

Gesar Fund : Annual summary 2015

Preface

2015 hasn't always been an easy year for the Gesar Fund. The board and the local volunteers have big ambitions, but we are not always able to fit them in the ever changing reality. So, sometimes we have to postpone our plans, and sometimes we even retreat. That is the wisdom of the dragon.

But always when there is a space which can be filled, we step forwards either with a enhancement of an existing plan , or with a new initiative. And we always trust that in the long term our work will bear its fruits.

In 2014 we had some setbacks regarding the General Store and the Gesar Bakery, but with patience en wisdom the nomad families and the local volunteers turned the new reality into a renewed successful future. Board member Nyima Kunga spoke in an interview about the new reality and new plans for the future: [A dream has come true!](#)

Also in the Education Project changes in legislation have taken place, which as well we had to handle with patience and wisdom.

A lot has been changed the past year, and also a lot has been achieved. In this annual overview we hope to give you insight into the activities of the past year and on which activities the money has been spend. You think that your friends and acquaintances also are interested in our good work? Please send them this pdf file!

30-01-2015

The Gesar Fund Board

An van Bolhuis

Eric Elbers

Nyima Kunga

Maarten Regtien

Han de Wit



Gesar Fund Annual Summary 2015

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3. The Gesar Fund in the news



1. The Education Project

1. The kindergarten

The teaching hours in the Kindergarten are limited to the hours outside the regular Chinese school hours. For the Gesar Fund that left us only the three months in the winter stop, as in the countryside Chinese school provide 24/7 school and boarding.

Unfortunately this winter a new local law went into effect: gatherings where is being taught to children or adults are forbidden.

2. The school at the Surmang monastery

The educational project is carried out in cooperation with the American Könchok Foundation. The activities on site are done by Khenpo Tsering, abbot of the Surmang Monastery. He reports on the use of the funds to the foundation, which in turns annually reports to the Gesar Fund.

Khenpo Tsering indicated in 2014 that he had trouble maintaining his group of nomad children. In particular, the guys are so wild that much material damage is created including many broken windows. Last year the Khenpo already twice interrupted the teaching activities to take time for repairs.

As the Könchok Foundation started a new training for monks, the student-monks in this program in shifts will deliver extra supervisors during the nomad children's lessons.

The number of children which receive lessons varied between 150 and 250.

The Gesar Fund priorities education to the nomad children. The fact that children get hot meals and - if necessary - also medical assistance, guarantees that this very vulnerable group likely will enjoy a healthy future!



2. The Healthcare Project

Hepatitis in China en Tibet, general information

Hepatitis, especially hepatitis B is a large health risk in China and particular in poor areas like Yushu. This project aims at testing people with hepatitis (A and B) and at vaccinating people, who do not have antibodies in the bloodstream. The costs of the vaccine and the tests are paid by the Gesar Fund. This means that the often very poor people can have themselves tested and vaccinated.

Also health education is given to the poor: in simple terms is explained what they can do themselves to prevent infections and to recover from infections. In China hepatitis still is a big taboo, like HIV is.

Although rarely people die from hepatitis B, the fear of this disease is big. Also fighting this fear is part of our campaign. And although most people can recover from hepatitis, in case of a long-term hepatitis the liver can be damaged in such an extent that special treatment is necessary. These treatments can be very costly. For now the Gesar Fund is not involved with their treatments.

In areas where Tibetans live the percentage of people who carry or have carried hepatitis is some 60%. As most infections are transferred from mother to baby, and the baby's immune system is not yet fully developed, this causes in 90% a lifelong carrying of chronic hepatitis. In one of these cases some 2% someday will suffer from liver cirrhosis or liver cancer.

The later in life people get hepatitis, the greater the chance their body can conquer the disease, and so smaller the chance they'll develop a chronic hepatitis. The Gesar Fund Medical Team tests anyone who wants to be tested, but has special focus on testing and vaccinating pregnant women.

High on the agenda of course is education regarding this contagious disease: not only the course of the hepatitis but also how hepatitis can be transferred: via blood, or sexual contact. Not only the doctors and nurses of our Gesar Team provide the education, but also a growing number of enthusiastic volunteers.

