



ANNUAL REPORT

2025





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Director's Message



Mr. Sonam Palden

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings and best wishes as we welcome 2026. I hope the New Year brings you peace, good health, and renewed hope. It is a pleasure to share Lha Charitable Trust's Annual Report for 2025. This year reflects the collective efforts of our staff, students, volunteers, and partners, whose dedication continues to strengthen Lha's work in education, social welfare, health, culture, and environmental awareness. Each story and activity shared here reflects our shared commitment to building a caring, harmonious, and cooperative community.

I joined Lha as director in June 2025, and these first months have been both humbling and inspiring. Being new to the organization has allowed me to see Lha with fresh eyes and deep respect for its long-standing service and impact. Witnessing the quiet dedication of our team and the trust of the community has reinforced my commitment to carry this work forward with care and responsibility.

Lha's work is ultimately about people—supporting one another, preserving our values, and building a more compassionate society together. I am deeply grateful to our donors, volunteers, and well-wishers whose generosity and encouragement make this possible. Thank you for being part of Lha's journey!!!



Background

Since 1959, hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have left their homeland seeking freedoms and opportunities denied under Chinese occupation. Each year, new refugees arrive in India after arduous journeys, carrying only a few personal belongings. Many have limited or no formal education, speak only Tibetan, and lack the skills needed to support themselves and their families. Adult and older refugees face additional challenges in accessing education due to school system requirements.

Founded in 1997 and registered as a charitable trust with the Himachal Pradesh Government in 2005, Lha Charitable Trust has provided essential support to vulnerable communities for over 28 years. Lha helps Tibetan refugees transition to life in India through long-term rehabilitation, education, and skill-building programs. Each year, initiatives are adapted to meet the evolving needs of the community while remaining committed to helping Tibetans thrive and preserving their unique cultural heritage.

Lha's financial accounts are audited annually by a government-approved chartered accountant, ensuring transparency. Its services are open to local Indian and Himalayan community residents. Volunteers and students are offered meaningful opportunities to engage in community service, fostering a culture of care, learning, and shared responsibility.



Vision



Lha envisions a compassionate and inclusive society rooted in harmony and cooperation, where Tibetan refugees and marginalized Himalayan communities live with dignity, opportunity, and cultural pride.

Mission



To support Tibetan refugees and marginalized Himalayan communities through inclusive education, healthcare, livelihood skills, social services, and volunteer engagement, fostering dignity, opportunity, cultural preservation, and cross-cultural understanding.

Experts' Gratitude Symposium in Honour of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th Birthday

The Lha Charitable Trust organized a one-day "Experts' Gratitude Symposium in Honour of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th Birthday" on November 1, 2025, at the TIPA Auditorium, Dharamshala, as part of the global Year of Compassion. The symposium served as an expression of gratitude for His Holiness's lifelong contributions to humanity and the Tibetan people.

The symposium sought to deepen understanding of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's unparalleled legacy—his principal vision, the relevance of the Dalai Lama institution, the continuing importance of his writings, his initiative to promote dialogue between Buddhism and science, and the deep sense of responsibility and devotion shared between His Holiness and the Tibetan people. The event was attended by over 150 participants, including CTA leaders, former ministers, scholars, NGO representatives, and students.

Expert presentations were delivered by Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche through a recorded video message, along with in-person talks by Yangten Rinpoche, Secretary to His Holiness the Dalai Lama; Geshe Lharampa Rongpo Lobsang Nyendak, Editor at the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; Geshe Lhakdor, Director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA); Kasur Lobsang Nyendak, Director of the Norbulingka Institute; and Dr. Tsangtruk Topla and Dr. Sonam Gyaltzen, both scholars from Sarah College. All expert presentations were recorded and uploaded to Lha Charitable Trust's YouTube channel to ensure public accessibility. The symposium concluded by reaffirming the collective responsibility to uphold His Holiness's vision of compassion, wisdom, and service.





Educational Programs



To strengthen language skills and educational opportunities for Tibetan refugees, Himalayan communities, and local Indian communities, supporting resettlement and cultural expression.

International Language Classes

Since its establishment in 1997, Lha Charitable Trust has supported Tibetan refugees through inclusive education and skill-building initiatives. One of its longest-running programs, the Language Class Program, provides accessible language education tailored to diverse proficiency levels and has reached approximately 14,993 students since its inception.

