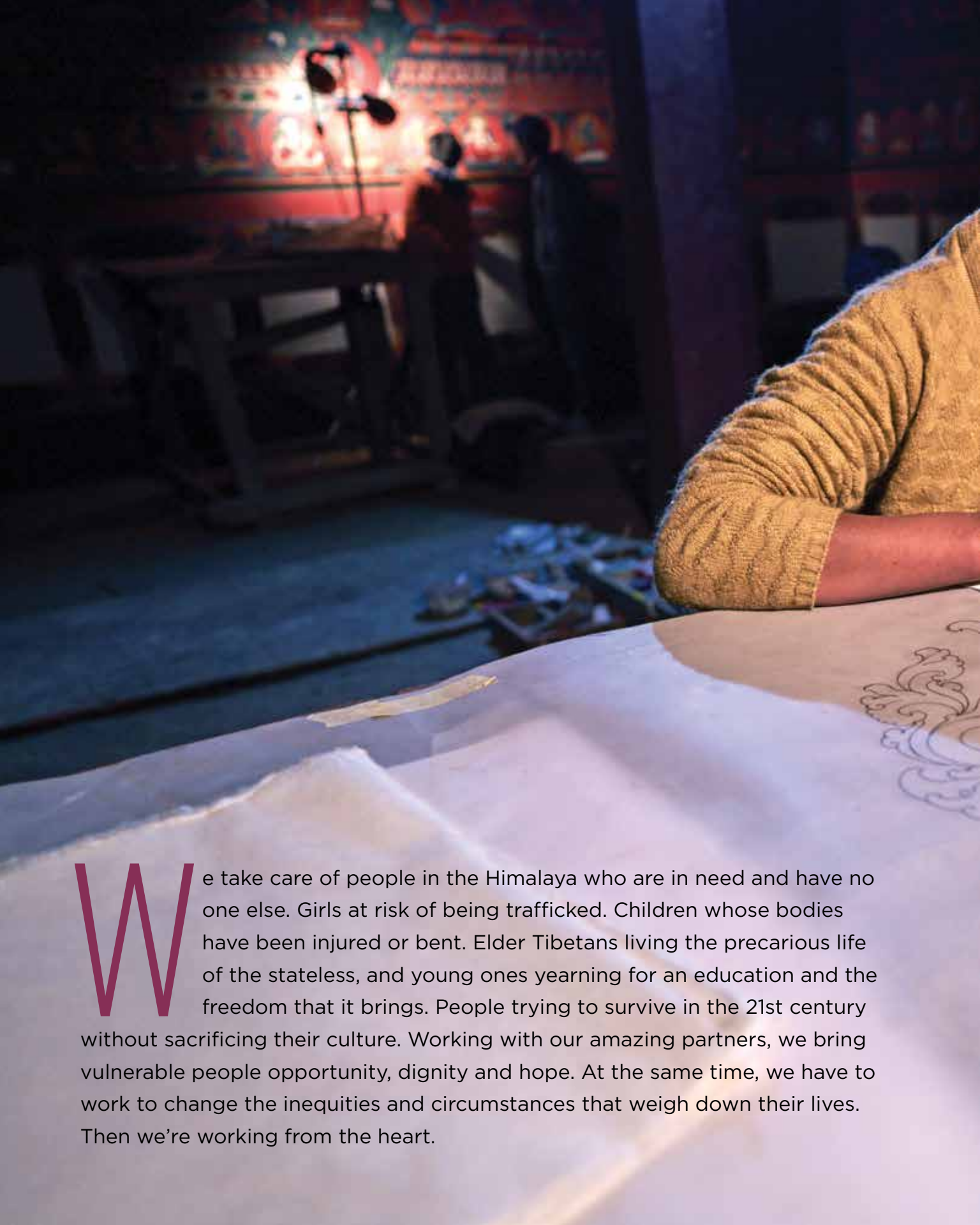




AMERICAN HIMALAYAN FOUNDATION | From the Heart, Next Chapter





**W**e take care of people in the Himalaya who are in need and have no one else. Girls at risk of being trafficked. Children whose bodies have been injured or bent. Elder Tibetans living the precarious life of the stateless, and young ones yearning for an education and the freedom that it brings. People trying to survive in the 21st century without sacrificing their culture. Working with our amazing partners, we bring vulnerable people opportunity, dignity and hope. At the same time, we have to work to change the inequities and circumstances that weigh down their lives. Then we're working from the heart.





