

Help in Action



Lama Gangchen Kiurok Tsochun

Long distance adoptions and humanitarian aid
in favour of Himalayan communities



Long Distance Adoptions

The long distance adoptions project of Lama Gangchen Help in Action is active since 1992 in Nepal, Tibet-China and India. Through the project it is possible to help from a distance a child, an elderly, sick or disabled person, or a Buddhist monk. Funds that are collected are also used towards the realization of fundamental medical and educational infrastructures within the communities where the adopted people live.

In Nepal

Lama Gangchen Help in Action works mainly in the area of the capital, Kathmandu. Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world (with an average daily income of less than a dollar, most people live on the threshold of extreme poverty). This country is tormented by political and social instability, unemployment, degradation and hunger.

Public services, when available, have a fee. The poor cannot afford medical assistance and as a result life expectancy in Nepal is very low.

Parents have to pay to send their children to school: but families who have an income sufficient to pay the fees are rare, so many children begin work at a young age and the rate of illiteracy in the country remains high.

Thanks to the long distance adoptions project approximately 900 children have been enrolled into school in the Kathmandu area. These children are also guaranteed medical care.



Long Distance Adoptions

In Tibet-China

Lama Gangchen Help in Action works mainly in the highlands of the Shigatse region in Central Tibet, where the altitude is approximately 4000 meters. Life in the villages of this area is very hard: the climatic conditions are extreme in a place where the houses are built of mud bricks. There is no running water, electricity, heating or sanitary facilities, and very often people don't even own mattresses or blankets. Schools are rare and makeshift. There is no medical assistance and needless to say there are no shops and no postal service.

The climate is extremely cold and just as arid; there is a dramatic scarcity of water. Most villages have no water pump and, without aqueducts, trees are rare and the cultivation of crops is difficult. The meager harvests often provide enough food for only 6-7 months of the year. But, as well as the problem of what to eat, the families also find themselves with nothing to sell or exchange and therefore they have no money to buy clothes for their children and even less to buy school materials. Children face the harsh winters wearing rags and without the chance to attend school.

Thanks to the donations collected, every summer Lama Gangchen Help in Action distributes money, clothes, shoes, school stationary, stocks of food and seed to the families of children in 26 villages.



Elderly, Sick and Disabled

In Tibet and Nepal public assistance does not exist and the weakest people often find themselves in desperate conditions without any means of support. The long distance adoption of an old, sick or disabled person gives them back their human dignity, hope and peace of mind.

Monks

The monasteries preserve the precious and ancient spiritual, cultural, artistic and medical traditions of the Himalayas: a heritage for the whole of humanity. Most monasteries survive on the donations they receive from the already poverty stricken local community. Often there is not enough money to ensure food, to buy medicine, clothes, shoes, blankets or fuel. Through the long distance adoptions project Lama Gangchen Help in Action is able to help 15 monasteries in Tibet-China, Nepal and India.



General Information

In Tibet-China

Once a year, in summer, volunteers of Lama Gangchen Help in Action distribute the aid collected directly, village by village, under the supervision of local Government officials.

Clothes, shoes, sweaters, jackets, school materials, sacks of rice, flour and seeds are all bought in Lhasa and Shigatse and transported to the villages by truck.

Money and gifts are distributed equally among all the children of the villages, adopted or not, and their families, to avoid creating a division between the more and less fortunate.

There is no postal system that reaches these villages; the exchange of letters and photographs between those adopted and their sponsor is made through the volunteers of the Association.



In Nepal

Volunteers of Help in Action travel to Nepal twice a year to deliver personally the aid collected and to co-ordinate the humanitarian activities.

Children of school age are enrolled into local schools, the fees are paid directly to the school, and the Kathmandu office of Lama Gangchen Help in Action monitors the children throughout the school year. The local office also organizes regular health checks.

At the start of a new adoption, the Association assesses and tries to resolve the most urgent needs of the family: sometimes there is a lack of food or no stove for cooking, maybe there is only one mattress and one blanket for many people, maybe someone is ill and there is no medicine...

It is possible to correspond directly, in English, with the sponsored person remembering however that the postal system is often slow and unreliable. Volunteers of the Association send news and photographs of each sponsored child.

Procedure for New Adoptions

To start a new adoption it is necessary to send by post, fax or e-mail:

- 1) The completed subscription form for the long distance adoptions project (**central page**), indicating on it any particular preferences.
- 2) A photocopy of the first payment slip.
- 3) The signed document regarding privacy laws (**central page**).

Payments can be made directly by bank, specifying the reason for the transaction, to:

Bank:
Banca Popolare di Sondrio
Agency 13, Milan, Italy

Account name:
Lama Gangchen Kiurok Tsochun

Account number: 2877/24

Bank codes:
CAB: 1612 & ABI: 5696
IBAN: IT58 D056 9601 6120 0000 2877 X24
BIC/SWIFT: POSOIT22

After receipt of this information we will send you the photograph, address and basic bio-data of the person we are entrusting to you.

