
Organization

Objective of the organization

The non-governmental organization supports people who live in the mountains of the Himalayas and Karakoram under particularly hard conditions; people who live at the extreme borders of settlement and also at the absolute limits of existence. It is our aim to allow villagers to stay in their ancestral homes and make life easier for them. We try to help the locals to help themselves and become independent of any aid.

Committee

Chairwoman: Barbara Hirschbichler

Vice Chairman: Alexander Huber

Secretary: Iris Wagner

Treasurer: Dr. Franz Leipfinger

Honorary members: Thomas Huber

Norman Dyhrenfurth

Helma Schimke

Principles of the foundation

Whenever possible the chairwoman of organization, Barbara Hirschbichler, supervises the progress of construction work and – after consulting with the locals – selects new projects. She personally distributes financial means. When she is not in Baltistan, her husband Ghulam Rasool, who is from the village of Kurphe in the Braldo Valley, looks after the projects.

As a general principle, these are carried out in co-operation with the villagers. Barbara Hirschbichler, who is a teacher at a grammar school, works for her organization on an honorary basis and does not use donation money to finance her travels to the region of her aid projects. Costs for advertising and administration are kept very low so that donations go into the projects with hardly any deductions.

The following points are of primary importance

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setting up a basis for self-help

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respect of religious beliefs

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protection of nature

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preservation of old traditions

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preservation of well-established social structures

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promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance

Membership

You can become a member of the organization and thus support it regularly. Membership subscription is 25 Euro per year. If you want to become a member, please load down the form, fill it in and send it to: Barbara Hirschbichler, Grünsteinstr. 20, D – 83471 Schönau.

At present the foundation has 100 members.

Registration as a charitable organization

The foundation is registered as a charitable, non-profit organization (confirmation of tax exemption by the tax office of Traunstein from April 21, 2008) because it is dedicated exclusively to tax-deductible charitable purposes.

The Chairwoman

Barbara Hirschbichler from Schönau/Königssee is an extreme climber who has been at the top of women´s alpinism for many years. She is one of the few female allround climbers who have been equally successful in sports climbing, Alpine climbing and high-altitude climbing.

She was the first German woman to climb 8a, then 8a+ and finally 8b. At the Sports Climbing World Championship in Frankfurt she came 10th (best German woman). She climbed many of the hardest and most demanding routes of the Alps and made winter ascents of some of the big north faces.

She reached the summits of Cho Oyu (8201 m) and Gasherbrum II (8035 m), stood on the fore summit of Broad Peak (ca 8020 m) and the summit ridge of Dhaulagiri (also above 8000 m). In the Tien Shan range she was successful on Khan Tengri (7010 m). Moreover she took part in expeditions to Mt Everest, Shishapangma and Nanga Parbat but was forced by bad weather and conditions to give up the summit attempts. Meantime she has turned away from 8000-metre peaks and prefers making first ascents of unnamed, unknown mountains in the Karakorams and to exploring remote regions. Another great passion of hers is cycling up mountain passes, and she spends a lot of her free time on the saddle of her racing bike.

She is a teacher of English and Geography and works at a grammar school in Bad Reichenhall (Karls gymnasium), but between 2001 and 2004 she took unpaid leave in order to be able to work for her foundation and to roam in the mountains. During these three years she lived in the Himalayas and Karakorams where she did not only get familiar with the mountains and valleys but also with the life, culture, languages and problems of the areas she visited.

Since 2002 she has been married to Ghulam Rasool, a Balti from the village of Kurphe in the Braldo Valley, through whom she has access to spheres which are commonly closed to foreigners.

Rasool used to work as a high-altitude porter and also reached the summit of Gasherbrum II and the fore summit of Broad Peak. There are probably few people who know the mountains of Baltistan better than he does. He looks after the projects when his wife can't be present, and it is he who decisively contributes to the successful realization of the projects.