Tibetan Healing Fund
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Children's Fund

***Project Summary**: The Children's Fund is Tibetan Healing Fund's first project and started in 2001 supporting 21 village school students in one village in Trika County, mSo-Ngon Province (Ch: Qinghai) At the request of local officials, the project has been expanded to support over 300 primary school students in 3 counties. The Children's Fund helps rural Tibetan children attend school. This support can be money, food, clothing, school supplies or medicine depending on the community and family needs.*

Project Goals:

- Provide financial support to families in need.
- Get girl students into school.
- Encourage families to take an active interest in education.
- Encourage students to attend classes daily and excel in their studies.
- Complete studies through the end of primary school.

Project Need and Beneficiaries:

Many families cannot afford the school fees so must choose which children can attend school and which must stay home. Officially, all children in the P.R. China attend school to grade nine and education is free. But, in actuality, students are responsible for school fees to cover the cost of books, notebooks, heating, salaries and other miscellaneous costs. The average village school fees are more than one-third of the local per capita income. When given the choice to send a boy child or girl child to school, Tibetan families will usually send the boy child. Therefore, illiteracy rates are even higher for women than men.

Project Activities:

Students are selected based on need. Girl students are given priority over boy-students (previously 80% of Children's Fund students were girl-students) and students forced to drop-out due to insufficient resources are given priority.

Funding is based on the following criteria:
1) The child is from a low income family and must labor to support the family.
2) Parents are disabled or the child is an orphan and lives with relatives.
3) The child was forced to drop out from school due to various family issues.
4) Girls are given priority over boys.
5) The child must have completed at least the first grade of their village school.

When students graduate, new students are brought into the program via the above mentioned selection process thus maintaining sponsorship numbers in each county. Tibetan Healing Fund requires each Bureau of Education to sign a contract agreeing to waive all additional student fees so children supported by the Children's Fund will be able to attend school. In addition to our agreement with the Education Bureaus, Tibetan Healing Fund requires a contract with the students, parents and teachers. The students must agree they will stay in school through the end of the sixth grade and will maintain or improve their marks.

Long-term Impact:

Education is not sustainable, but without education a population cannot participate in the larger society. The uneducated will remain underprivileged and without a voice. The teachers, students and parents are motivated, honored and appreciative of the support and want to work hard to make the support meaningful.

Timeline:

Funds are distributed twice yearly by direct distribution by Tibetan Healing Fund staff or through the Bureau of Education.