

Zanskar Health Association

Year Report

March 2017 to March 2018





1. Introduction

Dear friends, the first year of our association started on our first general assembly on 25th of March 2017.

We are happy to present you the main points of our association year from March 2017 to March 2018 !

2. Composition of the board

During the year we could welcome some new board members and confirm the previous ones, which have been elected during the foundation meeting.

- president: Yeshe Dorjay
- expert in global health : Dr. med. Beat Stoll
- deputy of Zanskar : Dr Stenzin Namgyal
- deputy of the Zanskar Rescue Team : Padma Sonam
- secretary : Rebecca Hertzog

During the General Assembly following people were newly elected:

- Treasury : now mainly run by Eric Germain-Bonne with co-treasurer Rebecca Hertzog
- Communication : Erica Sartarelli
- Fundraising : Eric Germain-Bonne (French), Hannes Rupprecht (German)

Due to family reason Erica and Hannes could not be as active as planned and their respective work has been taken over during the year for the Communication part by Jessica Otero and Fundraising German Rebecca Hertzog.

During the year the board function « responsible of the medical program » has been created and run by Eloïse Magnenat and Amalie Frandsen, both assistant doctors in internal medicine in the hospital Biel.

3. Membership

We have 29 registered members and almost 100 subscribed persons to our newsletter.

During the general assembly it was decided not to have any membership fee. There has not been any member unsubscribing from the association.

4. Activities

4.1 VISILAB

We could again meet the Visilab team in Meyrin (Geneva) that is committed to continue the meaningful sunglasses project. The donated sunglasses are highly appreciated by the community in Zanskar. Yeshe could bring again about 300 pairs to Zanskar and distributed them this time in Shamulin village. During every sunglass distribution we also provide a small teaching about eye diseases and their prevention.

4.2 Zanskar Rescue Team

Feedback on the technical teaching

During the 10 training days in Zanskar, Steve Long, mountain guide, focused on bringing practice-oriented teaching to the local technical team and develop a communication system to send an alert between the different villages.

The technical team of the Zanskar Rescue Team was composed of four men from Tungri. Four men from a more distant village, Ralagun, who heard about the project joined the training as well.

The aim of the teaching was self-sufficiency and empowerment. The teaching was adapted to the climate and the conditions of the terrain that winter demands.

The skills trained were security (the team's security and the patients security) with evaluation of terrain and conditions, walking and transporting a patient in deep-snow and giving alert. The team also learned to use avalanche transceivers for self-rescue in worst-case avalanche scenarios.

The men learned how to walk with snowshoes (for access to villages cut-off during the winter), rope technique for steep ground and basic transport techniques for a patient on a stretcher through snowy terrain.

A next point was navigation learning basic knowledge on orientation with a compass, as a tool to access the villages as well as for terrain evaluation in avalanche recognition. Zanskar being a high altitude mountain land, avalanche risk has to be evaluated understanding which aspect of slope to avoid.

A communication chain was put together with the help of walky-talkies to alert the neighbour villages in case of emergency. The political and geographical situation of Zanskar not allowing enough wifi, phone reception or satellite phone.

During the 10 days, the medical team and the technical team trained together on several occasion. They started together for general concepts (security, team work, decision making), met half way for trauma and transport knowledge and finished the training with practical exercises.

The interdisciplinary team work (evaluated during the 3 scenarios on the last days) allowed the team to learn how to take vital signs while moving the stretcher and communicating efficiently the information in order to make the right decision for and during the patients transport.

As described in the medical summary, the knowledge acquired requires practice, and repetition, other teaching sessions are planned to refresh and build on the basics taught this last winter. The idea is to train the rescue team to teach their fellow villagers and to make the scheme more sustainable and less reliant on outside training intervention.

Feedback on the medical teaching

During the 10 training days in Zanskar, 6 doctors (1 Gynecologist Elisabeth Marth, 1 Emergency Physician Christophe Huehn, 1 Pneumologist/Internist Jean-Luc Magnenat and 3 general practitioners/internists Amalie Frandsen, Eloïse Magnenat, Rebecca Hertzog) focused on bringing practice-oriented, symptom-based teaching to the local medical team, composed of the traditional doctor, the Amchi and of the 3 nurses who are part of the ZRT.



We aimed for a general program, based on the type of patients and problems most likely to be encountered in Zanskar, which was a very broad range of topics, and tried to give a few important key points to:

- take a medical history and perform a physical exam
- diagnose the possible problem and recognize it's potential severity
- act according to the severity of the problem (i.e. treat locally / decide if a transfer is needed/ organise the transfer and care of the patient while he/she is being transported
- treat rationally - given the lack of advance medical diagnostic tools, mainly based on the history and clinical exam of the patient.

Some of the (many) topics covered included:

What to do if a pregnant woman is bleeding? How do you suture a wound? What could be the cause of a difficulty breathing, and what do you do to treat it? How do you immobilize a patient who has had a trauma?

