

# Schools in Upper Dolpo

## „GIVE CHILDREN A FUTURE“



HUMAN  
STIFTUNG

in cooperation with



In 2016, the founders of the German based 'HUMAN Foundation' and the 'Dolpo Tulku Charitable Foundation' (DTCF) in Nepal signed an agreement with the aim to strengthen education in the Dolpo region.

As a consequence, we decided to finance the 'Winter School in Saldang' which is located at 4.053 meters altitude. In order to understand the relevance and impact, it helps to know the project environment. The project is fully in line with HUMAN-Foundation's vision: **'Give Children A Future'**

Up to the 18th century, the Dolpo region belonged to West Tibetan Royal and Princes dynasties. Until 1993, the Upper Dolpo was a restricted area and foreigners are only allowed to visit it since then. In the north, Dolpo is neighboring to Tibet and it is one out of 77 districts in Nepal, even the largest district with roughly 8,000 square kilometers and around 36,000 inhabitants, whereas in the Upper Dolpo live about 8,000 people.

All villages are located above 3,500 meters and you can only reach them after 8-10 days hiking from Juphal.

Besides Humla, Dolpo is the only district without roads and even without a road link to

other areas. To reach the Upper Dolpo you need to walk 7-8 days from the closest airport in Juphal and to cross passes above 5,000 meters. The Dolpo area is one of the remotest populated mountainous regions in the world and is known for its wilderness and loneliness. Dunai is the seat of the district magistrate and has 3,000 inhabitants. Our familiar Infrastructure like electricity, internet and (mobile) phone is not available.

Many people recognize the Upper Dolpo now as the real preserver of the Tibetan culture, as the Chinese Government attempts to destroy Buddhism and the Tibetan culture in Tibet. Immerse yourself into the wonderful scenery of the Dolpo area.





## The way to Upper Dolpo

The climate in Upper Dolpo is very arid with sparse vegetation. The name Dolpo comes from the Tibetan „dol“, which means abundance. This refers to the natural and mineral resources and the manifestation of the religious tradition.

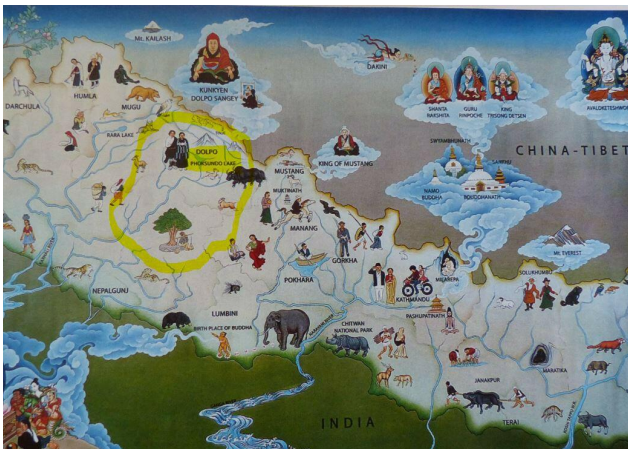
The Dolpo-pa - as the inhabitants in Upper Dolpo are called - are predominantly active in agriculture. People in the Dolpo grows potatoes, corn, wheat, millet, Tibetan barley and local crops.

**Local agriculture is vital to having enough food over the long winter, although it is not said to last every winter.**



Throughout Dolpo the path is marked by constant ups and downs. Up to the higher mountain villages there are actually only two routes from Juphal, both of which **are in the Shey Phoksundo National Park.**

As these are the only connections, remarkable gradual climbs are built with significant effort along the way with some steep cliffs. After 5 days, at 4,000 meters altitude, you will reach the wonderfully located Dho Tarap valley.



Here is also the Jampa Gompa and the house where **Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche lived and grew up until his 10th birthday.** Today his brother lives there with his family and their aim is to preserve the gompa and the Tibetan tradition. Meanwhile, the broken Choerten are rebuilt.

The further way from Dho Tarap to Saldang, our first school, becomes steeper and the area more lonely. It takes almost two days to reach the next village and you need to cross the first pass over 5,000 meters with a magnificent view of the Dhaulagiri massif.

One comes then into areas, in which there are many Himalayan blue sheep and very isolated also snow leopards, which however, can only be watched with good luck.

**The houses of Saldang, which are terraced on the mountainside,** can be seen from far away. It is a 45 minutes walk from the river very steeply up to reach the place where the **,Shel Ri Drugdra‘ school** is located. The village of Saldang is only 23 kilometers from Tibet. The location of the school area and the view of the mountain are awesome.





