

# Fondazione Lama Gangchen

## Help in Action onlus

Humanitarian aid for Himalayan communities



# Activities report

## 2023



In 2023, the Foundation's humanitarian activities continued, thanks to the constant support of our donors and volunteers. The work in the areas reached by the aid was carried out thanks to an extraordinary network of volunteers, teachers and local monks. It was also possible for people from Italy offering their services to take part in two field-trips to Nepal.

The economic situation in the country after the Covid emergency – already hard-hit by the 2015 earthquake – is increasingly difficult. The exorbitant increase in prices of even the most basic goods following the energy crisis is creating a dramatic situation, especially for a large segment of the population already living on temporary and underpaid day jobs.

Many families have found themselves unable to support the basic needs of their children, and in particular without any possibility to pay school fees for their education; the pressure of requests to enter Gangchen School in Kathmandu has greatly increased. The pressure on the monasteries – supported by the Foundation's projects in Nepal and South India – to take in more children has also increased and despite their general economic instability they are courageously taking in many new children from extremely difficult situations.



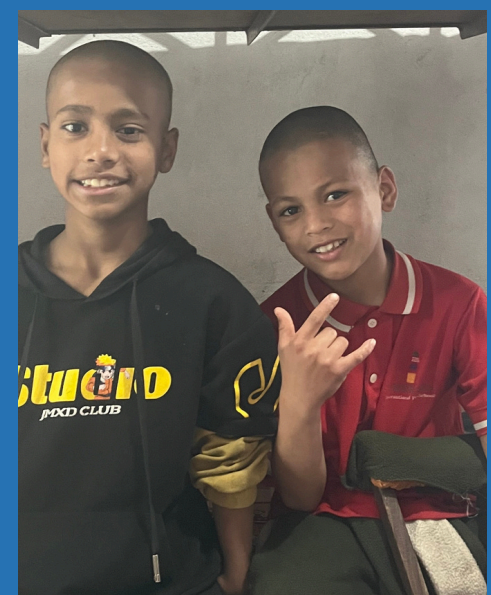
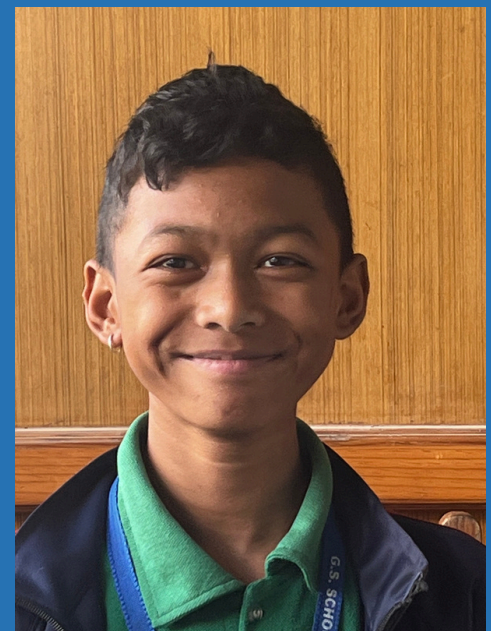


# LONG-DISTANCE ADOPTIONS

The long-distance adoption project in Nepal allows many children and young people from poor families to receive an education; the greatest asset for their future. In 2023, about 430 students benefited from this invaluable aid, enabling them to continue their studies despite a very difficult socio-economic context.

Again in 2023, this project made it possible to help lonely elderly people in difficulty; disabled children living at the Disabled Rehabilitation Centre in Kathmandu or within their families who, deprived of all other help, have to struggle every day to offer the most fragile children the assistance they need; children without families living at the Jorpati orphanage in Kathmandu.

Several 'donors' again this year realised their dream of meeting the children they are supporting in Nepal: a profound emotion that enriches and brings much joy to both the children and their families.







Support from this project also reaches many young monks in Nepal and India. The Tibetan monasteries give a home to many children from families in great need of help, taking full responsibility for their maintenance and education. In 2023, about 130 young monks were adopted: a fundamental help for the monasteries and for the survival of the culture of peace they offer the world.





