



## SNAPSHOT

# Portrait of a Tibetan Entrepreneur

**From poor farming roots to restaurateur: USAID support for Tibetan self-starter pays dividends.**



*As a result of USAID support, Aré now operates three restaurants and provides jobs to over sixty Tibetan staff, the majority from poor families in rural communities. / Photo: The Bridge Fund*

***“My aim is to have the best standard of Tibetan restaurant and I think we are confident to achieve this dream now with all our experience.”***

**- Aré, Tibetan Entrepreneur and project assistance recipient.**

Throughout Tibetan regions of China, resources for promoting local businesses, education, and healthcare are extremely limited. The socio-economic situation in Tibet is on par with some areas of sub-Saharan Africa. As the economy grows, rural Tibetans desperately need new skills and opportunities for living.

In 2010, USAID assistance established the Mandala Business Development Center, a community resource that will provide comprehensive services to Tibetan entrepreneurs such as Aré as they navigate through the various stages of designing, building, and managing a business.

Aré’s successful enterprise was built amidst disadvantages and setbacks. Growing up in a farming village, her family was unable to afford her more than a year of education. After several jobs in different restaurants, Aré was able to borrow enough money to open a small teahouse in 2001. The popularity of her business quickly increased and within a few years she invested in a second and third location. But her expansion proved hasty as her new restaurants eventually failed.

It was at that time when Aré first contacted the USAID-assisted program. USAID provided her with business development and management strategies skills as well as a series of consultations which enabled her to design a marketing strategy and expand her menu to appeal to broader appetites.

As a result of USAID support, Aré now owns and runs three restaurants in Sichuan and one in Yunnan Province, providing training and employment for over sixty Tibetan staff, the majority from poor families in rural communities who are unable to afford school. The popularity of Aré’s business has drawn nationwide attention from potential investors who urge her to take part in new ventures. Aré’s success reflects USAID efforts to foster economic opportunities and enhanced livelihoods for Tibetans, and it speaks to the effectiveness of USAID support in business trainings, which are conducted across a variety of sectors and levels of business sophistication.