



AKONG  
RINPOCHE  
FOUNDATION



# The Akong News

Spring 2016





Welcome to our very first edition of The Akong News

## A FEW WORDS FROM THE EDITOR - JIGME TARAP



The Akong Rinpoche Foundation (ARF) is an Edinburgh based, Tibetan led charity established to fulfil my father's vision for his monastery in Tibet (Drolma Lhakang), and to give practical and financial support to Tibetan, Northern Indian and Nepali communities for education, health care, social welfare and economic development.

In the past 2 years since the ARF was established, we have been very busy working on projects close to Akong Rinpoche's heart by providing assistance to communities in all four focus areas. We have raised funds and awareness through various events at the Himalaya Tibetan café, including a musical night last year that raised almost £1,000.

On behalf of my family, the trustees and volunteers of the Akong Rinpoche Foundation, I would like to thank all the supporters and friends for the amazing help you have given us, we greatly appreciate it and are ever humbled by your kindness. - *Jigme Tarap*



## INDIA

The Akong Rinpoche Foundation has been supporting the students of a local school in Nye-basti, near Dehra Dun, India. The school lacks essential resources and has inadequate buildings. The students come from very poor families who cannot afford to provide warm school uniforms, books and stationery for their children. In the last two years we have provided adequate school clothing and learning materials for around 240 students.

Stanley Wynd, one of our trustees visited the school at the start of February 2016 to see how things were going. Stanley spent a day at the school and together with Tenzin, our volunteer in India, was able to purchase school sweaters for all the children.

Having met the head teacher and following a tour of the school, what struck Stanley most was the severe lack of facilities. Classrooms are in poor condition and are barely equipped, containing only a blackboard and an insufficient number of desks. Also, it was obvious that there are a lack of textbooks and other basic teaching materials.

Walking around outside he saw cracks at the base of some of the buildings and was concerned to hear that the adjoining playground was suffering from gradual subsidence and that unless repairs are undertaken soon, severe problems will arise in the near future. It's hard to imagine how the school keeps going given how deprived it is but this structural problem, if not remedied, puts its very existence at risk. For this reason, raising funds for this purpose has to be a priority.

Despite all the difficulties Stanley found the staff members in good spirits and doing their best. Of course, the children are benefiting from being at the school but there is a lot more that can be done to help them.



*Some of the children with Stanley hidden amongst them.*

We are running an Indiegogo campaign to fundraise for these children which you can read about and if you wish to support it please check this link;

<https://www.generosity.com/community-fundraising/hot-meals-uniforms-for-children-in-north-india--2>

We will continue supporting these children by helping to maintain their school and by providing what we can to help with their needs.



As well as specific projects, we provide on going assistance to vulnerable individuals or groups when there is a need, for example sponsoring a child through school, or paying for medical treatment for elderly people. We paid for an elderly man living in Dharamshala, Wandak la, to have a knee operation, and for medical treatment and hospital care for Popo Pema, who suffered a stroke and brain haemorrhage, causing paralysis. Without the support of the ARF these individuals would not have been able to receive the medical treatment that they desperately needed.

There are more details of many individuals we support on our website:

<http://www.akongrinpochefoundation.org/>



## **NEPAL**

Following the devastating earthquake last April, we worked closely with our friend, Lama Samgye who was staying at a very remote region by the Everest trail where he supported a small community that had lost everything.

The ARF established what was needed and worked quickly to deliver the money that was required to help rebuild the village that was destroyed by the earthquake. A funding campaign helped us to send £700, plus further money via individual sponsors and proceeds from the Himalayan Café.

We wish to continue helping this small community and plan to visit them later in the year.

We are also looking to build partnerships with local grass root organisations in Nepal, to strengthen links and provide sustained and co-ordinated support to those who desperately need it.



**TIBET**

A fact-finding mission to Tibet by Jigme between September and October 2015, helped to solidify and authorise future plans. It was a very worthwhile and productive trip and he was able to visit potential projects and advise the relevant authorities about the ARF, what we stand for and what our intentions are in Tibet.



The ARF’s main project is supporting the monks and nuns at the Drolma Lhakang Monastery, which is the official seat of Akong Rinpoche, located in Eastern Tibet. There are 103 monks and 122 nuns currently living and studying at the monastery, and our immediate and continuing aim is to help with the running costs .

The lives of the monks and nuns are very harsh as they live in cramped and basic conditions. They cook, eat, practice, sleep and study often four to five people cramped into one very small room. The ARF would like to build more accommodation and a separate shedra (school) building for the nuns.

The ARF strives to improve the living standards of the monks and nuns which will improve their overall health, wellbeing, studying and practice. An Indiegogo campaign ran last September raised £1,450,for this project.



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