Amount

The amount requested for a long distance adoption is 240 euro a year, which can be paid in one or more installments. Please use the same surname on all transactions and always specify the reason of the payment.

From the annual amount the Association keeps:

- 2 euro a month to cover running costs such as office rent, telephone calls, postal charges, printing, photocopies and contributions to the traveling expenses of volunteers.
- 6 euro a year is placed in the Emergency Fund to help children left without help and for urgent cases.

All the people working for the Association are volunteers so there is no cost for personnel.

Duration of the Adoption

There is no fixed length for a long distance adoption. However, if you decide to make an adoption we advise that you do so with the motivation to continue for some years. This is the only way to give the children the real possibility to complete their education and earn themselves the chance of a better future.



Humanitarian Aid in Tibet-China

Tibetan Monasteries Project

For hundreds of years, the monastery has been at the heart of tradition and community for Tibetan villages: custodian of the precious medical, artistic and spiritual knowledge it continues to be a symbol of the Tibetan cultural identity. Lama Gangchen Help in Action has contributed to the reconstruction of many monasteries, in particular to that of Gangchen Monastery: founded five centuries ago, today it is home to 45 monks. Many small monasteries in Central Tibet, receive financial aid from the Association, for their maintenance and to improve the sanitary conditions: amongst others are those of Sed Gyued, Riwo Choling and Nimo Gyalchun.

Water Projects

After the realization of the Gangchen Village aqueduct (with water pumps providing potable water, an irrigation system and a small amount of electrical power), donations from Lama Gangchen Help in Action allowed the construction of a second aqueduct in the Namling region. Plans are underway for similar projects in other villages where there is no water for irrigation and where the lack of rain forces people to drink from stagnant pools that form on the land. This unhygienic water results in widespread disease.





Healthcare Projects

There is little medical assistance in the villages: people still die from easily curable diseases and are left disabled from simple fractures left untreated. It is not easy to reach the city hospitals because there is no public transport and then there is also the problem of how to pay for the treatment.

Sicknesses such as tuberculosis, skin infections and cataracts (resulting in blindness even amongst the youngest due to the strong sunlight and lack of hygiene) are widespread.

With funds from Lama Gangchen Help in Action medical dispensaries in Gangchen, Singma, Shishung and another 5 villages of the region have been constructed and are today functioning.

In 2007, the Association built an extension to Nye Clinic (the largest medical structure in this area) to enable it to offer residential facilities to sick people who are unable to travel to receive treatments. The Clinic also received funds to purchase necessary furniture and equipment. In 2008, solar panels were installed in the Clinic.

The Association also funds the small, but very popular, Tibetan medical dispensary of Gangchen Monastery.

The help of Lama Gangchen Help in Action also reaches the clinic of Tashi Lumpo Monastery in Shigatse, one of the largest monasteries in Tibet. The monk-doctors in this clinic receive around 150 patients each day from the surrounding area and treat them all for a symbolic charge.



Schools Project

Lama Gangchen Help in Action supports existent elementary schools - classes 1 to 3 - in the Shigatse area. The Association is committed to the construction and upkeep of school buildings as well as to the provision of desks, benches, blackboards, books and stationary.

Thanks to funds raised, a new school, now considered the best in this area, was built in Nepu Village. Other ramshackle schools, such as those of Shongma and Pandin, have been completely rebuilt.

The only elementary school in the area, that teaches until the sixth class is located in Nye Village. Around 450 children live in this school because their homes are too far away to make the daily journey. In 2007, the Association built and equipped a new kitchen and dining halls. A small greenhouse was also built in the school grounds to ensure fresh vegetables for the children. In 2008, a protective wall was built around the school grounds and a generator was provided so that the children will have a minimum of light for study during the dark winter days. Mattresses and blankets have also been donated to the children of this school who previously slept on bare wooden palettes.



Environmental and Agricultural Development Project

Due to the altitude and arid climate trees are rare and extremely precious in this region. Having no protection from the erosion caused by violent winds and strong sun the land becomes increasingly less fertile and at risk of landslides.

Over the years reforestation projects, supported by Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation, have formed several green zones in the area. In 2008, thanks to donations collected by the Association, a new green zone was created in the area of Gangchen Village with the planting of 4,000 saplings. A further 20,000 trees were planted on the outskirts of Dakshu Village.

Particularly important in this area are programs to encourage the cultivation of fruit and vegetables, with the provision of necessary hydraulic systems. The lack of fresh produce in the diet is the cause of many sicknesses related to vitamin and mineral deficiencies. In 2007 a large greenhouse was financed in Nye Village and a smaller one was built within the grounds of Nye School. These greenhouses now successfully provide a supply of fresh vegetables for local school children as well as for elderly and sick people.