# GANGCHEN SAMLING SCHOOL

At Gangchen Samling School in Kathmandu, utmost attention is paid to the quality of the education offered to the students, as well as to the creation of a comfortable and serene learning environment. Most of these children have parents who are beggars, or weavers, manual workers, cleaners or labourers on road building and construction sites. Having paid – in the best case scenario – the rent of their simple housing and bought daily food, these families have next to nothing left to pay school fees so their children can attend school.

The school's staff consists of 43 people, including teachers, headmaster, administrative staff and school assistants: the ordinary running costs – which include rent and maintenance of the building, school materials, uniforms and much more – are therefore considerable.

The quality of the teaching is very high, thanks to the careful selection of teachers. In 2023, at the end of class 10, 21 students took the State 'Secondary Education Exam', and as in previous years, all of them achieved the highest grades of A and B.

The school also offers regular extracurricular courses open to all students such as music, singing, dance and sports.

This year the school was equipped with a new library, an area that the students can use for individual study, research or group study: this initiative was greatly appreciated by the students, who helped in setting up and decorating the space as well as with cataloguing the books. Most of the books – in Nepali and English – were purchased thanks to the contribution of the Foundation's supporters.

In 2023, 361 of the School's approximately 480 students, from kindergarten to class 10, were supported by the Foundation's long-distance adoption project.







