



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

KUZUZANGPOLA & HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

With blessings and prayers from all the well-wishers and supporters, the academic year 2019 has successfully come to an end. 30 students have graduated this year. For 2020, the school plans to enroll 26 boys and 27 girls making a total headcount of 160 students (110 boys and 50 girls).

A stocktaking of the employability status revealed that all 172 graduates from 2005-2018 are nearly gainfully employed and even the recently graduated students have been approached for job opportunities. This is very encouraging, when the youth in general are grappling with unemployment

issues. Even those students who were unable for various (often family-related) reasons to complete their chosen course of study have gone forward to earn their living through the skills they have acquired at CTAS. Today our former students work across the country preserving and promoting the arts and crafts. One very encouraging trend is that these successful entrepreneurs, CTAS alumni, are in a position to offer employment to other youths, whether from the wider community or perhaps fellow CTAS graduates or drop-outs who achieved a certain skills level. As such CTAS demonstrably contributes to addressing the employment issues of the country, benefitting the grassroots community and the economic development of the country. The school hopes to continuously create such positive impact. All this would not have been possible without your support and we genuinely thank all our well-wishers and supporters.

While there have been some significant developments towards future sustainability of the school, there is need of immediate support and hence the School has resubmitted its application for support to Julius Baer Foundation, Switzerland. While we look forward to hearing good news, there is no guarantee, and hence, any support from your end would be most solicited.

The construction of the new class room with the challenge grant created by Mr. & Mrs. Bickell have made huge progress. The main outer structure of the building is now completed. Till date, the school has raised USD 165,327 which was equally matched by Mr. and Mrs. Bickell. We would like to thank Mr. & Mrs. Bickell and all the supporters for making us realize this dream project of creating conducive learning environment.

Towards achieving Grade 'A' institute status in the country and huge opportunity it would offer our students in their education and in shaping their lives, the school is working hard to achieve certification of Government Quality Management System (QMS) and national accreditation.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our main supporters - Mr. Koenraad, Lynne and Leila Foulon, Lam and Anh, Thomas Trub, Markus Ballauf, Fontana Foundation, Himalayan Youth Foundation, Sir Peter Ustinov Foundation, Nakadai Inc., other individual supporters and well-wishers for your continued support to the school, and shaping the beautiful dream of empowering youths from socially and financial disadvantaged youths and spreading love & passion for arts and crafts.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!
Sonam Choki

CTAS Graduates 2019

CTAS on the evening of 14th December 2019 made a fond farewell and best wishes to thirty of its graduating students. It was a memorable evening filled with joy, celebration and sadness. It was needed to remind of the elapsed road as the graduating students pursue a new beginning in their lives. It was bittersweet to say goodbye.

The farewell party was graced by the school founder Dasho Choki Dorji, the Choki family, Teachers, Alumni, parents of the thirty graduating students. The party as usual is uniquely special, as it is sponsored by the graduating students as an expression of gratitude, and organized by the upcoming graduating students as a token of their appreciation and taking up the new responsibility of being the senior most students.

The school is very grateful to Mr. Koenraad, Lynne and Leila for the very thoughtful graduation gifts, which the students very much appreciated.



The Thirty students have completed their course in the following two categories of Graduate and Certificate Level

GRADUATES					
Sl.No	Course	Male	Female	Total	Course duration
1	Lhadi/painting	3	0	3	7 years
2	Patra/Carving	4	0	4	5 Years
4	Tailoring	2	8	10	2 years
	Total	9	8	17	
CERTIFICATE					
1	Lhadi/painting	8	0	8	3 years
2	Patra/Carving	3	0	3	3 years
4	Embroidery	0	2	2	3 years
	Total	11	2	13	

Graduates Profile and Employability

The school started with five students in 1999 and eventually the number of students increased. In 2016, the school introduced certificate level, so that those students who have personal obligations, but have acquired basic skills could choose to discontinue their program over mastery of the subject. Till date, a total of 202 students have successfully completed their course, either as Graduate or Certificate Level as given below:

GRADUATES (who have completed the entire course duration)						
Sl.No	Course	Male	Female	Total	Course duration	Employed
1	Lhadi/painting	48	1	49	7 years	Yes
2	Patra/Carving	53	0	53	5 Years	Yes
3	Tshemdrup/ Embroidery	2	18	20	5 Years	Yes
4	Thazho/ Weaving	0	5	5	5 Years	Yes
5	Tshemzho/ Tailoring	5	24	29	2 Years	Yes
Grand Total =		108	48	156		

CERTIFICATE LEVEL (who have completed the minimal course duration)						
Sl.No	Course	Male	Female	Total	Course duration	Employed
	Lhadi/painting	15	0	15	3 Years	Yes
	Patra/Carving	18	1	19	3 Years	Yes
	Tshemdrup/ Embroidery	0	10	10	3 years	Yes
	Thazho/ Weaving	0	2	2	3 years	Yes
Grand Total =		33	13	46		

TOTAL GRADUATES (BOTH DIPLOMA & CERTIFICATE LEVELS): 202

BOYS: 141

GIRLS: 61

Bright future ahead for all 2019 CTAS graduates

The school is delighted to announce that all graduating students have been approached for job opportunities. The school cannot be happier than this to be able to see all its graduates being welcomed by the outside world and we hope that all our supporters and well wishers are also proud of this accomplishment.

