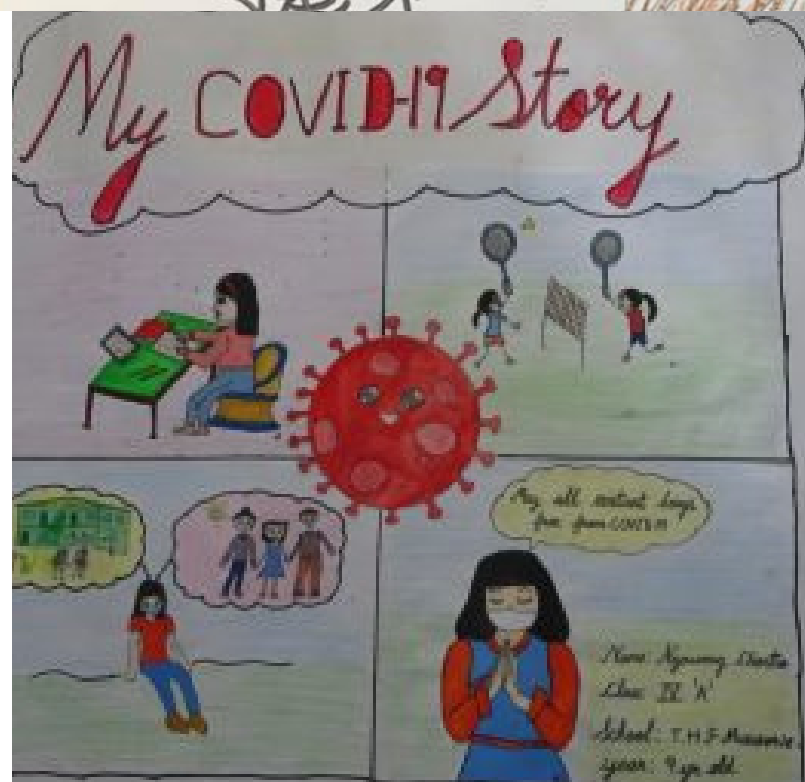




TIBETAN HEALTH

July - December 2020



About Us

The Department of Health, CTA, manages and finances 48 health centers in India and Nepal including Ngoenga School for Tibetan refugee children with special needs apart from different health programs, projects, and activities. Tibetan Health is the official Newsletter of the Central Tibetan Administration's Department of Health registered as (Tibetan Voluntary Health Association). Tibetan Health Newsletter is published twice a year to inform and update about our health promoting initiatives to our friends, donors and supporters. This newsletter also gives you an overview of health programs, projects, activities and needs of the department. Most importantly, it covers success stories and outstanding contributions of all our field health staffs including hospital administrators, doctors, nurses and community health workers etc. This newsletter is dedicated to them, for their selfless dedication and hardwork, who is the backbone of this successful and unique refugee healthcare system. Tibetan Health is for all who are interested in the works of Department of Health.

Advisor:

Mr. Choekyong Wangchuk (Kalon)

Mr. Palden Dhondup (Health Secretary)

Edited by:

Mr. Jampa Phuntsok (Additional Secretary)

Compiled, Layout and Designed by:

Miss Tsewang Yangtso (Under Secretary)

Mr. Tenzin Samten (Section Officer)

You can also contact:

Department of Health (Tibetan Voluntary Health Association)

Central Tibetan Administration,

Dharamsala, Distt Kangra (HP)

INDIA 176215

Tel: 0091-1892-223408/223486

Email: health_re@tibet.net

Websites

www.tibetanhealth.org

www.tibet.net/health

www.ngoengaschool.org

CONTENTS

ADMINISTRATIVE NEWS.....	1
HEALTH PROGRAMS.....	15
TRAINING NEWS.....	26
WASH NEWS.....	28
NGOENGA NEWS.....	35

ADMINISTRATIVE NEWS

COVID-19 Press Briefings by the Task-Force of the Department of Health, CTA



Figure 1 Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk at a press briefing

Dharamsala: Since March 2020 with the beginning of Pandemic COVID-19, The Department of Health, CTA carried out preventive measures on many aspects ranging from setting up Quarantine Centers, Sanitization of Junctions, offering counseling helpline, creating awareness posters, and also providing Tibetan Sorig immune booster to Tibetans in need worldwide. Since the beginning of carrying out the awareness activities The Department of Health, CTA conducted Press Briefings through TibetTV every week which continues and will continue till the Pandemic comes under very much control. The Press Briefings cover the new developments on COVID-19 in general, its vaccines, and case summary details in exile Tibetan Settlements. Timely precautionary measures have been given to the general public in

Tibetan by Public Health Officers of the Department, Dr. Tsering Tsamchoe of CCTM, and Dr. Tenzin Tsundue Medical Officer of Delek Hospital. Till December 31st, 2020, 39 COVID-19 Task-Force press briefings were conducted by the Department of Health.

Health Kalon attends the virtual meeting with the CNTRP



Dharamsala: COVID-19 Nepal Tibetan Response Group (CNTRP) was formed in March 2020 to provide timely preventive measures at the Tibetan settlements in Nepal to tackle the pandemic. Till 7th August 2020, CNTRP has held 21 weekly virtual meetings every Wednesday to update on the status of the pandemic and various measures undertaken in Tibetan settlements in Nepal.

The 22nd Virtual Meeting at the invitation of CNTRP Chairman, Mr. Tsultrim Gyatso, Health Kalon, Mr. Choekyong Wangchuk along with Health Secretary, Mr. Palden Dhondup, Additional Secretary, Mr. Jampa Phuntsok, Joint Secretary, Mrs. Tsering Youdon, and Mr. Namgyal Gendun, Deputy Secretary attended the meeting.

The virtual meeting at the other end had the participation of all the Tibetan settlement officers in Nepal, president of Lodrik Welfare Fund, officers of Snowline Foundation, SARD representative, Men-Tsee-Khang Doctors, and SORIG Lhentsok representative.

The Chairman, Mr. Tsultrim Gyaltso made a briefing on the overall status of the pandemic in the Nepal Tibetan community and measures undertaken, followed by all the settlement officers' updates on tasks

related to COVID-19 ranging from placing precautionary measures, public space sanitization, distribution of SORIG Immune boosters, and health screenings, etc.

In his address, Health Kalon lauded their committed service to the community amid the COVID-19 health crisis and assured CTA's continued support and service to unique demands in these difficult times.

As a measure to curb the spread of the coronavirus, Health Kalon reiterated the importance of having quarantine centers to limit the opportunities for transmission of the virus, helping to avoid a huge spike in cases that would overwhelm the health services. Although Nepal's fatality rate was estimated at around 0.3% and recovery rate at 70.9%, Health Kalon said, "They need to recognize the risk and develop the right strategies to contain the spread of the virus should continue to protect people. Additionally, the best approach is to start early testing which will result in early detection, isolation, and management."

