





Members of Friends of Lingshed with Sonam Dorje



## A big thank you to everybody who has supported us in different ways!

As a result of your support we were celebrating the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our project in 2008. It has steadily grown since 1994. The building of the Solar School was completed in the year 2000. Since then, Adult Education, Teacher Training and the development and production of school books and teaching materials have been added to our programme. The sponsorship programme has also been extended.

None of these activities would have been possible without your support, and for this we would like to thank you.

*Greta Kostka*

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Sonam Dorje, our project coordinator in Ladakh



## Friends of Lingshed

### Organisation for the Promotion of Cultural Identity in the Himalayas

Active members: Lisbeth Brugner-Ayadi, Eva Khil, Petra Schinagl, Greta Kostka, Irmgard Lusser, Bettina Bruckmoser, Elisabeth Smonig-Seidnitzer and founder-member Christian Hlade.

We are a non-governmental and non-profit organisation and our members all work on a voluntary basis.

At least one member of the organisation has visited the village each year since 1994 in order to coordinate, discuss, improve communication and mutual learning, and also to monitor the finances.

### Our Profile

We analyse the needs of the Ladakhis in Ladakh itself and offer them support to help them help themselves.

Our aim is to make the people aware of the existing cultural and social network resources, and to strengthen these.

We support those interactions that facilitate

democratic access to the existing resources. Team spirit and the spirit of partnership characterize our contact and cooperation with all persons and institutions involved in our work.

We promote school education based on up-to-date methods for children and adults.

Through our work we gain insight into other cultures, religions, traditions and ways of life. This encourages us to analyse our own values and attitudes, and to adopt and develop new models and values.

### Solar School in Lingshed/Ladakh

Lingshed is 4000 m above sea level and can only be reached by a 4-day trek over high mountain passes (5000 m above sea level). It is one of the most remote parts of Ladakh (northern India). Between November and March the village is completely isolated from the outside world when snow covers the passes. Lingshed and the neighbouring communities give home to about 1000 people.





They grow barley, wheat and peas and keep yaks and goats. The monastery in Lingshed is an important spiritual centre of Tibetan Buddhism.

In summer 2000, we built a solar-heated school with four classrooms, accommodation for teachers, a greenhouse for growing vegetables, two toilets and a sports ground. Over the past few years a storeroom has been added and a library set up. All of the rooms are south facing and therefore heated by the sun during the winter. Light is generated by voltaic electricity provided by solar panels.

### Solar School – Independence

The ownership of and responsibility for the solar school now lies in the hands of the people of Lingshed. During the summer months the building is used to accommodate teachers and their families and pupils. During the winter months winter tuition takes place in the Solar school building. In the past few years the Indian government has built a school centre in which it is possible to accommodate the greater

number of pupils through 8 years of schooling, a boarding school for children living in remote areas, who would otherwise be unable to attend school, and accommodation for teachers. There are now 12 teachers in Lingshed, 5 of whom are former pupils. The buildings, their maintenance, the running of the boarding school and the teachers' salaries are all paid for by the Indian government.

Friends of Lingshed are honoured that they were able to play a part in the development of such an effective school system in the region and will continue to support the winter teaching in Lingshed and the surrounding villages, offer help with school-books and teaching materials, promote environmental education and sponsor individual pupils.

Sonam Dorje has been a great help in every possible way!



## Educational Programme

### Winter Schooling

We employ teachers so that lessons can also take place during the winter months in Lingshed and the surrounding villages: Kartse, Dipling, Gongma, Skiumpata, Yulchung and Nyeraks. The necessary teaching materials are supplied by the Friends of Lingshed.

### Adult Education

We began the Adult Education programme in summer 2000. Older villagers, particularly the women, can now also learn to read and write. There are lessons in the local language Bodyik, English and Mathematics.

### School books and Teaching Materials

We support the development and production of school books and teaching materials which relate to life and culture in Ladakh. The children's direct environment is placed in the foreground.

### Teacher Training

Teachers learn how to apply the new teaching materials and methods.

