

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ACTION:

2nd Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training
An Undertaking of Tibetan Women's Association

The ten-day 'Advanced Leadership Training' (November 21 – 30) was held at the Tibetan Youth Hostel, Rohini. It had 28 Tibetan women attend from many parts of India and beyond - (Pokhara-Nepal, Tenzinghang –Arunachal Pradesh, Salugara, Chennai, Bangalore, Mandi, Dharamsala and Delhi) and

from various backgrounds. There were graduate students, professional workers, settlement officers, journalists and political activists. The training course was divided into three phases - identifying, building and practicing leadership skills. The Core Trainers included Vicki Robinson, a trainer from Canada, Lynda



Ongel Lepcha, who is the director and senior trainer of Holistic Training Solutions based in New Delhi and Tenzin Dhardon Sharling, Research and Media officer, TWA and member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

The Training was divided into three phases; Identifying, Building and Practicing Leadership Skills.

Sunday, November 20

Participants began arriving in the late afternoon, registering, picking up their Training Kits and accommodation assignments.

Phase one – Identifying Leadership Skills

Monday, November 21



The first official function of the Second Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training was a warm welcome by Kirti Dolkar Lhamo, President of the Tibetan Women's Association. She gave a short history of the Training and TWA's objectives in organizing such trainings and addressed the challenge of building women's leadership. She asked – "how do we encourage more women's leadership in the Tibetan community?" She encouraged participants to seize this training opportunity to become a stronger voice for the voiceless in Tibet.

Next Samten Chodon, Vice President of TWA, thanked all participants for taking 10 days out of their busy lives to attend the training. Many participants took personal leave from their jobs to be there. She followed with giving out information concerning all the accounting rules to be shared between TWA and the participants.



Vicki Robinson, trainer from Canada and TWA intern, welcomed all by presenting each participant and organizing member with a rose as a gift. She linked this gift to the world wide International Women's Day theme of "*Bread and Roses*" honoring women's hard work and creativity. Many participants remarked that this was the first time anyone had ever given them a rose and saw this as a very positive start to the first day of the training.

Following these introductions the participants were put right to work by Nyima Lhamo leading a lively one hour session of Mind Games, with an emphasis on not to limit one self and to think out of the box, believing in oneself.

The participants were divided into 4 teams with the goals of this activity being:

- Value of team work
- Start to think of decision making
- Problem solving



- Different people have different skills
- There is not always one right answer in any given situation.

And so the competitive spirit began. Each team chose a Team Leader and a Time Manager. Team names chosen were:

- Bread & Roses
- Game Changer
- G Unit
- H.O.T.

In addition to team points being given for project work, points were to be given for creativity, punctuality, team spirit and humor.

"Getting to know you" exercises were then led by Dhardon Sharling which proved lots of fun and very helpful in the participants learning each other's names and something about each other. These exercises were *Remembering Names* and *Share Her Image*. They increased everyone's level of comfort in the group and the training environment.



We then requested the participants to come up with their ground rules which will be abided by all throughout the training period. The suggestions included punctuality, mobile phones on silent mode, tidiness in the training hall, confidentiality etc.

Following lunch Kirti Dolkar Lhamo gave a more detailed introduction to TWA including a screening of the TWA compiled video featuring details on the many projects and current activities.

Dharon Sharling, TWA Research and Media officer then led a detailed orientation about the training including:

- Schedule review
- Group project proposal and implementation
- NDTV 24x7 Studio participation
- Ambush lobbying
- Panel discussion

At this time it was announced that 11 people could attend at NDTV studios this night to be audience members of the

program “Left, Right and Center”. The topic was: Congress vs BJP addressing issues of corruption, boycott of Parliamentary sitting and whether Anna Hazare will start his strike again. Audience members may have the opportunity to ask questions and participants prepared for this.

The evening session of the training was led by Vicki Robinson on “Key Elements in Proposal Writing”. Participants’ experience in preparing proposals varied greatly from total novices to very experienced. This session of the training was aimed at assisting teams in preparing the proposals for their training projects as well as assisting those who prepare proposals as part of their jobs.

