



Annual Report Braille Without Borders

*Dear friends and supporters
of the Braille Without Borders projects in Tibet India and around the world.*

This annual report is a bit more elaborate than in previous years. The main reason for this is that the projects are still evolving. To help you to navigate the report please find below a table of contents.

On behalf of all Tibetan students, all IISE participants and all our colleagues, we would like to thank you for your loyalty, advice, support and friendship.

With very best wishes,

*Sabriye Tenberken
Paul Kronenberg*



"Mouse class" students in Lhasa



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1. What happened in Tibet?

Since the beginning of the BWB project our goal was to enable participants with a sense of self-sufficiency and self empowerment. These days the project is mainly being managed by the previous generations of BWB students.

Kyila, Gyendsen and Nyima Wangdu, all trained at the International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs (IISE) in Kerala, South India, are now responsible for running the project in Lhasa.

Gyendsen runs the Braille book production (see 1.3.5), Kyila manages the day to day operations in Lhasa, while at the same time she is establishing an inclusive kindergarten. (see 1.3.6). After a year of training, Nyima Wangdu is now back in Lhasa where he will take over Kyila's work so she can concentrate more on establishing her Kindergarten.

1.1 New three-year contract with our Tibetan Counterparts.

During the summer Mr. Theo Schlaghecken from Germany had assessed the entire BWB Tibet project. Foreign Affairs officers had also visited the BWB projects several times and have approved a three-year contract. On the 2nd of November 2010 a new agreement was signed between the Tibet Disabled Persons' Federation and Braille without Borders. This is great news and much appreciation goes out to both, the FAO and TDPF. We look forward to a successful partnership over the years to come.

2.1 Preparatory school in Lhasa

1.2.1 Students

12 more Students of the "Rabbit" class at the preparatory school in Lhasa have now integrated themselves into the Beishung regular elementary school which is located next to the vocational training farm in Shigatse. They are progressing well. Additionally this year three of our students have been enrolled into High School in Lhasa. Although they had passed the stringent entrance tests with good



results, the headmaster still refused to accommodate the students due to their blindness. Through the intervention and support of the BWB partner organization TDPF (Tibet Disabled Persons' Federation), the three students were eventually accepted by the school. We give tremendous thanks to the TDPF team for this successful intervention on behalf of these children. This testifies to the value of BWB partnerships.

For now, we have 36 students enrolled in our school for blind children in Lhasa, most of whom are new this year. More and more people are getting to hear about our preparatory school for the blind through local radio and TV stations and by word of mouth, particularly in remote rural areas.

1.2.2 Employees

We are now able to offer a pension plan and insurance for our employees in Tibet, covering accidents, emergencies and more. Such insurance policies have become government policy only in the last few years.

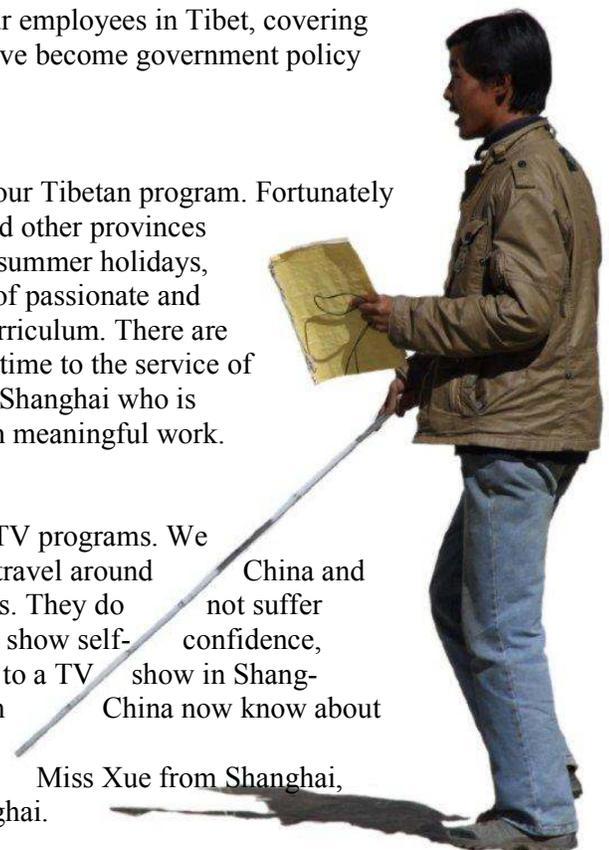
1.2.3 Volunteers

Unfortunately we cannot include international volunteers in our Tibetan program. Fortunately we have a dedicated team of volunteers from within Tibet and other provinces of China. These include local students who come during the summer holidays, and a high school teacher from Sichuan who gave 9 months of passionate and committed support to the students and helped develop the curriculum. There are more and more young people interested in contributing their time to the service of society. Currently we are hosting a university graduate from Shanghai who is gaining real benefits and genuine enjoyment from doing such meaningful work.