### Khalti Winter Schooling and School Trip

Since 1996 we have paid teachers for over 100 children to have lessons during the winter months in Khalti boarding school. Children from Lingshed area and other remote villages can receive further education (classes 9–12) in this state school. Each year we organise an educational tour for these pupils to know their own country better. This programme is a huge success and the children's enthusiasm is overwhelming!

### School Materials

We provide school materials (exercise books, pens, school uniforms and teaching aids) as needed for the school in Lingshed. We also provide books and materials for the Adult Education programme and winter schooling in the villages.





June 2000



August 2000

## Sponsorship/Scholarship

In 1996, we started to sponsor 4 children, paying for their education and boarding school costs in Leh. In the meantime we are sponsoring more than 100 children from throughout Ladakh who attend school in Leh, Matho or Khaltsi. We pay the boarding school costs, school fees or school materials, as required. In 2004 we started a scholarship-programme for higher studies in Jammu and Leh.

## How it all began – The History of our Project

The idea of building a school in Lingshed has existed from the very beginning of our partnership with Lingshed. Before we could start this project, however, we had to create a basis of mutual trust. To attend school was by no means the norm.

From the outset we were determined not to found a private school, but to support the Ladakhi school system – first with additional teachers, later with the Solar School building.

## »Open-air School«

In 1995, we employed two native teachers in addition to the government teacher, and began with our »Open-air School«. We started off with about 30 pupils. Lessons took place outdoors.

## Building of a School

After many discussions, many village meetings, and with a much stronger relationship of mutual trust, preparations for the building of a school began in summer 1999. All of the building timber, more than 200 beams, were bought and transported by lorry to Zangla, south of Lingshed. The beams were stored here until the winter, before they were pulled on sledges for several days on the frozen Zanskar River, and finally were carried on the shoulders of the villagers to Lingshed. The school itself was built in just four months in the summer of 2000. Christian Hlade was in charge of the project. The school is built like a traditional mud building. Children and teachers alike particularly enjoy and benefit from the warm rooms in winter. Before the school



was built it had been impossible to provide schooling during the winter months.

### Adult Education Programme

The foundation stone for the Adult Education programme was laid in 2001 in cooperation with representatives of Lingshed monastery, villagers, and with the teachers.

### Central School of the Entire Region

In the years 2001 and 2002 the government authorities declared Lingshed the central school of the entire region. They sent more teachers to Lingshed and built a boarding school and a big school building. More than 100 children now attend the school. Since 2004, it has no longer been necessary to employ private teachers for the summer months. The staff consists of about 12 government teachers, who teach in the school complex built by the government, two cooks and two hostel mothers for the boarding school. Now it became possible to attend school up to class 8 in Lingshed centralised school.

### Use of the Solar School

All schools in Ladakh are closed for two and a half months during the winter. In Lingshed area winter schooling is provided in the Solar School by local teachers, employed by the Friends of Lingshed. Now the responsibility for the solar school lies in the hands of the people of Lingshed.

### Cooperation with other organisations

Our aim is to build a network with international and Ladakhi non-governmental organisations that are also concerned with sustainability, school and village development. We are cooperating with some of them, especially with Health.Inc. and SLC (Snow Leopard Conservancy). Health.Inc publishes Lakakhi school and teaching materials and offers courses and workshops for teacher training in Ladakh. SLC implements an environment education programme in Ladakh.







ལྷན་མེད་པ་རྒྱལ་ལ་ལྷན་དེ་ཡིན་ཅོ། དེ་རྒྱ་མཚན་མང་པོ་ཞིག་འདུག དཔེར་ན་ས་ཐག་རིང་པོ་ལམ་སྲང་ཚོགས་པོ་དང་ལ་མཚོན་པོ་  
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བཙུག་པར་མངོན།

ཁོང་དང་མཉམ་པོ་ཡང་མེ་ལྷར་མང་པོ་ཞིག་ཀྱང་འདུས། འདི་ཚོགས་པའི་དམིགས་ལུལ་ཆེན་པོ་ཀུན་ནི་ཡོན་ཏན་ལ་ཡར་རྒྱས།  
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