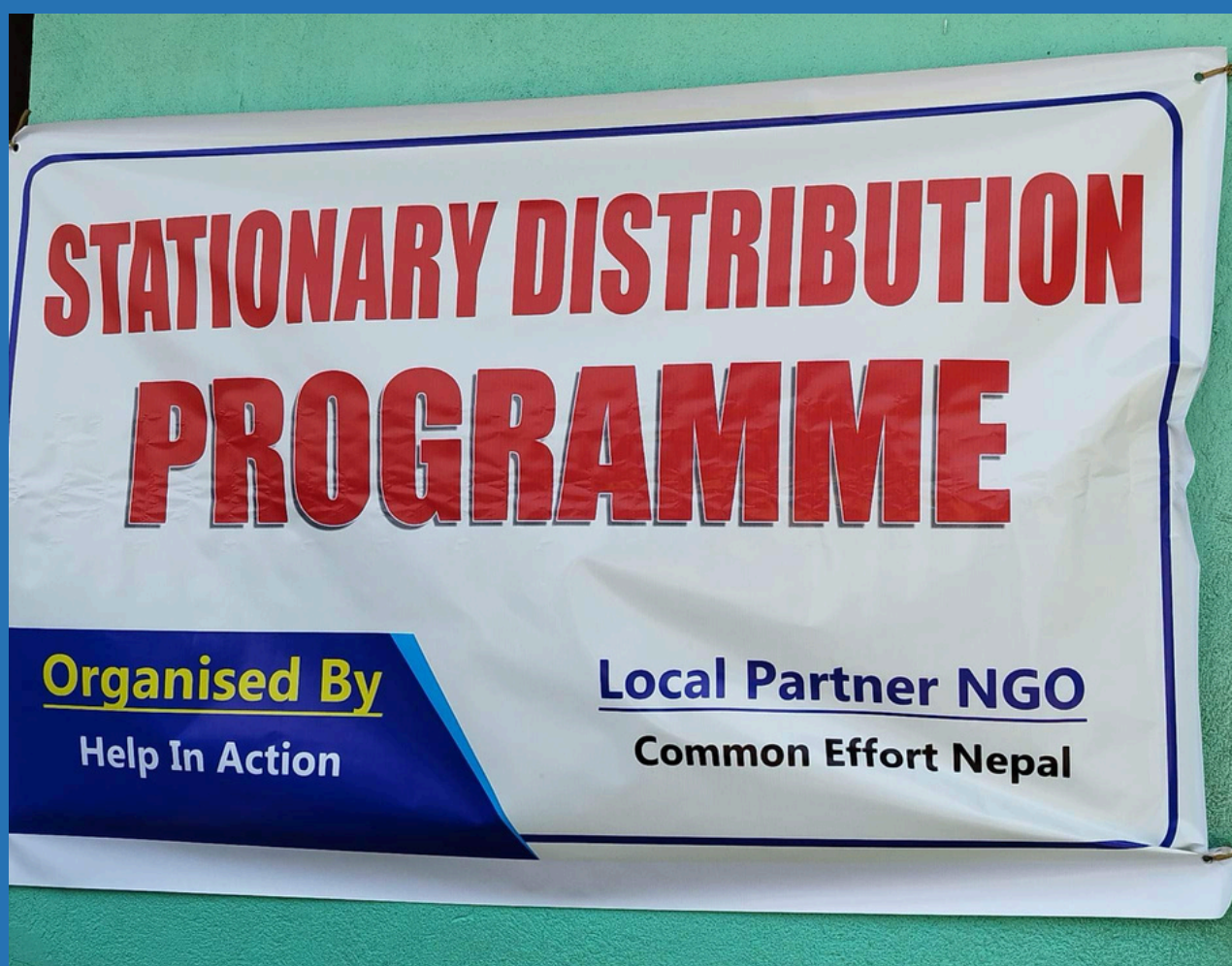


## EDUCATION FOR ALL

For children living in the villages of Nepal, receiving an education is very difficult: often there is simply no school, or it is very far away, or if it does exist it is completely run down – especially after the 2015 earthquake, which saw some 8,000 schools in the country destroyed – often with only one teacher available for all classes.

For families with a purely subsistence income, books and school materials are usually a luxury they cannot even think about: children, even when attending school, are often deprived of everything they need to study.

The Foundation has been supporting several village schools in the pre-Himalayan area for years: in 2023, books, exercise books, pens, backpacks and materials were distributed for one school year to three schools in the Sindhupalchock district, and the running costs (teachers' salaries, school materials, building maintenance) of the Shree Jana Bhawana School with its 70 students in the Makwanpur district were fully covered.











The distribution of school materials also reached the 130 young monks of Sed Gyued Monastery, the 30 young guests of the Disabled Rehabilitation Centre, the 44 children of the Lotus Foundation Family Home and the Jorpati Orphanage in Kathmandu.





## FURTHER EDUCATION

In 2023, 70 children supported by the long-distance adoption programme continued their studies after class 10 (the last one available at Gangchen School) by attending classes 11 and 12 mostly in Arunima and Xavier Colleges in Kathmandu. The final diploma after the 12th class then allows eventual admission to university studies.

For those attending the three-year university courses, the most frequent choices were: information technology, business studies, hotel management, social work and forestry.

In a meeting of the Foundation's representatives with the older students, the possibility of participating as volunteers in on-site activities was raised: several young people enthusiastically agreed, happy to be able to give back to the community some of the benefits they themselves have received.





## SED GYUED MONASTERY, KATHMANDU

The 130 young monks of the Monastery, who attend the monastery school built by the Foundation in 2020-2022, received all the necessary school materials for one year.

The complex water filtering and purification system, built inside the monastery to ensure that the children have access to water in adequate quantity and quality, became fully operational this year, making a fundamental contribution to the health of all those living in the monastery.

A basic health check-up was organised for all the children thanks to the voluntary contribution of doctors from the Community Empowerment Partnership in Kathmandu, who measured basic indicators (height, weight, general health) and treated a number of minor ailments.

In 2023, for 56 of the young monks, the fundamental contribution of those who decided to 'adopt at a distance' arrived at the Monastery.





## FOOD FOR THE POOR NEPAL



In July 2023, the distribution of hot meals to some of the poorest of the poor, living on the streets of Kathmandu, was already started.

Thanks to the organisational and financial contribution of our friends and long-time supporters – Mani Bhadra BV. Phoenix Import – the preparation of the meals is done at a small restaurant, whose managers with much dedication devote themselves to the distribution. The distribution takes place, for now, in 3 different areas of the city where the homeless – more and more numerous due to the heavy economic difficulties that have hit the country – are particularly concentrated.

The number of meals distributed depends on the donations received, and is currently around 80 per day. For people in desperate conditions living on the streets of Kathmandu, receiving a hot meal means not only survival, but also the relief and hope of feeling cared for and supported by someone.





## PROJECTS WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE ITALIAN BUDDHIST UNION 8X1000 — activities carried out in 2023 —

Proceeds from the 8×1000 designated to the Italian Buddhist Union contribute since 2018 to fund many humanitarian projects in Italy and the rest of the world.