Health Kalon concluded his address with appreciation to all the dedicated nurses, healthcare workers, and all the frontliners who are actively engaged in protecting our community and slowing the pace of the pandemic.

Miao COVID-19 Task-Force takes measures against the pandemic

Dharamsala: As India unlocked in phases from June 2020 with ease of movement, the country saw a likely rise in daily cases of COVID-19. Tibetan settlements across India, Nepal, and Bhutan took a series of preventive measures in the battle against COVID-19. Amongst them, the Miao Tibetan settlement located in the Northeast had voluntarily initiated proactive measures to fight the spread of novel coronavirus after the Government of India has sanctioned the relaxation of movement.

COVID -19 Taskforce chairman cum settlement officer, Mr. Tenzin Chokten reported: "As the lockdown was eased, with the increase in movement, Miao settlement has barricaded all the ten entry and exit points except for the two main entry point by setting up a temporary gate with security guarding the points, checking and sending all returnees directly to quarantine facility to keep the dreaded coronavirus infection at bay."

With a large influx of returnees and small space for the quarantine facility, the Taskforce had set up plastic partitions within the community halls. A total of 13 quarantine centers were set up, with arrangements of separate centers for the returnees from the red zone. The District Government, in addition, extended its services through Miao Community Health Centre Medical Officer (CHCMO) in collecting swab samples to test COVID-19 among the Tibetans in quarantine centers.

"As the frontline workers---- of Indian Government at Assam border, police guarded day and night to monitor the returnees, Miao Health Task Force committee provided free lunches to all the front line workers to show support for their efforts to slow the spread of the virus. On behalf of the Miao community, the settlement officer along with the secretaries of the hospital and cooperative society, offered Tibetan traditional scarf as a gesture of gratitude and appreciation to the District Commissioner, District Medical Officer, and the nodal person who showed extended support to the Tibetan community," said Mr. Tenzin Lhawang Executive Secretary of Miao Hospital.

To minimize transmission, he further reported that transferring from community quarantine centers to home quarantine was scheduled during the night. The task force also supervised and arranged the

necessities such as dry ration as well as setting up of recommended boundaries were done so that strict home quarantine protocols were followed.



Figure 2 Health Task force members barricading all the entry points of the settlement and Quarantine center with the plastic partition within community center



Figure 3 Health task force members disposing of quarantine waste

Many Vegetable, meat sellers, and vendors from other villages were banned, permitting few sellers who mandatorily followed strict and proper sanitization before entering the settlement.

Waste management at quarantine facilities was also properly taken care of by every individual taking responsibility for their waste while the task force members disposed of the entire waste.

As a token of appreciation, various people from the community, as well as those who quarantined offered donations and conveyed regards witnessing the admirable tireless effort of Health task force members.

Health department takes stock of Wuhan originated COVID-19 in settlements



Figure 4 Health Kalon attending the virtual meeting with settlement officers

Dharamsala: To assess the impact of the Wuhan-originated COVID-19 pandemic in Tibetan settlements, the Department of Health organized a virtual meeting of Health Kalon with the Chief Representative, South Zone, CTA, Chophel Thupten, and eight Settlement Officers of Mundgod, Lugsam, Delar, Bylakuppe, Kollegal, Hunsur, Odisha, Mainpat and Bhandara on 21st August 2020, The meeting was also joined by Health Secretary, Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary and concerned DoHe Officials.



Figure 5 Health Secretary Palden Dhondup, Additional Secretary Jampa Phuntsok, Joint Secretary Tsering Youdon, Deputy Secretary Nyima Gyaltsen

The chief representative and the settlement officers briefed the meeting on the status of the pandemic in their respective settlements and the measures taken against COVID-19. Matter of concerns such as quarantine and testing facilities, distribution of sanitizers and masks; provision of immune-boosting Tibetan medicine for the aged, as well as for those at quarantine centers and Tibetan nurses and other frontline workers who were leading the fight against this pandemic was also discussed.

According to the Settlement Officers, the provision of quarantine facilities at the settlement and the distribution of sanitizers, masks, and Sorig immune booster has proven to be highly beneficial and widely appreciated by the people. The settlement officers thanked the CTA and Dept of Health for their continued effort and guidance in these unprecedented times.

Health Kalon commended their dedicated service to the community during the crisis and assured continued support from CTA headquarters.

A similar meeting was also held on 12th August with Tibetan settlement officers (TSO) from North East India which included Tuting, Miao, Tezu, Tenzigang, Bomdila, Shillong, Gangtok, Ravangla, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Sonada.

Each settlement officer briefed about the precautionary measures taken and notified Kalon about few challenges faced at their respective settlements in carrying out some of these measures. The quarantine center dealing staff, Mr. Nyima Gyaltsen made few clarifications regarding documents and also addressed a few additional guidance on expenses for quarantine facilities.

Health Kalon concluded his address with appreciation to all the dedicated nurses, healthcare workers, and all those involved in fighting the pandemic.

Department of Health, CTA boosts ambulance service in the Tibetan Community



Figure 6 Amulance at Bir TPHC



Figure 7 Staff of Dhondenling Hospital with the ambulance

Dharamshala: The COVID-19 cases across India were on the daily spike and to enhance health services and prepare for worst-case scenarios arising out of the pandemic, the Department of Health (DoHe), CTA has enhanced the ambulance services in the communities.

Along with various initiatives, three new ambulances in Kollegal, Mainpat, and Bir settlement were procured by the department to provide healthcare services during the growing number of COVID-19 cases in the Tibetan community.

Ambulance services have become essentially critical for the transportation of patients during an emergency. This involves transferring patients to Hospitals, quarantine centers, hospitals for the COVID test, and shifting of deceased to the crematory places. All the ambulances are equipped with basic medical supplies while drivers have been provided with proper gear including masks, sanitizers, and instructions related to cleanliness and sanitization due to the pandemic.

As of 20th September 2020, a total of 13 health care facilities under the department, provides ambulance services, which consists of all the seven hospitals, four Primary health care centers, and three clinics remotely located with poor transport access, while 6 clinics were availing the services with rental ambulances and others were using the settlement office vehicle for COVID-19 emergencies. The procurement of these three new ambulances was funded by the PRM.

Health Secretary advises aggressive masking, social distancing, and frequent sanitization

Dharamshala: While India witnessed a daily spike in COVID-19 cases, 300 cases were reported from the various Tibetan communities across India and Nepal. Tibetans in Dharamshala have witnessed a total of three COVID-19 cases who had travel history from other states and now have recovered, however, recently a new COVID case, an employee of Canara bank located at the premise of CTA has caused a worrying scenario on 14th Sept 2020.



