

Tibetan Bilingual Teacher Training Workshops

Project Summary: *Tibetan Healing Fund's primary goal for education is the practical elimination of rural illiteracy for the younger generation of Tibetan children. This requires considerable investment in teacher training, curriculum reform, textbook writing, bilingual education programs, and repair of decrepit physical infrastructure, plus adequate salaries for teachers to remain employed. The Tibetan Bilingual Teacher Training Workshops teach teachers and school administrators on how to create and implement a strong bilingual education system as well as increase teachers' knowledge and skill levels in the areas of teaching methodology, lesson planning, and child development.*

Project Goals:

- ❖ To instruct teachers and school administrators on how to create and implement a strong bilingual education system.
- ❖ To assist children to maintain and extend command of the mother tongue and the second language in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- ❖ Inspire teachers, school administrators and village leaders to share their extraordinary and long cultural heritage with the village youth. Language is the root of culture.
- ❖ To provide on-the-job training opportunities for rural village school teachers.
- ❖ To increase teachers knowledge and skill level in the areas of teaching methodology, curriculum design, lesson planning, classroom management and childhood development.

Project Need and Beneficiaries:

Currently, there is no standard for bilingual education. Some villages teach only Chinese, some teach only Tibetan and some teach a confusing mix of the two. Most primary schools teach in Chinese although village children speak Tibetan at home. Therefore, when the child begins school they are confronted not only with new content, but content taught in a language they do not understand. (It is important to note that the Chinese and Tibetan languages are as different as English and Chinese.)

While some of these areas lack schools altogether, others have scarce resources and teachers themselves are more or less uneducated. Schools in herding areas often have only one teacher, who may not be qualified. In such schools the pupils at all levels are taught together in one class. Facilities are poor, often lacking desks, benches, and sometimes even a schoolhouse.

Project Activities:

The focus of the training is two-fold: teaching methodology and bilingual education. Training workshop curriculum includes principles of learning, teaching methodology, lesson planning and design, collaborative learning, critical moments in class, classroom management, behavior issues and child-centered education. THF's goal is to yearly provide training for 500 Tibetan teachers from various Tibetan counties.

Long-term Impact:

The long-term impacts of the Tibetan Bilingual Teacher Training Workshops are to instruct teachers and school administrative on how to create and implement a strong bilingual education system. The workshops will increase teachers' knowledge and skill level in the areas of teaching methodology, lesson planning and child development. Successful bilingual teacher training will help reduce dropout rates, increase literacy and enable a significant proportion of Tibetans to enter senior high school and receive post-secondary training.

Timeline:

In August 2003, Tibetan Healing Fund hosted its first Bilingual Education Conference; 190 teachers from Tibetan speaking villages in Dong Gou Township gathered to learn about the merits of bilingual education. The outcome of the conference was a policy on bilingual education for Trika County.

In January 2004, Tibetan Healing Fund hosted a second Bilingual Education Conference; all 550 primary and middle school teachers in Trika County participated in the training.