

Druk Padma Karpo School summer 2021



Lotus Leaves

annual newsletter

special celebration issue

20th
Anniversary

Reflect with us on the past 20 years as we celebrate the school's success
and help us prepare for the next 20 years.

2001 - Opening of the
nursery & infant
courtyard, 6
classrooms standing
alone in the high-
altitude desert



2021
873 students
enjoy a campus
comprising 27
classrooms and
8 residences



Printed on FSC paper

20 years of excellence in education: congratulations and thank you

Building a new school takes ideas, time and effort. Then confidence, determination and flexibility help to turn the ideas into reality. This year, the Druk Padma Karpo School celebrates 20 years of providing a high-quality modern education combined with traditional values and customs. Since 1992 Drukpa Trust has worked tirelessly to create this award-winning school which has transformed the lives of more than one thousand children. Our deepest gratitude goes to all those involved, past, present and future. Here is a selection of messages from our partners and supporters for this 20th anniversary edition of Lotus Leaves.

'We have enjoyed being associated with the school which dates back to its incarnation. We have had a great deal of pleasure hearing about the progression over the years. They have endured very damaging floods and yet they have continued to manage and educate the children. We are committed to the Druk Padma Karpo School and delighted with its success.'

Warmest wishes, Michael and Marina Cowdray

The Viscount and Viscountess Cowdray, Patrons



'Apart from having the longest name of any school in the world, the Druk Padma Karpo (White Lotus) School has impressive achievements up its talented and ambitious sleeve. Always aiming high, and for the best, its record of building a place of learning which is loved and used by so many is, frankly, awesome. Through hard times and wicked weather, this Ladakhi school has delivered a wide-ranging syllabus in safe and gorgeous surroundings. Twenty years have flown by, and the standards have never stopped rising. To everyone there, past and present, teachers, pupils, parents, supporters, communities, I send my heartfelt applause and admiration, and all my warmest good wishes for the future of this remarkable place of scholarship and compassion.'

Joanna Lumley, Actress and Campaigner, Patron

'Congratulations on 20 years of our prestigious school. I am very fortunate to work for the benefit of the many students. Working for the school is a very unique experience in itself. I once had a dream to serve a school, and it has come true with this opportunity. I will work and serve the school as much as I can.'

Tsering Motup, Deputy Chairman School Management Committee

'I feel privileged to be associated with this unique and prestigious institute. I am very grateful to His Holiness and His Eminence for believing and giving me this amazing opportunity. I am making sure to serve to the best of my ability. My main aim for this institute is to work for the holistic development of the students and for the betterment of the society as a whole. This institute is a blessing for many Ladakhis in terms of getting knowledge, it's a place where every day we are learning from each other and from the campus environment, it's a comfortable place to stay in and to learn. It's been 20 long years that Druk Padma Karpo School is continuing to engage in shaping and showing the path for the future generation. Within these few years I have learned many things from school. Working for the school is a continuous learning experience. Heartiest congratulations on the 20 glorious years of school.'

Mingur Angmo, Acting Principal



'Life is a journey and every chapter is very interesting. Druk White Lotus, one of the prestigious and most beautiful schools in Leh is where I started my journey as a teacher in 2001 and since then I have been a part of this school. It's been 20 years now and I feel overwhelmed to write down my experience in this school. By blessing of His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa and H.E Thuksey Rinpoche, it has been a wonderful journey with all the students and my colleagues with whom I shared all these remarkable years. There were ups and downs during this journey which I faced with the help of everyone. This institution is unique in its own way, it focuses more on the value-based education and learning is child-centred. During all these years, I have learnt so many things which helped me to grow as a teacher. When I started my career here, only a few classes were there and now it has become one of the best schools in Leh, providing education to more than 800 students. The school is like my family. I hope to continue my journey and give my best to this wonderful institution.'

Padma Dolker, Senior Teacher



Education, activities and success timeline

2017-2021

During the coronavirus pandemic, the 64 final-year students and their teachers worked with resilience and determination. They achieved a 100% pass rate in the Matriculation examinations, with 83% awarded distinctions. Most students continue their studies with the intention of going on to university after leaving DPKS.

The first cohorts of alumni now have jobs in engineering, government, travel, politics, medicine, carpentry and the army. Others have become entrepreneurs, setting up their own businesses, and one is an ice hockey player.

Promoting gender equality and inspiring the young women to work with confidence alongside their male counterparts to be the future leaders of Ladakh is of huge importance.



The four house names are values that are embedded in school life: Unity, Courage, Harmony and Wisdom. Each student is assigned to a house and competition between houses is encouraged. The school emblem incorporates the inspirational motto "Strive Succeed and Serve".



