

Yushu. One year after.

Report on the intervention
by ASIA in support
of the people of Yushu
struck by earthquake
on 14 April 2010.





Index



1. **Introduction**
2. **Intervention sectors**
 - 2.1. First Emergency
 - The first help offered
 - Support for schools
 - 2.2. Long distance sponsorship
 - 2.3. Cold weather emergency
3. **Results**
4. **Funds raised**

Yushu Prefecture lies on average at about 4.000 m.s.l.

The population is 90% Tibetan Khampa nomads.

The climate, harsh territory and long distance from the Provincial capitals make Yushu Prefecture one of the poorest and most remote areas of the People's Republic of China, where the prevalently nomad population lives on an average yearly income of 300 \$.



1. Introduction

One year ago, on **14 April 2010**, the Tibetan prefecture of Yushu, the heart of ethnic Tibet, was struck by a **violent earthquake**. The official date speak of **2.700 deaths, 12.000 gravely injured and over 100.000 homeless**.

The first quake, 7,1° on the Richter scale, at 7:49 in the morning, was followed by a strong seism that reduced the whole county of Jiegu to rubble.

85 % of the houses collapsed, together with the only local hospital.

Of the 238 Buddhist monasteries in the region, 87 collapsed and zuminarz 60% of the rest are unsafe. Gy-anak Mani, the temple holding the largest collection in the world of sacred Buddhist stones (Mani), was destroyed. The collection of over 2 billion stones carved with mantras collapsed destroying the eight stupas and prayer wheels ten metres tall. Thousands of ancient statues of Tibetan deities, precious sacred texts and thangkas, painted and embroidered on silk, were lost.

ASIA intervened immediately, carrying out between April 2010 and April 2011 **five distributions** of necessary prime staple to the poeple struck by the earthquake.

Over the course of the distributions our staff were able to witnes first hand the **extremely harsh living conditions of the local people**. In fact many people did not benefit from any government aid, which benefitted only those on resident list and was not aimed at large part of the population not on those lists. Moreover, extended and very numerous families received aid that was unsuitable and inadequate for their real needs. Often the sick and the elderly were totally abandoned.

One year on, the situation is still critical: electricity is still largely lacking, being supplied at times by only one electric power station (before the earthquake four were working); many families have still not received a tent suitable to the local climate, and the precarious health and hygiene conditions have brought about the spread of diseases, in the first place of tuberculosis.

Reconstruction, which should have started last summer to be completed in 2013, has not yet started and the people have been temporarily transferred to camps while they wait for the construction of New Towns.





On the basis of government plans, the buildings of the city of Jiegu that remained habitable were expropriated for government use while those declared uninhabitable were knocked down.

On the close of the first phase of the emergency the government, seeing the high cost of the tents decided to focus exclusively on reconstruction, effectively abandoning the people to themselves.

Many nomads are losing their land, and with it their only source of income for their families. For this reason they are leaving Yushu, depriving the territory of its most important resource: the people who for centuries have inhabited this highland plateau. **In this way another piece of Tibet risks completely disappearing.**







2. Intervention sectors

2.1. First emergency

To respond to the humanitarian emergency that struck Yushu on 14 April 2010, **ASIA immediately launched a fund raising campaign** among our friends, sponsors and donors. Our deep and detailed knowledge of the region, our experience and skill in dealing with emergency situations, our having a local office 800 km from the epicentre of the earthquake and the warm-hearted and generous response we received to our appeal allowed us to act quickly, getting the necessary permits and going and helping the people struck by the earthquake.

During our **first intervention** in Yushu, carried out just **7 days after the quake**, we distributed prime emergency kits.

In subsequent interventions ASIA decided to focus attention on schools. In fact the school buildings were struck hard by the earthquake.

80% of elementary schools and 50% of middle schools were destroyed or anyway unusable. Many of the staff were supply teachers and thus not on the government lists and would not have any help without our intervention. Also it was fundamental to foster resumption of school activities to give the children an extra chance to recover their peace of mind.