The program primarily serves individuals from Tibet and Himalayan communities. By strengthening language skills, it supports resettlement, access to further education, employment opportunities, and prospects abroad, while also building confidence and preserving cultural identity.

During this year, Lha offered six language courses—Tibetan, English, Chinese, French, Korean, and Spanish—across three terms, reaching 247 students. Courses ran for three months with one-on-one tutoring support. The English Conversation Class remained the most popular, engaging 20–30 students daily through volunteer-led sessions that fostered practical communication, cultural exchange, and community connection.





Intensive English Class for Geshes, Geshemas and Khenpos

The Intensive English Class for Geshes, Geshemas, and Khenpos is a specialized program designed to address language barriers faced by highly trained Tibetan Buddhist scholars. While many participants hold advanced qualifications in Buddhist philosophy, limited English proficiency can restrict their ability to teach, translate, and engage in international academic and spiritual exchanges.

Launched in 2020, the program reached its 5th cohort in 2025, with 15 students completing the intensive three-month course during the year. Delivered by experienced native English-speaking Ms. Cynthia McGowan and Ms. Maree Calloway, the curriculum focuses on practical reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, with particular emphasis on Buddhist terminology. Lha also provides financial support to participants during their stay in Dharamshala. The program equips scholars to share Tibetan Buddhist knowledge more effectively with global audiences and participate confidently in cross-cultural dialogue.

Tibetan Students Educational Tour



As part of Lha Charitable Trust’s Education Program, the Tibetan Students Educational Tour Program is an annual initiative designed to provide Tibetan students from remote settlements with exposure to Tibetan governance, cultural heritage, and community institutions. The program strengthens students’ understanding of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and key Tibetan cultural and political organizations based in Dharamshala.

During the year, Lha hosted 15 students from Grades 7 and 8, accompanied by two teachers from STS Chandragiri School, Odisha, for a 10-day educational exposure tour in Dharamshala. They visit the CTA, Tibetan NGOs, museums, archives, and monasteries, along with interactive talks, Q&A sessions, and other activities. Students from underprivileged backgrounds gained life-changing experiences, made even more profound by a personal audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Tibetan Nursing Scholarship Program

The Tibetan Nursing Scholarship Program, initiated in 2018, supports young Tibetan nursing students from low-income backgrounds to pursue higher education in healthcare. The program recognizes the vital role these students can play in strengthening community health services. Since its inception, Lha Charitable Trust has awarded a total of 28 nursing scholarships, including this year's recipients.

During the year, one-time scholarships were awarded to five deserving students selected from nine applicants based on academic performance and family financial background. The recipients included three men and two women, all demonstrating strong commitment to their studies and the healthcare profession. Lha conducted an orientation meeting to introduce the organization, explain the purpose of the scholarship, and encourage students to continue their education while engaging in community service. Through this support, Lha continues to invest in the future of Tibetan healthcare and empower resilient young scholars.

Recipients



Khentse Wosser
Graphic Era



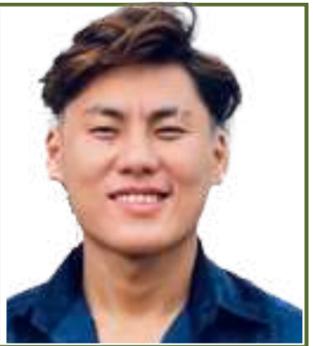
Tenzin Deysel
*Nightingale Institute
of Nursing*



Tenzin Topgyal
*Yenepoya
Medical College*



Keljang
*Yenepoya
Medical College*



Tenzin Tsewang
*Yenepoya
Medical College*

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Soft Skill Development Training Program



From January 5 to 9, Lha's winter soft skill development program brought together 74 students from TCV (Classes 6–9) and Mewoen Petoen School (Classes 6–8) for a transformative educational experience. Facilitated by a diverse team of experts from TCCR, SEE Learning, Tibet Theatre, Manara, and Nogshe, the program encouraged participants to step beyond their textbooks and bridge the vital gap between academic theory and real-world application.