“Whatever I learned from this training is immeasurable and immense. I wanted to meet as many Tibetan women as possible and this made it possible. I feel more responsible after this training” – Tsamchoe Dolma, ATWLT participant.



Phase one – Identifying Leadership Skills

Tuesday, November 22

As part of Phase One of the training – Identifying Leadership Skills – Vicki Robinson and Nyima Lhamo led a day of training on a variety of introductory topics:

1. Why Women? Why Now? Why You?
During this session participants identified women leaders they admire and discussed the characteristics that make them leaders.
2. Leadership Inventory
This inventory, filled out by each participant, helped them begin to identify their own leadership skills and those skills on which they still

need. They discussed in pairs once they had filled out the inventory.

3. Goal Setting – Using the SMART System
During this exercise teams began to develop their project proposals with the goals based on the SMART system.
4. Tips for Team Building – teams assigned specific roles to team members to work on their developing project proposals
5. Group Team Building Event – Making the Perfect Square with eyes blind folded; the trick was to see how the teams would attempt to make a perfect square; how they communicated, their creativity and coordination as a team. Making the biggest straw structure.





In the evening 7 people attended NDTV Studios to be in the audience of “Left, Right and Center”. Subject was: Is the opposition creating too much disruption



in the Parliament and will it backfire on them? Also Rahul Gandhi vs. Mayawati – will he challenge her for the leadership? Once again, audience members could be offered the opportunity to ask questions to the program guests. The NDTV visits were a great learning experience for the participants and several asked to go more than once if possible. The group posed a photo with the show’s host, a veteran journalist Nidhi Razdan.

Those who did not attend at NDTV spent the evening competing in teams

in the “Building the biggest Straw Structure” game which again tested team’s coordination, communication, creativity and also how they handled differences of opinion and ideas. The teams carried on with their meetings in teams for group strategy on project proposals and began work on their project presentations. At this time the organizing team met for strategic meetings.

“I was told by many that this workshop is good and it’s worth sacrificing my classes for ten days. I am inspired by my co participants, who are already working in our community and experienced yet they are all so humble and grounded”

Tenzin Sangmo, ATWLT participant.

Phase Two – Building Leadership Skills Wednesday, November 23



The second phase of the training began with TWA’s President introducing Lynda Ongel Lepcha, Director and Senior Trainer of the Holistic Training Solutions. Her focus was on ‘Building Leadership Skills’.



The theme for the day was ‘Leading Self’ and Lynda began her day with an introductory ice breaker; a mind game with balls which highlighted the importance of planning, strategizing, etc. The participants were then introduced to concepts of Leadership challenges and the 5 traits of exemplary leaders and went through the traits in detail. We then looked into different aspects of leadership through the differences between managers and leaders. The next concept was problem solving and decision making wherein Lynda explained how the context of our brain works and how to make it work optimally and understanding how we make decisions and solve problems.

After lunch the participants studied understanding self through the various social styles. As we looked into our dominant styles in groups, participants looked into the strengths and weaknesses

of self and others and did a gallery walk through chart presentation showcasing an image describing one’s social style and strategies with other profiles. The concluding session of the day was techniques to understand and work on individual focus areas. The activity was to go around the room to provide and accept feedback on one behavior that you would like to change which should make a significant positive difference in one’s life.

Eight participants could participate at the NDTV studio and the scheduled topic was: Has the anti-corruption crusader lost his focus? Pakistan army wins again? Does the army re-assertion of its authority cast a shadow on ties with India? This topic was changed at the last minute to the rising value of the rupee against the dollar.



"Thank you TWA for all your efforts and preparations trying to put in the best exposure and experiences for the trainees. It's wonderful meeting many new women who are young and confident."

Tenzin Choedon Chophel,
ATWLT participant

Phase Two – Building Leadership Skills Thursday, November 24



The second day on building leadership skills, Lynda introduced us to concepts like being interpersonally savvy through a video clip which focused on how to connect with others and then discussed making the right connections. The session on influence and impact got interesting through push and pull strategy with the 5 types of power and using power to influence others. The groups displayed these skills through role plays. We then embraced flexibility as a leader which was another self assessment activity where you get to know your leadership behavior. These include Directing, Coaching, Participatory and delegating behaviors. It focused on techniques about the ability to convince different people or audiences using different techniques.