The first help offered

On 22 April the ASIA staff left from Xining, provincial capital of Qinghai, with the first convoy consisting of **800 kits** of prime necessity goods: food, blankets, soap. In the first phase the team focussed on determining the needs of the population, working in co-ordination with other actors present on the field. At the end of this first operation we planned the details of the distribution.

Part of the kits were distributed through the government distribution centre where a field hospital had been set up.

The rest were distributed among families for whom it was difficult to reach the base camps, the nomads in the settlement at Jiegu and at the main elementary school.

THE 800 KITS WERE DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS:

- **200 kits** at the government distribution centre and then to the field hospital and the nomads at the resettlement* camp in the city of Jiegu;
- **100 kits** to the first elementary school in Yushu;
- **100 kits** to families in villages on the north slope of the mountain;
- **80 kits** were delivered, with the help of a local NGO, to villages around Jiegu not yet reached by government help;
- **320 kits** to needy families in Jiegu.

* Camps where nomads are bound to settle down.

COMPOSITION OF THE KITS

sugar	1 kg
salt	1 kg
tea	1
tsampa	9 Kg
butter	2,5 Kg
soap	1 bar
vegetables	1 kg
Tibetan pasta	4 kg
toilet paper	1
steel basin	1
package bag	1
face mask	1
bread	0,5 Kg
blanket (2 x 1,80mt.)	1

A second primary emergency distribution was done in the days immediately after the quake, in the **village of Rangwupe**, which lies 10 km from Jiegu.

The population is made up of shepherds and farmers. The earthquake did not have economic repercussions on the local economy, but all the villagers had to leave their homes and few possessions. The quake also caused serious damage to the village temple, the main assembly and meeting centre of the village.

IN THIS VILLAGE ASIA DISTRIBUTED:

- **1 generator;**
- **1 solar panel kits;**
- **1 water purifier;**
- **1 cistern, and medicines;**
- **186 pairs of shoes;**
- **1 tent (40 sq. mt)** set up near the old temple for worship and assemblies.

This provisional temple gave the inhabitants of Rangwupe the opportunity to resume their spiritual activities, that were so important under conditions such as these.



Support to schools

Our intervention was in support of teachers and students at 3 elementary schools and the maternity school in Jiegu.

The teachers received tents, solar panels, cooking pots and charcoal burners and other primary necessities. Many of them had not received any assistance from the government distribution.



The pupils were given food rations to guarantee minimum food standards and to relieve the families at least in part from their maintenance need in this moment of great difficulty.

The third elementary school in Yushu County

Distribution in the third elementary school in Yushu started on 14 May, exactly one month after the quake that caused such serious damage to the school building that it had to be closed.

Direct beneficiaries of this distribution were the **164 teachers** and the **1.500 pupils** at the school.



FOODSTUFFS DISTRIBUTED TO THE 1.500 PUPILS:

- **22.500 kg** of tsampa;
- **2.250 Kg** of butter.

GOODS DISTRIBUTED TO SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STAFF:

- **144 tents** (12 sq. mt) double layer with 5mm of felt, waterproof, stainless steel structure;
- **328 beds**: 2 tent beds in stainless steel complete with sheets and pillows;
- **328 blankets**;
- **164 coal-fired** cast-iron stoves;
- **164 cooking pots**;
- **164 solar panels** equipped with lamps and batteries;
- **5.000 kg** of barley flour;
- **486 kg** of yak butter.

The primary school in Jiegu

At Jiegu primary school the most urgent task was to furnish the teachers with the needs for a decent life. Above all they had to be provided with shelter to face the harsh winter conditions. They thus received tents (12 sq. mt.), beds, pillows, stoves, cooking pots, and solar panels.

GOODS DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE TEACHERS:

- **75 tents** (12 sq. mt.) double layer with 5mm of felt, waterproof, stainless steel structure;
- **105 solar panels** equipped with lamps and batteries (12 w);
- **26 blankets:**
- **26 beds** of stainless steel complete with blankets, pillows, mattresses and sheets;
- **26 cooking pots;**
- **26 coal-fired cast-iron stoves.**

The tents, pitched and equipped, were set up in different quarters in the city.



