Tibetan cultural heritage rescue work
(2002 and 2011)

Short description
CHwB has been involved in two projects related to the rescue of Tibetan heritage. The first project was the restoration of the Beri Monastery in the province of Sichuan in China. The building’s oldest parts are from the 17th century. After the Cultural Revolution the monastery was repaired and later re-opened in the 1980’s. However, because of a badly leaking roof, invaluable wall paintings from the 17th and 18th centuries were seriously threatened. In order to carry out the work, a workshop was established for the use in the restoration of traditional building skills. Work consisted mainly of repairing the timber structure and roof and installing a functional drainage system.

The second project was the Tibetan Museum in Dharamsala in India, where the largest Tibetan photo archive in the world was under sincere threat to be destroyed due to improper storage of the photos. A CHwB mission made an analysis and a proposal how to improve the storage situation.

Contribution to socio-economic development
Tibetan culture is threatened in various ways and therefore it is vital to rescue valuable and important heritage for future generations. Both projects have contributed to this.

The restoration work of the monastery has had the immediate effect that the wall paintings were saved. A more long-term effect is that the monastery as an important Tibetan symbol can continue to play a role as part of the history and culture in the area. The project also had significance through the training of younger craftsmen in traditional techniques.

The situation report and proposed action plan which CHwB assisted the Tibetan Museum to produce has given the museum a tool to improve the storage of the photos. This will save this unique documentation, which plays a vital role for Tibetan society, as well as for museum visitors from different parts of the world, offering knowledge about different aspects of Tibetan life and culture of the past until today.