Figure 8 Health Secretary advising the contacts prior to COVID-testing.

To stop the spread of the virus, the secretary of the health department promptly advised all visitors of the bank to self-isolate and at the same time, an emergency meeting was held on 14th Sept 2020 with Dr. Tsundue to discuss contact tracing and setting new guidelines to all offices and NGOs in the vicinity.

No sooner COVID-19 task force meeting was held, another case was reported from the same bank. Health Kalon and the Task-Force Committee discussed a range of issues including curbing the spread, strategies for contact tracing, mandatory 14 days quarantine, an instant arrangement of RT-PCR test for close contacts, etc. In the meantime, all the contacts were provided SORIG Immune Booster.

On 18th September 2020, Mr. Palden Dhondup, Secretary of Health Department briefed instruction on the importance of practicing precautionary measures, followed by testing of 46 High-Risk contacts with

the help of Delek Hospital staff. All of them have tested negative for the COVID-19. The remaining listed contacts were later tested on 22nd Sept. 2020.

COVID Care Facility for CTA staff was arranged near the former Shugseb nunnery in case of any unfortunate occurrence of cases among CTA staff. Further discussions were held with the Settlement Officer, Dharamsala on the importance of advising Tibetans residing in McLeodganj to continue with the preventive measures as instructed before. Likewise, Kashag (Cabinet) has issued official guidelines to be adhered to by all the CTA staff and their family to control the spread of COVID cases in our community.

Department of Health appeals local banks in CTA premises to take precautionary measures, donates vital supplies

Dharamsala: Few cases of COVID-19 in October were reported from a local bank in the Central Tibetan Administration headquarters premises. The Department of Health, CTA with concern for the safety of residents in the CTA headquarters and the customers with the obvious reason of Gangchen Kyishong being the seat of CTA. Jamyang Sherap, WASH staff of the department met the managers of both banks located in the Gangchen Kyishong and urged them to set a safe medium to deal with customers.



Further, he suggested them to set up a foot-operated sanitizer dispenser outside the banks & ATMs. The department also contributed face shields, masks, sanitizers, and a foot-operated sanitizer dispenser to ensure the safety of the customers.

Health Department's COVID-19 Task Force reviews the surge in COVID-19 cases in Mundgod

Dharamsala: With the surge in COVID-19 positive cases in early October 2020, Mundgod Tibetan Settlement, the COVID-19 Task-Force members of the department of health headed by health secretary Mr. Palden Dhondup along with the two advisory members Dr. Tsewang Tamdin and Dr. Tsetan Dorji Sadutshang had a meeting with Mundgod Settlement Task-Force members led by settlement officer Lhakpa Tsering,



*Figure 9*CTA's COVID-19 Task Force (Department of Health) during a meeting with the members of Mundgod's COVID-19 Task Force.

Members of the settlement Task-Force committee include Executive Secretary and Medical officer of DTR Hospital Mr. Ngawang Thupten and Dr. Kelsang Choedon, Drepung Loseling's Abbot Geshe Samten, Gajang Hospital Dr. Dhondup Tashi, TMAI Dr. Nyima Gyaltsen, respective camp leaders, and representatives of sections of monasteries on 7th October 2020.

The settlement officer updated the worrying situation in Mundgod despite the continuous effort by the members since March 2020. As the surge in positive cases gave an indication of community spread at the settlement. Hence, a strategic approach with efficient use of available hospitals was implemented. All the non-COVID patients in the settlement were directed to Gaden Jangtse Hospital whereas the mild and

moderate cases were handled in DTR Hospital. The surge in cases had led to the occurrence of six positive cases among the staff of DTR Hospital. This resulted in an increased workload for the remaining staff, expressed the Executive Secretary of DTR hospital, for which he stressed the need for additional human resources and other resources.

Abbot Geshe Samten, a member of the settlement Task-Force, updated on the administration and monitoring of the situation of the Drepung Loseling monastery. After the series of updation of the situation by the respective members of the settlement, Dr. Tsewang Tamdin urged the members to continue their effort in maintaining the discipline at the quarantine centers as a lack of discipline by few individuals risks the spreading of the virus in the entire community. He also added that a more intense collaborative effort of both traditional and allopathy medicine should be put in treating the patients.



Dr. Tsetan Dorji Sadutshang appreciated the efforts of each member and urged them to identify the loopholes which led to the occurrence of positive cases and suggested discussing corrective measures to be taken. Mrs. Tenzin Dolkar from headquarters suggested the importance of early contact tracing in the current situation and emphasized the importance of community participation in overcoming the shortages of staff. As the department is well equipped to provide contact tracing training. Also, Mrs. Ngawang Tenzin of the Mental Health desk encouraged them to reach out to the desk in case of any counseling-related requirement. In conclusion, the Health secretary assured complete support of the department at the same time appreciated the continuous efforts by all the Task-Force members at the settlement and urged them to continue the same.

Health Department organizes virtual meet with Southern Tibetan Settlements' Emergency COVID 19 Committee

Dharamsala: Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases in Mundgod and Bylakuppe Tibetan settlements, a virtual meeting was held on 30th October chaired by Sikyong, Dr. Lobsang Sangay and Health Kalon, Choekyong Wangchuk with the settlement officers of Mundgod, Bylakuppe; Lugsum and Delar, and along with its Task-Force members, abbots of respective monasteries in the settlements, health secretary of the Department of Health (DoHe), DoHe medical advisors and DoHe concerned officers.



Figure 10CTA led by Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay and Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk in a virtual meeting with the Southern Tibetan Settlements' Emergency COVID 19 Committee

Health Secretary, Palden Dhondup briefed on the department's preventive measures undertaken at Bylakuppe and Mundgod settlements followed by discussions on challenges faced by the settlement.

Sikyong Dr. Sangay briefed on various measures undertaken by the Central Tibetan Administration, (CTA) from the onset of a global pandemic in Tibetan settlements across India and Nepal and said that settlements with bigger populace such as Bylakuppe and Mundgod were sanctioned higher budget to tackle the pandemic and has till date spent around 51 lakhs.

In total, a sum of INR 6 million was spent to fight the pandemic and INR 150 lakh was spent from the CTA budget for all the settlements across India and Nepal.



Figure 11 Staff of the Health Department during virtual meet.

The abbots of monasteries shared their scenarios and challenges at the respective monasteries. They also shared their positive feedback on the Tibetan Sorig Medicines and appealed for continuous support.

Health Kalon appreciated the staff of the settlements, monasteries, and volunteers for their collective and tireless work during these unprecedented and challenging times. In his address, he lauded the health facilities' executive secretaries and medical staff for working tirelessly to help those affected by COVID-19 and meanwhile requested the front-line warriors to keep the fight on.