## Winter School in Saldang

The **Samye Choeling Gompa** is the heart of Saldang. Next to it is the ‚clinic‘ of the Amchi Dhondup Lama, which heals people almost exclusively with herbs, as well as the nervous systems on the fingers, eyes, ears and tongue.



The school in Saldang exists since 1999 and was built by Lama Karma Dhondup with the great support of ‚Friends of Nepal‘. The **School Coordinator Pema Wangyal** and his staff members teach at the school with great dedication in this very remote area. As in all mountainous regions of Nepal, this school would not exist without any foreign support.



Lama Karma Dhondup



Lama Pema Wangyal

In eight small rooms, the children from Saldang can attend classes 1-6 beside the ‚kindergarten / play group‘ and the ‚preschool‘.

**Since the winter of 2016, 60-70 children have been attending the newly founded winter school.**

Some families leave the region in winter, so the number is reduced by about 10-15% of the students in the winter period. There is a formal ‚compulsory schooling‘ of 5 years, but no control over it.

The winters in Upper Dolpo are very cold and life in the villages is extremely hard. People are cut off from the lower regions for months.



**70% of the inhabitants stay in the village over the winter, 30% go with their yaks into deeper areas or try to find work.**

The yaks are allowed to return to the village only after the harvest in fall, because they would destroy the seed. On the way back the yaks bring heating material, such as collected wood, which is used beside dung and local shrubs for heating during the winter.

It is not possible to send a letter to Upper Dolpo by postal mail.



**Karma Dhondup is „Head of Municipality Saldang“.** Nepal was always centrally governed. A stronger decentralization of responsibility has been prevailed in the last elections, which is good. Two representatives of Dolpo have now seats in the parliament.





## Winter School in Nyisal

If you walk a few hours north from Saldang along the Nagaon River towards Tibet, you will come to the village of Nyisal on the right hand side.

Since the winter of 2019, up to 40 pupils have been able to attend the newly established winter school in Nyisal.

The basic conditions for the school and the life of the people in Nyisal are pretty much identical to the village and school in Saldang. Nyisal is 3,800 meters above sea level.



Pema Tsering Gurung



Nyima Tashi Gurung

Three teachers teach at the winter school in Nyisal. One of them is Nyima Tashi Gurung, who can also sing beautiful Tibetan songs.

**The teaching scheme in Nyisal is congruent with Saldang:** repetition of the subject matter from the summer school and intensification of Tibetan traditions. At the end of the winter period, what you have learned is also checked so that you are well prepared to switch to the regular summer school.

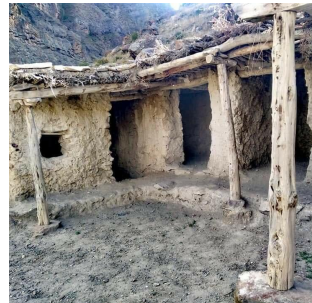


Regular discussions with **Pema Tsering Gurung, as head of the school committee**, help to clarify the needs and necessary changes as well as the annual need for support. It is not always easy to recruit teachers for this work in the harsh winter, so the rec-

ognition for the people for whom education in these mountain villages is personally important is all the greater.

We want to financially support the operation of the winter school in Nyisal for as long as possible.

## School in Lhuri



Old school in Lhuri



Dawa Phuntsok

Since 2021 we support now the **Shree Tripitak Lower Secondary School** in Lhuri.

The village of Lhuri (3,900m altitude), four hours from Nyisal, consists of three villages: Ke, Lhuri and Sungjer. This school was the central and most accessible place for the children from these villages. **The school in Lhuri was closed during the civil war in Nepal (1999-2006) and never reopened.**

The old Lhuri school building is in a very dilapidated condition and not a safe environment for children's education.

Before schools reopened, children had to either go to school in the next village, which takes a day, or stay at home to help their parents.

**Dawa Phuntsok**, who grew up in Lhuri, had a vision to get the school up and running again. As a teacher, he recognized the problems when children do not have access to education. But the ailing infrastructure and poor school conditions affect student performance and learning.

**In 2021, 23 students attended the school.** Since the children have not had any regular lessons up to now, there has not been any class assignment. From 2022, 11 children will be in the care (nursery), 5 children in kindergarten and 7 children in the 1st grade. With each additional school year, the next higher class will start, so that class 5 can be put into



operation in 2026. In total we will employ up to seven teachers.

