

# HSD

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# Land of High Hopes

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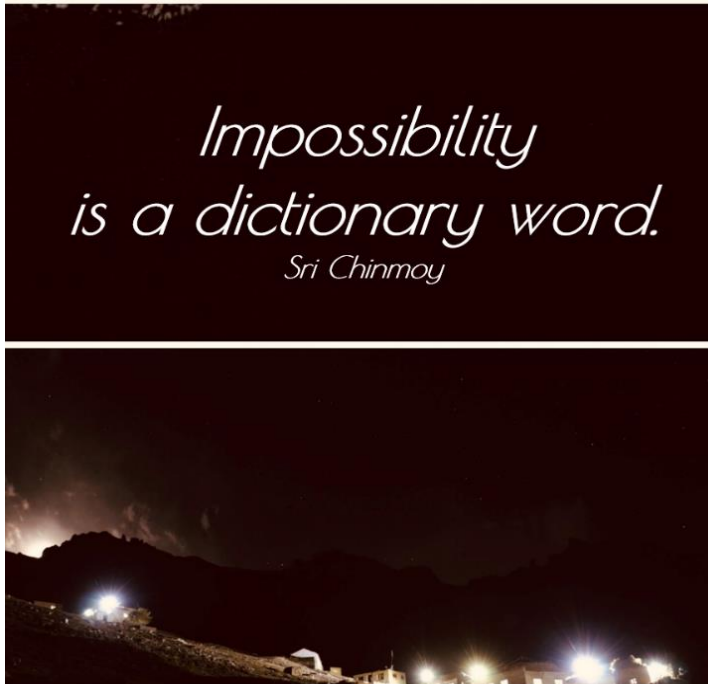
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## About the possible.



We are living in the era of sophisticated, state-of-the-art technology, artificial intelligence, accelerating data sciences at ultimate speed and sheer unlimited possibilities. We are able to shoot unmanned rockets equipped with vehicles into the orbit. We can afford to spend fortunes on research and development. However, and that leaves me bloodcurdling and furious, we haven't managed yet to settle at least some of the most pressing global humanitarian needs: access to food, water, electricity, education and healthcare. So how can we be proud of any achievements? What does make us proud anyway?!

Healthcare, hygiene, education, access to food and water, electricity, infrastructure, research and development, roads, leisure, recreation and an abundance cultural life is all a matter of course to those who live in the so-called advanced parts of the world. Likewise, is switching on light at night.

Fair enough: We Westerners work hard for a good standard of living. We don't give in easily. In climbing up Maslow's pyramid of needs, we give our best and take it up with the many demands of an often too merciless social system. We grow, because we can. We exploit, spoil, use up, accelerate our speed, live a healthy, wealthy life but are trapped in growing distances between us. Isolation – though connectivity allows us to be online 24/7.

Fair enough again: We can because we face only a few obstacles to grow, combined with the manifold opportunities we have. We succeed individually; there is no much need to request help from others.

Would Maslow have travelled to, let's say, Ralakung, his definition of needs to help social communities to grow might have been a different one. His pyramid would have been upside down, with common social needs forming the base and personal security combined with a solid standard of living forming the top of the pyramid. Togetherness – though there is no connectivity across the region at all.

With such harsh, backward life circumstances, almost no opportunities but the simple life people in underdeveloped regions have, without the help of technology and access to infrastructure we tend to draw conclusions too easily. It seems impossible to help those people breaking free and watch them grow. „It's impossible to change the world!“

The following is to prove that impossibility is just a human-made fiction of things that can be changed.

## About GHE.

If caught up in our many would, should and could, how to break the cycle of conjunctive and bring the action? If being told things won't work as they are impossible to bring to life, how to make them happen anyway? Next answer is not far away: If there are communities who have never been exposed to light a night, what does it take to help those living in entire darkness?

Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE) is a social enterprise that focus on providing basic energy and education access for remote communities through sustainable tourism. Based on the concept of negative CO2 emission, GHE is committed to substantial efforts to reduce their carbon footprint to negative values throughout their projects. Carbon negativity is the reduction of an entity's carbon footprint to less than neutral, so that the entity in question has a net effect of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere rather than adding it.



