Annual Report
2010-2011
GIRLS EDUCATION IS THE CORE OF OUR PROGRAM

Initiated in the summer of 2009, Pentok began its first program in Mukbo village\(^1\), providing a chance for four young Tibetan nomadic girls to continue schooling outside of the village. At that time, female participation in primary and secondary school was zero.

The Tibetan regions of Western China still lag far behind the rest of the country in terms of development issues. Qinghai Province, especially, is the least developed area and issues like poverty hinder opportunities for the future. We believe education is the foundation for change. Miraculous changes can happen in households and communities if women are educated: families will be smaller and healthier; income will be increased in households; the next generation will get better education; communities will thrive. Pentok was founded by women from the region who have been fortunate to receive a higher education in universities and who want to give back to their communities through first-hand understanding of the challenges being faced.

1. See more introductions of the village in the following section.
We work with one girl at a time and grow together with them. The success of our work in providing educational opportunities is measured by MASS: M-Measurable Results. Pentok focuses its efforts on individuals, households, and one community.

A-Achievable Goals. We set tangible goals for each of our activities.

S-Financial Sustainability. We strive to achieve financial sustainability for each of our projects.

S-Scalable Model. We ensure that each program can be expanded and scaled in similar regions.

What We Do

We are a grassroots initiative led by local women committed to promoting sustainable education and leadership for women and girls in low-income rural Tibetan areas of Qinghai Province, China.
“Drokpa is a Tibetan word that means nomad. Pastoral nomads have a traditional lifestyle moving between pastures with their livestock. There are estimated 30-40 million nomads in the world. Two million of them are Tibetans. Nomadic cultures are facing being extinct in the industrialized world today.”
Pentok works with the drokpa communities in Xinghai County. Located in Tsolho (Ch. Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Region, Qinghai Province, western China, Xinghai County is 300 KM away from Xining, the capacity city of Qinghai Province, where the Pentok Institute’s office is based. There are eight townships and 56 villages in Xinghai County. 98% of the villages are covered with Tibetan nomads whose living conditions depend on herding sheep and yak. There are a total of 54,000 residents estimated to be living in Xinghai County. 90% of the population is located in rural communities, as far as a one-day trip by jeep to the county town. Most of the nomads live isolated on mountains, hills, and grasslands. Nearly all the nomadic villagers depend on income from herding sheep and yak. In the summertime, many villagers dig and sell caterpillar fungus, a medical product that grows in the Himalayan Mountains. This fungus is sold to Muslim and Chinese merchants who take the fungus to markets located in cities and towns.
Our organization, Pentok Institute, started doing its first Girls’ Fellowship Program in the area of Mukbo Village in 2009, and now we cover most of the nomadic villages in Xinghai County with our fellowship program. We have developed deep and trustworthy relationships with nomads, village doctors, village leaders and local government officials. Mukbo Village consists of 750 Tibetan nomads and it suffers from extreme isolation from the outside world, lacking basic amenities such as electricity, running water, clinics, and schools. The villagers subsist solely by herding yak, sheep, and horses. It takes 2 hours by jeep to reach the nearest town, and 5 hours to reach Xinghai County, where the schools are located. A former village official sold his yaks and constructed Mukbo’s first school in the 1990s; however, all the village schools were demolished in 2008 due to the government’s recent education policies. Distance, language barriers, and added costs in transportation for schooling have discouraged most students from pursuing education, especially girls, whose parents do not believe are worth the time and money to send to school.
Education has not traditionally been seen as an effective way to tackle issues like poverty, health, and malnutrition. More than 70% of Tibetans living in Qinghai are illiterate. Of the few who attend school, around 50% drop out at the junior middle school or high school levels. Those that leave school face tremendous challenges because their schooling neither prepared them for city jobs nor for daily life in the countryside. Thus, these young people return home to find themselves belonging nowhere. In rural nomadic communities, the local economy is extremely fragile, with limited opportunities. In most nomadic communities, 70% of a households’ income is derived from digging a local plant called caterpillar fungus. The price of this fungus fluctuates tremendously, and local Tibetans have little knowledge of the market and pricing mechanisms. For example in 2008, most Tibetans earned no annual income at all due to dramatically low price of caterpillar fungus, leaving many families in poverty.

2. From field research.
3. From field research.
4. From field research.

**GIRLS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

**“ EDUCATE A WOMAN, YOU EDUCATE A NATION. ”**

- Increase girls’ school enrollment rates and ensure that 90% of the girls complete nine years of compulsory education in our community, Xinghai.
- Allow 10% of the girls in the community to achieve higher education.
- Promote the value of girls’ education among drokpas.
- Expand opportunities for girls to achieve employable skills.