**In the long run, an increasing number of students is to be expected,** since the children from Sungjer and Ke are also being taught. The children from Sungjer will sleep at school because of the long journey. The school runs from April to October.



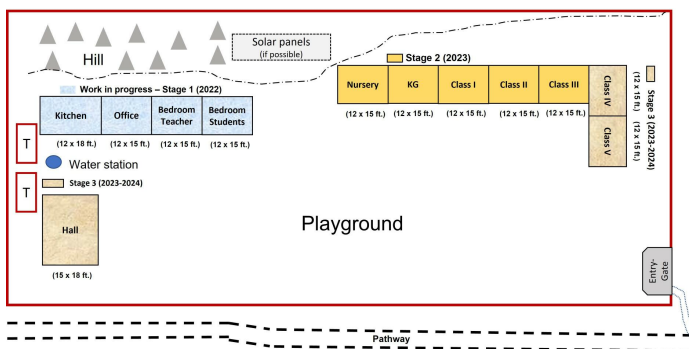
The rapid implementation is made possible primarily by generous donations from Gaby and Matthias Wahl to the HUMAN Foundation.

**The school is built in memory of her late son Alexander Wahl.**

Alexander was fascinated by the people and culture of Tibet and Nepal. Through this work we will forever remember him.

Together we want to run the school and thus enable the children in this region **to get a future through education.**

Site plan of Lhuri School (to be built 2022-2024)



**A total of 12 buildings are planned to be erected by 2024:** 7 classrooms, two bedrooms, 1 kitchen, an office and a larger room for further training purposes. The construction of three rooms has already started.

The HUMAN Foundation has agreed to ensure the operation of the school for at least 20 years.



Depending on the need and usefulness, we also support other projects.

We provided financial support **during the earthquake in 2015** and also **during the pandemic in 2021**. Together with our partner, the DTCF and other NGOs, 755 families in Upper Dolpo were provided with food. Due to Covid-19, the living conditions for the needy people in Nepal have also deteriorated.

**Humanitarian support for people in poverty and need is the basis of our work.**

## Further Projects



## Summary

The HUMAN Foundation completely finances the operation of the two winter schools: the teachers and the kitchen staff, the daily meal as well as some learning materials. All costs are covered for the school in Lhuri: construction and maintenance of 12 school buildings as well as all running costs of the school.



At the end of class five/six, the children have to pass an exam. If successful, they are allowed to go to Kathmandu into the (higher) Secondary school. These schools and hostels are also funded by private organizations. So far, all children from Saldang successfully passed the exam, which is also a result of the winter school. Four students from Saldang can go to Kathmandu every year. So far, however, there has been no problem.

**How can we now exactly influence children's and people's life in this region with our project?**

**The children learn to read, write and math, learn to speak and read the Tibetan, Nepali and partially the English language.**

Edith and Karlheinz Neumann initiated HUMAN Foundation in order to support poor and needy people, in particular children.

„GIVE CHILDREN A FUTURE“ is our vision.

**We allocate 100% of all donations to our projects**

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**They get general knowledge** and a deeper understanding of Tibetan culture. **They get a choice how and where they want to live their life.**

The young adults are able to **organize living conditions in the village and to manage their farming more effective.** They get a much **better relation to money** and live a conscious life. **Women dare to ask for help at birth, children** give their parents support when they are facing problems. They are prepared to manage daily life in the village.

Children, who start school in the cities, return less often back to home compared to those children, beginning school in the villages. They have a much stronger relationship and responsibility for their families and are more open for Tibetan culture.

**There is no violence in the schools but a social togetherness.**

We have the certainty that with the support of the schools in Upper Dolpo we are on the right track and that we are setting the right accents. Together with the teachers in the villages and our administrative partner DTCF, many children are able to lead a self-determined life.

**The visits to the villages encourage us in our actions and are an unforgettable experience.**

Anyone who can spend three to four weeks in this indescribable mountain landscape with the Dolpa-Pa can count themselves very lucky and collect impressions that will last a lifetime.

Our administrative partner in Nepal is the Dolpo Tulku Charitable Foundation, **founded by Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche.**

The DTCF is aimed at supporting people in the Dolpo region in all aspects of their life, either by education, medical care or improving their living conditions.

[www.dolpotulku.org](http://www.dolpotulku.org)