Carbon-negative status can be achieved by a number of means, including greater carbon sequestration and obtaining carbon offsets from a third party, as well as engaging into activities that directly reduce that amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Such activities include e.g. planting trees, generating green energy and improving energy efficiency.

It leaves me with a good feeling to mention that our project in Ralaking as well as the many others prior to this trip have been entirely carbon negative – including our flights from across the world to reach Ladakh.

Electrification and digital education access through carbon negativity is the GHE vision. Sustainable projects with the aim to generate green energy and improving energy efficiency in remote villages and hamlets in the higher Himalayan mountain range is the mission of GHE as a for-profit organization.

For more details about “Impact Electrification & Entrepreneurship”, please watch:

<https://youtu.be/Bmb-UV8RRqM>



The concept proves them right: As of today, GHE has conducted 43 impact expeditions with over 600 volunteers from all over the world and provided access to clean electricity to 69 remote Himalayan villages. Our project in Ralaking was number 70! In this process, GHE was able to generate over 130,000 US-Dollars additional income for

the local communities through local purchases and enabling people to offer so-called “homestays” at their houses to a growing number of tourists.

To date, in Germany nearly 100 % of households have access to electricity, in India it's about an 80 percent. It can be supposed that energy poverty in Ladakh is still up to a 60 percent.

## About me.



I am approaching my 50, proud mother of 3 wonderful kids, happily married since decades, living, engaging and working in Düsseldorf. Far away of being an extreme sports athlete, I am blessed with a regular physical fitness and most importantly: a very strong will. I suffered quite a bit in life, as we all do, mastered ups and downs as we are all asked to over our individual life journeys. So there is nothing too special about me. And that's the fact when adrenaline kicks in! If not too special, how to master the extraordinary? If equipped with just a regular body, how to push this human machine to its limits and beyond? If confronted with all the many should, would and could, how to bring the action? If resilient, how can I let others positively benefit from my stamina? If living in lightness, how to help others to fight darkness? Allow me to give you an idea...

## About the connect.

Düsseldorf, capital of North-Rhine Westphalia, Germany – Ralakung, Zanskar valley, Ladakh region, state of Jammu & Kashmir, Indian Himalayas: Airline distance approximately 5,000 miles.

No matter where we are from, where we go, and whom we meet, the two things that unite us all, are:

1. We all have the same basic universal physical human needs.
2. We all strive for happiness.

It is often hard to see these similarities because of the many different ways we go about reaching them - like the kind of careers we choose, the type of friends we have, and the types of activities we engage in. However, if you think about what is fundamentally driving all of these goals, decisions and behaviours (in yourself and in others), you will see that in every decision that we make, we are trying to reach happiness in some way. In this, we are all the same, though we live in extremely opposed life conditions.



(Photo credits Wikipedia)

Hence, access to (solar) electricity and (digital) education are fundamental desires we all have.

## About the challenges to support a fragile system, respecting distinctive features.



Humanitarian organizations are often criticised for bringing putative help into fragile ecosystems, whose people have limited chances to drive aspects of change themselves. *They managed to live without light for centuries, why would you want to change that?!* What made me engage into Ralakung was the matter of fact that change was demanded by the villagers themselves rather than imposed by an organization. The urgency for solar light was tangible, as the community had collected all the money for the initial investment long before we took the action to electrify the village. Now all they needed was a committed team to do the installation. All that gave me the confidence to help as required.

However, over the time of project execution, it became obvious that bringing light was just the one side of the coin. Creating awareness how the satisfaction of a basic need affects the further socio-economic development of the community was even more important. More hours with access to light directly influence productivity and efficiency. The latter mentioned frees resources and capacities, which might be spent on other activities. Which activities may that be? In addition to that, will the elder ones be able to pass the crucial information about a life managed without light after sunset to the new generations? What is their takeaway from life enhancement and how will it influence their community in the future? To answer these questions and many more it is indispensable to stay in touch with the people; there are, indeed, manifold areas, which require scientific research.