**Fact**

**Goal**

- In Mukbo village, girls’ school enrollment rates have been increased from 0% to 85%.
- Funding 25 long-term girls’ scholarships in Mukbo Village
- Donating 200 books, schoolbags, and other school supplies
- Funding secured for 120 children’s schooling costs.
- Raised awareness of the value of girls’ education among drokpas in Xinghai
- Three girls have completed primary school and entered secondary schools.
We spend every dollar and every moment wisely to ensure that the girls’ potential is fully discovered and their confidence is built up. Here are some moments from the year 2010-2011.
When the Pentok Staff asked Tseyang Jyid, “What are the things you like to do most at school?” she immediately answered, “Reading storybooks. Tibetan stories are such fun to read during my spare time. My Tibetan writing skill have also improved through doing the readings in these couple of years since Pentok started supporting me with minimal school expenses and some readings every term.”

“My dream is to be a doctor who can serve the poor in my community and who can eliminate people’s sickness. To achieve this, I personally think understanding several languages is such an important thing to do at school. Native language study especially cannot be missed because you can use the language to communicate with your people in your homeland by yourself.”

Regarding that Tseyang Jyid is the first girl in the village to ever complete primary school, she is the most successful student among all the village students. Many of the villagers praise her outstanding schoolwork.

“Because sending three kids to school and investing in education is such a challenge for a nomad’s family, I was quite worried. However, I was encouraged when I saw the fruit produced from my investment. My three kids are doing great at school. I hope none of them drop out of school on the way. I’d love to support them with all my effort if they are capable enough to carry out higher education in the future.” This is Uncle Tashi Gyal’s commitment to allow his three children to be educated. He raised the kids by himself the past three years.

“I was almost heartbroken whenever I saw my girl sobbing in the corner of our house because I wanted her to stop school, as we couldn’t afford the school expenses and sometimes I needed her help with some house chores.”

----- Pakmo Tar’s mother

“My teacher once told my mother that out of all my classmates, I have great potential to be a university student. I also hope that I would be a university student in the future. I hope you can continue to support me with my study. I will repay your help with hard work at school.”

----- Pakmo Tar

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Changing Lives in Little Samdrup Tso’s family

In September 2009, when Samdrup Tso was of age to attend school, her parents Ake Dortar and Ani Sanglo, took turns guarding Samdrup Tso in their little rented house near the school. After her first year at school, Samdrup Tso made impressive progress in her studies: she turned in her homework on time, she dressed nicely and tidy, she concentrated on class and she was more active in class.

In September 2010, Samdrup Tso’s aunt, a single mother of two children who lived nearby, suddenly passed away. Thereafter, Samdrup Tso’s family took on the responsibility of taking care of the two cousins and Ake Dortar was burdened with two more people to feed. More seriously, in January 2011 Samdrup Tso’s mother suddenly became very sick and quickly passed away because the family was not able to afford medical treatment for her. Due to the recent chaos that happened in the family, Samdrup Tso has had to stop school for a while.

When the Pentok Staff asked Ake Dortar about Samdrup Tso’ future education, he said, “I want her to start school in the fall semester of 2011. This spring semester, the family has had many changes and it has been too much for a child to carry to school. I’ll let my daughter review the old lessons taught at school so that she won’t have so much trouble when she gets back to school. There are so many things to deal with by myself now, but I hope she can start school this fall semester.”

Yak-Loan Project

Education, especially female education, has little value to Tibetan nomadic communities in Qinghai, western China. Educational achievement for women does not currently translate into socio-economic improvements for their families. Pentok aims to change this by developing novel projects that create direct links between the two.

The amount of animals, particularly yaks, that belong to a family is the most common indicator of wealth in Mukbo. The relatively rich families have around 60 yaks. Poorer families, however, have very few: usually between two and ten. Because they lack the benefits of having several yaks, the poorest families in Mukbo must rely on herding other families’ yaks to earn income.

The yak-loan project is a family income-generating project that aims to help improve the family conditions of those poor nomads who have financial difficulties, particularly in sending their daughters to schools. Pentok brings funds into the village by purchasing the yaks from local nomads and creating an animal bank. The bank continues to loan yaks to poor households after the project is completed, helping maintain the traditional pastoral lifestyle, and bringing extra incomes to households.

Through our loans, we were able to provide three households with yaks, a total of 30, which will ultimately raise their household income. It is our hope that with this improvement in income, the family will be able to send their daughters to school. We are very excited to hear about the results of the Yak Loan project in the short- and long-term.
This milking yak, purchased from Lhapal’s cousin, will give birth this summer. This summer, his family will have a milking yak that can produce milk.

In March 2011, Uncle Chodor’s dream became true that he had his first baby yak.