For a permanent immunity three vaccinations are required. Standard procedure for the vaccination of one person is 60 Yuan (9.5 US\$). Thanks to the fact the hospital grants us discount we can offer a full vaccination for 45 Yuan (7 Euro).

Gesar Fund Fighting Hepatitis and TB in 2015, the Gesar Fund School Project

Besides the regular TB and Hepatitis tests the Gesar Fund medical volunteers (doctors and nurses from the Peoples Hospital) perform when roaming the desolate countryside with the Gesar Ambulance, in 2015 a very special project has started: the Gesar Fund School Project.

The Gesar Fund School Project embodied that on **all** 1000 students of the Chengdu elementary/secondary Hepatitis and TB tests were performed.

Students with positive test results were sent to the Peoples Hospital for (free-of-charge, by the government paid) treatment.

All students were asked as reciprocation to help out the elderly with daily activities for a period for two weeks after school hours. As well they were asked to do small repairs and to keep company.

Also there was a group of students informing the public orally about TB and hepatitis: especially about prevention!

With asking a reciprocation the Gesar Fund hoped to achieve two goals:

1. Het Gesar Fund is not to be regarded as a NGO providing money and free services.
2. Het Gesar Fund stimulates self-help, self-reliance and own-initiative to make the vulnerable nomads more able to cope with daily life.

The Gesar Fund School Project (costs EUR 5000) was a success and thus will be repeated the upcoming years!!!

Rabies

In 2014 rabies broke out at several places in the Chengdu prefecture. In China stray dogs roam the countryside in big numbers and there is little control on the health of these animals. As there was a human sacrifice case in Chengdu, the government was forced to solve the rabies problem by killing all stray dogs in winter and spring of 2015

In summer 2015 Chengdu was declared rabies-free.

Gesar Community Centre and Healthcare

In the Community Centre is a medical post. The doctors perform general medical tests on the local nomads such as measuring blood pressure, performing diagnostic heart tests and lung function tests. Tibetan herbs are given to people who have stomach pain.

Also education is given concerning the prevention of infectious diseases. Most nomads who meet our local volunteers are illiterate. Information mostly consists of illustrations, which is also provided for free by the Chinese Government. The Gesar Fund strives to educate on healthcare via cd's and dvd's but due to copyright laws this is very difficult.

The Gesar Fund board decided that the medical team of the 10,000 euro's they spend annually, 20% is allowed to be spend on own initiative and insight.

Regularly the medical team gives ad-hoc emergency help to individual families. Read for example the 2013 update regarding the little boy Champo. [Update 03-04-2013: Champo.](#)

Gesar Ambulance

The Gesar Ambulance manned by the Gesar medical team (doctors and nurses from the Peoples Hospital) roams the desolate countryside to perform tests and deliver treatment wherever possible.

The doctors and nurses do so solely in their spare time!



3. The Family to Family Project

The Gesar General Store / The Gesar Bakery

The Gesar General Store is a grocery in Dönda where better quality products are offered against lower prizes! Starting in 2011 the store was a huge success

In 2014 we had some issues with personnel for the store, however. The solution seemed to be a new manager: the young nomad Metok Bhakto. Metok however appeared to miss communicational skills to bind customers to the store, thus causing to decrease the turn-over. The shop then was closed until a solution was found. Half of the products was transferred to the Gesar Bakery.

Not so long later, however, the lady who runs the Bakery had an accident with one of the powder machines, which forced her to stop working in the bakery. The lady from the bakery now is general manager of the Gesar Community Centre and is training three young nomads as staff in the bakery.

The Gesar General Store will open again this year, now with two employees. The young not so experienced manager will be supported by an elderly man, who will take care of the customer relations. Also free tea will be available at the store to make it more of a meeting point, also with the goal to generate more turn-over. The lady of the bakery / general manager of the Community Centre will oversee all store activities.

For now the bakery still will be selling general store merchandise.

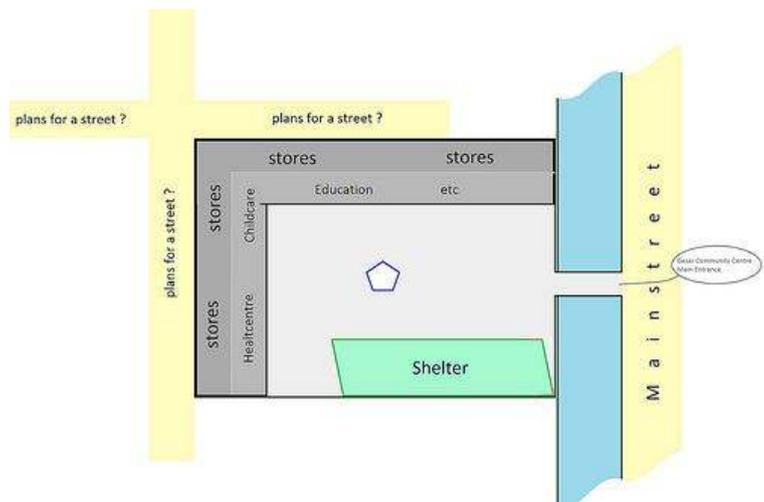
The Gesar Community Centre

In 2012 the nomad families suggested if it would be possible too create a space where they could train each other in practical professions as tailor or carpenter. The board decided to invest into buying a piece of ground to crate the centre. The project officially was blessed by a lama, but it took more than a year before the building could start as foundations only can be constructed during summer. The buildings already there had to be removed as they were too rundown.

So in summer of 2013 the foundations were constructed and board members Eric Elbers and Nyima Kunga performed a first spade ceremony during which they buried a thangka with blessed herbs. A few days after the ceremony construction started and largely was completed in November.

There are two buildings situated in a 90° angle. By this means we can create an entrance on each adjoining road, as it still is not clear which of those roads will become 'major'.

On the outside shops are planned and on the inside a childcare unit. The proposal is to have a nice courtyard with a stupa and on the side opposite from the buildings a roofed open air place with prayer wheels. The idea is to create a haven for people, coming from the busy street were the main entrance will be.



In 2015 in the courtyard the building of a small prayer wheel house has started. The exterior was finished in the winter. Plans for the interior (including large praying-wheel) hopefully will start in spring/summer 2016.

Het Gesar Community Centre: zelfredzaamheid nomaden

Now the center there the nomads should be further encouraged in self-sufficiency. As the board we do not expect that the Gesar Fund is a kind of money machine.

The problem in the more self-sufficiency of the nomads is that they really do not have more skills than the nomads skills as making yaks hats, tents build and stoves.

As Dönda is an obligatory stop for tourist buses, it seems the best option for the nomads is to sell souvenirs to the tourists: small parcels of yak butter, miniature stoves, miniature nomad tents, thangka's, jewelry et cetera. By selling these products there is a direct link between the production and the money.

In winter 2015 the local volunteers bought a large quantity of yak hair, which has been divided over several nomad families to process it into various kinds of souvenirs. To be continued.

Also three pool tables have been bought for in the Community Centre. Pool tables attract people who will spend money on food and drinks.

The Kindergarten

The teaching hours in the Kindergarten are limited to the hours outside the regular Chinese school hours. For the Gesar Fund that left us only the three months in the winter stop, as in the countryside Chinese school provide 24/7 school and boarding.

Unfortunately this winter a new local law went into effect: gatherings where is being taught to children or adults are forbidden.



2015 - Donations and Annual Account

The total of received donations in 2015 is **34.741 euro**.

De annual account of 2014 is online: [Annual Account 2014](#).



2015 - Gesar Fund in the News

- **19-01-2015:** board member Han de Wit went with his son in law Nyima Kunga to Xining in December 2014 for the yearly Checking our Aid campaign. Read Hans's impression in the Shambhala Times: [Meeting our Ling Family in Kham.](#)
- **30-09-2015:** after the Checking our Aid campaign in the summer of 2015 board member Nyima Kunga was interviewed by the Shambhala Times: [A dream has come true!](#)
- **The Gesar Fund is on the internet:**
 - Dutch website: www.gesarfund.nl
 - English website: www.gesarfund.nl/english/
 - facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Gesar-Fund
 - Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/gesarfund/
 - SoCl: www.so.cl/#/profile/Stichting-Gesarfund
- **Photo's :** on [Gesar Fund Photostream](#) many photo's of Yushu, Dönda en Zhenzing can be found!

Are you inspired by the work of the Gesar Fund?

Please support us with a donation!

"Generosity is the ultimate wealth"