2012-2016



A measure of success of Indian schools is the Matriculation exams at the end of class 10. In 2012, the first year-group to take these examinations achieved an excellent pass rate of 92.3%. A total of 369 students have now matriculated, forging an outstanding reputation for DPKS.

Other successes include awards for art, literacy and inter-house competitions. Students have excelled in inter-school Bhoti-language dramatics, distance running, football tournaments and essay-writing competitions.

The annual summer White Lotus Expo and Fete has been a resounding success in bringing together students and staff, and parents and villagers. Numerous partnerships with international schools have enriched the students' global understanding. Teacher training with partner schools in Delhi has produced outstanding results in incorporating new ways of teaching into the classroom.

2007-2011

Curriculum development and teacher training are key elements in our success. One mission of the school's governing body is to transform education for local children and those from remote areas.

The aim to provide good quality education for girls and boys aged 4-18, using a child-centred approach remains ambitious, bold and challenging. In April 2010, the Khachey branch school opened in the Phokar valley.



A wide-ranging extra-curricular schedule encourages the development of healthy, considerate and environmentally conscious young people. Sports, drama, photography, art, and debating and campaigning, are encouraged, and at the same time the traditional activities of dance, song, cooking and crafts are maintained. An extra special opportunity to learn about film-making arose when the school became a set for part of the Bollywood film "3 Idiots" and some students were selected to take part.

2001-2006

On September 24th, 2001 the school welcomed its first 88 students. Celebrating the opening of the six nursery and infant school classrooms, the community saw the start of their wishes coming to fruition – a local school combining traditional values with a modern education. Students from remote villages and nomadic communities joined the school two years later when the first residential courtyard and kitchen were completed. In the nursery class, they are taught in Bhoti, their local language, and English is introduced. Hindi is added in lower kindergarten. In junior school, most lessons are taught in English with difficult words explained in a local language. By 2006, student numbers had risen above 300, there were 96 boarders, of whom 65 were sponsored, enjoying three nourishing meals a day in their new dining hall.



From a bare plot of land to a living school: more messages of support

'Since 1996 Arup have developed the masterplan and evolving design for the Druk Padma Karpo School in Shey, Ladakh. We have sought to meld together Arup's sustainable design skills with local craftsmanship and materials to create a campus that is of its place. We are truly proud of our partnership with the people of Ladakh, the Drukpa Trust and of the living school that sits lightly within the beautiful Indus Valley. The school is always growing and adjusting, as we learn more about the environment as well as the pedagogic requirements.'

Rory McGowan, Arup Project Director

ARUP

'I always remember that I was presented with a big piece of land with an old school building on it. With the five rooms we made one into my office, one for the construction caretaker and the other three as homes for my labourers. It was a big challenge in the beginning for me to work with new people from Arup and Drukpa Trust, but I have also learned a lot every year from different specialists. Now it has been 20 years of the school, benefiting lots of students from all over Ladakh, with the blessing of His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa and His Eminence Thuksey Rinpoche. Congratulations to each and every one who is involved directly or indirectly. Thank you so much to all the trustees of Drukpa Trust, headed by Jonathan Rose, one of the original school architects, for their support and guidance. I can't forget the late Dr. Philip Cornwell for his support. Thank you so much to Arup, headed by Rory McGowan and Sean MacIntosh since the beginning. There has been great support from the University of Greenwich to design the landscape headed by Tom Turner.'



Sonam Angdus, Construction Manager.

'I first visited the site for Druk Padma Karpo School in 1992 where a small school building, unoccupied for several years, stood in the middle of a vast sandy area scattered with rocks. Over the next 10 years, thanks to His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa, His Eminence Thuksey Rinpoche and the partnership between the Drukpa Trust, Arup and the team in Ladakh, a new and exciting structure grew from the ground and came alive in 2001 with the first intake of teachers and children in the Infant Section. Since then DPKS has blossomed into an amazing and vibrant educational institution touching the hearts and minds of young people. The students thrive on a rich curriculum of core academic subjects, creativity and culture on which they can build a future and discover their place in Ladakhi society and the world. It is a warm and loving community which I have had the great fortune to be connected with for over two decades. I wish all at DPKS great success for many years to come.'



Annie Smith, Trustee, Drukpa Trust



**UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH**

'Congratulations to the Druk School on its 20th anniversary - from all the volunteer landscape architects from the University of Greenwich who have been helping to green the campus (since 2012). It's great to see a 'green dragon' slither from the Indus valley and wrap the school in its protective embrace.'

