

Health Education & Outreach

Project Summary: In order to improve rural Tibetan women's knowledge of family health, maternal and children's health, Tibetan Healing Fund facilities Community Health Education and Outreach initiatives. Tibetan Healing Fund collaborates with mSo-Ngon University Tibetan Medical College to train and deploy Tibetan medical students to assess needs and educate thousands of rural Tibetan women about maternal and child health. Over 6,000 rural Tibetan women have received culturally and linguistically appropriate health education on women's physiology and health, family heath, hygiene, nutrition, infectious disease, such as HIV/AIDS and TB and disease prevention. Tibetan Healing Fund has built a strong reputation both in Tibet and US for exceptional trainings in education and health.

Project Goals:

- Train Tibetan medical students to be community health advocates and educators.
- Increase the numbers of village Health Educators.
- ❖ Increase rural women's knowledge of physiology, women's health, family heath, hygiene, nutrition, infectious disease, such as HIV/AIDS and TB and disease prevention.
- Create and distribute culturally and linguistically appropriate health education materials for rural women.
- Create a comprehensive text for field workers working on issues related to women's health.

Project Need and Beneficiaries:

Tibetan Healing Fund with the guidance of Dr. Kunchok Gyaltsen conducted a community health assessment in 2003. The health assessment report, Socioeconomic Status and Maternal and Child Health in Rural Tibetan Villages was published in March 2007 in conjunction with California Center for Population Research, University of California, Los Angeles. This assessment of Tibetan community health in mSo-Ngon Province (Ch: Qinghai) was initiated by THF to provide information on the lives and health status of rural Tibetans in mSo-Ngon Province (Ch: Qinghai) which can be used to design, evaluate and expand health, nutrition and social development programs to improve the lives of the Tibetan population. Of the 279 women surveyed:

- 96% gave birth at home, of these women, 95% delivered without the assistance of a trained health personnel.
- ❖ 0% had heard of Hepatitis B, STIs, HIV and AIDS and none of the women know how these infections are contracted or what they could do to protect themselves against the infections. One out of the 279 women said she knew about TB.

Clearly our health education, outreach and trainings are critical to improving the health of rural Tibet.

Project Activities:

To improve rural Tibetan women's knowledge of family health, maternal and children's health, THF conducts Community Health Education and Outreach initiatives. In 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009(summer) Tibetan Healing Fund sponsored 50 Tibetan medical students from mSo-Ngon University Tibetan Medical College to travel to their native rural Tibetan villages in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan Provinces to educate over 6,000 Tibetan women on basic maternal and child health. Each medical student is given copies of THF's Maternal and Child Health Education Handbook as their educational tool and conducts educational activities using various methods, such as face-to-face meetings, peer education talks, and discussions in small groups. Activity locations is wherever is the most convenient, e.g. in homes, out in a field, etc. in order to ensure a private space for women to learn.

Prior to sending these Tibetan medical students into the field, THF in collaboration with mSo-Ngon University Tibetan Medical College conducts a 3-day training/workshop to the 50 medical students in order to prepare them as effective health educators. The training/workshop provides information and perspectives of Maternal and Child Health both in Tibetan Medicine and Public Health, the concept of health education, the purpose of health education, skills of health education, and management of peer health education activities. A total of 50 third- and fourth-year Tibetan medical students from the mSo-Ngon Province University Tibetan Medical College



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are selected as field-educators and female students are given a priority in selection and all students voluntarily join the project.

Before implementing the education activities, the fieldworkers conduct a baseline survey on health knowledge, with 10 randomly selected women and conducts a post-survey with the same 10 women after the completion of the education activity. The pre-test and post-test results are compared to determine the mean of differences in order to provide us with information to evaluate the health education project and to identify any health knowledge improvement(s) among the women.

Long-term Impact: Tibetan Healing Fund works to create lasting, positive changes in the lives of Tibetan women and children. The cornerstone of all Tibetan Healing Fund's projects is ensuring self-sufficiency by providing education and primary health care for rural Tibetan children and their families. THF promotes sustainable development using transparent and participatory methods while incorporating local and traditional knowledge. The Health Education and Outreach project addresses social and humanitarian needs, specifically health education; the project also encompasses vocational training and capacity building that develops skills for our in-country staff, volunteers and the members of the community we serve.

Conducted Training Timeline:

- ❖ 2005, Tibetan medical students facilitated health education and outreach for 3,000 women from rural Tibetan villages in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan Provinces.
- ❖ 2006, follow-up to the 2005 health education and outreach.
- ❖ 2008 February, health education and outreach for 3,000 women from rural Tibetan villages in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan Provinces.
- 2009 (summer), Tibetan Medical students from mSo-Ngon University Tibetan Medical College will travel to travel to rural Tibetan villages in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan Provinces to provide health education and outreach.