Projects must be presented by a non-profit organisation according to the guidelines of the annual Call for Proposals, and among the many received the Italian Buddhist Union selects the most deserving ones for funding.

Fondazione Lama Gangchen Help in Action Onlus is benefiting from this invaluable aid for four projects accepted for funding, from 2019 to 2022.

The 8×1000 of the Italian Buddhist Union contributes 70% to the total cost of the projects: donations are therefore essential to allow the Foundation to cover the remaining 30%.



*Con il contributo 8x1000  
dell'unione buddhista italiana*

MAINTENANCE OF STUDIES IN A MONASTIC ENVIRONMENT FOR  
VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN POST-COVID ECONOMIC HARDSHIP PROJECT  
approved in 2022

BUDDHIST EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN NEED IN KATHMANDU  
MONASTERIES PROJECT  
approved in 2020 and 2021



# MAINTENANCE OF STUDIES IN A MONASTIC ENVIRONMENT FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN POST-COVID ECONOMIC HARDSHIP: SERPOM MONASTERY, SOUTH INDIA

Serpom Monastery in Bylakuppe has its origins in Sera Monastery in Tibet, founded in 1419. Re-founded in South India in 1970, it is registered as a non-profit organisation and a Monastic University. The Monastery school accommodates more than 200 children, almost all from families in great difficulty.

The monasteries survive thanks to donations and often find themselves in a state of emergency and with few means at their disposal, particularly in this period. The international economic difficulties caused first by the pandemic and then by the energy crisis are deeply affecting the monasteries income, increasing uncertainty, while on the other hand, requests to take in new children have sharply increased. Many families already survived on just alms or day jobs, and the pandemic drove them to despair. In recent years, therefore, the Monastery has tried not to close its doors to anyone, welcoming as many as 78 new children. The Monastery offers the children accommodation, food, clothing, medical care, and guarantees them the right to an education thanks to the in-house school.

In the Monastery School 'Serpom Education Society', a partner in the project, there are 8 external teachers for the curricular subjects, (English, Tibetan, mathematics, science and social studies) as well as 5 monastic teachers who lead and supervise the memorisation sessions, recitation of prayers, traditional Buddhist art and preparation of ritual materials. The project includes the purchase of text books, exercise books, pens, pencils, sharpeners and other stationary items.





Ensuring an adequate diet for 205 children is a big commitment: every day the kitchens have to prepare large quantities of rice, chapati (thin bread), lentils and vegetables.

In order to guarantee the children all the necessary nutrients, as requested by the Monastery, the project ensured that they received a portion of fresh fruit and milk every day or every other day. These goods are rather expensive for the Monastery, so the children previously only received a portion of fruit twice a month.

The children had only one garment, which was generally reused still damp after washing, and as footwear only rubber slippers: the project provided each child with a spare garment, for which the necessary fabric was purchased and then sewn by the tailoring department of the Monastery, and a pair of good shoes.





# BUDDHIST EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN NEED IN KATHMANDU MONASTERIES PROJECT: REBUILDING OF NYANANG PHELGYELING MONASTERY, NEPAL



The main building, built 50 years ago, suffered serious damage in the 2015 earthquake in Nepal: the walls and ceilings had deep cracks that were becoming more and more open, it was raining in the classrooms and in the rooms of the young monks. The small kitchen was also very old, unhygienic and in poor condition and there was also no place for the monks to eat together.

Despite economic and logistical difficulties, the Monastery generously took in many children who had been left without a family after the earthquake, or whose families were no longer able to care for them. Many requests for shelter continue to arrive after the economic emergency caused by Covid, and today there are about 70 young monks. They receive accommodation, medical care and education within the Monastery.

The demolition and reconstruction of the unsafe building, which began in September 2022, continued in 2023: earthquake-proof foundations were built; structural work on the ground and first floors and plastering was carried out. Work is expected to be completed in approximately 6 months in 2024, with fixtures, fittings and external and internal finishings.







# WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

## Chapakhori Village Nepal: project 2019-2023



The village lies at an altitude of around 1600 metres in Nepal's pre-Himalayas: following the 2015 earthquake, the already scarce availability of water for the families living in the village was dramatically reduced.