The virtual meeting concluded with certain clarifications and guidance which would enable the southern settlements to fight this pandemic with collective efforts and cooperation.

HEALTH PROGRAMS

Department of Health, CTA observed World Hepatitis Day

Dharamsala: On World Hepatitis Day 28th July 2020, the Health Department, CTA observed the day by organizing a small function with the presence of Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk, Health Secretary Mr. Palden Dhondup, Additional Secretary Mr. Jampa Phuntsok, and the rest of the staff of the department.



Figure 12 Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk launches the short awareness video on Hepatitis, an initiative of the Health Department to mark World Hepatitis Day on 28 July. Photo Tenzin Phende CTA

The department had organized a sketch competition-themed #hepatitisfreefuture announcing through its official social media handles. The organizing team received 25 remarkable entries and saw vivid efforts of all the participants in promoting the awareness of Hepatitis.

The top three entries along with three consolation prizes of the sketch competition were announced on the same day. Also, a special consolation prize was announced for the youngest participant. The day was also marked with Health Kalon Mr. Choekyong Wangchuk launching a short awareness social media clip both in English and Tibetan focusing on the significance of at birth Hepatitis B vaccination.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the usual awareness programs at the settlements could not be carried out, thus the settlement health workers under the department had been advised to reach out to the

antenatal women via telephone and make them aware of Hepatitis B infection and make them aware of its vaccine at birth.



Figure 13 the themed drawing contest held by the Health Department to raise awareness about Hepatitis.
Photo Tenzin Phende CTA

Health Kalon in his message mentioned, reflecting on the enormous efforts which have been put to tackle Hepatitis B in the Tibetan community with various initiatives such as awareness campaigns, free under five vaccinations, Hepatitis B screening and vaccination program, etc.

His call to action was for every individual to Get tested, Know their status, and Get vaccinated especially “at birth dose”. He also mentioned the comprehensive hepatitis B assessment done in the year 2019 which showed a prevalence rate of 6 to 7 percent compared to the prevalence rate of 8.9 percent from the Hepatitis B study carried out at Bylakuppe Tibetan Settlement in collaboration with John Hopkins University.

Although the diagnostic tests and treatment of hepatitis B are under the welfare scheme, few people could not avail of the benefits with lack of participation due to circumstantial constraints.

In addition, he expressed the need for collaboration between various organizations to get consolidated data on the disease burden in the Tibetan community and the importance of individual responsibility to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat and make Hepatitis free Tibetan community.

Department of Health, CTA releases a 40-min film to raise awareness of mental health issues

Dharamshala: Mental health issues in the Tibetan community often come with the tag ‘Nyompa’ which perpetuates the existing stigma around mental illnesses in our community. This makes it difficult for people to understand and recognize mental health conditions and discourages people from seeking early intervention.

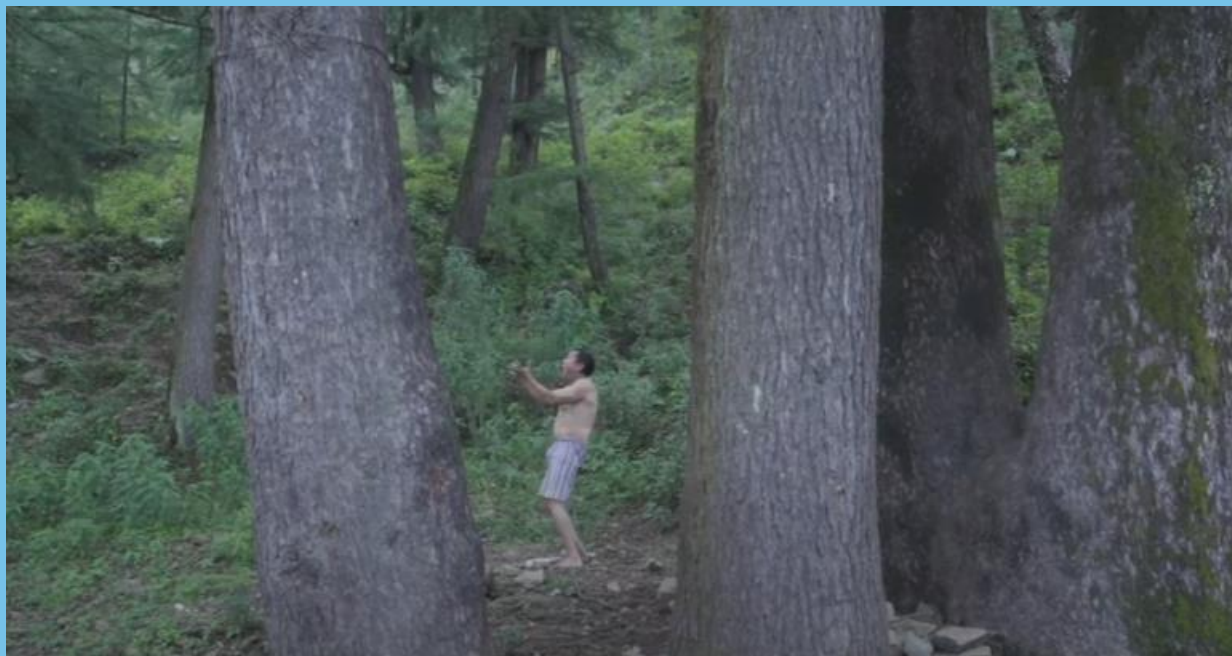


Figure 14A still from the film titled ‘Who is Crazy’ an initiative of the Health dept to raise awareness of mental health issues.

At the same time, it reduces a person to a condition, instead of being a person who has a condition — among other traits. And, using mental health conditions as slurs perpetuates the idea that mental illness is a weakness or somehow found only in a flawed person.

According to WHO, one in four people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. Around 450 million people currently suffer from such conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide.

Treatments are available, but nearly two-thirds of people with a known mental disorder never seek help from a health professional. Stigma, discrimination, and neglect prevent care and treatment from reaching people with mental disorders.

To start a conversation on “Depression”, the Department of Health, CTA released a 40-minute film titled ‘Who is Crazy’ on July 24, 2020. Through this movie, the Department hoped to send a message of hope for those who need it and to tell them that they can get better and they can have a good life.

The Department of Health provides 50% treatment reimbursement for people with mental illnesses.

Some common signs and symptoms of depression lasting more than two weeks include:

- Lack of energy or increased fatigue
- Changes in weight or appetite
- Feeling restless or agitated
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities or things that were previously enjoyable
- Sleep disturbances, such as waking early in the morning, oversleeping, or not being able to sleep
- Feelings of guilt or hopelessness, sadness
- thoughts of death or suicide

This project was funded by PRM and USAID.