1.2.4 Our students travel to China

This year our students have been invited to appear on many TV programs. We all welcome this, because they learn a huge amount through travel around China and also have the opportunity to present a new image of blindness. They do not suffer from stage fright, are cheerful, and in interviews the students show self-confidence, intelligence and wit. In May, 10 of our students were invited to a TV show in Shanghai. The show is called "China's Got Talent". Many people in China now know about Braille Without Borders (BWB) having seen the show!

A great supporter and friend of Braille Without Borders, Miss Xue from Shanghai, invited 10 of our students and staff to visit the Expo in Shanghai.





1.2.5 Activities

- Together with the NGO Handicapped International we organized a public event called “White Cane day”. We focused on creating public awareness about blindness.
- Our blind music teacher Ngudrup attended a music competition in Shanghai along with two of his students. They reached the finals.

1.3 The training farm in Shigatse

1.3.1 Students and apprentices.

Currently, fifty two students are living and training in the BWB farm in Shigatse. Thirty of them are studying in the Government Primary School, eight in the Government Middle School and one student in the local Government High School. Without exception all students were able to achieve at least 75 points out of 100. The student Nyima Chokpa was even among the top 10 of the 600 candidates for the High School. A few years ago, local community leaders were very skeptical about the enrollment of blind children. Today this has changed. Today they are glad to have the blind taking part in their classes. Seventeen trainees have completed their training in 2010 in the following areas: medical massage, knitting, weaving Tibetan carpets, Tibetan traditional music, cheese making, bread baking, organic cooking, organic gardening and animal care. However, the challenge remaining is the next step, to find employment opportunities.

1.3.2 Bakery

A professional baker from Holland, Mr. Wilbert Rutten, taught basic skills in baking and in the marketing of products, which is already paying off. Our students regularly sell our products in the nearest town of Shigatse including ‘up market’ items like waffles and ‘apple flaps’ to a widening niche of customers in white collar professions. The Bakery programme has three major goals: 1 An additional vocational skill for the blind. 2. A healthy way to enrich the local diet. 3. The sales provide local income.

1.3.3 Dairy

Our cheese market has experienced some modest success. The German Head Chef of the St. Regis hotel chains certified our cheese as being of excellent quality. Our cheese now appears on the menus of the St.Regis hotel. We continue to look for more outlets of our dairy products.

1.3.4 Braille Book Production

In summer 2010 the project in Lhasa was visited by a delegation from Japan and Malaysia. The delegation provided training in the production of Braille books. Tse Yang attended this course. She heads the production of Braille books for students studying in government schools in Shigatse. Gompo Gyendzen heads the Braille book production in Lhasa.

1.3.5 KIKI'S Kindergarten

Two old Army barracks were renovated at the farm in Shigatse for Kyila's Kindergarten project. She has designed a very unique curriculum for the centre. She also wants to involve the children in the operations of the farm. Amazingly, Kyila organized the fundraising for the entire kindergarten project on her own. Congratulations Kyila!



2. International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs (IISE), Kerala, South India

02.01 Graduation ceremony

On Saturday, 13 November we celebrated the graduation of our 2010 participants. Twenty eight participants from 18 different countries presented their proposals developed during the year. They spoke before a panel of external auditors. Four prizes were awarded: Deginet Wotango from Ethiopia, won the award for best IISE participant. The Anandi Ramachandran prize for best project proposal, was shared between Pamela Sabwami from Kenya and Daniel Chiambah from Cameroon. The IISE solidarity prize went to Kapri Kanu of Sierra Leone.

Guest speakers included the Minister of Forestry, Wild Life Protection and Housing, Mr. Binoy Vishwam. He made an impassioned speech about the important role of social entrepreneurs in supporting eco-friendly environments.

Twenty seven new projects will be created as a result of the participants' work, including one developed by a blind couple from Pakistan. Under the title "Empower Pakistan" their project will support women with disabilities by providing practical life-skills' training. The couple is aiming to work towards a comprehensive barrier-free society in Pakistan.

Michael Muzah from Zimbabwe has a project entitled "Spirit of Survivors", a training programme in survival techniques for the blind in Zimbabwe. Pamela Sabwami from Kenya plans to set up a school for visually impaired children in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, the largest slum in the world. She will teach Braille reading and writing, orientation, mobility and life-practical techniques.

2.2 Content of the IISE programme, a journey in five acts:

As in the past, the year has been constructed around five distinct 'acts' or chapters. Each act brings participants one step closer to the reality of building their social projects, in their own country.

2.2.1 Act 1: Project Planning

The first act took place in a fictitious country called "Malaika Islands". This fictional island has a similar climate and population to the neighboring states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, so that the participants could go to both States to seek advice and input. Participants split into four groups focusing on the following problems of

the islanders: street children, food shortage and Usher syndrome (deaf-blindness inherited).

Objectives:

- Needs Analysis: What is needed to set up a project? How do I create a needs analysis?
- Project planning: How do I create an action plan and the resources available to me?
- Fundraising (with imaginary sponsors): How do I raise the necessary funds for my project?



Participants from the four groups, wrote project plans to address the problems of the fictitious island nation and these were submitted to external auditors for critique and feedback. The “Mandala-group“ came up with the most convincing scenario and action plan. It designed an "outreach program" for children with deaf-blindness.

