Rebuild Ladakh

A Comprehensive Interim Report

Project Team: Dr. Norboo, Motup Chewang, Divyesh Muni, Rajesh Gadgil

Background

On 5th August 2010, disaster struck. A massive cloud burst followed by flash floods devastated Ladakh. Hundreds of lives were lost, homes destroyed and farm lands rendered useless. Members Divyesh Muni, Vineeta Muni, Don Goodman, Natala Goodman and Rajesh Gadgil were on an expedition in the Zanskar area of Ladakh at that time. On their return to Leh, they surveyed the extensive damage and discussed the possible role that the Club could play in the rebuilding/rehabilitation process with Motup Chewang, Hon. Local Secretary, Leh and Dr. Norboo, HC member who is involved with many social projects in Ladakh. They submitted observations and recommendations to the managing committee.

Based on their inputs, the Club decided to take up two projects:

1) To assist the rebuilding of five damaged houses in villages of Kaya and Skui in the Markha Valley.

2) To assist rebuilding of the Children’s Hostel in Leh. School Children from the remote villages of Ladakh stay in this hostel during their school terms and they are provided with food, shelter, medical and educational facilities.

Inside the Hemis National Park, the scenic villages of Skui and Kaya form a part of the famed Markha Valley trek. This trail is one of the most frequently visited by trekkers and mountaineers. Situated at an elevation of roughly 3500 m, Kaya and Skui villages are adjacent to each other.

On the 5th night these two villages got badly hit by the cloudbursts. Many trekkers lost their lives in the resultant flash floods. Fortunately there was no report of loss of life in case of local villagers. However the loss of property was immense. Life in the villages was severely affected. Many houses collapsed and much of the productive land has been buried under mud slides. Irrigation and drinking water channels were completely destroyed. In Kaya, most houses were damaged and few of them needed complete reconstruction. Some of them required major repairs. Similarly in Skui, houses were completely damaged and needed complete reconstruction. The families in these villages were in urgent need of temporary alternate source to stay to survive the winter months.

The hostel housed 63 students from remote regions of Ladakh. They come from economically weaker families and cannot afford their stay, fees, clothes, books etc. Therefore the hostel itself arranges for all their expenses through donations. As a result of the sudden floods, the hostel building was damaged, with many of its walls collapsed, the entire toilet block washed away, 90% of the compound wall damaged and the entire compound was filled with several feet of mud and silt. The students had been sent back to their homes since it was not possible to house them in these conditions and their education had to be stopped till the hostel could take them in again.
Fund Raising efforts

Circulars and brochures were sent out to appeal for funds.

Website: An exclusive website www.rebuildladakh.org was connected with the main website of the Club www.himalayanclub.org and information of the project with an appeal for donation was put up.

Video Appeal: A short video was prepared by Divyesh Muni, Meenaz Lala with technical assistance from Labyrinth Cinematic Solutions Pvt. Ltd. The video was hosted on Youtube and was screened in several public gatherings and Himalayan Club programmes.

Photo-Exhibition: Vineeta Muni and Divyesh Muni organized an exhibition of their photographs of the Himalaya “Himalayan Mystique” at the NCPA from 11th March 2011 to 20th March 2011 that was sponsored by the Club. Proceeds of sale of photographs were donated by them to the Ladakh fund.

Australian Himalayan Foundation: Our member from Australia, Garry Weare organized for his Foundation to match the total donations made by the audience at a Himalayan Club programme in Mumbai. A donation of $ 4000 was received from the Australian Himalayan Foundation.

Individual donors also contributed to the effort.

Rehabilitation Efforts

Immediate Assistance

Our Hon. Local Secretary, Ladakh, Motup Chewang and Yangdu, put the entire organizational strength of their Company, Rimo Expeditions to man the effort. They participated in several search and rescue missions in the region and also provided immediate relief to the villagers of Kaya and Skui. The villagers were provided alternative accommodation and food till the time they could fend for themselves and could move back into their own homes. Although the Club had sanctioned a monthly expenditure for providing alternative accommodation and food to the affected villagers, the same was not required to be disbursed since the host villagers refused to accept the compensation.

The Club had also received donation of warm clothes from several donors in Mumbai. The same were sent to Leh and distributed through Motup’s office to the villagers.

Reconstruction of houses at Kaya and Skui

Five families were identified for assistance and designs were prepared for reconstruction of the houses. In the meantime, the villagers were given government grants for the reconstruction of their homes. However, the cost of wooden doors, frames, beams etc were not met by the government grant. Motup therefore arranged for supply of the wood frames, doors, windows etc. from a carpenter in Leh at a cost of Rs.38,500/- per house. The items were inspected by Motup before dispatch to the villages and subsequently the houses were also inspected after fitting of the same. Five houses were supported by the Club. A total of Rs. 1, 92,500/- was disbursed to

the carpenter for supply of the frames. The villagers further needed support for painting, plumbing, wiring etc. which would be an additional (approx) Rs. 25000/- per house which the Club has agreed to
sanction. This work would be completed this summer (2012) and after inspection the amount will be paid to the suppliers.