Department of Health, CTA observes World BreastFeeding Week

Dharamshala: The Department of Health, CTA marked the “World Breastfeeding Week”, observed from 1st to 7th August by the screening of five-minute-long awareness videos on the theme of breastfeeding. This is a part of a video contest that the department organized ahead of World Breastfeeding week to educate expecting mothers on the significance of breastfeeding and its long-term health benefits for the child as well as the mother.



Figure 15 Health Department marks “World Breastfeeding Week” by declaring the winners of the video contest held on the theme and screening their presentations. Photo Tenzin Phende CTA



Figure 16 The winners of the video contest held by the Health Department (from left to right) Tenzin Norzin (nurse), Tenzin Wangchuk doctor and Lhakpa Wangyal.



Figure 17 Consolation winners Tenzin Sangmo, Tenzin Nordon and Tenzin Nordon.

The event began with the announcement of winners and screening of their awareness videos: Tenzin Norzin (Nurse), Dr. Tenzin Wangchuk (Medical Officer), and Lhakpa Wangyal won the first three prizes, and Tenzin Sangmo, Tenzin Nordon, and Tenzin Nordon were selected for the consolation prizes from a total of 16 participants. The winners were adjudged based on the grading assigned for conveying the message and content matter. The winners received prize money of INR 8000, 6000 and 4000 rupees respectively.

Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk who officiated the occasion briefly spoke on the importance of the event. “World Breastfeeding Week” is observed every year globally from 1st to 7th August, and the Health Department of CTA conducts an awareness campaign to educate the public about the necessity of breastfeeding for both the mother and the child. The video contest arranged has seen a good number of participants. Their enthusiasm and the content produced indicates the success of the program,” Kalon said.

“In our Tibetan culture, breastfeeding has always been given due importance. With the growing understanding of its benefits, the international community has subsequently recognized it to increase public awareness.”

Health Kalon cited research data that states timely breastfeeding prevents a mortality rate of around 1.8 lakhs of the population. He further highlighted the scientific evidence that reveals breast cancer and ovarian cancer is prevented in mothers who breastfeed and the economic rationale for saving 3.2 billion dollars globally.

Kalon emphasized His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s teachings on the benefits of mother’s love and compassion, adding the value of compassion inculcated through the nurturing act of a mother.

He pointed out the Health Department’s CCOCC program that educates new mothers on techniques for breastfeeding, diet plans, and more.

While advising mothers to not fall under the traps of unreliable studies that are profit-oriented, he appealed to the healthcare workers to dedicate full efforts to educating the public. He concluded by thanking the Health Education section, Disease prevention committee, and healthcare workers at the settlements for their commitment to their collective effort.

TPHC Dekyiling carries out Dengue and Typhoid awareness programs

Dharamsala: Monsoon in India was at peak all over India and with it comes many diseases like Cold, Malaria, Dengue, Stomach Infection, Diarrhea, Fever, Typhoid, and Pneumonia. Since monsoon is the breeding season for mosquitoes, there is a greater likelihood of people to suffer from mosquito-borne diseases. According to National Vector-borne Disease Control Program (NVBDCP), there were more than 4.87 lakh cases of malaria, dengue, and chikungunya last year in India. Moreover, India is considered to be the 11th most malaria-affected country in the world according to WHO.



Figure 18 Awareness programs being carried out by TPHC nurses in Dekyiling.



Figure 19 Awareness programs being carried out by TPHC nurses in Dekyiling.

Mosquito-borne diseases like malaria and dengue can cause havoc in our Tibetan society and can burden the already limited healthcare infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic within the Tibetan community in exile. Therefore, The Department of Health, CTA sees that timely and periodical awareness of diseases and their symptoms is essential for screening and early detection. If members of the public are aware of mosquito-borne diseases and their symptoms, then they are more likely to take action to prevent it from happening to them and their family

Such awareness and prevention programs contribute to the prevention of other public health issues during this COVID-19 pandemic where more healthcare resources are channeled towards the prevention and management of COVID-19. The department appreciates TPHC Deckyiling for its initiative and encourages individuals or organizations to initiate such health activities.



Figure 20 Sanitization carried out near drainages by TPHC health worker.

CTA releases COVID-19 Relief Package to the vulnerable group

Dharamsala: The Central Tibetan Administration has been providing continued support amidst the unprecedented Wuhan COVID-19 pandemic to serve the Tibetan community through comprehensive measures ranging from controlling the spread of the virus to supporting the basic needs of the most vulnerable sections.

The pandemic has not only affected the health systems but has also caused a grave burden to the social and economic systems of the vulnerable groups. The Department of Health, CTA to address the need of these vulnerable populations during the pandemic allocated a sum of INR 35,87,220 relief package.



Figure 21 Beneficiaries under the mental and disabled program.

Through the relief package, a total of 265 vulnerable Tibetans under the health department have benefitted, which consist of 8 political prisoners, 4 leprosy patients, 135 patients with mental illness, 88 differently-abled people, and 30 people living with HIV/AIDS in September 2020.

The relief package includes a cash amount of INR 9000 handed over to each beneficiary through the settlement officer and a collection of personal hygiene and protective kits which comprises masks, hand sanitizers, hand wash liquid, and soaps. Earlier some of the individuals from the above categories have received a package in cash from CTA through the department of home. As such, the department of health made sure that each beneficiary receives net cash not exceeding INR 9000. The relief package for the vulnerable was funded by PRM.

Health Education section of DoHe, conducts survey on contents of healthy lifestyle

Dharamsala: "Who is Crazy" The movie was released on the official youtube channel (healthCTA) of the Department of Health and was received very well and appreciated by the Tibetan netizens. So with the same intention to benefit the general public, The Department aimed to produce another such video/movie tailored to the needs of the Tibetan community to encourage people to adopt healthy lifestyle practices in their daily life. For this, a short survey to learn about the preferences in the contents for an awareness video in October 2020.

Department of Health announces winners of COVID-19 drawing and essay contest

Dharamsala: The Mental Health desk of the Department of Health, CTA organized a drawing competition on the theme 'My COVID-19 Story' for children and essay competitions for teenagers and adults on the theme 'My Reflections during COVID-19'.





The objective of holding these competitions was to understand the ways the pandemic has affected the lives and mental health of young people of our community and to discover their way of dealing with the challenges posed by COVID-19 and thereby providing them a platform where each of them receives an opportunity to reflect on their experiences during this pandemic.

The department received a total of 147 drawing submissions, 96 teenage and 40 adult essay submissions in both English and Tibetan.

From the submissions, we learned that the pandemic has unexpectedly and covertly affected the lives of students from the initial ecstasy of getting a long winter vacation to slow boredom sitting at home for months longing to go back to school and meet their friends. Some even survived the COVID-19, and many were stuck in schools/colleges trying to look out for themselves and their safety. Some of our young members of the community are COVID-19 warriors-selflessly risking their health for others' welfare. From all these myriad experiences, it is evident that the social support-be it from family, relatives, friends, and strangers, has been the sole factor of relief and assuagement for all.