Another challenge I see, is that after social groundwork, life is not the same as before anymore – neither for caregivers nor its receivers. Whether men or women, old or young, foreigner or locals: the success of the mission depended on the ability to adapt quickly. The evolutionary theory describes the need for social bonds as a tool that help us survive, procreate and develop advanced standards of living. We were thrown into the project - fair enough to mention which we chose ourselves. The entire team had to bond within short, as we were all dependent from each other over the gruelling journey and challenges ahead. We did this via story nights – letting others participate in our feelings and social, business backgrounds. In addition, the villagers were awaiting us, and yet had to accept us, as we are, like us, bond with us. We did this via little gifts. All of us had to accept the many influences occurring when worlds collide.

The quickly we bond the quickly we had to cut off bonds when we left. For me very difficult and emotionally challenging. As much as we had to trust them, it became obvious that their entire trust were on our shoulders, too. It takes both sides a lot of intuition and sure instinct to respect the many distinctive features when engaging with fragile or unknown ecosystems.

## About the project.

*„We must embrace the struggle to make a home that feels our own. The unease that goes with it is a reminder of how important that work is, and what is at stake. Without a local home we lose our roots, without a global home we lose our reach.“*

(Photo credit: GHE)



The village of Ralakung is one of the most isolated villages of Zanskar. Located at 15,500ft and exposed to the earth's most volatile climate conditions, the village can only be accessed in the milder seasons from March to September, when temperatures range from minus 5 centigrade at nights to plus 25 over daytime. Ralakung is supposed to be one of the most backward villages in the region. People hardly have seen a local passing by, let alone foreigners to reach their homes. To get a first impression, have a look at the trailer: <https://youtu.be/ZiwjaWw- s>

On January 22, 2018, three villagers of Ralakung have been waiting for 3 days along the Chardar trek on the frozen river of Zanskar, with surrounding temperatures of minus 30 centigrade, to meet a team of engineers requesting them to electrify their village. They got notice that a few of their local people were approaching for electrification site inspection in the offsite mountain range. Therefore, they waited...

When they met „*Ralakung! Ot* (Ladakhi for light) *Ralakung!*“ was all they claimed. In May, the GHE sent a survey team for inspection. On September 17, 2018 the villagers' wish for light came true – together with the help of 18 volunteers from 9 countries. Just 8 months later, Ralakung was successfully illuminated: light after sunset, first time after 1.200 years.



The project goal: install solar micro grids for 60 light bulbs in 7 houses of Ralakung Nagma (plus the system to support another 40 bulbs in the neighbour village Ralakung Phema the following day). We all rolled up our sleeves: technicians, villagers, volunteers, visitors. Out came screw drivers and wire cutters, up onto the flat roofs went the huge solar panels. We all wired switches and screwed light fittings. Next to the volunteers were the GHE technicians who did the serious circuitry. Huge acid batteries (already fully charged) were placed in the warmest rooms of the houses. The villagers knitted yak wool covers for them, placed butter and shawls on and over the central switch to secure all Gods' blessings for their life-long functionality.

The women of the village told the teams where to fix the lights, which heights to fix the switches. It was extremely important for them to do part of the fixing themselves, though they had never used any of the tools before. They did not want to be just sitting around and wait for help to come. These are their homes, light was their most urgent need, installation their duty, too.

## LIGHT IS FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT.

DC solar installation as such is as easy as winking... to bring solar micro grids to Ladakh's most isolated village however made the team ending up with a long list of requirements....

- 4 program leads
- 18 volunteers from 9 countries
- 5 times trekking the entire distance (site inspection, due diligence & measurement, first batches & equipment necessary)
- 2 x 18.000ft climb, 4 x 15.000ft climb (in between painful highs and lows)
- 14 Sherpa, locals, guides and support team
- 35 pack animals (yaks, horses, donkeys)
- 117 pieces of bulk baggage (tents, sleeping bags, dishes, personal stuff etc.)
- 589 smaller pieces of luggage
- 11 solar panels (120 x 150 cm)
- 11 acid batteries (35 kg each!)
- 100 light bulbs & wires
- food & water for all
- ovens, cookers, stoves
- sanitary equipment & dry toilets
- cameras, drones, satellite phone
- etc...