Jiegu maternity school

The nursery school in Jiegu, for children aged 3 to 6 years old, received toys and games: a slide, a carousel, a pool with coloured balls and a game mat. We also distributed 20 water dispensers.

The day after the delivery the games were set up for the children's use to ensure for them **a pleasant and safe place where they could play happily following the disaster they had undergone.** The water dispensers were put in every classroom and in the teachers' staff room.

GOODS DISTRIBUTED THE MATERNITY SCHOOL IN JIEGU:

- **1 slide;**
- **1 game mat;**
- **1 pool with little balls;**
- **1 carousel;**
- **20 water dispensers.**



The school at Anchong

The school lies in the village of 110 km from the prefecture capital. 97% of the inhabitants are very poor nomad families. Only 30% of children of school age attend the school, and already before the earthquake the school could not ensure decent living conditions to the pupils on account of the lack of economic resources.

This situation, already bad before the earthquake, worsened considerably after the quake, that seriously damaged the school building so that it had to be closed, bringing the village families to their knees.

In this school too the prime need was to provide a "home" to teachers who did not have one or who had to stay with other people in overcrowded tents. To improve their living conditions they received double layer tents (12 sq. mt.) which could stand up to the rigid winter conditions in the area, equipped with beds, blankets, bedsheets and pillows.

The school was also furnished with food rations sufficient for two months' meals for the 213 pupils who were able to resume their lessons. For this we distributed toasted barley flour and yak butter.

GOOD DISTRIBUTED AT ANCHONG SCHOOL:

- **20 tents** (12 sq. mt.) double layer with 5mm of felt, waterproof, stainless steel structure;
- **20 stainless steel beds** with blankets, bedsheets, mattresses and pillows;
- **20 blankets**;
- **5.280 kg** of barley flour;
- **528 kg** of yak butter.

After a long interruption the school resumed teaching activities on 20 June 2010. Lessons were held in pre-fabricated halls provided by the government, that also set up dormitories for the children; while the teachers were lodged in tents distributed by ASIA.

2.2. Long distance sponsorship

In November, in order to guarantee the pupils of Anchong school the chance to attend the school and to offset the school fees for the families, **ASIA started a distance sponsorship project.**

Anchong school lies in a very poor nomad area. The local population lives mainly on yak herding, and in the months of May and June they gather and sell Yartsa Gunbu, an important mushroom ingredient in traditional Tibetan and Chinese medicine.

To help these families and to maintain school education in a nomad area that has kept alive the cultural traditions of Tibet, our intervention entailed a sponsorship project for the village children.

A year after the earthquake, **ASIA has found for 37 children** (30 enrolled in the first year and 7 in the second) **distant sponsors** guaranteeing each of them at least three years primary education respectful of their culture, a cooked meal, health care and decent living conditions.



2.3. Cold weather Emergency

In November the rigid winter climate, that afflicts the plateau every year with heavy snowfalls and temperatures of 30 degrees below zero, struck, with most of the population of Yushu, over 100.000 people, homeless and living in tent camps.

For various reasons **many of these people** had been excluded from the lists of beneficiaries of government aid, **finding themselves without a tent** and thus needing to find accommodation with relatives; others had to make do with light tents of poor quality.

To help the people of Yushu to face the freezing cold, an emergency within the emergency, ASIA launched a new fund raising appeal at Christmas and, following a series of meetings with local authorities, our local staff selected the villages and base camps that would receive the following distribution.