To help improve the agricultural yield, in 2008 - requested by the local population - a small tractor was given to each village which can also be used to transport water, tools, provisions and even sick people in need of medical care.



Humanitarian Aid in Nepal

Emergency Fund

This Fund allows immediate help to the most urgent and desperate cases: parents who are unable to feed their children or who are about to lose their home because they cannot pay the rent; people in need of medical care or urgent surgery but with no means to pay; elderly who are without any kind of income.

The Fund also takes care of sustaining temporarily those children whose long distance adoption has been interrupted as well as the purchase of medicines and healthcare equipment for the dispensaries helped by the Association.



Himalayan Healing Center Clinic

This medical structure, situated in the outskirts of Kathmandu, is active since 1993. It provides minimal cost healthcare to the poorest and most needy of the local population: it offers medical consultations, medicine and treatments, blood and urine tests, vaccinations, dental and eye care and has family planning facilities. It also acts as a base for important community health awareness programmes.

In 2007, approximately 12,000 people were treated (the majority of whom were women). Every year the clinic hosts western doctors who work voluntarily alongside the full-time Nepalese staff.

The Himalayan Healing Centre Complex is also the local base of Lama Gangchen Help in Action.



Vocational Training Courses

Lama Gangchen Help in Action offers a range of vocational training courses to mothers who are in particularly difficult economic conditions. The full time courses comprise a monthly allowance, ensuring that the women can maintain themselves during the training. These courses aim to make these women self-sufficient, thanks to a new trade, and thus able to provide for themselves and their families.



Gangchen Samling School

The school presently has 450 students, many of whom are sponsored through Lama Gangchen Help in Action. The three-floor school building has well-lit and well-equipped classrooms, adequate bathroom facilities, clean drinking water, administrative offices, computer room and a large library. Foreseen in the future are science and language laboratories, a sports pitch and larger playground. The school offers students the complete cycle of primary and secondary education, from class 1 to 10, developing alongside the official curriculum a non-formal program of peace education.





Saraswati House

Since 2008, the Association is helping to support 30 orphans being cared for in a small home run by local Nepalese volunteers. This home located near the local office of the Association has been named “Saraswati House” by the first sponsors who offered to pledge help.

The Association has already helped with the provision of healthcare, education, clothes, bedding, kitchen equipment and so on. A small amount of money is also being provided weekly to help buy food and fuel; however in order to give these children, who have already suffered so much, a stable and secure environment we need to collect donations for the running and upkeep of the house.

Gangchen Drupkhang

Thanks to contributions from Lama Gangchen Help in Action, the construction of Gangchen Drupkhang (alongside the Himalayan Healing Centre) is nearly complete. A new centre for the production of traditional paintings on canvas, woodcarving and Himalayan medicine and incense. The aim is to create new work places, whilst preserving Himalayan handicrafts and culture. In the future this centre will become a site for vocational training courses and a school of Tibetan medicine is also foreseen.



How to Contribute to Humanitarian Aid Projects

By making a donation to a project you are giving immediate benefits to an entire community. Donations for any humanitarian aid project can be made through your bank to:

Bank:

Banca Popolare di Sondrio
Agency 13, Milan, Italy

Account name:

Lama Gangchen Kiurok Tsochun

Account number: 7770/67

Bank codes:

CAB: 1612 & ABI: 5696

IBAN: IT88 D056 9601 6120 0000 7770 X67

BIC/SWIFT: POSOIT22

Cheques and money orders should be made out to Lama Gangchen Kiurok Tsochun.

Once you have made a donation for a project, it is important to send the Humanitarian Aid Subscription Form to the Association. **(Central page)**

In this way the Association can verify that the donation has been credited to the account. It also enables us to send information about the project and to keep sponsors updated.

Please specify on the Subscription Form and the bank transaction your choice of project. If no particular project is stated then the Association will allocate the money to the most urgent project.



Lama Gangchen Help in Action - Kiurok Tsochun is a voluntary non-profit association, founded in 1992 under the umbrella of the Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation – a United Nations affiliated Non Governmental Organisation in consultation with ECOSOC - with the aim of helping the poverty-stricken communities of the Himalayan region. The Tibetan name Kiurok Tsochun synthesises this very goal: help for the poorest and forgotten.

The Association, run entirely by volunteers, promotes long distance adoptions and raises funds for the construction and maintenance of schools, clinics, aqueducts and monasteries, as well as for the realisation of projects aimed at agricultural development, the revival and preservation of medical and artistic traditions, the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, the Tibetan Lama who founded the Association, works tirelessly to promote peace throughout the world and to develop reciprocal exchanges between the east and west, be it from a cultural point of view or that of humanitarian aid in favour of those less fortunate.

He is founder of the Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation and numerous foundations, associations and centres worldwide; he is also the Chancellor for the Italian Charter of the International Association of Educators for World Peace, a UN affiliated NGO in consultation with ECOSOC.



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