You may ask: *Why didn't they fly in all the stuff rather carrying it by feet all themselves?* Answer: Nobody would fund it! No return on investment can be calculated - in the short run. Bitter pill.

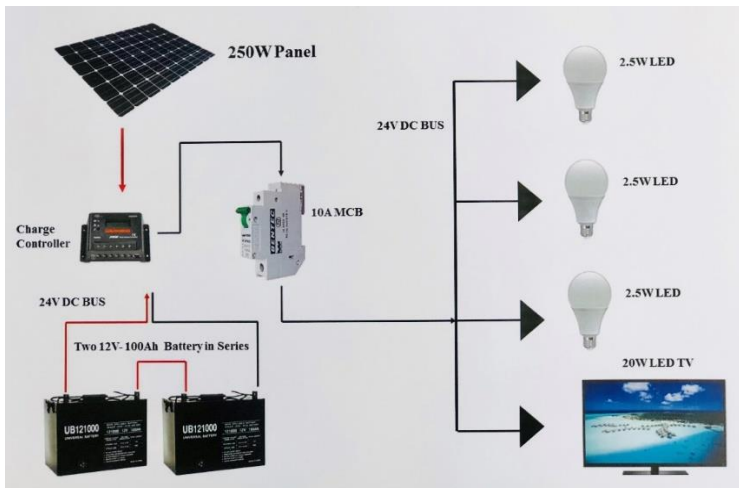
You may say: *Why you? Hire more locals!* Answer: Light was the side product. The core message is: No matter how gruelling or impossible it may seem, it is all doable. For each and every one of us. We must not look away. Our engagement and talking about the initiative may help others to receive solar light solutions and solar upgrades in the near future.

## LIGHT IS PREREQUISITE TO LIFE.





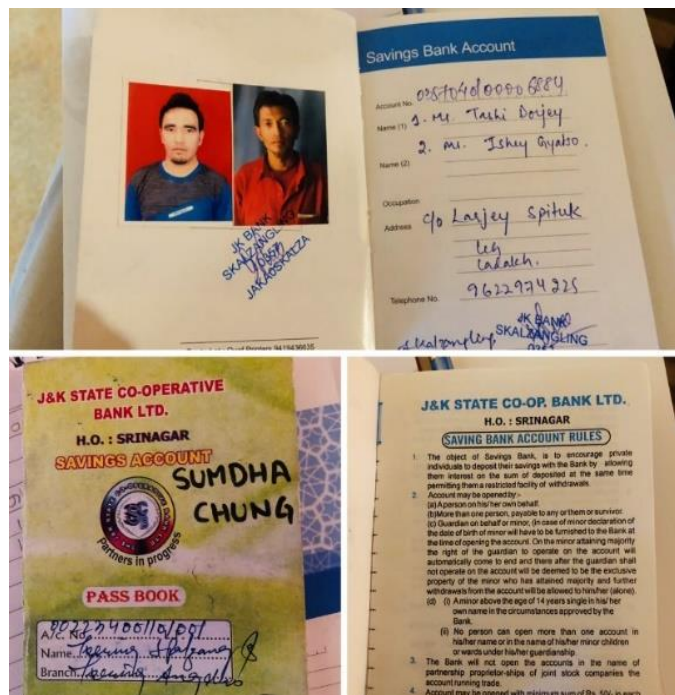
## About the technology.



Sunlight is directly changed into electricity by using solar cells. When light hits the solar panels, their photons (particles of sunlight) are converted into electrons of direct current (DC) electricity. The electrons flow out of the solar panel and into an inverter and other electrical safety devices; the energy produced that way is stored in batteries. A net energy meter keeps track of the all the power the solar system produces.

Any solar energy that is not used simultaneously will go back into the electrical grid through the meter. At night or over winter, when the system is not producing what the house needs, electricity is fed in from the grid. The battery supplies excess demand. Benefits of this simple technology: It's easy to build, easy to use, it needs little maintenance and above all there is no health risks through electric shock. Picture cards help the locals to maintain and trouble-shoot, in case needed. Data cards in the main switch component do control energy consumption and help to avoid human errors, like forgetting to switch off light in case not needed. Dimmers help to increase light intensity during sunset to a maximum at night and reduce energy load towards sunrise. In case a TV is connected to the grid, watching TV is only possible at night once all other work is done or over the isolated winter months when people and animals lock themselves into the houses to survive cold and agony.