Uncle Chodor’s family hopes that the 6 best yak will breed more yak babies next year together with his family’s 9 inferior old breeding yak.

These two yaks were purchased from Kahsham’s family, who has two children (a boy and a girl) who are both going to school. The girl received a scholarship from Pentok.
Lhapal’s (b. 1980) family had 20 yaks, and now they have 25 yaks after Pentok purchased five milking yaks. He and his wife have two children, a young boy and a girl who helps her mother with family house chores because her mother is always sick. Lhapal and his wife think that education is very important and they want to send their children to school. Lhapal’s family has no caterpillar fungus so he has to make some income from other work, such as helping other families to graze the yaks and sheep for short-term income.

Motorcycle Repair Shop

Most nomadic villagers rely on motorcycles to take their children to school in neighboring areas. In Mukbo village, motorcycles number approximately one per household. When a motorcycle breaks down, a truck must be hired to transport the motorcycle to the Xinghai County repair shop, which is 100 kilometers away. Motorcycles need repairs frequently due to the low quality of the roads.

Pentok collaborated with a group of Lewis and Clark students from the U.S. and won the 100 Projects for Peace Grant to build the shop in the village. After one year’s operation, 10% of the shop’s profit would go to the Girls’ Fellowship Program, which would support more girls from the village to go to school.
“Leadership is lifting a person’s vision to higher sights, the raising of a person’s performance to a higher standard, the building of personality beyond its normal limitations.”

**FACT**

Tibetan women have very few opportunities for leadership roles. There are only a handful of role models in contemporary Tibetan society. From a study of 18 villages in Qinghai Province, we found out that the population of females and males in the villages are almost the same, but 40% of males are literate while only 15% of females are literate. The 15% of literate women are mostly primary and middle school students, while 90% of female adults are illiterate, as many girls drop out of school as they get older. They drop out after middle school or high school due to financial difficulties or having to help families with household responsibilities. Many female college graduates are waiting for jobs at home or accepting temporary teaching jobs, which pay a very low salary of 500 RMB per month, while the average salary in Qinghai is around 2,000 RMB per month.

The few Tibetan women who manage to attend college often end up with severely limited career opportunities. Research shows that only 0.1% of the Tibetan population has obtained a university education. It’s not clear how many of them are female. The majority of Tibetan women who graduate from college have no job opportunities after years of investment in education, as there are too many graduates with few job opportunities. The investment in education can often lead the family to further impoverishment. Those who do get jobs after their graduation usually end up in conventional careers. Most women are fulfilling traditional female roles on farms and grasslands. Because education often does not justify its investment, very few Tibetans living in China have hopes in education.

**GOALS**

- To nurture future Tibetan women leaders.
- To expand job opportunities for young female university graduates in the development sector.
- To form a network of learning among Tibetan females.
- To build skills needed in the non-profit sector.
- To understand and work together with rural Tibetan women.

**YEAR IN REVIEW**

16 young Tibetan women have been selected and participated in the program. Four of them are now working in the NGO sector. Seven are seeking higher educations both in overseas and China. The rest are seeking for teaching jobs at their home areas.

**Moments of the year 2010-2011 in our TWLP program.**
One solar cooker weights more than 100 kilograms, and it takes five to seven people to unload one solar cooker from the truck. This woman in the picture carries the solar cooker on her back, and four other people helped to put it on her back. Usually, people in Emao Village think women are responsible for various physical labors, and it is considered shameful for men to do these work. This woman is at her 30s, and women in the village usually carry around 60-100kg of firewood from the mountains and travel for long distance before reaching home.

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Girls from the Fellowship Program and women from the Leadership Program are all from their own unique communities, tribes, and villages. Our dream is to build a healthy and vibrant community in order for our empowered women fellows to return home and contribute back to the communities. The community development program includes needs-based, small-scale development projects that can help reduce burdens shared by the communities in rural Qinghai.

Examples of such projects are:

Solar Cooker Project

"It is great to have a solar cooker in my family. I really appreciate this. I have been busy and suffered for my entire life going out collecting dung, cooking and fetching water. Now with a solar cooker, I don’t think I will need to keep two girls at home to help me with the chores."

----- Chotso, solar cooker recipient

Pentok provided 750 solar cookers to 14 villages and 2 monasteries in Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan provinces. The project helped to improve the lives and living standards of 5,499 Tibetans across western China by reducing their reliance on wood burning cookers.