*Patience and perseverance produce grace. Farmers turned artists in Mustang bring the gods of their faith back to life.*





# STOP Girl Trafficking

In Nepal, the trafficking of young girls—often valued less than the live-stock they tended—had become a tragic part of rural poverty. Twenty years ago, we joined Dr. Aruna Uprety to stop this scourge by preventing girls from being sold into slavery and suffering.

Aruna's idea was revolutionary then: take the financial burden of educating their daughters from parents so they would agree to put them in school. There they could be safe, watched over, and learning.

**From 52 girls, to 12,000 girls this year enrolled in over 500 schools across Nepal.**

1,200 graduates are now active in alumnae groups, what we call Aruna's army. They are educated and confident young women, hundreds of whom are working to keep their younger SGT sisters safe from being trafficked and abused. Some are tackling child marriage and gender and caste inequity in their villages. Together, they are changing attitudes, just by being role models of what an educated woman can do.

This year, we have been able to withdraw from the places we have made safe for girls, and are going deeper where trafficking is still entrenched. In one new village, the deputy mayor told us how fathers obtain false papers for underaged daughters who they then send abroad to work, and who rarely return—a grim reminder that this fight is not over. But we know the power of STOP Girl Trafficking, and, with your help and Aruna's leadership, we will keep changing futures.



Dr. Aruna Uprety is both a visionary and a pragmatist, who simultaneously comprehends the immensity of the trafficking problem and has figured out effective methods for alleviating it.

— Jon Krakauer



*Top: Aruna's army. An architect, a teacher, two nursing students and a national Tae kwon do champion in this colorful group.*

*Left: Young and at risk. Let's keep them safe, not sent away.*



# 30 years, 90,000 children



We take in children  
who have only  
crawled for their  
whole lives, and we  
get them walking.  
It's a little bit of  
investment in a child  
for such a lot  
of return.

— Dr. Bibek Banskota  
(yes, Dr. B's son)

It began with an impromptu meeting at a small children's clinic in Kathmandu between Dr. Ashok Banskota and an American doctor from AHF's board. As Dr. B said, "Gil understood the gravity of the situation." There was almost no decent care for children with physical disabilities in Nepal, especially those from poor, remote villages. Dr. B, a US trained orthopedic surgeon, had returned home resolved to change that. A 30 year partnership that has healed 90,000 children was born.

Dr. Banskota's determination that children with disabilities be able to live their best lives was so compelling that we committed to help. He built a team of doctors, nurses and physical therapists who felt as he did, that care should be skilled, comprehensive and compassionate. They worked out of a rented house fitted as a hospital until one day we asked when he was going to have a real hospital. He smiled. "Whenever you help me build it."

So we joined an international group and worked to make the new Hospital and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children a reality. His medical team is bigger now, but Dr. B's vision that every broken child who passes through their doors—with clubfeet, a badly set fracture, untreated burn, whatever their condition—deserves the best they can give, still holds.

This year the hospital opened a sixth operating room and is finishing construction of a new 26-bed wing, because it was running at capacity.



As you walk through the sunny wards, you can see the smiles of the children and feel the warmth of the staff. HRDC's informal motto: love heals.



*Left: HRDC has a classroom onsite so patients can keep up their lessons.*

*Below left: Dr. Bibek Banskota at work in one of the community-based field camps.*

*Below right: In-house prosthetics and orthotics so little feet can grow; dancing shoes come later.*





# Kindness



To help the most vulnerable find space in their lives for hope and joy matters deeply to us. Offering shelter and safety and the comfort of community to those who have none is at the heart of what we do.  
— Erica Stone

If you live in the Himalaya, where the social safety net is flimsy at best, the beginning or end of life's journey has extra perils. For those at the margins, abandoned children and destitute elder Tibetans, what we offer is simple but essential: food, shelter and the warmth and connection of community.

Children with disabilities can end up neglected or even abandoned by already struggling parents who simply do not know how to care for them. At Ngoenga, Tibetan children with special needs share a loving home and receive nurturing care and therapy. Kids with similar challenges come together at Navjyoti Day School to laugh and learn the skills they need to function in the world. And orphaned and abandoned children find a home, school and big family at Child Haven.

Many Tibetan elders escaped from Tibet and, after the rough, uncertain life of a refugee, ended up with nothing and no one. From Kathmandu and Pokhara to the settlements in far corners of India, we and our Tibetan partners give these lonely, lovely elders a way and a place to live with dignity and in the company of new friends.



**Very vulnerable:** The fewer than 3,000 tigers left in the wild are still hunted. In Nepal and India, with our partners, Fund for the Tiger and the Wildlife Protection Society of India, we are teaching villagers who live by tiger reserves the advantages of protecting their whiskered neighbors. And to thwart poachers, more intense patrols in more reserves, and more of them community-led. Long live the tiger!