Within a safe and supportive environment, students engaged in interactive sessions—ranging from gesture theater to art-based activities—designed to strengthen communication, emotional resilience, and peaceful conflict resolution.

By providing practical tools for emotional regulation and teamwork, the initiative successfully fostered improved confidence and empathy, reflecting Lha's ongoing commitment to the holistic development of Tibetan youth to navigate the complexities of life with both heart and skill.



Social Work Initiative

To provide meaningful, multi-level social services that support Tibetan refugees and other impoverished and underprivileged communities in navigating social and economic transitions.

Clean Water Program

Under its Social Work Initiative, Lha Charitable Trust remains committed to improving community health by ensuring sustainable access to safe drinking water. Through this initiative, Lha provides water filtration systems to schools, monasteries, elderly homes, and remote settlement areas. Since 2010, 34 water filtration systems have been installed, benefiting more than 5,359 people daily.

To ensure the long-term effectiveness of these systems, Lha conducts annual maintenance and filter replacements. During the year, maintenance was carried out across several settlements, including Dharamshala, Bir, Dehradun, and Mandi, ahead of the monsoon season to ensure continued access to clean and safe drinking water.

Access to clean water is a fundamental human right. Through this ongoing initiative, Lha continues to safeguard community well-being and improve quality of life, with many individuals and institutions benefiting from this essential service.



Elderly Care Program



"The elders of a community are like a living library; to care for them is to preserve our own history and identity."- Amadou Hampâté Bâ,

Under its Social Work Initiative, Lha Charitable Trust conducted the Elderly Care Program, a 10-day healthcare initiative at the Tibetan Settlement Office Hall in Dharamshala to support the well-being of senior citizens. Recognizing that many elders are unable to prioritize physical health due to financial constraints or spiritual commitments, the program provided free access to traditional Tibetan medical care.

A team of ten volunteer practitioners, all graduates of Men-Tsee-Khang, delivered specialized treatments including acupuncture, cupping therapy, massage, and pulse diagnostics. During the program, services were provided to 204 participants, with the eldest beneficiary aged 80.

In addition to elderly residents, the program also attracted local community members and international visitors, reflecting growing interest in the Sowa Rigpa medical system. The strong number of repeat patients highlighted the effectiveness of the treatments and the demand for holistic care. Through this initiative, Lha continues to promote community health while preserving and advancing traditional Tibetan medical knowledge.

Environmental Awareness Program

Bagsunag Waterfall Clean-up:

On May 26, Lha Charitable Trust, in collaboration with Waste Warriors, conducted a mass cleanup drive at the Bagsunag Waterfall in Dharamshala. As a popular tourist site, the area is often polluted with plastic waste and bottles. Volunteers cleared debris from the waterfall and riverside, promoting a cleaner ecosystem and responsible tourism. Lha's Cultural exchange students from Tulane University also participated, strengthening environmental awareness through cross-cultural collaboration.



Celebration of World Environment Day:

To mark World Environment Day on June 5, Lha Charitable Trust organized a large-scale clean-up drive across McLeod Ganj and the Temple Road area in Dharamshala. The initiative highlighted the collective responsibility to protect the environment and maintain a clean, sustainable living space at the heart of the Tibetan community in exile. Lha's students, staff, and volunteers actively participated, reinforcing environmental awareness through practical action and community engagement.



Distribution of Waste Bin:

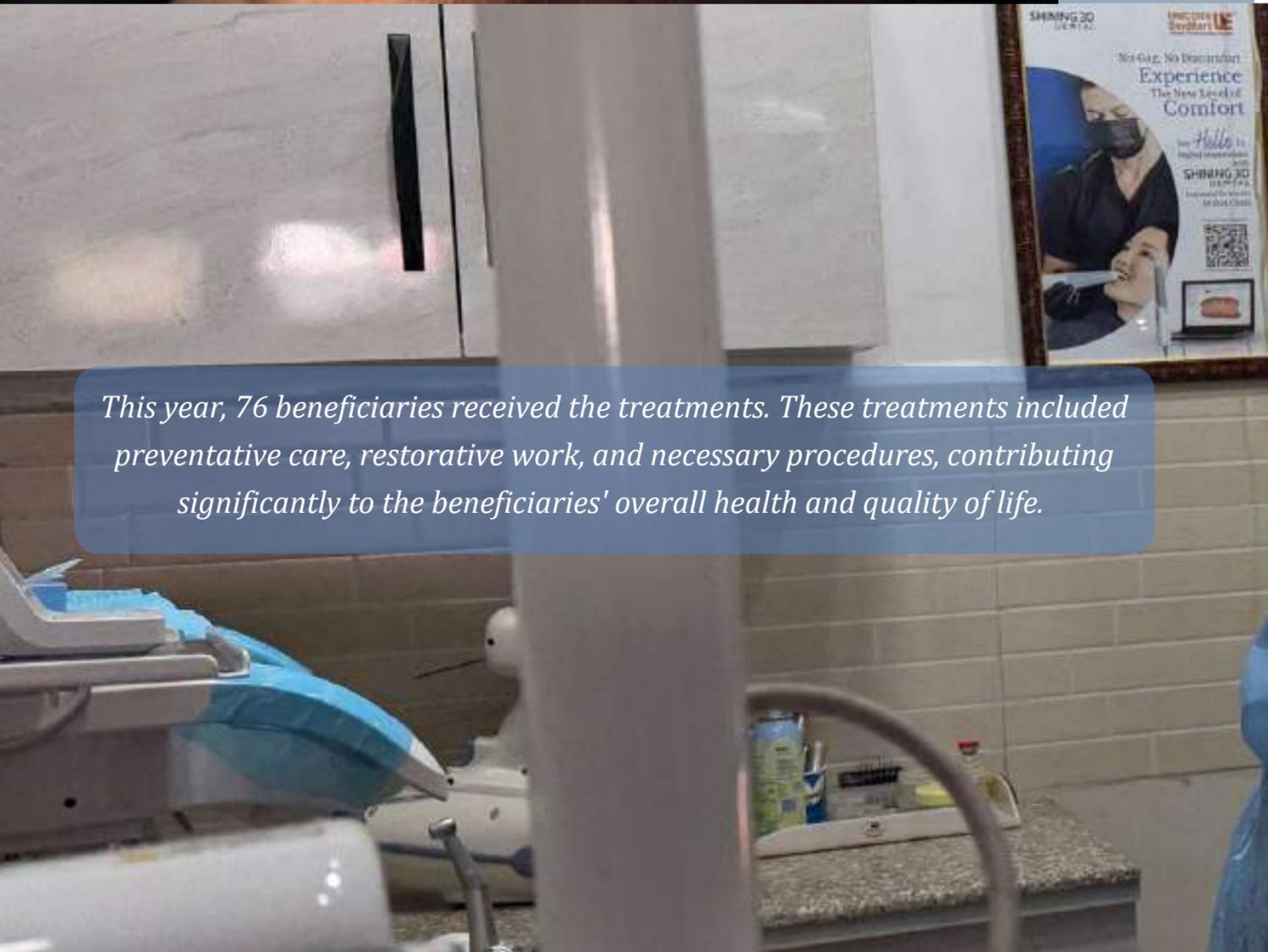
Under its Environmental Awareness Program, Lha Charitable Trust distributed 106 waste bins to the Upper Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) School on December 3, 2025, to improve waste management and promote a cleaner, sustainable campus. A follow-up training on waste segregation is planned to educate students on biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste, reinforcing responsible environmental practices among the younger generation.





Smile Dental Care Program

Lha Charitable Trust's Smile Dental Care Program, established in 2011, continues to provide essential, free dental care to financially vulnerable members of the community. The program primarily supports nuns, monks, and laypeople whose economic circumstances prevent access to routine or necessary dental treatment, ensuring that oral health issues do not compromise overall well-being or quality of life. Since its inception, the program has served a total of 1,487 beneficiaries, including this year's participants.



This year, 76 beneficiaries received the treatments. These treatments included preventative care, restorative work, and necessary procedures, contributing significantly to the beneficiaries' overall health and quality of life.





Tibetan Culture and Language Preservation and Promotion



Lha provides a platform for international visitors to deepen their understanding of Tibetan culture and traditions. We preserve and promote Tibetan language & culture in exile through global connection and different initiatives.