We wanted the teaching sessions to be as practical as possible, with many case scenarios, and reserved two days at the end for some clinical cases (with "fake patients", in the village) so that the technical and medical team could practice what they learned together and learn to work as a team.

We were very much impressed by the nurses' and Amchi's capacity and eagerness to learn, and their quickness in digesting so many new concepts, and using those appropriately to evaluate, and treat, patients.

Of course, as the field of medicine is virtually infinite, and any knowledge acquired requires practice, and repetition, other teaching sessions are planned to build on the basics taught this last winter, based on what the local needs are and which topics weren't covered during this first session.

We could settle down our rescue team basecamp in the government dispensary and furnish it with medical equipment and essential medicines. We have two rooms. One room for our rescue team Amchi and one room for our rescue team nurses. Since our teaching they treat five to six patients per day in the dispensary.

Overall feedback about the Chadar / Stay in Tungri and perception of the people in Zanskar

We could welcome our interdisciplinary and international expert team and the moviemaker Laetitia Clément end of January in Leh, the capital of Ladakh.

We reached Zanskar after having trekked on the frozen river called « Chadar ». It was a very impressive way full of beauty and also full of danger as you will read later. 17 men from Tungri village in Zanskar accompanied us. They came all voluntarily because our project is meaningful for their village and valley!



Their power and motivation was as impressive and heart touching and soon we developed a strong team spirit!

In Tungri, the village where our rescue team has its basecamp, we had a very warm welcome by the whole village community. As you read above we had 10 intense and beautiful days of teaching in Tungri.

The special thing was that this winter season was very little snow in Zanskar and too mild temperatures. This made our way back on Chadar to Leh more difficult than when we came. As a team we managed many challenging paths and enjoyed a marvellous last evening together around a big fire singing and dancing.

On our last day a big tragedy happened. The place of tragedy didn't appear dangerous and half of the team had already crossed that part as suddenly a huge ice block collapsed and two young Zanskari women fall into the river! The water was very wild and we had no chance to take them out of the water. They were taken under a compact of ice sheet down the river.

One girl, Dolkar, a student joining our group to go back to Leh where she had to attend school, could be rescued further down the river and had despite having been immersed several minutes in the ice water no acute physical complication!

The other girl, Dolma, one of our rescue team nurses who came back with us to complete her nurse studies in Jammu was stuck under the ice sheet. By a challenging rescue action our mountain guide with the help of the Zanskari men could take her out of the water. In the huge distress we did a prolonged reanimation but we had no chance to do anything and Dolma died sadly on that morning.

We have been thinking and talking a long time about this dramatic event. There wouldn't have been any way to preview and prevent this accident unless not going on the Chadar. There was no sign that this thick ice sheet was unstable. Probably the problem has been the exceptionally mild temperature rising up the temperature of the rock and that so the connection between rock and ice became unstable. This tragedy put a big question mark on our whole project but after a team debriefing the conclusion has been that the project is meaningful for the valley and that it was also meaningful for Dolma, otherwise she wouldn't have committed to the project and joined the teaching! So we will continue but we will never again go to Zanskar by the Chadar trek.

4.3 Waste management

With the help from Miss Chen Chen and her friends from Taiwan a rubbish classification centre was built in Tungri village Zanskar in 2016. We continued on education about waste management and the women continue with the monthly village cleaning days. Part of the waste (metal, glass) can be sold to the truck drivers going to Kashmir who resell it there.

4.4 Lady Cups

The Lady Cup project was unfortunately during 2017 on stand by due to heavy time investment into the rescue team project. But we found out that menstruation cups are



produced in good and hygienic quality now in India. We could order some that has been tested by our rescue team nurses. There is already a big demand of the women of the village for further menstruation cups. So this project will get a new dynamic in 2018.

4.5 Clothes HUG

Jessica Otero organized a big winter clothes collection in the university hospital of Geneva where she works. Plenty of good quality winter clothes could be collected and will be brought to Zanskar, as much and as fast as it is possible by transporting them as additional luggage pieces. Especially the children clothes will be highly appreciated.

5. Financial accounts 2017

5.1 Profit and loss statement (in CHF)

Expenditures		Income	
Air travel costs	2'537	Crowdfunding campaign	11'140
Transport and logistics	2'851	Private donations	12'063
Accommodation	212	Institutional donations	10'265
Eating and catering	570		
Computer (in office in Tungri)	591		
Medical equipment and medicines	9'374		
Mountaineering and rescue equipment	2'041		
Buildings and repairs	1'041		
Advertising	113		
Financial costs (fees)	347		
Total	19'679	Total	33'469
		Net profit	13'790

5.2 Balance sheet (in CHF)

Assets		Liabilities	
Bank current accounts	17'619	Creditors (expenses paid by members)	3'829
		Retained earnings	13'790
Total	17'619	Total	17'619



5.3 Fundraising

In 2017, the association received CHF 33'469 of donations, of which:

- CHF11'140 (net of fundraising costs) have been collected through the crowdfunding campaign organised with 100days.net ;
- CHF12'063 come from private donators ;
- CHF10'265 come from institutional sponsors and foundations: Swiss Mountain Medicine Society (SGGM/SSMM), Association SER (Santé Education Recherche), and the Lech mountain rescue team in Austria (Bergrettung Lech).