# THE LAND THAT TIME



**M**ustang, the forbidden kingdom, was a Tibetan enclave that, by an accident of geography, ended up within the northern border of Nepal. Once a prosperous stop on the salt route, the kingdom's fortunes faded. By the time it was opened to the world, and AHF invited in, it was dilapidated and crumbling, its people struggling.





# FORGOT

Our primary partner in Mustang is the Lo Gyalpo Jigme Foundation, aka the Bista Boys, four friends who could have left, but didn't. They stayed back to help their fellow Lobas navigate the rocky transition from an isolated high desert kingdom to accessible part of the world—without losing their culture. And they have been thoughtful, looking for the inflection points where we could have the most impact.



# Mustang, revitalized



When I first arrived in Mustang 20 years ago, to turn farmers into restorers and painters, I was basically trying to teach them that art was more important than religion. Unexpectedly, by spending that much time close to the Tibetan culture, I slowly realized that I was wrong. Near the end of this long journey to make whole the sacred spaces that hold Mustang's culture, I understand differently. I stood watching the farmers I transformed into restorers, and realized that they were both. They still would go to the fields when they weren't working in the monastery. The same hands that would cut the crops could hold a brush and make wonders out of it.

— Luigi Fieni, Lead conservator Mustang restoration

As our partner, Tsewang Bista, said on our last visit, “we both like to do small things that make a big difference.” True. Beyond restoring the gompas, we have set up 14 daycares in almost every village so parents can now work in the fields without worrying about their child's safety. The youngsters learn 123s, ABCs, and how to brush their teeth, along with social play, early childhood learning that sets them up to do well in school. Visiting a daycare almost always results in the children breaking into song and dance, sometimes, “I'm a little teapot.”

In local schools, we've added teachers to keep up the students' Tibetan language skills and the songs and dances of their traditions. And, since there is only one high school in Upper Mustang, we started a hostel in Jomsom where the students can live and study (and Bollywood dance) together while in high school. One of our Jomsom graduates was recently elected Chair of Mustang's local government. Kudos.



*Our partner, Tsewang Bista, at home on the range.*



With 38 public works projects under their collective belts, youth groups have become a real force for good. They build infrastructure in their villages and, after starting with trail repair, have graduated to irrigation and drainage systems, and rebuilding bridges and community centers. Gives them income and status, which helps stem outmigration.

Seven existing clinics have been made useful by hiring trained staff that stay all year, and by stocking them with medicines. This year, the clinic team saw over 4,400 patients; the champ was Sabina in Charang, who treated over 1,700 cases herself.



*Top: Best school year ever! The Jomsom hostel students send their thanks.*

*Left: Singing in daycare: it's impromptu and enthusiastic.*





When AHF first arrived in Mustang, the king earnestly requested that we begin by working on the gompas and the monastic schools. He explained, only by first restoring its soul could Mustang come back to life. This summer, 25 years later, His Holiness Sakya Trizin, head of the Sakya sect of Tibetan Buddhism, led prayers in restored Thubchen gumpa, filled with Lobas and monks from the local monastic schools. It was an emotional moment. The soul of Mustang is alive again.



*In Tserok, the dark comes early. At 8700', deep in the Kali Gandaki river gorge in Nepal, it is very isolated. Solar street lamps make the camp safer and permit social gatherings in the evenings.*



# Tibet in exile

Being a refugee is not without hardship. But living in the far flung, isolated jungle settlements of northeast India up near the Burmese border has meant fighting long odds to stay together and survive. And survive they have, building in thick tropical forest near an ongoing insurgency. The Tibetan settlements of Maio and Tezu, together 3,500 strong, have been resilient and determined to move beyond subsistence farming and grow their own economy from the ground up.

AHF has a unique role here—visitors are infrequent, and the camps receive little outside help. So, in addition to help with daycares, schools, frail elders, and malaria test kits for clinics (a serious problem there), AHF's Tibetan Enterprise Fund is active here. In Miao, a cyber café and micro-credit loans for the sweater trade and buying seed have been successful. A few years ago, we made grants to grow tea and, this year, an ecological brick making factory. As refugees, self-reliance is their best security.

In Tezu, the Fund helped farmers begin rubber tree growing and made loans to the local agriculture cooperative. This year we backed them in starting a noodle factory, to match the successful one in Miao. Turns out everybody loves noodles.