The total project costs (from site inspection, to purchase, to delivery, to salaries for helpers, to food and water, bulk animals etc.) required financial resources of roughly 60,000 US-Dollars – money that has been split among the volunteers joining the mission. That money is considered ignition investment for the villagers, who – prior to the project - were supported with basic banking knowledge like opening bank accounts and transferring two US-Dollars per person each month to an account that GHE tracks. The technical equipment is re-financed that way over time; any access may be used on upgrades as e.g. more light bulbs or even a television or a satellite phone.



The very positive side effect of this financial solution is moral bonding. You might take much better care of things you have to pay for rather than of those freely gifted.

## About education.



We managed to install network and equipment at both schools in just one day. GHE made sure that everything necessary was in place before we started our work. Never will I forget how shyly the children approached new technologies: „Click here? Drag there? Open it?“ “Hmmm... Zanskar” - click – “Zanskar!!! Look we are here...?!” “Ok, Ladakh” - click – “Ladakh! Oh, that’s huge... India?! Bharat Mata ki jai! India!”... click, click, click (confidence at its maximum) click, click... whispering, giggling, shy looks... “Germany?”... click... “Germany!!!”

What was originally planned as a „useful side effect along electrification“ was the highlight of education support to me: equipping two boarding schools in the region (Skyagam and Phey) with notebooks and internet offline content including Hindi and English reference materials, as the schools were electrified earlier. Both electricity and education are fundamental human rights, being electricity the prerequisite to education. Teachers and children desperately awaited us giving us an overwhelming and warm welcome.



Priceless were the freaking out and ear-battering cheers once Beethoven’s 5th in full blast filled the simple classroom...

Australian endurance athlete Dr. Kate Leeming supported both education projects. With her engagement, GHE was able to set up innovation (education) centres in the both villages. The Raspberry Pi computer systems, which we set-up are extremely energy-efficient. With no internet access, the computer systems will be linked to special hard drives called a RACHEL device that create a Wi-Fi hotspot to access a library of learning resources that it contains for the students – a virtual internet (not connected to the worldwide web). This makes a good way to bring in digital education to the children.

To learn more, have a look at Kate’s feature at

<http://www.breakingthecycle.education/expeditions/indian-himalaya/>

Btw: Talking about upside-down Maslow once more: The Skyagam school is led by a 26-year old teacher, born and raised in Phey, educated and socialized in the big cities of India, one of the high potentials with university degree and international background. He could have easily left his hometown to pursue a fantastic career. He instead returned to educate his people.

## About the region.



It started with the most spectacular flight of my life: landing in Leh, a small military airport in the stone desert surrounded by spectacular mountain ranges. „*Nothing can do justice to the grandness of the Himalayan mountains.*“ – how true. Mountains, manifold shapes as far as eyes can reach. Vast mountains of all sorts of colours, valleys, fast-flowing streams, rocky ascents and stony descents, blue skies over day, morphing into blisters and storms every now and then.

When night falls over Zanskar, little to no light defines darkness, with an incredible abundance of stars at reach. I felt tenderly covered by the majestic Milky Way at nights. My eyes remained insatiable.

The journey took us from Leh to Kargil, Kargil to Phey by bus, from Phey to Ralakung by feet; distance ca. 600 miles. In between we enjoyed some mountain biking.

What impressed me unexpectedly, was living, working and engaging in a war-shaken region: Kargil is a town in the district of Ladakh region, in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, the second largest town in Ladakh after Leh. It is located 145 miles from Leh to the East, 150 miles from Padum to the Southeast and 650 miles from Delhi to the South.