For the final bit of the NDTV studio participation, 7 participants took part and the topic was 'Inflation – is anger against inflation justified?' The remaining trainees worked with their group project proposals.

"It was a great learning experience; NDTV studio participation and Lobbying are like lifetime experience for me. The thing that got me here was because my friend attended this training last year and I am now feeling what she meant to say."

Tenzin Tsering,
ATWLT participant

Phase Two – Building Leadership Skills Friday, November 25



Lynda's final day looked into the SCARF Model which is a very useful framework to use in thinking about interactions or organizational dynamics. It was then followed by an exercise called 'Prisoner's Dilemma' which was an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human behavior. The trick behind the activity was to highlight that the individual's choice is essentially between strategy and outcomes. This depends on the interactive strategies of two or more persons, who have opposed or, at best, had mixed motives for each other. The next concept was managing performance at work and feedback skills and types of behaviors towards feedback. The participants then had to go around the room and give motivational feedback to each other. This was the best part of the training with so much positive energy and warmth in the room. Last but not the least; Lynda introduced the concept of GEARS Model of Coaching to the trainees. The most important thing about coaching others is to have them say what they want to do in life. Open ended questions and tickling to the right nerve with the right set of questions works well. With immense positivism and energy, Lynda's training concluded with a brief note of thank you by Kirti Dolkar Lhamo, President TWA and a memento and Tibetan white scarf.

The evening activity was a *Climate Evening* led by Tenzin Woebum, TWA

WEDD officer, who was leaving early the next morning to represent TWA and the Tibet 3rd Pole at the COP 17 gathering in Durban, South Africa. Woebum spoke about the work the TWA WEDD has been doing in the environmental field and the book just produced – **Purging the Treasure House: Displacement and the Status of the Tibetan Nomad**, which is to be launched at COP 17. A copy of the book was presented at this time to each participant. Next each participant and organizer was invited to make a commitment to one way in which she personally could help preserve the environment. Each commitment was filmed and a green ribbon presented. Woebum was given a heartfelt sendoff and many good wishes for her journey at COP 17.

"Thank you TWA, it has been whole lot of self discovery in here and we are successful in discovering ourselves through this training."

Tenzin Menkyi,
ATWLT participant



Phase Two – Building Leadership Skills Saturday, November 26



Creative Communication and Media Messaging led by Dhardon Sharling

This was a very full and excellent day of communication and messaging theory and practical knowledge as well as many exercises and role plays designed to put into practice what the participants were learning. One of the goals of the day was to give participants the skills and practice to be put to use the next day when lobbying Indian parliamentarians to sign the “Stand Up for Tibet” petition.

The first portion of the morning was theoretical, imparting information on effective and creative communication. The group activity assigned to the teams to practice marketing their message via the media was an exercise called *ADZAP*. Each team was to create a TV ad for a new product and in doing this unleash their creativity, innovation and effective communication skills. Each ad had to demonstrate an appeal to a clear target audience e.g. Indian or International? Women, men or all? and the team had to be able to answer questions about their

product. Team ads were:

- Bread and Roses – a new phone service available in Northern India
- H.O.T. – a new deodorant
- Game Changer – a Magic String which promotes good health
- G Unit – a weight loss belt

Teams were questioned and given feedback by trainers on their success at delivering their message, marketing their product, creativity in product choosing etc.

The following portions of the day focused on media and messaging – tactics, strategy, channels and impact. Focus shifted to messages about the Stand Up for Tibet Campaign and how to communicate the main messages of this campaign to a larger audience. Who is the target audience? What are the spheres of influence? How to get a share of the media market for this message? What are the vision, goals and strategies necessary to successfully execute this campaign in Delhi and beyond?

Participants practiced with an exercise called “Elevator Pitch” to give them the opportunity to deliver the Stand Up for Tibet message in 2 minutes as though they had that amount of time in an elevator with a world leader (e.g. Barack Obama) and that leader asked them what was their priority issue. How could they make the best use of this opportunity? Could they deliver their key message effectively in 2 minutes? Good practice and not easy to do!