*Left: Water purifiers for Miao makes the water safe to drink.*

*Below left: In Samdo, on the shoulders of Manaslu in Nepal, almost a week's walk from the nearest road, 46 smoke-free stoves will let the Tibetans there cook and heat their homes without destroying their lungs or the forest.*

*Below right: Noodling in Miao and Tezu*



In over 22 years working with the Tibetan exile community, we have built a resourceful network of partners. We meet with them, share ideas, and explore ways to meet new challenges—talking to them 365 days of the year. We visit the settlements, live in their homes, and feel their pain and their dreams. Personal stories and hopes for the future are shared with us, and we try our best every day. We listen, we are engaged, we are committed.

— Tsedo







# Education for Tibetans

You don't have a passport, because you're stateless. You live in a small village. You're 10. You're curious and like to read, and your parents want very much for you to get the education they could not. They know it's your way out of their precarious refugee life. But there's only a primary school within walking distance. What do you do?



It's what matters most — nothing can be more transformational. Once you have education, no one can take it from you. It's what breaks the cycle of poverty, gives our minds the freedom to decide, and opens a world of opportunity.

— Norbu Tenzing

You make your way to a larger settlement that has a school with more grade levels and bid your parents goodbye. You don't know anyone, but you can live in the school hostel for kids like you from remote villages. It's lonely at first, but you make friends and get to keep learning. You see your parents at most a few times a year, but they are so eager to see you in a school that includes Tibetan that they are willing to suffer your absence.

There are only a few Tibetan high schools in Nepal, so you have to move again. You still live in a hostel, but maybe now you have friends who have made the same journey as you have—in search of the education that will prepare you, as you and your parents dream, to be a world citizen still grounded in your Tibetan heritage.

And college. Beyond your means. But we've been there for you from the beginning and will be for college. It's your hope for the future, and, as a refugee, the only thing that cannot be taken away from you.

How does AHF help? With daycares and hostels for students from far places, lunches and books and uniforms and lights to study by. And with funding for college. Our Osher scholars are a growing group of educated and resourceful young Tibetans who are becoming real community leaders.



*Top: Education rooted in culture.*

*Lower left: Concentrating on studies. The future of the Tibetan diaspora depends on their educated youth.*

*Lower right: How many was that again?*



# Commitment

Dear Friends,

At AHF, it's always been in our DNA to find visionaries determined to do good and work with them.

Over time, we have built dozens of amazing partnerships that have changed thousands of lives for the better. Dr. Aruna Uprety

has enrolled 23,000 girls in STOP Girl Trafficking, and now we are seeing not only individual girls safe, but those girls graduating and becoming a force for change in their communities.

Dr. Banskota has been a partner for 30 years(!). We have been with him from his first small clinic to the Hospital and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children that now reaches children in all corners of Nepal. He and his team have healed 90,000 children.

In Mustang, our first partner was the king, and his direction to restore the soul of Mustang through its gompas and monasteries worked so well it led us to engage in ways that touch almost everyone in the former forbidden kingdom.

It takes time and respect and trust to create real, sustainable change. But it works, and you are the engine that makes it all possible. We are all grateful for your support, for believing in AHF, and for caring about people in need in the Himalayas.

Please stay with us. Make a gift, and together we can create change—and happiness.

Best personal regards,



Richard C. Blum  
Chairman



## Health

**\$170** turns a child's suffering into smiles with life-changing surgery from the dedicated Drs. Banskota.



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Many thanks to the generous person who donated the cost of producing this publication.

PHOTOS: LUIGI FIENI, BRUCE MOORE, ERICA STONE, TSEDO, NORBU TENZING, MARGIE THOMAS, BRIAN WEIRUM, COURTESY OF OUR PARTNERS & STAFF, GOKARNA

DESIGN: STUDIO A2

## Shelter from the Storm

**\$2,800** gets the mother's community hall repaired—by the youth group. Joy!



## **STOP Girl Trafficking**

**\$100** saves a girl from being trafficked by keeping her in school for a year. Ready to invest? \$1,000 takes her to graduation.



## **Keeping the Faith**

**\$30** keeps a Tibetan nun studying dharma for a month. \$360 gives her a year.



## **Education**

**\$45** for uniforms and books for one of the 55 children from farflung villages at Hyanjgia Tibetan hostel.



## **Compassion**

**\$108** gives a year of comfort, dignity and tea to an elder Tibetan. They will be so grateful.



## **Livelihood**

**\$160** trains a young Tibetan refugee as a baker, tailor, driver or barista. Profiteroles anyone?



## **Love Tigers?**

**\$what** you can. Keep the stripes alive — don't let them vanish. Your children will thank you.





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"Just be kind to each other. Just be kind. No agenda...Just be kind."  
—Phakchok Rimpoche

*The horses of the Yartung festival in  
Mustang in a quiet moment.*