2.2.2 Act 2: Social development and change

The overarching theme here was "social development and change". The act focused on social marketing with the emphasis on exploring the roles and responsibilities of project managers. During this act, the skills acquired in act 1 were developed and applied in the following areas:

- a) Bookkeeping (Financial Planning)
- b) Social marketing
- c) Communication (Public speaking, public forums etc)
- d) Writing skills (creating Press releases, articles, short stories, radio plays)

Participants chose 6 projects featuring taboos from their own countries :

- "Pro Natito" campaign against female circumcision in Africa. "Natito" is a curse word for uncircumcised women.
- "Better Bag Campaign" (BBC): Campaign against the use of plastic bags.
- "You are You" campaign against skin-damaging cosmetics for skin lightening (specifically aimed at Indian women)
- "One Light" campaign against religious intolerance.
- "Free Arena" campaign against sexual harassment in the workplace.
- "Good Bye Humbug" campaign against superstition and denigration of disability and promoting self-esteem among disabled young people.

The "Catalysts" (our teachers at the IISE) translated the economic strategies of the individual steps in project planning for the various campaigns. Group exercises were used to explore each step. In this way, participants learned about planning and development strategies for social projects. In developing and implementing their chosen projects, they used principles taken from social marketing, project management, leadership, financial planning, creative writing, communications with the media, advertising and ultimately in creating a radio play. The resulting exhibitions, addressing these six taboo topics, were presented to the public and viewed with great interest by local university students and press. The Indian media were particularly interested in the "You are You" campaign against skin-lightening crèmes, a major consumer item in India.

The Pro Natito group discovered that female circumcision is also practiced in India, a point taken up by the press.

The presentation of dealing with sexual harassment at work was taken very seriously by those CEOs visiting the exhibition. This group had introduced the campaign's proposed motto : "Zero sexual harassment"

The "Humbug" exhibition was also well received by students.



2.2.3 Act 3: Project work

The IISE also runs long-term projects, and our participants have been involved in these for a number of years. These projects are:

- A basic preparatory school for blind children in Kerala
- The development of a Centre for Social Innovation CSI (See also 3 Center for Social Innovation)
- A community outreach program which includes “zero waste management” and “cultivation of organic vegetables”.

All participants choose one of these projects for developing curricula, action plans and creating the necessary media publicity.

2.2.4 Act 4: Internship

The fourth act is an eight week internship. It is spent with large firms or social organizations in India and Nepal.

As well as benefitting the host organization, participants had specific tasks and objectives to plan and carry out. For example, Deginet led a social marketing programme for a large company, Babar set up a helpline for the employees of a company, Pamela created a curriculum for a school for the blind.

2.2.5 Act 5: Participants Own Projects (POP)

In Act five participants concentrated on developing their own project concepts. They presented their plans to an external jury, in public. The jury provided useful feedback which participants could use upon graduation.

The graduates expressed great gratitude to the entire IISE staff and the jury at the farewell ceremony on December 15th.

2.3 Events

- At the IISE we also run regular social events. One particularly successful event was an afternoon for mothers with disabled children. The cooks had provided delicious food and drinks. The participants took care of the children with imagination and empathy, playing, dancing and singing together. The mothers who usually cannot find time for themselves, spent time relaxing, boating, picknicking, singing local songs and dancing. A good time was clearly had by all.

- Dr. Sashi Tharoor, a member of parliament from Trivandrum and former assistant secretary of the United Nations under Kofi Annan visited the IISE. Dr. Tharoor is a well known author and has produced many books and articles, and is especially sought after for his views and ideas on human rights. He was very enthusiastic about the mission of the IISE and the structure of the campus and promised active support.

The IISE is already well known in Kerala and becoming better known throughout India, i.e. a national newspaper published an article on their front page, the local website Yenta.com writes regularly about the IISE and its activities, a television station produced a talk show involving five women of the IISE



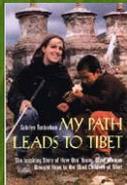
| Graduates 2010

calling it “New Heroines Interviewed” and the Times of India, the largest newspaper in the world in terms of circulation, wrote a very positive article on the work of the IISE.

3. Spread the word

We are looking for IISE participants. They should be talented, motivated and interested in creating innovative social projects. If you know of any feel free to send them our website information: www.bwb-iise.org

If you enjoyed this annual report, feel free to send it to friends and other interested parties. More information can be found on our websites: www.bwb-iise.org - www.braillewithoutborders.org



BOOK:
Sabriye Tenberken
My Path leads to Tibet
 Arcade Publishing
 ISBN-13: 978-1559706940
www.braillewithoutborders.org



DOCUMENTARY:
BLINDSIGHT
 Robson Entertainment
<http://www.blindsightthemovie.com/>

If you would like to support the activities of Braille Without Borders in Tibet / India, you can send a donation to one of the following:

GERMANY

Förderkreis Blinden Zentrum Tibet – Braille Ohne Grenzen e.V.
 Im Auel 34, 53913 Swisttal-Morenhoven

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BLZ: 370 501 98
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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT!