

Druk White Lotus School, Shey, Ladakh, Indian Himalaya

Child Sponsorship

Ladakh (sometimes called 'Little Tibet') is a remote former kingdom high in the Indian Himalaya. The people of Ladakh realise that education is the key to creating a viable future for their children. They want their children to be equipped for life in the 21st century, but to keep their traditional values and unique cultural identity.

Druk White Lotus School opened its doors in 2001 and welcomes children from all backgrounds. The school offers a high quality education combined with a deep respect for Ladakh's environment and traditional ways. In the long-term, the school will accommodate about 750 pupils (4-16 years old), including 200 residential children from remote areas.

How sponsorship works

Each year we need 15 additional sponsors for new residential children, several sponsors for disadvantaged day pupils and replacements for sponsors who are no longer able to continue.

The school year starts in November. We encourage new sponsors to sign up by July if possible, so that when I travel to the remote areas in August/September with my local counterpart, Mme Sarla Chhewang, we know how many places we can safely offer to disadvantaged families and their children. We seek advice from the village chief and check the personal life circumstances of applicant families ourselves.

Last year, Sarla and I went to the Markha Valley to interview families and ascertain their circumstances to determine the eligibility of applicants.



Mme Sarla (far right) preparing to cross the Zaskar River



Children in Doltokling



Wendy, school assistant Yuron, pony and pony man alongside the Markha River

When a residential child comes to the school, s/he is placed in one of our purpose-designed Residences in the care of a warden, housemothers and other staff. Mme Sarla oversees the well-being of the students, including their healthcare. We review the family situations from time to time to ensure they are still eligible for sponsorship.

We don't like to take very young children into the Residences and so they are generally at least 7 years old when they come to our school. Many have experienced a slow start to their education and so we run a special catch up class called UKGX (Upper Kindergarten EXTRA) - with only 15-20 children.

Sponsorship is a two-way relationship

We hope you will enjoy happiness from giving a child a chance to flourish and learn about the world, in an environment that values Ladakh's unique culture and heritage.

We encourage contact between sponsors and sponsees. The children love to hear from their sponsors. As their English improves, sponsees are encouraged to write to their sponsors.

We will send you a photograph of your child each year as well as the teacher's report so that you can monitor progress and achievements. We aim to keep supporters informed about progress at the school through periodic newsletters, "Lotus Leaves", and through the school website www.dwls.org. For reasons of economy we try to communicate by e-mail (but if you don't use email, don't worry we still use the mail too).



What choices do I have?

You can choose full or part-sponsorship for a day or a residential child. Day pupil sponsorship covers school fees, uniform, books and bus fares. Residential sponsorship covers all the child's needs, including food, healthcare and staff. Full sponsorship costs:

Day Pupil	£120 / €180 / US\$240 per year
Residential Pupil (from remote area)	£360 / €540 / US\$720 per year

If this amount is not affordable, you can opt for part-sponsorship – with a friend or family member, or we will try to arrange a co-sponsor to share with you. You can pay annually, quarterly or monthly in advance – this enables us to maintain an even flow of funds to Ladakh for your child.

See the difference you can make



2005: Their mother died in childbirth 12 days before this photo was taken.



The nomad father and family home – he owns only one animal.



2009: The girl nursing the baby in the left-hand image is now a successful student at Druk White Lotus School.

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