TO MEET THE COLD WEATHER EMERGENCY WE DISTRIBUTED:

- **826 thermal winter tents;**
 - **1.709 solar panels;**
- for **a total of 2.535 direct beneficiaries.**





3. Results

- **5 distributions** of aid carried out between April 2010 and February 2011.
The first was on 22 April, just 7 days after the earthquake.
- **1.065 double layer tents** with 5mm of felt, waterproof, stainless steel structure.
ASIA chose to distribute high-quality extreme weather-resistant tents.
- **1 tent/temple** (40 sq.mt.) for the Village of **Rangwupe**. ASIA furnished this community with a tent sized 40 square metres, which was erected opposite the old temple in order to fulfil its spiritual functions, enabling the people of Rangwupe to resume their spiritual activities in such an important moment of great need.
- **1.998 solar panels**, equipped with lamps and batteries.
To make up for the lack of electricity and enable the maximum number of people to light a lamp, cook and have warmth.

- **5.264 Kg** of yak butter.
- **39.980 Kg** of barley flour.
The barley flour and yak butter are the staple food for Tibetans.
- **420 stainless steel beds** complete with bed sheets, pillows and mattresses.
- **1.220 blankets**.
We distributed heavy winter blankets for maximum protection for people against the harsh cold conditions at Yushu.
- **190 coal-fired cast-iron stoves**.
- **190 cooking pots**.
- **2.385 school children and teachers maintained**.
- **37 elementary school children** at Anchong **received distance sponsorships**.

5.983 people were direct beneficiaries of our distributions.

Considering that a nuclear family comprises at least 5 people and that the benefits of the distribution are shared by all the family members in all we reached **29.915 people**.



4. Funds raised

Asia raised c. **700.000 Euro in funds.**

About 650.000 Euro were used in the course of this year to support the families of the earthquake victims of Yushu. The rest of the funds will be spent in our future interventions to help the survivors of the earthquake rebuild their lives.

Over 300.000 Euro came from the extraordinary warm-hearted response of sustainers and donors throughout the world who answered our appeal. **266.000 Euro** came from international Foundations and Organizations: Hit Foundation, Trace Foundation, and the Czech NGO People in Need. The Swiss Embassy in Beijing invested **over 22.000 Euro** in this project. Our groups in the world: ASIA USA, ASIA France and ASIA Germany collected **about 70.000 Euro**, about 10% of the total amount. **25.000 Euro** was contributed by the Tavola Valdese in Italy.

Deployment of funds

To respond to the humanitarian emergency, this first year ASIA concentrated on purchasing and furnishing prime necessity goods.

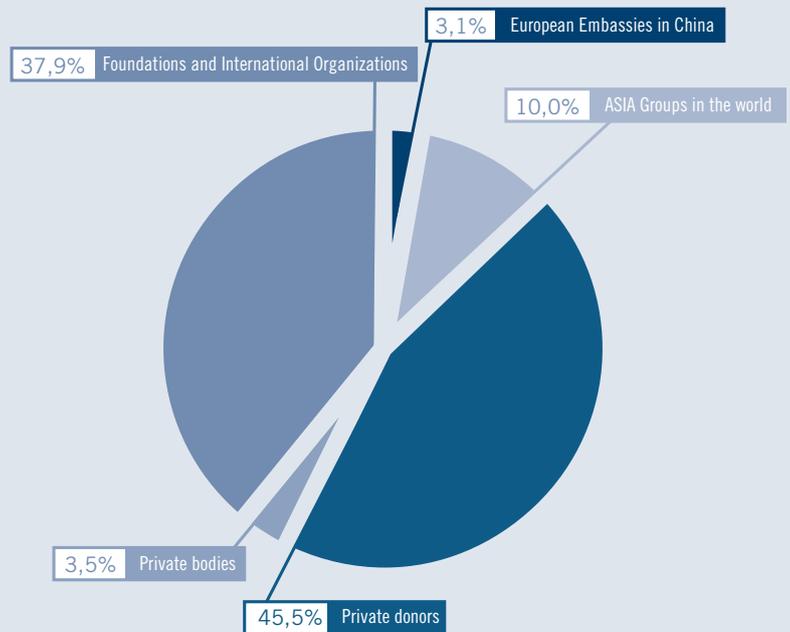
26,17% of the funds raised were used to send the first goods to aid the schools (pupils and teachers) identified as weak targets.