The Kargil War (kargil yuddh, kargil jang), was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan that took place between May and July 1999 in the Kargil district of Kashmir and elsewhere along the Armed Forces Line of Control. In India, the conflict is also most proudly referred to as Operation Vijay (Hindi: विजय, literally "Victory") which was the name of the Indian operation to clear the Kargil sector. The deep scars of a vulnerable region are visible



until today. Bomb shelters in the tourist-ready city tell about the continuous political threat of the nation's territory. Massive military presence and warnings make clear that the country is ever ready to protect its national borders in the unforgiving desert mountain range. The country spends about 20% of its GDP on defence, barely a 2% on education. Green energy plays an even minor role, expenses-like.

In the past, Ladakh gained importance from its strategic location at the crossroads of important ancient trade routes. Since the Chinese authorities closed the borders with Tibet and Central Asia in the 1960s, international trade has dwindled except for tourism, successfully encouraged by the Government of India since 1974.

## About the people.



*„This is our land, our lives given by our ancestors. This is heritage to our children. Now that we have light, what else can we wish for...?!“*

The fertile patches of land are farmed communally, replenished by natural dung fertilisers. They make and sell the best yak butter in the region; pashmina wool is another source of income. Work is equally split between men and women, with no gender clusters visible, as obvious in the Western countries. Women are getting married between their 20s and

30s, marriages are arranged, like almost everywhere in India. Children are born with the same will and zest for life as those in our parts of the world.

To me, the allegorical fact of societies built on collective rather than self-sense, emerges over the fact that no mirrors were to be found in any of the places that we visited. Can you imagine growing up without mirrors? Can you imagine not knowing at all how you look like? How your appearance change over time? My words are too little to express how confused, excited, happy, surprised, puzzled, cheerful especially the women were, when I showed them the photos I took – with people piling up over one mobile phone...



This old woman broke into spontaneous dance and song in her haystack - singing that she was so happy she would see electric lighting before she died. The many ways to express gratitude left me speechless – like a very strong, firm hug, an intense smile, the swift touch of a hand, or another pot of butter tea (with yak milk and salt), quietly served.

Villagers from other offsite places hiked all the way to Ralaking to celebrate together with their people, being happy for the others to have light. Those particular villagers have not yet access to solar light themselves. Everyone was full of praise and thankfulness, treating us like kings and queens, handing over Ladakhi silk scarfs called “Khatak”.

They sang and drummed as much as they were physically able to - to welcome, please, honour, thank, chill, pray, dance, party, greet farewell... Certainly, this would have inspired Beethoven for another 5th!

## About the women.

Living the cultural connect, everywhere I went I faced just openness, warmth and deep respect – especially by the many women I was blessed to meet. In Phey, where we supported a school with IT, notebooks and global offline internet content, with all their pride I was honoured to wear local attire - above the rough and dirty hiking gear I was wearing... With love and patience, the women squeezed me in, liking the result with clicking their tongues, whistling, shaking their heads.



Women! They just could not wait until asked to do part of the light installation themselves. Equipment and instruments seemed all too intuitive to them. They helped. In addition, they loved it. Telling where to place the light bulbs, which heights to install the light switches - it was their say over all. In addition, it all came too naturally; there was no need to discuss any of those things with their husbands prior to the project. Above this, there is this invisible alliance between women across the globe making team working a real pleasure.

Though being illiterate, uneducated, cut off from civilisation and progress, when it comes to hygiene, gynaecology, menstruation and sexuality, the women deeply impressed me in every respect: They get married as adults. Child marriage does not exist. It was a past Ladakhi tradition for women to have two husbands as a means of birth control. They have their say in selecting their husbands, decide on the number of children they want to raise. They decide when time has come to use a t-copper or contraceptives. They handle menstruation as a gift by nature, talk openly about it with their husbands (who in turn may grant them days off from hard work). They use sanitary napkins and tissues. Grown up in close togetherness, their monthly rhythm adjusts to each other.



And yes, sexual life is important to them. I have no doubt about that they enjoy their sexuality and do define personal limits themselves.

**#Mighty\_Muses!**

To learn more about empowered females in the region, I do recommend you to watch the documentary „*Becoming a woman in Zanskar*“.