→ *Tulane University (USA):*

From May 20 to 26, 2025 Lha Charitable Trust hosted seven Tulane University students for a week-long cultural exchange with Lha's English learners. The program encouraged mutual learning, cultural dialogue, and cross-cultural understanding, while strengthening Tibetan students' communication skills through direct interaction and shared experiences.

Gurukul Students ←

On June 21, 2025 students from the Gurukul Program visited Lha Charitable Trust to learn about its mission and programs. The exchange included hands-on preparation of traditional Tibetan food such as butter tea, tsampa, and momos, fostering cultural appreciation, engagement, and meaningful learning experiences.



→ *American School of Bombay (ASB):*

From December 18 to 20, 2025, we hosted 17 students from the American School of Bombay for a cultural exchange program. The initiative provided an introduction to Tibetan culture and Lha's work while promoting intercultural dialogue, awareness, and global citizenship among students.



Recipients



Guru Drakpa
Varanasi



Yeshi Lhatso
Men-Tsee-Khang



Tenzin Wangdak
Men-Tsee-Khang



Tenzin Norzin
Dalai Lama Institute
For Higher Education



Dolma Tsering
Dalai Lama Institute
For Higher Education



Yidam Tsering
Men-Tsee-Khang



Tenzin Youdon
Men-Tsee-Khang



Tsering Youtso
Varanasi

Under Lha Charitable Trust's Tibetan Language and Culture Preservation and Promotion Program, the Merit Scholarship was launched in the name of His Eminence Professor Samdhong Rinpoche to honor his enduring legacy in advancing Tibetan language and culture. The scholarship supports dedicated Tibetan graduates in Tibetan studies who demonstrate strong academic merit and commitment to cultural preservation.

In August, Lha announced the scholarship and received 40 applications. Following a rigorous review of dissertations, research work, and documentation, 8 meritorious graduates—5 women and 3 men—were selected from institutions including Men-Tsee-Khang, the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education, and the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi. Additionally, 16 students from Sarah College for Higher Tibetan Studies received supplementary scholarships to support college fees.

The awards were presented on November 5 during the celebration of Professor Samdhong Rinpoche's 86th birthday, observed as Tibetan Teachers' Day. Through this initiative, Lha continues to empower Tibetan scholars and strengthen the preservation of Tibetan language and cultural heritage.

"This is another creative way by Lha to bring our youths' focus to our traditional culture and education. I hope more of our youth show interest in Tibetan studies and help promote it." - Tenzin Wangdak

"The Merit Scholarship is not only financial support but also a powerful recognition of our commitment to Tibetan language, culture, and education." - Tenzin Youdon

Celebration of His Eminence Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche's 86th Birthday and Tibetan Teachers Day.



Under Lha Charitable Trust's Tibetan Language and Culture Preservation and Promotion Program, the Trust organized the annual celebration of His Eminence Professor Samdhong Rinpoche's 86th Birthday on November 5, officially observed as Tibetan Teachers' Day, at the Tibetan Settlement Hall in Dharamshala. The event honored His Eminence's lifelong contributions to Tibetan education, cultural preservation, Buddhist philosophy, and service to humanity.

The program highlighted the significance of Tibetan Teachers' Day and recognized academic excellence through the Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche Merit Scholarship presentations. It also marked the launch of Professor Samdhong Rinpoche's Online Digital Repository, created to preserve and share his teachings, speeches, and scholarly work. The event was attended by over 55 guests and participants, fostering a warm atmosphere of respect and reflection. Through such initiatives, Lha continues its commitment to advancing Tibetan language, culture, and community development.



Livelihood Skill Training Program



To equip Tibetan youth and underserved community members with practical, market-relevant vocational skills that enhance their employability, support self-reliance, and reduce unemployment within the Tibetan exile community.

Launched in 2019, Lha Charitable Trust's Livelihood Skill Training Program aims to address unemployment within the Tibetan community by providing access to practical, market-relevant skills. Over the past five years, the program has supported more than 498 Tibetans, regardless of age, gender, or educational background, and has shown steady growth in participation each year. In the current year, the program reached its highest engagement to date, with 111 students enrolled, of whom 41 have secured employment, reflecting an employment rate of approximately 37%.