The onset of winter with the worsening of weather conditions made a further intervention urgently necessary; this accounted for 53,29% of resources.

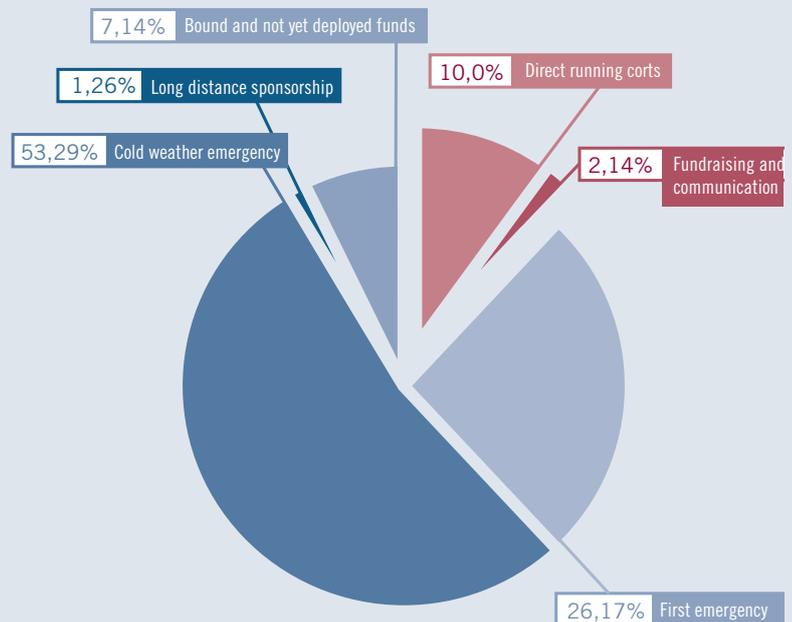
10% of the total budget was spent on direct running costs; this includes, aside from project supervision and monitoring costs, also local office expenses that were indispensable for planning and carrying out aid distribution in Yushu.

2.14% of our resources funds were used for fund raising and communications.

FUNDS RAISED DIVIDED FOR SOURCES



FUNDS DIVIDED FOR INTERVENTION SECTORS



On behalf of the people of Yushu, ASIA Onlus thanks:

The sustainers, donors and friends who answered our appeal and helped to spread it and to raise funds. Without this warm-hearted response we would not have been able to support the victims of this earthquake, that has remained almost unknown to the general public of the world.

The international Dzogchen Community, for their participation and prompt and generous response to our appeals.

Asia Germany, Asia France and Asia USA for their tireless commitment.

The Hit Foundation, Trace Foundation, People in Need, the Swiss Embassy in Beijing and the Tavola Valdese for having funded this project.

**The situation in Yushu is still very difficult.
We hope we can continue relying on your help.**

You can support the people of Yushu with:

- **Banker's draft**
Made out to ASIA Onlus
bank: Monte dei Paschi di Siena
current account: 3893.50
IBAN: IT 27 M 01030 72160 0000 0038 9350
SWIFT BIC: PASC IT MMXXX
- payment through ASIA **Italian Post Office**
current account: 89549000
- by **credit card**: www.asia-ngo.org





ASIA Onlus – Association for International Solidarity in Asia – is a NGO recognized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that operates to preserve the cultural heritage and traditions of Tibet and of the ethnic minorities of the continent of Asia and to promote sustainable development.

ASIA is a partner of ECHO (European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office), has been operating in Qinghai since 1993 and has already carried out emergency interventions in support of the people of Yushu.

Furthermore, ASIA is the only Italian NGO officially registered with the Civil Affair Bureau in Qinghai, the Chinese Ministry responsible for management of emergency situations in China, and is a partner of the Charity Association of the Province of Qinghai, a local NGO working in collaboration with the Civil Affair Bureau in emergency projects.



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