training key people and providing some simple water filters is a good first step.

We are hopeful that we can fund a trip for an ENPHO expert to visit Saldang to evaluate the drinking water situation and determine how to install a permanent safe drinking water system.



– Initial session in December with ENPHO – Bipin Dangol – Manager and school coordinators

REED - Teacher Training Initiative Altitude Project, along with 8 other NGOs from around the world, is providing funding for the first year of a teacher training program. Eighty teachers from the Upper Dolpo will receive ten days of training starting on March 26th at Dunai in the lower Dolpo. Afterwards, they will move to higher ground to open the schools for the season. This training is important – most of the project teachers are not trained as teachers. They are people from the Dolpo that have completed high school and / or college in Kathmandu and that wish to return to help people in their villages. It is admirable on their part and touching to witness. Part of the training program includes follow-up in the field by the trainers to help the teachers implement the skills they have learned. This is an exciting initiative and we are proud to be part of it. It will improve the learning outcomes for students.

Solar Lights – by LuminAID – we delivered 125 solar lights in 2018 and have recently sent another 125 that will be delivered this spring to villagers at several villages in the Upper Dolpo. These simple lights really make a difference. To have a light in the home in the evening is a game changer; it allows children to work on their studies in the evening. Travel between homes and night becomes easier and they are extremely useful for trips to the toilet as well. There have been some reports that the lights seem to keep snow leopards away from animal pens at night but I expect they will soon figure that one out!



Medical Care Ambitions – Long Term Initiative - the health posts that exist at Namdo, Saldang and Karang provide very basic care. And, they are closed in the winter, the time of year when people get very sick! Infant mortality rate is still extremely high in some parts of the Upper Dolpo at ~ 50%, and up to 25% of mothers die during childbirth. There is a desperate need for improvement. There is an amazing small-scale hospital at Bhejir (that is funded by generous people from the US and Switzerland) but patients must cross a 5,000+ meter pass to get there – not an easy task even when healthy. A long-term goal is to create a similar type of small-scale hospital at Saldang that would provide a higher level of health care and that can provide tests such as blood chemistry and ultrasound imaging. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the annual budget of the hospital at Bhejir is only \$35,000 US. Last year they treated ~1,000 patients. This is the project that Dorje Dolma “Yak Girl” is most interested in funding. The capital cost will be high but if she manages to get herself on the Ellen show, maybe her dream will come true faster than anticipated!

Most nurses in the Upper Dolpo are originally from this region and have returned to help their villages! Tashi Bhuti Lama, originally from Bhejir, decided to become a nurse at age 3 when she witnessed her mother’s death during childbirth. Now 29 years-old, she is a shining example for how education in the Dolpo helps their communities.



Images of hospital at Bhejir – Tashi Bhuti – nurse and General Manager

During a very recent (and short) trip to Kathmandu, I met with Tsering Wangmo, a nurse who is originally from Dho Tarap, in the Upper Dolpo. Tsering is an amazing person – she has a vision and not much gets in her way. Recently she was the first recipient of the Eloise Brinkman Perak Award for excellence in high Himalayan rural health care. She is the go-to person in Nepal for the Upaya Nepal Nomad’s Clinic. Joan Halifax of Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe New Mexico is the founder of this organization that brings medical care to extremely remote parts of Nepal in month long mobile camps each year. Tsering works each winter as the head nurse for the winter health clinic for Dolpo people in Kathmandu at the Stupa Community Hospital. It is a free clinic sponsored by Dolpo Tulku.



Tsering Wangmo - Nurse

As Altitude Project grows, and it seems to be growing, we will undoubtedly need more help. Although I can't clearly define the needs at this point, if you are interested in becoming involved with our work, please let me know by email and include some information about why you are interested and something about your skill sets – thanks!

We are in the preliminary stages of planning a return trip(s) to the Upper Dolpo for the fall of 2019. If you are interested in this opportunity, please email me and I'll send you details to Dave Gluns, our trip coordinator. It is a difficult trip so a good fitness level is definitely required.

We are now on facebook - please like / follow us to see the latest updates and photos.

If you can give a little – it will help a lot!

And remember – every dollar goes directly to Nepal!

Altitude Project has registered charity status in Canada - tax receipts are issued for all donations.

Here are the ways to donate to Altitude Project

- Interbank transfer from your bank to this account number at CIBC in Nelson BC, Canada – 00270/010/1065610
- e-transfers can be sent to donations@altitudeproject.ca – for security question please use "What is this for" with the answer SaldangSchool (no spaces)

- A cheque payable to Altitude Project can be mailed to Altitude Project, 4228 Crescent Bay Road, Nelson BC, Canada, V1L 6N1
- On the [donate page](#) of the [Altitude Project website](#)
- We can now accept securities as donations. We have an account with [Canada Helps](#); they handle transactions on our behalf. Canada Helps is a large non-profit charity that helps other charities raise funds. They make it easy, click “Donate Now -> “Donate Securities” and then follow the instructions.
 - Donating stock can be a big benefit to donors, as it eliminates capital gains tax!
- For our friends in the US, we are now able to accept tax-deductible donations from American donors in partnership with [CAF America](#). Please visit [our page](#) and click on the Donate Now button. Please note that the minimum gift for this service is \$500 and there is an 8% fee of the first \$100,000 (minimum fee \$80). **For more information**, download the [Donor Advised Gift](#) sheet.

❖ *And please be sure to include your name and mailing address when donating. We need both to issue a tax receipt – it is a CRA requirement! Also, please include your email address as we send receipts by that way to save on the cost of stamps!*

Tashi delek, Namaste, Sincere Thanks
On behalf of Altitude Project



David Swain

If you no longer wish to receive email from Altitude Project, please advise us by return email – thanks