So were the online classes, bringing their school a little closer and giving a structure to their day. In all, this pandemic gave the students an opportunity to spend quality time with their families and has also made them reflect on themselves, their lives, and the world in general. A recurrent theme of feeling

fearful, anxious, out of control but also grateful and resilient was noticed. Almost all the work concludes with a strong message of hope for the year to come.

It was a very difficult task for our judges to select the winners for each category as all submissions were outstanding and unique in their ways. The department highly appreciates each participant and their parents for sharing their work and their personal stories during COVID-19 with us. The list of the winners can be found in this link/ <https://tibetanhealth.org/news/department-of-health-announces-winners-of-covid-19-drawing-and-essay-contest/>. This competition is supported by PRM.

TRAINING NEWS

DoHe, CTA successfully completes virtual training on HIS

Dharamsala: With the ongoing pandemic, virtual training is the only way forward to keep updated our nurses and health workers with the new challenges. The Department of Health's virtual training on Integrated Health Information System (HIS) has been successfully concluded on 18th September with active participation from nurses and healthcare workers from 35 Tibetan settlements. The virtual training session for DHIS2 and OpenMRS users was held from 15th-18th September 2020. The training was conducted in collaboration with HISP India, headed by Joint Secretary Mrs. Tsering Youdon, and coordinated by Ms. Tenzin Dolma HIS program coordinator.



Figure 22 Virtual training with all the nurses and healthcare workers of 35 settlements

The training was aimed to help participants understand their role as end-users and equip them on quality reporting of data, settlement-wise data analysis, and demo on changes in the app for Android users. The collection of data helps in checking on the general health status of the Tibetan Settlements which is why the HIS program remains a critical section of the Department of Health, CTA.

CTA conducts contact tracing workshop

Dharamsala: Cases of COVID-19 had been on the rise ever since the beginning of unlocking phases in June, India. The recent unlock 5.0 guideline allowed further relaxation of activities, such as the opening of schools and colleges, etc. Hence, until the vaccine becomes available, contact tracing remains an essential component of the toolbox for containing the outbreak. This is especially true for a disease such as COVID-19, which can be spread by people who have no symptoms.



Figure 23 Staff of CTA from respective departments at the workshop.

Dharamsala being the residential seat of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the seat of CTA's headquarters, the surge in COVID-19 cases in the district was worrisome needing collaborative initiatives to tackle outbreaks.

On 29th September 2020 and 5th October 2020 respectively, the Department of Health, CTA organized training on COVID-19 contact tracing to the contact tracers of respective departments of the CTA and the representatives of proximate 14 Tibetan organizations in three batches which include monasteries, schools, and NGO's.



Figure 24 Representatives of NGOs at the workshop.

The department believes that the training will be beneficial in containing the spread of the virus. The department urges every individual to continue practicing proper masking, social distancing, and hand hygiene. These simple steps remain the key to fight against the pandemic.

WASH NEWS (Water Sanitation and Hygiene)

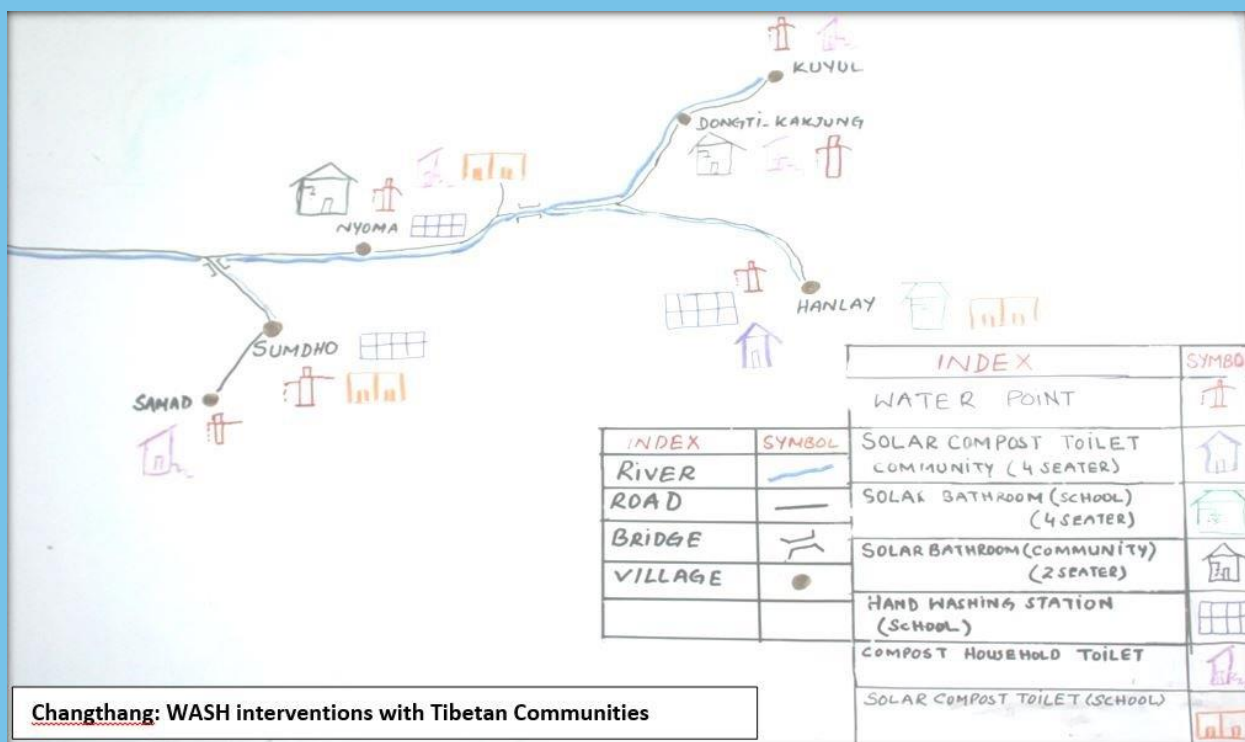
Promoting Sanitation in the face of COVID-19

Dharamsala: Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of health despite having the huge responsibility of protecting and curbing the spread of COVID-19 in the Tibetan community, continued to carry on with the ongoing essential projects adhering to COVID-19 risk mitigation measures in place.