The major exercise of the afternoon was a contest amongst the teams to pitch for being chosen for a BBC World Sunday afternoon 60 minute slot. Their pitch must involve marketing a portion of the Stand Up for Tibet message to audiences

worldwide in an effective way. Each team will get a share of the market, but BBC World is the most desired. Other market shares are BBC Asia, BBC Europe and BBC Africa.

Teams chose the following portions of the Stand Up for Tibet message for their slots:

- Bread & Roses: Forced Sterilization of women in Tibet
- H.O.T.: Preservation of Tibetan Language
- Game Changer: Displacement of Nomads in Tibet
- G Unit: Melting Glaciers in Tibet

They were given an hour to prepare their presentation. They were advised to focus their preparations on the human approach, giving deeper insight into the issue they have chosen and being conscious of the visuals they are presenting.

Teams showed amazing creativity and originality in creating their slots as per their chosen subjects. All team members participated actively, taking on different roles in the actual presentation as well as creating stage props, signage, costumes, and in one case, even a news release.

Here are some details of the presentations:

Bread and Roses – Compulsory Sterilization



The setting was a medical camp set up by Chinese medics in a village. All women in the village are invited to come for a free medical examination. Men in the village are trying to force the women to attend because it is free. Some women are suspicious and do not want to attend as they think they will be sterilized without their permission. A pregnant woman is forced to attend and loses her baby as a result of the medical procedure – in fact a late term abortion. The effect is very dramatic, the acting good and the message very clearly delivered. These procedures are done by force and not voluntarily. The “ask” is clear – “Put your feet in our socks”.

This presentation won the BBC World slot.

Game Changer – Displacement of Nomads



The setting is a news conference on the issue of Displacement of Nomads. A news release is handed to the BBC officials as the action commences. The panel at the news conference consists of a TWA representative (moderator), two nomad women, one expert. The message concerning the plight of the nomads is clearly delivered – one million years of

culture are being lost – be a voice for the voiceless Nomads of Tibet. This presentation was very realistic but there was not a lot of action and the “ask” was not clear.

This presentation won the BBC Europe slot.

G Unit – Melting Glaciers



The setting was colorful and dramatic with participants wearing costumes representing glaciers and rivers. These elements of nature talked to each other and bemoaned what is happening to their environment – glaciers melting, rivers contaminated and dammed. No animals are coming to the rivers to drink any more. This scene was followed by a news conference of NGOs working on environmental issues in Tibet. The “ask” at this news conference was clear – “lend me your eyes and save the earth”. A DVD on the issue was distributed free at the news conference on the issue of Tibet and the Third Pole. It was clear that the target audience for this presentation was Tibet’s downriver neighboring countries. This presentation won the BBC Asia slot.

H.O.T. – Preserve the Tibetan Language



The message for this slot was delivered effectively by pairs of participants chanting slogans in Tibetan and English and carrying banners stating “preserve the Tibetan language”. There were several exchanges between younger and more mature activists – the younger people not interested in preserving their language or culture but more interested in being part of the international “youth culture”. The clear message was “Be the Change” – each one must take responsibility for preserving the culture and language. The “ask” was clear that this will be a gradual process – no easy solutions.

This presentation won the BBC Africa slot.

Teams spent the evening in the final preparations for their group projects to be executed the next day.

“Everything was so perfect, not only the training, but also all other facilities you have provided was really impressive. Keep up the great work and I wish you all the very best for future. Hope you keep doing these training and empower more and more Tibetan women.”

Sonam Chhukyi,
ATWLT participant

Phase Three – Practicing Leadership (Outbound training) Sunday, November 27

and it's worth sacrificing my bar exam for this training. Gladly met many beautiful women and great brains, thank you all"

Tenzin Sonam,
ATWLT participant



Phase Three – Practicing Leadership (Outbound training) Monday, November 28



Project Implementation Day

Teams presented their project proposals, done in Power Point and following the outlines suggested in the first evening's "Key Elements in Proposal Writing" workshop. The presentations were judged by Mr. Thupten Tsewang, Project Manager, Foundation for Universal Responsibility, New Delhi. He gave feedback to all teams and presented G Unit team with the extra amount of rupees to be used on their project.

