PRESS RELEASE, Bucharest, 22.02.2016

**“#Joy4Nepal” charity campaign: the schools’ construction has begun**

**Over 36.000 donors answered the charitable call, launched by the high altitude climber Alex Găvan, following the devastating earthquake that took place in Nepal, on the 25th of April 2015. Today, the 106.576,68 euros will help the construction of two schools, hosting up to 500 kids.**

“*The big earthquake destroyed, in Nepal, around 5.000 schools, putting almost one million kids in the situation of no longer being able to continue their education. We cannot make a difference for the whole country, but we know, for sure, that, through the “#Joy4Nepal” campaign, the kids from two isolated communities, situated in the Himalayan Mountains, will have an extra chance for being able to fulfil their educational potential. This thought simply fills my heart with joy.”-* stated Alex Găvan.

The construction of the two schools is conducted by the Nepalese partner, Karuna-Schechen, founded by Matthieu Richard.

“*On behalf of the Karuna-Schechen, I’m extremely pleased to inform all the generous people from Romania, who joined us in helping the victims of the devastating earthquake in Nepal, that we have finalized the first stage of the emergency aid, launched during the first three months that followed the calamity – we managed to help over 210.000 victims, from 620 villages. Also, we started the reconstruction of two schools from isolated areas, thanks to all the support given by the Romanian people, as a result of the mobilization call set in motion by Alex Găvan. We will keep you informed about the progress we make, this being the way we are expressing our deep appreciation and gratitude for the solidarity and compassion that all of you have shown towards us*.”- declared Matthieu Ricard, President of the humanitarian organization, Karuna-Schechen.

The two schools to be built in the place of those destroyed by the earthquake are designed to host up to 500 kids, between 1st and the 8th grade. Both schools are situated at a distance of about 135-190 km away from the capital city of Kathmandu. The primary school Sthanika is situated in Satdobato, from the Gorkha district, while Gramdaya school is situated in Tekanpur, in the Okhaldunga region.

The “#Joy4Nepal” campaign was launched on the 19th of May 2015, as immediate reaction to the devastations caused by the earthquake that caught high altitude climber Alex Găvan in the Lhotse/Everest basecamp, during his audacious attempt to summit. Most of the donations came from private donors who answered the call by sending text messages, worth of 2 euros each, at 8826, available in Orange, Telekom and Vodafone; also, donations were made through sponsorships, bank transfers or credit card payments, on [www.alexgavan.ro/nepal](http://www.alexgavan.ro/nepal).

The totalizing sum of 106.576,68 euros was integrally transferred to the Karuna-Schechen organisation. All the administrative expenses are completely covered by Karuna-Shechen’ own private donors, while in Romania the raising fund campaign was managed pro bono.

***Restarting life. Rebuilding joy in Nepal.***

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### The Joy for Nepal Campaign was supported 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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**About Alex Găvan:**

A leading Romanian high altitude climber, Alex Găvan reached six 8000m summits in the Himalayas by fair means, meaning without supplemental oxygen and high-altitude porters. To Alex, “climbing mountains outside is climbing mountains inside“. After surviving the earthquake and the Everest avalanche on April 25, he initiated “#Joy4Nepal”, a humanitarian campaign for the people of the Himalayas: http://alexgavan.ro/nepal/. He is also deeply involved in many environmental issues.

**About Karuna-Schechen:**

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.

You can find more information about Karuna-Schechen on: <http://karuna-shechen.org/>.

**About 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 – regarded as “the happiest man in the world”. After completing his Ph.D. in cell genetics in 1972, at Pasteur Institute, under the guidance of French Nobel Laureate François Jacob, he moved in the Himalayas, where he has been living for the past 40 years.Matthieu Ricard is a board member of the Mind and Life Institute, an organization dedicated to broadening the understanding of how the human mind works. He contributes to the research on the effect of meditation on the brain, at various American and European universities, and is the co-author of several scientific publications. He also contributed to the book “Destructive Emotions”, edited by Daniel Goleman.

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

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