The immediate needs of the villagers having been met, the Committee considered long term support measures for the villagers who had lost their source of livelihood due to the destruction of their land by the floods. It was no longer possible for the villagers to continue agriculture on the silted land. The matter was discussed at length by the Committee and it was decided that the Club would provide assistance to the villagers to build an additional room to the homes which could be used by the villagers to provide home-stay facilities for trekkers which is a popular scheme in the valley due to the large influx of trekkers. Thus this scheme can give affected villagers a steady source of income during the trekking season. The decision of the Committee was conveyed by Motup to the villagers and a proposal is awaited from them for costs involved etc. A list of most deserving families will be sanctioned by the village panchayat. As per our latest communication with the villagers, they will be submitting this list soon and after our approval shall start the work this summer (2012) and according to them it will be completed before the season of 2013 when it can be inspected before disbursement.

Children’s hostel, Leh

The hostel has been re-started and presently 56 children are availing of free accommodation, food, and other facilities at the hostel. The managing committee of the hostel had got the silt cleaned up from the hostel compound, repaired the toilet block and shifted the children to the adjoining building. The Club has reimbursed an amount of Rs. 2,68,000/- for the work done so far.

The hostel committee has also requested Club assistance to repair the two vehicles (One ambulance and one utility van for transportation of daily goods such as rations) that were damaged during the floods. An estimated cost of Rs.50,000/- has been sanctioned and shall be disbursed on production of the invoice and receipt for the repair expenses. The Club will continue re-imbursement of expenditure incurred by the hostel on repairs to the building and campus as per the progress of the work and on production of supporting documents. The hostel was also in process of constructing a new Bathroom / Toilet block. They have requested for our financial support for the same. This decision has been deferred until the complete proposal is received from the hostel. This construction is to be completed this summer (2012).

Fund disbursement mechanism

A bank account (no. is 31857208992) has been opened with State Bank of India, Leh for the project in the name of The Himalayan Club. Mr. Motup Chewang, Dr. Norboo, Mr. Deepak Bhimani and Ms. Nandini Purandare are the signatories to the account to be operated by any two jointly. Funds are transferred from the Club account in Mumbai to the Leh account as required. On inspection of the work done and receipt of supporting documents, the funds are disbursed from the Leh account.
Physical Inspection and supervision

Motup, and Dr. Norboo are overseeing the implementation of the project. Rajesh Gadgil visited the villages in August 2011 at his own expense and inspected the work done. Divyesh and he also visited the Children’s hostel. They have discussed the project with the managing committee of the hostel and assured the continued support for the further work to be undertaken.

Rajesh Gadgil visit Report

**Skui and Kaya Villages Reconstruction:**

Rajesh visited Skui and Kaya villages on 31st August - 1st September 2011.

It had already been decided that no cash would be offered to the villagers directly but it would be paid to the suppliers. The villagers themselves would contribute by the way of free labour to reconstruct their own houses. These houses have also received funds to some extent (ranging between Rs 1,00,000 to 1,75,000) by State Government for the basic construction.

The basic construction work of the five houses was in various stages of completion. So far HC has supported each of them with woodwork (Doors, frames, windows, beams etc.) worth Rs. 38,500/- per house. This amount was sanctioned by the managing committee and was transferred to our Leh account for disbursement. Subsequently the amount was paid to the supplier.

However, they further needed support for painting, plumbing, wiring etc. which would be an additional Rs. 25000/- per house approximately, which has been sanctioned. This work will be completed this summer (2012) and after inspection the amount will be disbursed. Regarding construction of the home stay rooms, this list of the most deserving families is still awaited. Some of the photos of the undertaken work are attached to give an idea of progress of the project.

**Existing Projects for which payments are due**

As a summary, of the ongoing projects, money will have to be disbursed in the coming summer for the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Painting, plumbing, wiring etc. in the village houses</td>
<td>(approx) Rs. 25000/- per house to be disbursed when work is done and bills are presented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra room for home stay facilities for five deserving houses</td>
<td>List of houses from Panchayat to be received along with estimate of building costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leh Hostel vehicle repair</td>
<td>Bills for an estimated cost of Rs.50,000/- to be received</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hostel building repairs</td>
<td>Proposal and Estimates to be received</td>
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Financial Statement

Fund Flow:

Total Donations received till date: Rs.17,25,966/-
Interest on fund (as on 31/3/2011) Rs. 1,23,908/-

Less:

Paid for wooden frames, doors, windows etc Rs. 1,92,500/-
Reimbursed to Childrens Hostel for repairs etc. Rs. 2,68,000/-
Bank charges for transfer of funds Rs. 900/-

Balance Rs.13,88,474/-

Project Visuals

Children’s Hostel, Leh

Hostel Kids
Skui and Kaya
Houses before repairs
Work undertaken at Leh for villages

Windows and doors design with estimate

Distribution records with acknowledgements

Window frames

Carpenter at Leh

Door frames
Reconstruction work in the villages