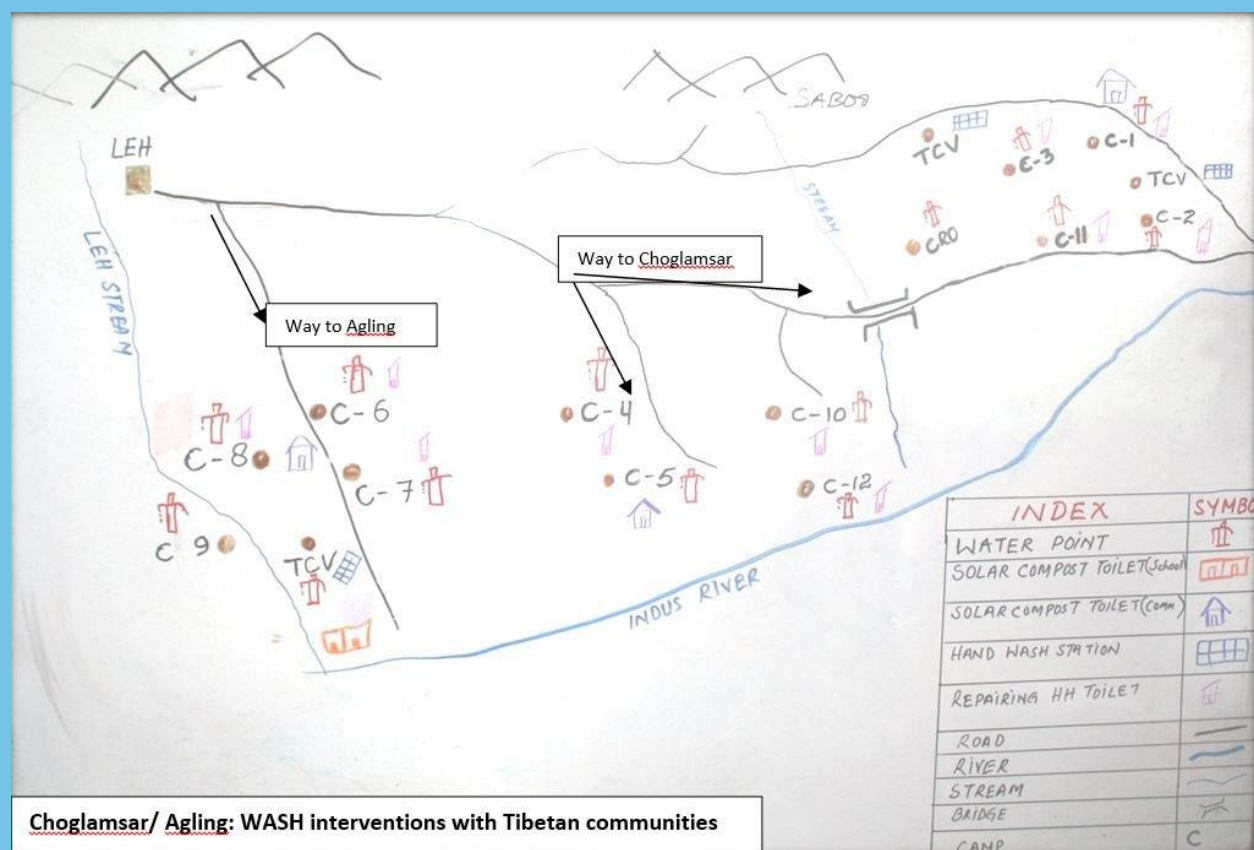
One such project to highlight was the Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program which along with the LNP team has resumed our effort to implement WASH activities at Ladakh and Jangthang



regions as per the GOI Ministry of Home circular on 5th May 2020 “continuation of works in construction projects, within the limits of municipal corporations and municipalities”.



The Leh Nutrition Project (LNP), is a non-profit organization, specializing in drinking water and sanitation projects having expertise and experience in building infrastructures for the cold deserted region of Ladakh. Given that, Health Department made contracts with them to carry out WASH activities under the banner name of “Enhanced wellbeing of Tibetan communities and children through WASH intervention in Ladakh” in Leh and Jangthang region. The feasibility and location for the setting were assessed and headed by the Chief Representative Officer (CRO) of Ladakh, CTA with consultation from Camp and Jangthang leaders. The final overall project is being overseen and monitored by the WASH Section of the health Department.



By August 2020, 90% of WASH infrastructural works such as submersible hand pumps, Community Solar Composite Toilets, Solar Bathroom in Jangthang areas, and drinking water cum handwash stations in various schools & villages have been installed. Along with that, a WASH committee has been formed successfully in each camp and school in Ladakh Tibetan Settlement.

Mr. Tsetan Wangchuk, CRO of Ladakh Sonamling Settlement expressed his gratitude on behalf of Sonamling Tibetan Settlement to the Department of Health, CTA for funding essential WASH projects.

He said “Ladakh Sonamling settlement being one of the most arid, remote and harsh-weather settlement, the residents has been facing water scarcity issues, poor sanitation for decades. But with the health department’s initiatives over the years have resulted in successfully solving almost 80% of drinking water problems as well as 70% of sanitation problems in the areas. We also contemplate in promoting health education amongst public and students and have been able to bring considerable behavioral change in

the form of good sanitation practices, the importance of hand hygiene and clean drinking water amid the pandemic”.

Construction of Check Dams at Hunsur:



The Check Dams work started on 7th Sept 2019 and was completed on 31st Sept 2020. A total of five Check Dams were constructed such as Village E, C, N, I, and A. The size of the dams differs based on area, due to their geographical location.



The main objective behind the construction of the dam is to increase and improve the underground water table and hence the residents face fewer water shortage problems. During the implementation of the project, the obstacle faced by the settlement is nationwide locking down from the end of March to the beginning of June 2020. The funding of check dams was a Gift of the United States Government.

Construction of Check Dams at Mundgod:



The project was implemented with the help of the Settlement Officer and camp leaders. The Settlement Officer sent a tender circulation on 7th Feb and an agreement was signed on 14th Feb 2020 with a contractor Mr.Melareppa. The payment was divided into 4 installments.

The Size of the dams is 55 lengthx2 Width x3 m depth. In between due to lock down the project had halted for almost two and half months. But with the relaxation of lockdown, the project was completed by 30th August 2020. It benefits a total of 482 out of which 233 are male and 249 are female.

Construction of staff Quarter at Miao:



The construction work of Quarter for Medical Officer and a boundary wall at Miao was started on 6th March 2020 and was completed on 15th Oct 2020. This project was successfully completed with coordination between TPHC Executive Secretary to procure the materials while the labor contract was given to Mr. Abbash Ahmed. The quarter includes a wooden board ceiling, CGI sheet roofing, concrete shelves in the kitchen room, and lintel. Through this project, we were able to provide better accommodation to the Medical Officer in mitigating the problem of shortage of quarters for the Tibetan Primary Health Centre, Miao, and ensuring the safety of the staff by retaining the boundary wall. This project was funded by PRM US.

