

LACHEN HELFEN e. V.

(registered charity)

Charity aids refugees

Since 1996 a private initiative of German soldiers has been actively supporting children in areas affected by war and other crises

The early days

In 1996 a group of German soldiers, moved by their personal experiences in war zones, founded a private initiative called "LACHEN HELFEN" (roughly translated "help to laugh again"). Confronted with the living conditions of people in Bosnia and Croatia, the German soldiers stationed there initiated an aid programme which was soon to be followed by further initiatives.

ROBERT-BOSCH prize for LACHEN HELFEN

The aid provided by the initiative did not remain unnoticed, so in July 1998 LACHEN HELFEN was awarded the Robert-Bosch prize for its work. An increasing number of aid workers, including civilians, eventually made it necessary to establish a charitable organisation.

Objectives of the charity

The charity founded in September 1998 provides humanitarian aid in a few areas which are not covered by the major aid organisations. LACHEN HELFEN mainly supports children in regions affected by war and other crises. The aid is always directed at all ethnic groups.

Concrete help without any losses in distribution

One definite advantage of the charity is the presence of the soldiers in the affected areas, which makes it possible to assess the needs of the local population realistically. Thus the urgently required goods are purchased in Germany and then transported to their destinations. In this way concrete help can be given, taking people's actual needs into consideration.

The goods arriving in the affected areas are distributed by German soldiers stationed there. This procedure ensures that all donations reach the people in need.

The aid work so far

LACHEN HELFEN has been active in Bosnia and Croatia since 1996. Now the charity is also supporting Albanian refugees expelled from Kosovo. At regular intervals aid convoys are sent to the affected areas, transporting aid goods such as clothes, toys, bedding, toiletries and food to the people in need. In Afghanistan LACHEN HELFEN builds and supports children's homes, orphanages, schools and refugee camps.

The charity has also supported projects such as medical centres in Croatia, a pumping station in Sarajevo and the work of a nursery teacher. In a further project educational units have been equipped with second-hand computers.

Financial help urgently required

The charity wishes to continue its work in zones of war and crises. LACHEN HELFEN continually depends on monetary donations to cover the high transportation costs.

We currently require donations for the construction of two schools, two Basic Health Centres (mainly for children and expectant mothers, each for a community of about 50,000 people) and an orphanage. We are currently financing annexes to two schools, and two further schools are being equipped with our help.

Remote mountain villages in the Hindukush region receive school tents which are financed by us, but erected by local Afghan citizens. To prevent the misappropriation of funds, money for these projects is only released on completion of the work.

About 90 per cent of our aid work is currently centred around Afghanistan.

Please help

How can you help? For example, by making a donation to our account or by becoming a member.

You will, of course, receive a tax receipt for any donation you make. We will be pleased to answer any of your questions, so please contact us at the given address or visit us at our website.

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