After successful drilling in 2019 to find water at the base of the hill on which the village stands – there was a forced halt of work due to the pandemic. The pumping system to bring the precious water resource up to the village was completed in 2022.

At the beginning of 2023, to the great joy of the villagers, a system of pipes to the houses in the village with water-fountains was completed, the pipes were also extended to reach more houses as requested by the inhabitants. Water is now finally available close to home, and it is among other things of excellent quality and purity as shown by the analyses carried out.

In November-December 2023, technicians from Italy made a new inspection of the system to solve an electrical problem linked to the lack of continuity in the voltage of the electricity supplied by the power line that reaches the village.





# Restoring hot thermal water to Tatopani Village, Nepal project 2023-2024

Tatopani lies at about 2600 metres altitude in the Nepalese Himalayas. Here, until 2015, a sulphurous thermal spring water flowed, with extraordinary and renowned healing properties that attracted many visitors from all over the region as well as foreign tourists on trekking routes. The small income from this activity supported the local economy based on simple guest houses in the village and small general shops in the area of the springs.

The nearest medical facility is more than an hour's drive away, so the waters were also for the inhabitants of the entire district the main, if not only, means of treatment for a number of health problems: joint pains, gastrointestinal problems, dermatological afflictions, respiratory difficulties.

Following the devastating 2015 earthquake that cut off the flow of hot water, and the subsequent Covid pandemic, the village's economy suffered a fatal blow.

Tatopani has for a number of years been included in the Foundation's aid programme with the distribution of food, school supplies for primary school children, and aid for the many elderly people living in extreme poverty here. But the Foundation's goal is to return the village's primary resource so that it can flourish again.

In 2019 and 2022, engineer Greggio and geologist Galli carried out on-site inspections to assess the situation.

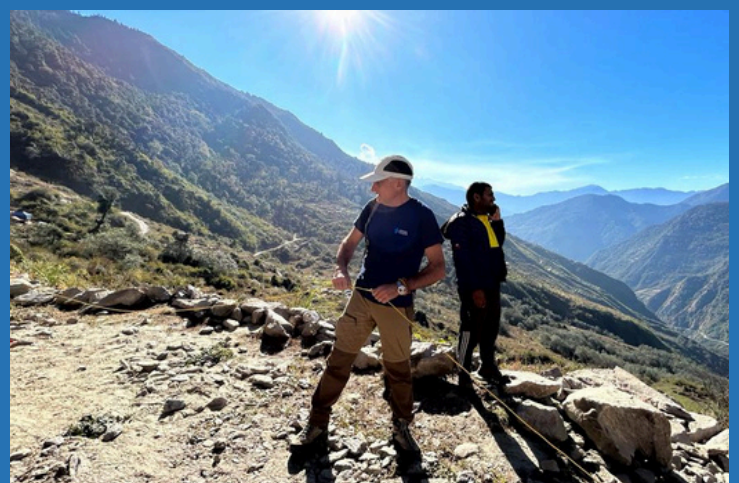
Thanks to the generous donation of STEIEL S.r.l. of Ponte san Nicolò (PD), the voluntary contribution of Dr. Geol. Alessio Pacchini, an expert in Geophysics, and the great professionalism and passion of the team of Planet Test Ltd. of Kathmandu, in November-December 2023 it was possible to plan and carry out a geophysical survey, which allowed us to reconstruct the electrical tomography of the subsoil.





The processing of the field data, carried out with the help of sophisticated specialised software and the experience of the technicians involved, led to recognising with reasonable certainty the existence of an important reserve of hot water at a depth of 40-50 metres. The data also highlighted and confirmed the extraordinary and unusual wealth of minerals in these waters.

The village representatives made a heartfelt plea for help to the Foundation: for this purpose, engineer Greggio and geol. Galli are planning a project for the construction of a well that will reach the depth at which the hot water reserve currently exists and extract it by pumping.





**THANK YOU SO MUCH  
TO ALL THOSE WHO WITH THEIR  
GENEROUS HELP HAVE ENABLED US  
TO REALISE OUR PROJECTS!**

**— *Together we can* —**

*Lama Gangchen Rinpoche*

Fondazione Lama Gangchen Help in Action

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