The program emphasizes hands-on training to enhance job readiness and promote sustainable livelihoods. Participants are selected through a competitive process from a large applicant pool, with priority given to unemployed youth, school dropouts, former monks and nuns, ex-servicemen, and individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Through this initiative, Lha continues to strengthen economic self-reliance and livelihood opportunities within the Tibetan community.

Skill Training in Dharamshala Area



Special Cuisine:

This training focused on professional culinary skills, with emphasis on Mediterranean cuisine and introductory exposure to Japanese and Korean cooking. Participants developed kitchen management, food preparation, and restaurant-level cooking skills through classroom learning and internships.



Tibetan Traditional Massage:

This course focused on traditional Tibetan massage techniques, with introductory exposure to Swedish and Thai massage and basic spa practices. The training combined theoretical foundations with practical application in professional spa settings.



Bakery:

The bakery course provided comprehensive training in baking and pastry arts, including breads, cakes, cookies, pies, and café products. The program emphasized practical skills, hygiene standards, and real-world experience through bakery and café internships.



Tibetan Traditional Wood Carving & Carpentry:

The program emphasized traditional Tibetan wood carving and basic carpentry techniques. Participants developed hands-on craftsmanship skills, learning precision, tool use, and traditional design methods.



Barista:

Barista training covered coffee origins, brewing techniques, espresso preparation, and café service skills. Participants gained hands-on experience in café operations, supporting employment and small café entrepreneurship.



Beautician:

The beautician course is designed to provide broad training in beauty and wellness services, combining theoretical knowledge with practical salon skills. The program remains positioned to meet growing market demand.

Skill Training in Dharamshala Area



JCB Backhoe Loader Operator Training:

This vocational training focused on operating heavy construction machinery, safety protocols, and practical handling skills. The program aimed to enhance employability in infrastructure and construction sectors.



Electrician:

Electrician training focused on electrical installation, wiring, safety standards, and maintenance skills. The course emphasized practical competence and certification to support skilled employment.



In Dehradun

Yoga Teacher Training:

The yoga training provided in-depth instruction in asanas, breathing techniques, meditation, anatomy, and teaching methodology. The intensive program prepared participants for teaching and wellness-related livelihoods.

Skill Training in Delhi Area



Nail Art:

Nail art training focused on modern nail care techniques, design, hygiene, and client services. The course combined intensive practical learning with salon-based experience, supporting self-employment opportunities.



Microblading:

Introduced in response to market demand, this training focused on microblading techniques, skin safety, and precision aesthetics. The short-term, hands-on course supported freelance and salon-based livelihood options.



Eyelash Extension:

This training covered eyelash extension techniques, product knowledge, hygiene standards, and client care. Emphasis was placed on practical skill development for salon work and independent services.

Volunteer Opportunity



Since 1997, Lha Charitable Trust has served as a bridge between the Tibetan refugee community and the wider world, with international volunteers at the core of its work. Volunteers play a vital role by contributing skills in education, language instruction, health care, and program support, while fostering meaningful cross-cultural exchange.

Volunteering at Lha is a mutually enriching experience. While volunteers share their time and expertise, they gain valuable insights into Tibetan culture, resilience, and compassion. Lha offers opportunities for both short- and long-term volunteers, including graded language classes in English, French, Chinese, Spanish, Korean, and German.

In 2025, Lha welcomed 216 volunteers, bringing the total number of volunteers since 1997 to approximately 9,285. Their contributions have had a tangible impact, equipping refugees with language skills, confidence, and practical tools for self-reliance in exile. Many volunteers describe their time at Lha as transformative, leaving with lasting connections and a deeper sense of shared humanity.

