



## **ATMA-LHF Health Education Project**

***PROPOSAL FOR  
PROCURING HEALTH EDUCATION  
EQUIPMENT FOR THE LADAKH HEART  
FOUNDATION HOSPITAL***

## **BACKGROUND**

A Thousand Metres Above (ATMA) is a registered, Canadian non-profit organization (Incorporation Number: S-0060755), established in 2012, that provides funding for projects seeking to improve the well-being of people residing in mountainous regions around the world. ATMA is founded on sustainable, informed, utilitarian and collaborative principles. By working with regional partners around the world we are able to facilitate the work they do by providing crucial funding for their projects. Our current focus is on providing funding and research support to organizations in the Indian Himalayas. The ATMA fund provides grants to local organizations working to address the unique development challenges inherent to their mountain communities. More information regarding who we are and what we do can be found at [www.athousandmetresabove.org](http://www.athousandmetresabove.org).

The Ladakh Heart Foundation (LHF) is a non-profit, non-political charitable trust. It was established in 1997 by Ven. Thupstan Chogyal, a Ladakhi monk, and has been registered by the Jammu & Kashmir Government (registration No.2718-S; dated 21 February 1997). The organization was originally created to address the high prevalence of acquired and congenital cardiovascular disorders in the region as well as to address other serious health problems that affect the local community. Given the high altitude, remote mountain environment, harsh climate and limited accessibility to the outside world, especially during the winter months, the people of Ladakh experience considerable health problems. The LHF has since expanded beyond treating cardiovascular disease alone and now offers treatments for all conditions.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE LHF**

The LHF is committed to:

- Providing surgeries and diagnostic clinics to the people of Ladakh
- Providing free education and prevention programs to the people of Ladakh

- Providing emergency health services to the people of Ladakh
- Providing mobile clinics to outlying and remote villages of Ladakh
- Maintaining a registry of the health status of all patients in the region and to continuously monitor their conditions
- Providing the above services at a limited cost so as to allow healthcare to be accessible by all, regardless of their financial situation
- Working alongside government health facilities to provide quality healthcare to the people of Ladakh

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

Ladakh is the largest district of the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir. Its large geographic size, low population density and limited accessibility to many of the villages and towns in the district all place a considerable strain on healthcare provision in Ladakh. The people of Ladakh have limited access to either health education or the staff and equipment needed to diagnose and treat their conditions. Furthermore, the majority of patients who attend health facilities in the region cannot afford the high cost of treatment. Limited road access, and harsh climates that close many parts of Ladakh to the rest of India for much of the year, make it difficult for the people of Ladakh to access the healthcare they require throughout the year.

Since 1997 the LHF has been working to address gaps in healthcare plaguing residents of Ladakh. In 2009 a hospital was constructed in Leh that offers affordable, quality care to all those that attend. This hospital is a state-of-the-art building that has been designed to maximize energy efficiency and minimize its environmental impact. From 2009 to 2011 the hospital treated 8,273 patients (345 patients per month), in addition to the many patients that were served in their local communities by mobile field clinics. ATMA has been involved in providing funding for medical equipment for this hospital.

Health-related problems in Ladakh are on the rise. Studies have revealed that most cases stem from lack of awareness and traditional cultural perceptions of illness and

appropriate behaviors surrounding treatment. Because illiteracy is a hurdle for many Ladakhis, we are proposing a mobile health awareness program and workshop to increase peoples' awareness of various health problems, both life-style related and genetic, and the precautions that should be taken to prevent chronic illness.

## **BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL**

We are currently seeking funding to buy equipment that would allow the Ladakh Heart Foundation to embark on a health education project to provide basic health and sanitation education to the people of rural Ladakh. This cost-effective means of preventative healthcare could mitigate the need for villagers to travel the long distances to the Ladakh Heart Foundation hospital in Leh.

The proposed project will primarily target the following health-related categories:

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Hypercholesterolemia (high cholesterol)
- Smoking
- Obesity and Diabetes
- Diet (prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer)
- CardiacDisease
- Sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS
- Environmental and Occupational Exposures
- Accident Prevention
- Suicide Prevention

## **PROJECTED COSTS**

Components of Proposed Health Awareness Plan:

(a) Video recordings from various specialist doctors (in local dialects), highlighting

various health problems experienced by patients, including environmentally and socially-induced illnesses.

(b) Several LED TVs (including replacements) with USB capability, to be attached to a vehicle, and used to broadcast the aforementioned video recordings to populations gathered in communities across Ladakh, including prominent centers, remote villages, and schools.

### **COSTS: MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Total Cost (\$)</b>
Study vehicle / truck (x1)	~11,000
LCD TV 84" (x2)	5,500
PA system (incl. speaker, microphones, amplifiers)	900
Vehicle modifications for placement of AV equipment	~600
External power generator (x1)	2,000
	<b>20,000</b>

### **IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL ON THE COMMUNITY**

Procuring the equipment listed above will have an enormous impact on the health of the people of Ladakh. Given the harsh climate, physical remoteness, large geographic size of the district and the relatively small population, the people of Ladakh have limited health services provided to them. Currently, people in rural parts of Ladakh who require complex medical must travel long distances to Leh to receive these services; at prohibitively expensive costs. At the Ladakh Heart Foundation we have been able to construct a state-of-the-art hospital in Leh. Furthermore, we have been able to recruit award-winning physicians and specialists, such as Dr. Tsering Norboo, winner of the Jammu & Kashmir Award for Meritorious Public Service, published researcher and surgeon, Dr. Tsering Lhadol, winner of the Government of India Padma Shree Award and accomplished gynaecologist, and Dr. Norbu Tsering, former Chief Medical Officer

of Leh. These doctors, as well as the other nurses and medical staff at the Ladakh Heart Foundation Hospital & Research Centre have considerable experience in providing healthcare to the people of Ladakh both in private and government institutions. Our highly qualified and decorated staff, as well as the state-of-the-art hospital we have constructed in Leh, means we are in a pivotal position to provide high quality, affordable health services to the people of Ladakh. This health education program will further expand our services to the community, especially to those in rural Ladakh who face tremendous obstacles to access the medical services available in Leh.

**Preventative medicine is known to be one of the most cost-effective forms of healthcare.** By targeting people while they are healthy to remain healthy through education and regular screening, this project could benefit large numbers of Ladakhi people.