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PRESS RELEASE

First Week Results of the Fundraising Campaign for Nepal Launched by High Altitude Climber Alex Găvan

The campaign for reconstruction in Nepal launched by Romanian climber Alex Găvan together with his friends and supporters raked in about **24,000 EUR in first week of fundraising**. Money poured in through 2 EUR donations via each SMS sent to **8826** over the Orange, Telekom and Vodafone networks; card payments online at www.alexgavan.ro/nepal; as well as sponsorships.

Another source of joy for the campaign team this week was that individuals and organizations have taken initiatives to support the cause and show solidarity. Thus, at the moment there are in the pipeline running and tango events, debates, and Alex was invited as a speaker at a number of conferences to promote the Joy for Nepal Campaign.

The fundraising campaign **Joy for Nepal** was launched on May 19, 2015 and will unfold for 7 weeks and 9 days, to evoke the magnitude of the earthquake that devastated this country on April 25, 2015. That day Alex was in the Everest Base Camp, on his expedition for the ascent of Lhotse summit (8,516m / 27,940 ft).

All funds raised in Romania are donated to the Campaign's partner in Nepal, i.e., [Kharuna-Shechen](#) organization, founded by renowned author [Matthieu Ricard](#), which has been working since 2000 in assisting the advance of rural communities in Nepal and has experience in post-disaster intervention.

100% of raised funds will reach the final beneficiaries, people of Nepal. This is possible as the entire fundraising campaign is done pro-bono by people and companies from Romania who got involved willing to do good; and the partner responsible for putting the intervention and reconstruction project into action in Nepal has the administrative costs covered by his own sponsor.

The raised funds will mainly finance reconstruction operations in isolated communities affected by the earthquake, as well as rebuilding schools, medical facilities, clean water supply. Furthermore, the funding will support the development of local leaders' networks, including women, in order to help them take over and carry on the reconstruction process. As new disasters are possible, up to 25% of the donations may go to emergency interventions.

The Campaign's website www.alexgavan.ro/nepal will publish activity reports to track transparently both the use of funds and the progress accomplished.

Additional Info:

The Partner in Nepal – Karuna Shechen

Karuna-Shechen was set up in 2000, by [Matthieu Ricard](#), with the mission to provide quality healthcare, education, and social services to individuals and families in the poorest communities in



Tibet, Nepal, and India. The organization places a special emphasis on the empowerment of women and young girls and the preservation of cultural heritage. Over twenty years of experience have allowed the organization to establish a collaborative team of professionals who work within local communities to identify and implement projects that respond directly to their needs. Even in adverse political situations, their projects have continued to thrive because they are community-based in scale and focus.

Since 2013, Karuna-Shechen has been running an [Advanced First Aider \(AFA\) Training Program](#) in Nepal, under the Disaster and Emergency Response Program. Within this program, the organization has trained 294 AFAs to date, and is currently training 100 more and has been conducting medical response drills, to be ready to respond immediately in case of natural disasters.

Karuna-Shechen relief work in Nepal follows a 3-step program:

1. Medical response, both short-term and long-term;
2. Food and shelter, both short-term and long-term;
3. Rehabilitation and reconstruction, essentially long-term.

Karuna-Shechen will continue to bring medical and relief assistance (food and shelter) to communities affected by the earthquake as long as they need it. Karuna has been working in Nepal since 2000 and has built in this time a network of local grassroots organizations. Through this network they are able to reach isolated communities. Karuna-Shechen is joining forces with them to deliver adequate aid, reach isolated villages, and help those who are too often forgotten.

Rehabilitation and reconstruction will be the next phase. Given the magnitude of the devastation, this is not going to be a small or easy task. This will include building schools and houses, helping schools with their educational programs, rain water harvesting, planting of kitchen gardens and women empowerment. The organization has started to assess the needs of the people and will devise long-term programs that benefit communities as a whole, based on their specific requirements.

Shechen Clinic, in collaboration with the monks at Shechen Monastery in the vicinity of the clinic which housed hundreds of people left homeless by the earthquake of April 25, 2015, assisted and treated the wounded in the neighborhood. Sechen Clinic's doctors and medical staff have been mobilized around the clock to help. Medical teams go every day to places hardly accessible. In partnership with local NGOs, Karuna-Shechen brings to the population affected by the earthquake, especially in remote areas and the villages of Kathmandu Valley, food, medicine and shelter. The organization directs its rescue efforts and aid to small and isolated communities, where conditions are extremely poor and there is a high risk of epidemics.

Matthieu Ricard

Born in France in 1946, as the son of French philosopher Jean-François Revel and artist Yahne Le Toumelin, Matthieu Ricard is a Buddhist monk, author, translator, and photographer. After completing his Ph.D. degree in cell genetics in 1972 at the Pasteur Institute under French Nobel Laureate [François Jacob](#), he moved to the Himalayan region where he has been living for the past 40 years.

Matthieu Ricard is the author of several books, translated into over twenty languages, such as: "Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill", "Why Meditate? (The Art of Meditation in the UK)", "The Quantum and the Lotus (a dialogue with the astrophysicist Trinh Xuan Thuan)", and "The Monk and the Philosopher", a dialogue with his father.



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Matthieu Ricard has dedicated his life to the study and practice of Buddhism following the teachings of the greatest Tibetan spiritual masters. He has been the French interpreter for the Dalai Lama since 1989. For many years Matthieu Ricard has been photographing the landscapes, spiritual masters, and people of the Himalayas. His work is exhibited in museums and art galleries throughout the world. He is the author and photographer of a number of photography books.

Matthieu Ricard is a board member of the Mind and Life Institute, an organization dedicated to broadening the understanding of how the mind works. He contributes to the research on the effect of meditation on the brain at various universities in the USA and Europe and is the co-author of several scientific publications. He also contributed for the book *Destructive Emotions*, edited by [Daniel Goleman](#).

All proceeds from Matthieu Ricard's books, photographs, and events are donated to Karuna-Shechen (www.karuna-shechen.org/), the humanitarian association he created. Based on the ideal of "compassion in action", Karuna-Shechen develops education, medical, and social projects for the most destitute populations of the Himalayan region.

He received the French National Order of Merit for his humanitarian work.

WHO SUPPORTS US:

The Expedition for Lhotse Ascent was supported by CertInvest (Main Partner), TotalSoft (Partner), Zitec (IT Partner), OMA Vision (Communication Partner), and also by Intercapital Invest, Accountess, World Class, Suplimente.ro, Sanador (Supporters).

The Joy for Nepal Campaign is supported so far by:

- **Friends:** Ivan Patzaichin - Sprint Canoe Olympic Champion; Oana Pellea - Actress; Eugen Voicu - Founder CERTINVEST; Cătălin Tolontan- Journalist; Liviu Drăgan - CEO TotalSoft; Cristian Lascu - Speleologist; Vlad Mixich - Journalist; Adelin Petrișor - Journalist.
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