*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."
— Mahatma Gandhi*

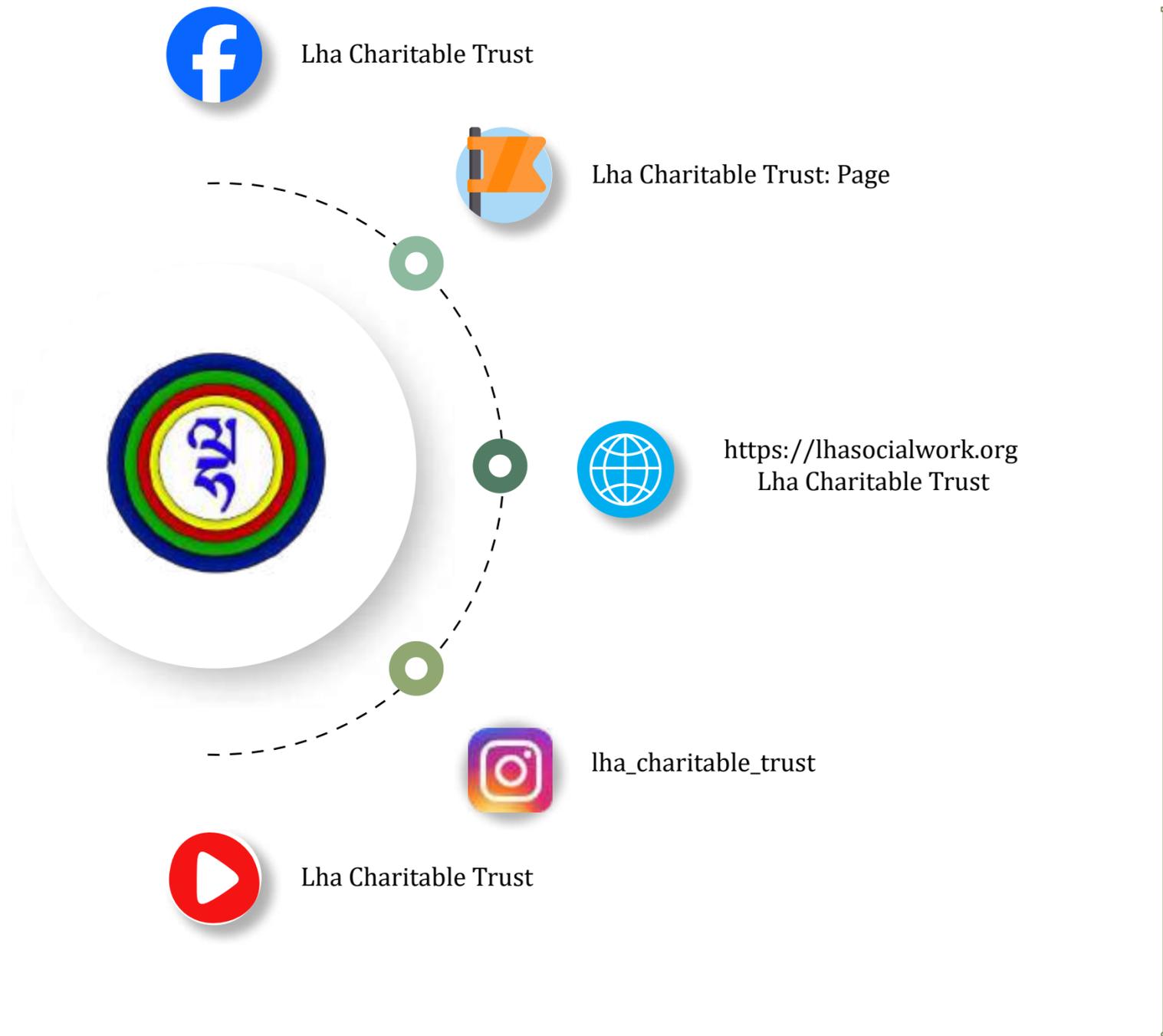


2025 Glimpses of Impact

As we reflect in this year, we are filled with gratitude for the significant milestones we have achieved together.

- 5.9K Approx. people provided with safe drinking water daily
- 110+ Students benefited from livelihood skill training
- 76 People benefited from Smile dental care program
- 200+ Elderly people received free treatment
- 29+ Support & Provided Scholarship
- 265+ Students participated in language classes
- 210+ Volunteers from around the world
- 40+ Culture exchange program participants
- 89 Education tour & Soft skill training provided to students

Find Us Through Social Media



Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche - Wisdom & Teaching

Samdhongrinpoche.com

prof - samdhong - rinpoche



Our Donors and Partners





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Lha Charitable Trust
Institute For Social Work & Education

With Gratitude

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our donors, volunteers & friends for your generous support and trust. Your kindness makes our work possible and continues to bring hope, learning, and opportunity to the communities we serve.

With sincere appreciation,
Lha Charitable Trust