5.3 Expenditures

Expenditures are accounted for on a cash basis, i.e. they are invoiced as bills arise.

Investments in assets, mainly medical monitoring tools, communication or rescue devices, have been charged to the profit and loss account and have not been capitalized, as we consider that the residual value is nil for assets located in India. Buildings located in India are leased for free by the medical authorities and not owned by the Association. There are no further assets located in Switzerland.

5.4 Approval of 2017 accounts

The profit and loss account for the year 2017 indicates income of CHF33'469 exceeding expenditures of CHF19'679, leading to net profit of CHF13'790.

We request the General Assembly to approve the accounts for 2017 as presented here.

We propose to the General Assembly to allocate the full net profit of CHF13'790 to the retained earnings.

As of 31.12.17, the balance sheet indicates creditors of CHF3'829, corresponding to expenditures made for the association in 2017 by Yeshi Dorjay and Rebecca Hertzog from their own pockets. We recommend the General Assembly to vote for a reimbursement of this same amount, however Yeshi Dorjay and Rebecca Hertzog have expressed their wish to abandon this amount in full and convert it into a donation of the same amount.

6. Thanks for the donations / sponsors

- Bergrettung Lech (Austria) : we thank a lot for partnership regarding the technical teaching, the generous financial support, the sponsoring of a rescue bag and other items for the technical rescue
- SGGM (Swiss Mountain Medicine Society): we thank a lot for the generous financial support and the possibility to ask if needed for advice in medical and technical issues
- LOWA, Leki, Gloryfy, XSocks : we thank a lot for the high quality mountaineering boots, hiking poles, unbreakable sunglasses and warm socks for the local Zanskar Rescue Team members



- Swiss Sport Clinic : we thank a lot for the medical and technical support in terms of many good advices, the sponsoring of medical equipment and the very reliable rescue stretcher
- Visilab : we thank a lot for all the new and second hand sunglasses sponsored since many years and the smooth and friendly collaboration
- Zanskar Sport in La Fouly & friends: we thank a lot for all the high quality mountaineering gear that has been generously sponsored for the local Zanskar Rescue Team as well as the help in finding Mammut avalanche transceivers
- Cactus Sport in Carouge : we thank a lot for the mountaineering gear for the local Zanskar Rescue Team
- GRIMM (Groupe d'intervention médicale en montagne): we thank a lot for all the technical equipment donated during the Internation Mountain Medicine Congress.
- Nettomed : we thank a lot for the medical equipment sponsored for the rescue team and the medical aid center
- SAC Brisenhaus : we thank a lot for the donation of this mountain cottage team and the gift shop with Himalayan items they settled up in the mountains to further support the project
- Rettungsdienst Kantonsspital Uri : we thank a lot for the high quality rescue team clothes that have been sponsored for the local Zanskar Rescue Team of which they are really proud
- Rotary Club Laufen : we thank a lot for their interest in the project, generous financial support of the society and the extra donation of one member. With this donation we could purchase medicines that will probably last for 1 year.
- Frauengemeinschaft Urserental: we thank a lot the women association of Urserental for organizing their "Suppentag" for our association that made a generous donation
- Hausarztpraxis Andermatt: We thank a lot Dr M. Schmid and his team for sponsoring our rescue team nurse, Stanzin Naskit.
- We thank also to all the persons who donated directly on the association account and through crowdfunding. Especially we want to name the family Ferrazini for their generous support.



7. Outlook 2018/2019

We are looking forward to the second technical teaching in autumn 2018 and to plan again an interconnected technical and medical teaching session in 2019. One big aim is also to document well the medical interventions in the dispensary and the rescue team interventions in order to adjust well the future teaching objectives and project aim.

For future we also plan to train other rescue teams, if possible by peer training as soon as our technical experts estimates the skills of the Tungri rescue team as well enough. We already started with the training of a second rescue team in Ralakung and maybe there will be also one team in Abran.

We further aim on a self-sustained project. This is at present regarding the work at the medical aid centre not possible because the people in Zanskar have not enough income to pay for consultation and medicine. But it remains a long-term objective.

We also will continue to run our other projects with Visilab, waste management and reactivate the menstruation cups project.

For spring 2019 we are also looking forward to finish the movie about the first teaching session in Tungri and to organize movie projections for winter 2018-2019.

We further put a lot of energy in visibility.

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