Projects chosen were as follows:

- H.O.T. – Drinking to Health
- Game Changer – Winter Aid - Narela
- G Unit – A Lamp in the Dark – Andh Vidyalaya
- Bread & Roses – Environmental Awareness in Rohini area

Teams spent the day executing their projects and reported on their success on Tuesday morning, November 29th.

"Thank you TWA for such an initiative

The day began with Dhardon Sharling offering training on Ambush Lobbying, the priority activity of the day. The groups then got an hour to strategize for the Ambush lobbying and have their lobbying kit organized. The group was invited to attend a Parliamentary sitting at the Lok Sabha in the afternoon and following that, attempt to lobby Indian parliamentarians and leaders to sign the Stand Up for Tibet Petition, which must be completed by International Human Rights Day, Dec. 10th. Upon arrival at the Lok Sabha it was discovered that Parliament had adjourned early and it would not be possible to enter the buildings or observe proceedings. This was a great disappointment to all.



Phase Three – Practicing Leadership (Outbound training) Tuesday, November 29

Some participants did attempt to lobby a few MPs and media baron Rajdeep Sardesai (journalist and co-owner of CNN-IBN) as they were leaving the buildings with limited success. What followed was an exercise in flexible leadership as the group met on the lawn to re-strategize their priorities. A group decision was made to attempt to lobby MPs the next morning at 11 as MPs were leaving their offices for the Parliamentary sitting. The moral of the day was that sometimes things do not work out as planned and the challenge what to do next. The participants showed in practice the leadership skills that they learned through the training and handled the situation very smartly.

“Thank you TWA for giving me this opportunity and everyone encouraged me throughout the training; it was a complete new exposure and experience for me”

Dawa Dolma,
ATWLT participant



The second last day of the training saw two members of each group continuing with the lobbying around the Parliament. The remaining participants, in their teams, were given an opportunity to prepare for the next day's Panel Discussion. The Game Changers and H.O.T. teams were given the responsibility of advertisement. The teams covered the important areas like Delhi University and Lodhi road with the posters. The G Unit team handled the media invitations. They went around Delhi meeting media people, visited the Press club of Delhi and distributed invitations. The Bread and Roses team took charge of the invitations for the special guests for the Panel Discussion.

AFTERNOON SESSION: PROJECTS PRESENTATION

In the afternoon the teams reported on their December-27 project implementation and December-28 lobbying activities. The reporting was very optimistic and positive.

Bread and Roses



We discussed and focused on an environmental awareness program. As planned we delegated the work amongst the team members and we can say it was successful at the end of the day. Initially we faced difficulties in convincing people and we tried our best to let them know why we did this project and gave away environment friendly products. In a nut shell, as we wished, we implemented the project.

H.O.T.



The goal of this project was to distribute water filtering equipment to a school in the area where clean drinking water

was not available. The Project was called *Drinking to Health* and had unexpected results. The first school the team approached was not interested in receiving this equipment and the team was told by their lawyer that they did not accept donations. All schools were closed because it was Sunday (a planning error) and/or already had water filters.

The team felt it wasted a lot of time finding a proper recipient for their project. It was very hard to find a place, so they re-strategized and began looking for any organization that would accept their equipment. They used the Helpline as a resource. They became frustrated and tired and decided to expand the area of possibility in order to find a proper recipient. They were asking everyone for help which was a “weird feeling” for the team.

Finally they heard of a small school for mentally and physically disabled children run by a physically disabled couple. This couple explained to them that their main challenge at the school is convincing parents to educate their disabled children and be involved in their lives. The school has 25 students and is run strictly on the basis of donations. All staff at the school are disabled.

In the end the team bought what the school principals said was needed, rather than water filter equipment. The team visited some wholesales that were open and purchased gym balls and other specialized equipment that would be useful to these disabled students.

Game Changer



This project was called *Winter Aid* and was focused on the area of Narela, a slum resettlement project very far out of Delhi. The team contacted Pastor Rene Gopal, who works with the children in the development, and found out from him what was most needed. He asked for blankets, as winter is coming. Team members went to Chandhi Chowk to purchase blankets although this was a bit challenging as many shops were closed for Sunday. Blankets were eventually purchased and members of the team took the bus to Narela, a very long and time consuming ride.