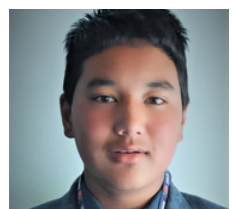
Tom Turner, Landscape Architect, University of Greenwich

'I am very happy and delighted that this year our school is completing 20 years. With the blessing of His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa, His Eminence Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche and tireless work with professional honesty which has been carried out by each staff member of the Druk family we have completed 20 successful years. All of them really deserve sincere appreciation for getting success in academics and co-curricular activities and giving quality education to students from far flung areas of Ladakh. I also wish and hope that the school will soon provide classes 11 and 12 for 16- 18-year-olds. I extend my heartiest congratulations to all associated directly or indirectly with Druk Padma Karpo School and hope they will continuously help our school in many ways. With Warm Regards.'



Tashi Tsering - Office Coordinator

'In the past few years our school has gained so many achievements and we can get more achievements in the future. You can do whatever you are good at and attain achievements. If you don't know what you are good in, you should say yes to every opportunity you get and one day you will find the thing you are good in and you will make big achievements for yourself and your school.'



Rigzin Chosphel, Head Boy

Sustainability, awards and gardens timeline

2017-2021

The four eco-shower facilities were built between 2017 and 2020 as part of the health and wellbeing initiative, which it is hoped will include a health centre in the future. In tandem with this the seismic upgrade of the residences is continuing, a vital project to ensure the resilience of the buildings for future generations of students. The next major new infrastructure development will be a classroom complex for 16- 18-year-olds.



2012-2016

In 2013, the fourth residential courtyard was completed, providing an additional 80 places. Two IT classrooms opened in 2016 and several classrooms had interactive whiteboards installed. By 2016, latent damage from the 2010 mudslide was noticed in some of the buildings and a repair & seismic upgrade programme was launched. As part of the sustainable design, local building materials are used and energy from solar radiation heats the buildings. The photovoltaic system generates and stores electricity. The use of water is minimised by the use of dry latrines.



2007-2011

The first specialist classrooms were opened in 2007 to great excitement, the art room to explore creativity and the science laboratory for empirical investigations. Every year during the construction season, a resident engineer from Arup joins the local construction manager Sonam Angdus on site. An unexpected task was the design and construction of a protective wall after the devastating mudslide of 2010.



The silver lining of the horrific cloudbursts, that caused the mudslide, is the Dragon Garden project, designed to green the devastated campus. With the creation of the plant nursery and a planting strategy, the campus now has orchards, willows, flowers, play areas, paved pathways and a drip-irrigation system. As the campus expands, we need to continue developing an inspiring green learning environment.

2001-2006



Building design inspired by local monastery architecture, combined with modern ecological principles has produced award-winning buildings. The 2002 World Architecture Awards recognised the school in the categories of Best Green Building, Best Asian Building and Best Education Building, saying it was “a model of appropriate and sustainable design” and “the environmental strategy maximizes the site's solar potential”. More classrooms and residences were needed to keep pace with the influx of 60 new students joining the school every year. Drukpa Trust in the UK worked hard with supporters to raise much needed funds and the school thrived.

A residential student's story

'My name is Stanzin Chosphe and I am from a small village called Skiu in the Markha valley in Ladakh. I feel blessed and happy for getting a chance to write my story as a student of Druk Padma Karpo School.



My story begins at the age of five. I used to play and go around with my mother. My father is a carpenter and mother is a housewife. I thought I'd study in a local government school, so I can't believe that I've spent almost 13 years in this beautiful school. For most of those years my twice-yearly journey to school started with a two hour walk to the nearest place to Skiu where a car could reach. Now, cars can reach my village.

My first day at school was very hard and painful, because I had to live in a hostel and be apart from my parents. I spent my first night and the next day crying so much. After that, I enjoyed my hostel time as it made me feel like my sweet home because of all the house mothers and helpers, again I thank them. I was a happy learning boy.



I don't know how my years have gone by so quickly as this is my last year. When I think of this a fear rises in my mind because I think teachers like mine are difficult to find. So, thank you to all my loving teachers for making me a human being. I want to continue my studies into grade 11 and 12 as I want to become an engineering scientist, I will work on my aim until I can. Me and my family are very thankful to our sponsor and all Drukpa Trust family. If I get success in my life, it's because of you all. So never stop learning, knowledge has no end, and there's no age limit to start learning. Thank you.'

Stanzin Chosphe must leave the school because we do not yet have grade 11 and 12 facilities. We wish him the very best for his continuing studies.

Residential students' wellbeing

To sustain the health and wellbeing of the residential students, regular health checks are carried out and the eco-showers provide warm water. The on-site laundry is kept busy caring for the uniforms, sportswear and leisure clothes. Three healthy meals, plus snacks, for the 248 boarders are lovingly prepared by the head cook Tsering Angchuk and his team.