Solar cookers work on the principle of converting sunlight into heat energy to cook food or boil water for purification. The surface of the cooker contains hundreds of small mirrors that reflect the heat towards a dark pot positioned above the cooker. A solar cooker can boil water in 15 minutes. The purpose of solar cookers is to reduce the use of traditional stoves, which require the use of wood and animal dung for fuel. The reduction in use of traditional stoves increases fuel security in regions where fuel is scarce and reduces the exposure to smoke, which can lead to chronic respiratory problems.
Public Water Well Project

On May 23rd, 2010 Uncle Chopa and his team started digging a 330 meter-long, 2 meter-depth ditch for new water well. Gajia Villagers mixing cement together in order to build well. Based on the old well, we concrete the bottom of the well with mixed cement.

Newly built water wells in the Gajia Village.

Gajia Villagers mixing cement together in order to build well.
The new public water well being built. After the well is completed, it will make 40 more households get clean water easily.

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Clothing Drive Project

My name is Nanshem and I am sixty years old now. There are eight people in my family: my wife and our daughter with her five children. I am the only male laborer in our family and due to the extreme poverty none of my grandchildren are going to schools. My family owns twenty-five yaks and fifty sheep. In addition to selling some of our livestock each year and from digging caterpillar fungus, we can make around 7,000-8,000RMB for annual income. I am a disabled old man and my daughter is mute, together with other illnesses coming along, each year we have to spend around 1,000RMB on our medical expenses. Thus, as a matter of fact, these clothes you have so generously donated to us will not only ease our clothes purchasing burden but also will make great impact to our family within the next year. Thank you.

My name is Drolma Jyid and I am thirteen years old. I am an orphan and now I live with my elder sister’s family. My parents died when I was only seven years old. Afterward my sister has taken care of me, and brought me with her when she married her husband. I hope that I can finish my primary school and then go home help my sister with the family work.

CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES PROGRAM

The project, at its essence, aimed to create a more sustainable organization by building the capacity of NGO leaders so that they can push the organizations to a new level of growth and sustainability.

RESULTS:

- 10 NGO leaders in Qinghai were trained in NGO management and leadership.
- Two of the best development projects in the area have been visited, and we have learned from their experiences.
- Five organizations have been visited and we have exchanged ideas on education, development and challenges in the NGO sector.
- Pentok’s donor community has been diversified to include Chinese foundations and individuals.

All the NGO participants are posing for the final photo in front of Drucker, the father of management. The training for NGO Management is also from his book “Management for Non-profit Organizations.”
Rinchen Dawa, from SSG, and Ligyal Tsering, from Tzsongkha Charity Association, are talking about group work on Team Building in NGO sectors.

NGO workers are taking tours at Norlha Workshop. Norlha, a social enterprise, based in a small Tibetan nomadic village, has employees of 120 nomads, producing 9,000 high quality products from yak wool and selling them to the fashion world in Paris and New York.

INTERNshiP PROGRAM

“Think globally, act locally.”
The mission of promoting sustainable education and leadership services for women and girls on the Tibetan Plateau cannot be achieved if we do not build partnerships with many like-minded individuals, organizations, and donors. Pentok’s Internship Program offers volunteering experiences for university graduates and current students at colleges from around the globe. In the past year, we had interns from Harvard University, Reed College, Hull University, and many others.

University of Pennsylvania

John Hung

“Time flies, indeed. It’s been a month yet I felt like I’ve only stayed in Qinghai for a week. I’ve had a wonderful time working with the Pentok staff, learning from local NGO leaders who frequently visited our organization, and, most of all, experiencing the overwhelming hospitality from the Tibetans. The day I started here, drinking with the team at a picnic, seemed like it just happened yesterday.”

Lewis & Clark University

Sara Eichelberger

“We lived with the Pentok staff while volunteering for the organization. Our hosts were hospitable, spoke impeccable English, and we enjoyed hanging out and cooking meals together. I was impressed with the staff’s dedication, organizational skills, and involvement with the village community. Working with Pentok provided me with invaluable insight and knowledge of development work, Tibetan and Chinese culture, and nonprofits.”

International interns with Girls’ Fellowship Recipients

Rowan from Hull University in Uk taught basic English to about 100 children in a Tibetan Township in the summer of 2011.
2010-2011 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Total: 897,375 RMB

- Community Development: 234,269 (26%)
- Capacity Building: 76,538 (9%)
- Admin: 9,3645 (10%)
- Fellowship: 89,679 (10%)
- Other Education: 260,000 (29%)
- Education/Enterprise: 78,000 (9%)
- TWLD: 65,244 (7%)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Global Fund for Women
The Sustainable Table
DAP, Australian Embassy
AusAid, Australian Embassy
Misereor
Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
International School of Beijing
Beijing Community Dinner
One Global Village
Debra Grant
Michelle Grant
Jerry Colonna
Donna Margolis
GaoYing Feng
The Davis Projects for Peace
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