One of the issues in this community is that families are selling their 10-year-old

daughters into marriage as they cannot afford to keep them. Pastor Gopal is working to discourage this practice. Team members felt they learned from this project how big their hearts are. They were able to offer 15 blankets to 15 families (a small percentage of the families in need) as well as to provide pencils and sweets to the 100 or so students who go to Pastor Gopal's one room school. In talking to some of the children, the participants found that they have big visions – aspiring to be lawyers, police etc.

The team was very satisfied with their project and felt it exceeded their expectations.

G Unit

This project was called *A Lamp in the Dark* (taken from a Helen Keller quote).



The main challenge for this team was choosing a recipient. They finally chose Anndh Vidyalaya, a school for visually impaired boys. They made contact with the school principal to see what the needs of the boys were.

Their hope had been to purchase Braille books for the school but found, to their disappointment, that these books are not readily available for purchase, but must be

pre-ordered. Since this was not possible they did bring a lot of equipment to the school (as requested by the principal) – for example mini pianos, cricket bats, lots of paper, pencils, markers plus yummy sweets.



The team spent about 2.5 hours at the school and very much enjoyed interacting with the students. However, they regretted that they had not in some way been able to join with the Game Changer team as they needed more money than they had. They were also not satisfied as they had hoped to purchase Braille books.

Lobbying Report



The groups had varying reports about the Lobbying session. A total of 4 Members of Parliament and 2 celebrities signed

the Stand up for Tibet petition. This is seen as a major achievement. The G Unit achieved 3 signatures altogether and they were hurried away by security officers. The Game Changer – no signatures of MPs achieved. They experienced a problem in not knowing if the people they were approaching were MPs or not and had to ask “Are you an MP?” The H.O.T. team – did not achieve any signatures. Their experience was that MPs were in a rush going to Parliament. Also the security people told them they were harassing the MPs. They did not feel they had a good experience. The Bread and Roses achieved 3 signatures and all teams felt that it was the experience and teamwork that really counted.

“It’s a refreshing experience and would like



to thank TWA for helping me meet many wonderful people through the lobbying program. I feel content and happy now”.

Tsewang Diki,
ATWLT participant

We ended the day with an activity called ‘Spin a Yarn’; an activity through which we collect the oral feed forwards from the participants and the trainers. This part of every training always gets emotional; a feeling of never wishing to realize it is the end of the training, realizing how much you have grown through the program.



Talent Night

The evening saw a women's talent night where the teams had to showcase their creativity and team effectiveness as they had to perform a group song and dance, solo song and dance and a fashion show. The fun filled scintillating talent night was followed by a special farewell dinner.

"It has been a great pleasure getting to know you all and I am feeling good to know that the Free Tibet cause is in good hands. I am absolutely blown away by everything that this whole group produced throughout the training, keeping creativity alive and thriving."

Vicki Robinson,
ATWLT Trainer, Canada.



Phase Three – Practicing Leadership (Outbound training) Wednesday, November 30 (South Asian Women’s Day)

The last day of the training proved to be the most exciting part of the training and trainees and organising team keenly looked forward to this day. The teams left for the program venue to do their final touches for the Panel Discussion.

Kirti Dolker Lhamo, President, Tibetan Women’s Association welcomed the four esteemed panellists and the gathering and the moderator for the day carried forward the program from there.



Four prominent and distinguished personalities were panellists: Dr. Kiran Bedi, Social Activist and (Retd) Indian Police Officer, Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Jaya Jaitley, Political Activist and former president of Samta Party, and Vinod Saigal, (Retd) Major General. Each panellist provided an earnest insight into the topic ‘Women’s

Leadership in the 21st century, a Noble Achievement’ and each received questions from the audience of dignitaries, participants of the 2nd ATWLT and members of the media.



The symposium was moderated by Dhardon Sharling, member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile and Research and Communications officer of TWA and lasted for 90 minutes.