[https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=Rmh9\\_c4H4sU](https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=Rmh9_c4H4sU)

## About the children.

No/little access to basic education is a scourge of humanity. Kids are just hungry for inputs, obsessed to rise and fly high. For the majority of them this remains unreachable. Parents do suffer painfully, as their own illiteracy stops them from breaking the education cycle. They do have a small school in their village, but they cannot keep a teacher for any length of time because of the isolation. Consequently, all we could do was making us tangible to them; let them participate as much as we could. Play, talk and interact with them. Little signs of gratitude towards them, to remind them we were all real. We were there. We try to help - today and in future times.



It is certainly, because I raise kids myself. It is certainly, because I love engaging with children across the world and watch them grow. It is certainly, because I work in tertiary education. Very well knowing how much it took me personally and the many mentors and coaches at my side to help me getting there where I am blessed to be today. Moments like the following moved me to my core:

*„Mam, are you real...?“* In the crowd of exited kids, pulling, dragging, pushing me, I noticed the two small hands gently touching my botty...?! Looking back, there he was and kept on touching. „Hey mate, what’s up?“ I asked. His tiny hands moved towards my arms, legs, hugging me. Big eyes. Our worlds collided. *„Mam, please are you real...!“*

The children of Ralaking will probably never go to school, there is no public institution taking care, no big corporate to fund, no government programs in place let alone foreign investment into the region.

The offspring has never seen a book in all their lives or having been read out of a book. Not one pencil can be found or any paper; it’s the dusty ground they write and paint on with their fingers. And how education hungry they were! Like little sponges, they soaked in any information we foreigners gave them.

We watched them copying words and imitating slang, trying out moves and mimics of their foreign guests. Humanity imposes us with an important legacy: [#Empowering\\_Offspring!](#)

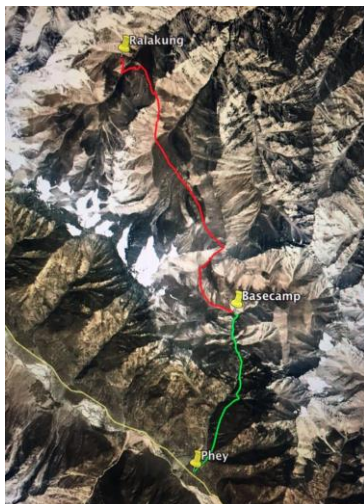
Empowered kids will become active members of the society, thus making the world a more safer and peaceful place. Self-dependency and confidence do build the pillars for the economic growth of both the region and the nation.



## About hiking.

*"It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves." (Sir Edmund Hillary)*

The barren beauty of Ladakh with snow-capped peaks and clean azure sky have attracted me as a cyclist since quite a while. I decided to experience the region before any serious cycle challenge and must say: Ladakh is a favourite haunt for trekking and mountaineering enthusiasts. Bravery and naivety made me start my hiking career in some of the world's most spectacular mountain range. Truth to be told, the rugged terrain and the majestic mountains around make it an exotic cocktail for an adventure sport lover. I spent a lot efforts on proper training and acclimatization – and my trekking went well overall, except of some incredible blisters, which you really don't need when you fight a mental game in the mountains. It was a physically tough challenge; one of the toughest climate conditions on earth left me with paper dry skin, nose and lungs. However, the hard preparation paid off: I coped extremely well with the high altitude. Kudos to my body! My kidneys flooded my body with hormones that produce red blood cells to transport the little oxygen available across my body. Human bodies are pure miracle machines; mine helped me coping with 10 days out in the remote wilderness...



You can easily go far beyond your personal limits, if you hike for a cause. Thanks to our teammate Cody Shadley, you can now fly like an eagle over all the many mountains we hiked.

Over trekking, daily temperatures ranged from minus 5 to plus 25 centigrade. We used dry toilets, if lucky, otherwise, the nature promised to keep our secrets. Unexpected snow blizzards mixed with glazing sun. Strong winds and narrow water flows were icy cold. Evenings ended at 21:30h, then we jumped into our thick polar sleeping bags, fully dressed with many layers, caps, hoodies, gloves, socks and jackets on... Some nights our water bottles in the tents froze. Night skies and shimmering Milky Way above us made us never moan. Beautiful sunrises were not from this earth. Mornings started around 5:30h with hot bed tea, milk or coffee. We could not have complained a bit.