Ngoenga News

Celebration of 85th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Dehradun: Children's Day was celebrated on 14th November every year as a tribute to India's First Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Likewise, Ngoenga School celebrated Children's day on its campus. In the morning, the entire family- the children, teachers, and non-teaching staff gathered at the school auditorium to begin one of the most celebrated days among the Tibetans. The celebration began with the Director and head of each department offering a scarf and lighting a butter lamp to the portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Then followed by everybody singing Tibetan and Indian national anthem.

Moments later, everyone was served the traditional Tibetan festive dish Dresil. After the serving, everyone settled, headmaster Nyima la, addressed the gathering about the significance of observing this day. Then the function proceeded with a few staff performing traditional dance and popular dance and sang a few songs. After the dance show and some fun activities, at the end director, Pema Labrang again greeted the children and appreciated everyone for making a fun and refreshing day for the children. The celebration concluded with special lunch for everyone for the special day.



Ngoenga School celebrates World Disability Day

Dehradun: In the morning of 3rd December 2020, all the staff and students assembled at the courtyard and sang the Indian and Tibetan national anthems. Venerable Kunchok Nyima Rinpoche and Dagmo Kalden Donkyi were invited as Special Guest and Chief Guest for the day. Then the celebration proceeded with a demonstration of physical training exercises by the students which were visibly enjoyed by the children and the guests.

Ngoenga's Director Pema Labrang addressed the gathering about the significance of the day and appreciated the efforts of all the staff in creating a nurturing environment for the students. After the speech, the event was lightened up by the dance performances by a section of students.

Then the Chief Guest and Special Guest addressed the event and distributed special cakes to the students. Different types of games were played by the students with the help of staff and the whole atmosphere turned into a fun and friendly one. In the end, different kinds of games including a basketball match were also played among the staff.



Figure 25 Students playing fun games



Figure 26 Dance performance by staff



Figure 27 Children playing games with the help of wheel chair

After the games, the Chief Guest Dagmo Kalden and Special Guest awarded the prizes to the winners of the games and matches.



Figure 28 Special Guest Velnerable Kunchok Nyima Rinpoche awarding the prizes

Once the awarding of prizes was over, Headmaster Nyima la concluded the event with word of thanks to all the guests, special guests for their presence, and especially the students to make this a wonderful celebration.

Celebration of 31st anniversary of the conferment of Nobel Peace Prize Day

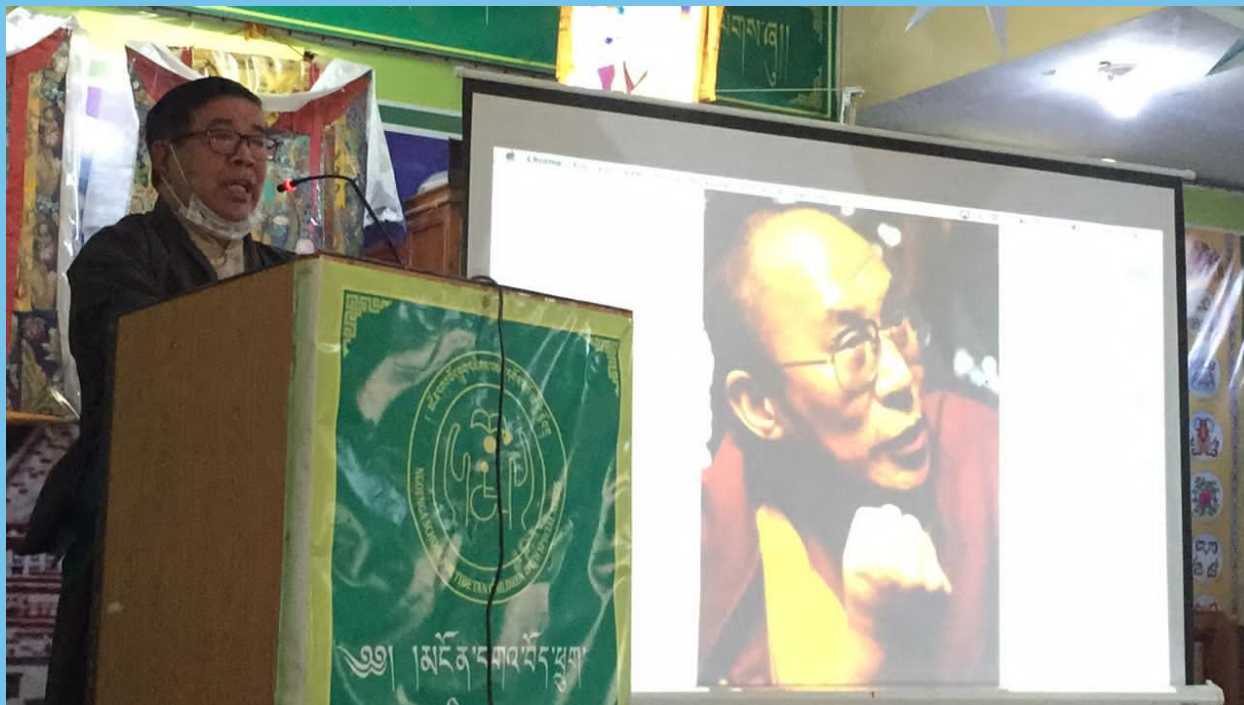


Figure 29 Ngoenga Director addressing the children and staff the significance of the occasion



Figure 30 Ngoenga children posing for picture

Dehradun: On 10th December 2020, Ngoenga School celebrated the 31st anniversary of the conferment of Nobel Peace Prize Day in the school auditorium with the entire Ngoenga School staff and children including the school Director Mr. Pemba Labrang. The function began with singing the Tibetan and Indian National Anthem followed by the offering of traditional Tibetan Scarf (Khatak) to the portrait of His Holiness The Dalai Lama.

The Director Pema Labrang gave a speech on this great memorable occasion along with the statement of the Kashag for the day. The entire Ngoenga family watched a short video clip of His Holiness The Dalai Lama and his speech when he received the award back on 10th December 1989.



Figure 31 The students performing dance with great enthusiasm

The program continued with the Tibetan butter tea and traditional sweet rice Dresil to all the children and staff at the auditorium of the school followed by a prayer session offered for the long life of His Holiness The Dalai Lama. After that, special needs children and staff performed some songs both in Tibetan/Hindi. Few others gave wonderful cultural dance performances in-group and solo as well. The program ended with a word of thanks speech by Headmaster Nyima la.

The day was concluded with the basketball tournament between teachers and foster parents. With the generosity of Kalsang's restaurant, (Dekyiling, Dehradun) Pizzas and Juices were provided to all the staff and children on this special occasion.

All the staff and students were served the special lunch and dinner sponsored by the Tibetan singer Tenzin Kunsel la from California (USA).