Dr. Bedi expressed her deep admiration for the Tibetan people and said, “I respect the way you are carving your life and fighting for your own value system.” She stressed that while men boast of the ‘3 Ms - muscle, money and mobility’, women are bestowed with ‘3 Hs - head, heart and hand’. In response to a question on the dwindling Indian political support for the Tibetan cause, Dr. Bedi reiterated the crucial role of the Tibetans in India who are making outstanding



contributions to their host country to show great appreciation and to gauge support of the Indian government and people. "You should all be Dalai Lamas in India and make India proud" said Dr. Bedi.



Youdon Aukatsang reflected on the status quo of women's leadership in the Tibetan community in exile and lamented the traditional barriers that still play a deterring factor in enabling a balanced representation of men and women in the political arena. Youdon stressed the future imperatives of Tibetan leadership, which must see the presence of more women leaders. "It's time for women to lead from the back and the front and thereby fit into

all realms of the political arena", said the young member of the Tibetan Parliament in exile.



Political activist Jaya Jaitley stressed that leadership is achieved only when one tackles a challenge and that women should brave and face challenges with a strong fervour, grit and commitment. Jaya advised that Tibetan women to embark on reaching out to the oppressed women of South Asia. "As women belonging to a group whose rights have been violated, you should reach out to the suffering women; particularly the women in Nepal caught in human trafficking, women in Pakistan caught in the blasphemy laws, and women in Afghanistan who fear a conspiracy between the Taliban and the United States," said Jaya.

Writer and Major General (Retd) Vinod Saighal said that the three 2011 Nobel peace laureates are women who fought a system and struggled to be recognized. He stated that this achievement will reshape and redefine women's leadership in the 21st century. This will usher in a new generation of leaders which will include Tibetan women who have struggled this far and yet maintained their modesty.



Answering a question on the political clout surrounding India and Tibet, Vinod said, “albeit the Indian politicians have remained silent, but they are slowly but surely finding that the freedom of Tibet is in India’s interest.”

The event also witnessed the launching of three TWA publications: ‘Purging the Treasure House: Displacement and the Status of the Tibetan Nomad’ and the Tibetan and English version of ‘DOLMA magazine: the Intellectual Expression of and for Tibetan Women.’

The panel presentation was followed by a lively Question and Answers session where we saw good flow of questions from our participants.

TWA’s vice president Samten Choedon conveyed the thank you note to the panellists, media, guests and training participants.

The final event was presentation of certificates of achievement by Tsewang Namgyal, Board of Directors, TIBET FUND to all participants and presentation of gifts to all panel members followed by a short enriching talk to





"It has always been a learning experience. I think we still have many more women in our society who needs such platform and its only TWA who can provide. So would appreciate if you can continue TWTALT for other Tibetan sisters."

Tenzin Yangkyi,
ATWLT participant

Conclusion

The Tibetan Women's Association extends deep gratitude to the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, the TIBET FUND and the National Endowment for Democracy, all based in the United States, for having supported us with the much needed financial aid that made this training possible. We also thank our amazing participants who made this training happen with their presence and participation. We look forward to being

the participants. A festive and delicious lunch for all participants, training team and panel members followed.





able to create many more such platforms to empower and encourage our women to climb to higher scales of leadership both in personal and professional fronts. We thank our sponsors for making this project a reality.

The 21st century saw the dawn of proven leadership by women and this has been reiterated with the recent announcement of three women leaders as joint winners of the Nobel peace prize 2011 for 'their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full

participation in peace-building work.' TWA's '2nd ATWLT' succeeded in giving the 28 Tibetan women participants a strong vision for 21st century- the century of Women's Leadership.

TWA's primary goal is to advocate for the rights of Tibetan women inside Tibet and to empower Tibetan women in exile. TWA's 'Empowerment Through Action Desk' provides a central point of contact for resources for Tibetan women in exile, while effectively coordinating empowerment programs in culturally

appropriate and gender sensitive ways. TWA imparts leadership and empowerment actions, which include the Advanced Tibetan Women's Leadership Training, the Annual Young Tibetan

Women's Leadership Program, the All India Gender Sensitization Training, Combating Domestic Violence and the Annual Tibetan Nuns Leadership Training. ■

TWA remain thankful to Tenzin Menkyi, David Huang and Karma Dhoundup for their photo contribution to the report.