Our common goal was to [#Empower\\_With\\_Endurance!](#) We climbed mountains and moved some mountains, too. Along with the solar micro grids, we brought happiness, confusion, new ideas and lifestyles, questions and maybe some answers. Next to light and education, we brought smiles, a first start to shape outlook, awareness, laughter on haggard faces, tears of joy and tears of farewell. We brought all we could, having received more than we are able to carry - knowing that from these moments on there are people, who will keep on talking about us. Like we all will keep talking about the ones we met there. Making us. Shaping us towards [#OneWorld\\_OneHome\\_OneFuture](#).

And so *"I stood on the mountain top in front of a million women, to make them see what I see."*

## About the many helpers.



A homage to our fantastic, fantastic, fantastic guides, alpinist, medical team, Sherpa, cooks, salvators, buddies, new friends, mommies, support crew, jack-of-all-trades, animal handlers, camera team, musicians with Stanzin Gurmet, Jigmed Onechuk, Konchok Thinles, Shakir, Sungur, Gurmat, Stanzin and Tundup.. to name just a few. Without them, any step forward would not have been doable.



To give you an example: What do you do, when homesickness hits you hard and you cannot pick up a phone and call your loved ones? What do you do when languages reach their limits and you just cannot talk with your trusted Sherpa about the many things that move you? What if you feel his urgency to speak, however exchanging bits of handmade yak cheese is all you can do?

What if blisters at your feet are killing you but you are afraid of climbing downhill on a horse, too? Right! Having fun, play „lonesome rider and horse“, cracking jokes, singing good old Bollywood songs and making the mickeys out of everything. Above all: Both your trusted Sherpa and you become one in being overwhelmed by the stunning landscape.





## About sustainable economic growth and global warming.



The old lady of the village made another important point: „Winters are getting colder and longer every year. And please look at Drang Drung Glacier. We did not behave as the elements request us to. This glacier is melting...“

While writing this paper, her words are reconfirmed in the political conclusions from IPCC Special Report on climate change. Her words do also echo in the US economy Nobel Prize winners' profound research on dependencies between climate change and economic growth. How do we explain to the woman that she is not witnessing Gods' infestation but human-made climatic imbalances deliberately created far away from Ralakung...?!

To learn more about climate dependencies and their destructive impact on fragile regions, please watch

the award-winning documentary „Jungma – The broken silence“ by Stanzin Dorjai <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZhe0hQmJnY&t=73s>

For me, the relevance of the accomplished lies in the duty to talk about what our eyes, hearts and souls were truly blessed to witness. Talk about bonding and un-bonding, friendship and confusion, tears of joy, pain and alleged helplessness. About connecting beyond cultures, finding ways to communicate beyond languages. About the challenge to support a fragile system, respecting distinctive features. Most importantly: about the environmental mess we create in our countries, leaving others suffer from the dramatic results. Reflection on behaviour came naturally: Did I do everything right? Certainly not. Pilgrims' spirituality claims reclusion and privacy. I disregarded this, stuck in my own awe and exhaustion, I took pictures of those protecting their existence. Not knowing it any better. The old lady was mirroring my own boastful unimportance. However, the soft smile on her face reassured me: If we learn from our mistakes, well, then it is all good that way. „Om Mani Padme Hum.“

## About you.

There lies so much ahead of us all. We must not look away. The five elements, the world itself – it is all interlinked. Consequently, it must be our concern also. Any help not offered when needed will suffocate us all shortly. What will we tell our children, why we did not stop the preventable? What would be our answer to all those people flooding the bigger villages and cities, if we don't do every effort to make them stay in their homelands?! Another abysmal immigrant policy...

Fighting the impossible - if I can, you can certainly do it much better. Our tomorrow starts today. It all starts with YOU.

**Julley!** (Ladakhi greeting and ultimate word to express and explain everything). Together. United. All for **ONE WORLD ✓ONE HOME ✓ONE FUTURE ✓**



# IMPRESSUM

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