'Jullay everyone, I am very happy today that our school has completed its 20th year. DPKS is like a garden where beautiful and diverse flowers blossom every year, where we all work together as a team shoulder to shoulder. In these 20 years our students have achieved a lot in various activities, it is all because of the blessings of His Holiness and His Eminence. The hostel is a place where our students get everything and I focus on the food part, we are providing healthy, hygienic and traditional balanced food, which makes our students all-rounders. We are using more local ingredients which also helps in generating income to locals. We don't allow our students to eat any junk food so as to maintain good health and to protect the environment from litter. Lastly I congratulate each one of you for a 20th successful year.' Tsering Angchuk, Head Cook

Child Sponsorship Programme

When the first residence opened in 2003, the Drukpa Trust facilitated the sponsorship of four young children from remote areas of Ladakh for whom a quality education would have been unavailable. As the school grew, the numbers of sponsored children rose to more than 250 students supported by individual sponsors around the world.



Since 2013, the sponsorship programme has been gradually absorbed into the work of the Drukpa Trust's sister charity Live to Love.

A big thank-you to all sponsors, past and present, who have supported students through their time at Druk Padma Karpo School enabling them to achieve goals which otherwise might not have been attainable. We hope it has been a rewarding experience for you as well as being hugely beneficial to the students and their families.



Looking forward to a bright future

World Bank data demonstrates that education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and lays a foundation for sustained economic growth. \$1 invested in education and skills = \$10 in economic growth.*

*2013 World Bank, "Education For All" Global Monitoring Report.

With your help we can expand the education provision at DPKS by adding classrooms for 16- 18-year-olds and continuing to make the school seismically safer. Good education will ensure that young Ladakhis will have the skills to protect and nurture their environment, economy and culture.

Please act now and donate to help the Druk Padma Karpo School

Arup pledge match funding to a value of £50,000. We aim to raise £150,000 from this appeal.

How your donation is used

- £20 pays for one carpenter for three days or buys 40kg of steel reinforcement
- £200 pays for one stonemason for a month
- £400 buys one cubic metre of timber
- £1,000 goes towards a white board and desks for a new classroom
- £14,000 pays for the seismic upgrade of one dormitory
- £35,000* pays for one new classroom for 16- 18-year-olds

*subject to design confirmation



Together we can make the wishes of 13-year-old Tsulden Gyatso come true with the design and construction of the new classroom complex for 16- 18-year-olds.



'I really hope that all the great activities at school continue and that by the time I am in grade 10, I will be able to stay at this amazing school until I am 18.'

Tsulden Gyatso, aged 13

The seismic upgrade work continues for the construction team. Keeping the children safe in their beds at night has to remain a priority.



'I would like to express my thankfulness for the renovation work that the construction team is carrying out every year. Your team helps to provide us with a comfortable and safer place to stay in. For 20 years our school has been in constant development. I, on behalf of all students, would like to express my gratitude.' **Jigmet Angmo, Head Girl**

Student's dream becomes her future



In 2019 we featured an article on Yangzin Chuskit, an electronic engineering student. Yangzin dreamed of becoming an entrepreneur, and wanted to help in shaping Ladakh and set an example to others. Yangzin's dream has come true and she now has a small start-up IT firm in Ladakh, designing websites and looking to expand into school management systems. Yangzin wrote in 2019: *'I spent 13 years at this amazing school. It gave me not just bookish knowledge but also taught me moral values and discipline, how to be a kind and good person.'*

The vision

The school campus is already an oasis of education, a place to work, study, play, explore and live. A place for young people to discover their talents and to develop as individuals.



Photograph and sketch by Tom Turner showing the Druk Padma Karpo School campus with the sacred white stupas in the foreground and the barren desert landscape behind

10-year vision – education

The curriculum will continue to be student-centric and focus on holistic development. Extra-curricular activities will help students to be fluent in all three languages, Bhoti, Hindi and English, for which we also aim to have a language lab. Sports and clubs will remain essential to balance the intensity of classroom learning. Teacher training will be a prime focus, with refresher courses for teachers and exposure visits for them to other prestigious schools. Within 2-3 years, we are hoping to expand our school to 11th and 12th grade and will start with at least two streams or options e.g. humanities and commerce. The School Management Committee will be working to incorporate the findings of India's 2020 National Education Policy into the planning.

10-15-year vision – construction and gardens

In 2020 and again this year, the construction work has been drastically affected by Covid-19. The construction programme is being adjusted accordingly. The seismic upgrade programme is literally of seismic proportions. First, we are concentrating on making the residences safer. Over the coming years, we are hoping to continue this vital work in tandem with building new facilities. A classroom complex for 16- 18-year-olds (11th and 12th grade), a multi-purpose hall, more school offices, a health centre, a new library and new visitor centre are some of the key additions. In parallel, work on the Dragon Garden project will continue to create an inspiring green learning environment.

On behalf of the Druk Padma Karpo Educational Society, thank you for your support.

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