Well-wishers of CTAS grace the school

Since the beginning twenty years' ago, CTAS has and is still standing strong thanks to all the support received from both within and outside the country. For that we remain grateful and it is always such a great pleasure to be able to welcome all supporters and well-wishers of CTAS.

This year on October 23, we were able to welcome back Mrs Jennifer Bidwell and welcome Mr. Charles. From 2006 until 2010, Mr. David Bidwell, late husband of Mrs. Jennifer through the Himalayan Youth Foundation provided budgetary support to meet operational gap, in addition to construction of boys hostel in 2004.



Later on, on the 19th of November, the school had the privilege of receiving Mr. Koenraad Foulon and his wife Lynne, who have played an immense role in building the school to its current glory. Had it not been for their support, goal of providing equal opportunity for female students would not have been realized and it was only in 2009 that education for girls who wish to study at CTAS has been realized and it was all made possible thanks to the efforts of Mr. Koenraad and his daughter Leila.

Till date, a total of 61 girls from socially and financially disadvantaged backgrounds have successfully graduated. This is a huge step towards educating the youth of our traditional arts and crafts and in preserving the unique cultural heritage of Bhutan.



New Classroom Construction Underway

The construction of the new classroom building that began in early 2019 has made tremendous progress with the outer structure completed and confirmed to be completed in time for the academic session in March 2021.

All gifts that the school is able to raise are matched by Mr. Alan Bickell and his wife Patricia. Till date, the school has raised USD 165,327, which the Bickell's have matched. Hence, a total of USD 330,654 has been raised till date. We would like to thank Mr. & Mrs. Bickell and all the supporters for making us realize this dream project of creating safe and conducive learning environment for our students. However, as of now, only the outer structure has been completed and we still need additional financial support (which will be equally matched again by Mr. and Mrs. Bickell) so that the building will be completed in its entirety and as planned.



CTAS observe Zero Waste Hour

This year, from September onward, CTAS has joined the nation in observing the “Zero Waste Hour”. This means on the 2nd day of each month, an hour is dedicated to cleaning and maintaining the surrounding environment. This noble initiative was launched by Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Jetsun Pema with objective to instill a behavior change towards proper waste management and in order to get into the practice of sustainable consumption that will lead towards a safe, healthy and clean environment. This will contribute towards Bhutan’s vision of Zero Waste Society by 2030 and the school is honored to be a part of this Green initiative.



The Green and Natural Pigments Project

The school has ventured into using natural pigments through an art project that was carried out by 24 students from the third year painting class. The project aimed at using 100% natural pigments that were derived from plants and minerals because natural paints offer a sustainable and inexpensive way to add unique and beautiful textures to the paintings while inculcating environment friendly and non-toxic material options for our young painters. For this project we used powdered herbs such as turmeric, mustard, beet root, charcoal, tea leaves, red turnip and its leaves, Mentha(mint), walnut, khempa (artemisia), rhododendrons and bamboo shoots.

Ms. Dorji Choden, the lone female student in 3rd level painting course, has performed really well in this natural pigment project and her work was selected under the “Best Product of the Month” special category. Dorji comes from Sershong, Sarpang Dzongkhag (southern part of Bhutan). She is the eldest of the four siblings. She studied up to class twelve and couldn't continue further as her parents couldn't afford to send her to a private college.

Today when she looks back, she is happy with her decision and is optimistic of completing the entire course duration of seven years, while she admits of getting pressure to find a job to support her family. Given her competency, attitude and behavior, the school is optimistic that she could possibly become a role model for other young women to join this profession, which is largely a male dominated. She is very grateful to Leila and her father Mr. Koenraad for the support to establish girls' education in Choki Traditional Art School. Otherwise, girls like herself would not have availed such learning opportunity.



CTAS Instructors undergoing TOT Program

With the objective of providing high quality arts and crafts vocational education, it is paramount for the institute to have 100% of its instructor trained and certified by Ministry of Labour & Human Resources as deemed fit to be a good instructor, encompassing all the required traits.

Towards this end, the school is pleased to inform you that with the two instructors who are currently undergoing the TOT (Training of Trainers) program with Ministry of Labour & Human resources, 80% of all our instructors are TOT trained and certified. This is also one strategy towards realizing our goal of achieving Grade 'A' institute status in the country, which is a rare honor and privilege for a vocational institute. It will benefit our students and graduates immensely of the prestige of such status.

The Ustinov Project

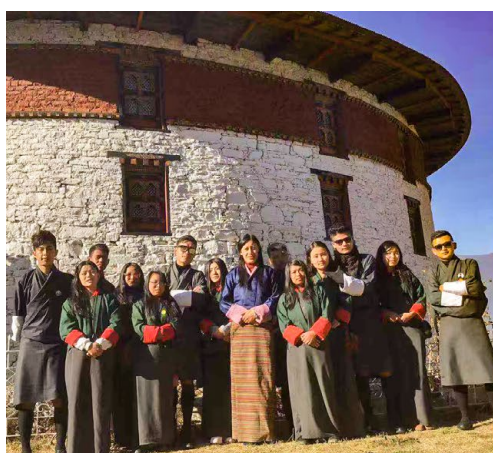
The school would like to convey its heartiest gratitude to Sir Peter Ustinov Foundation for supporting the school for four consecutive years (2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019). The assistance has been most useful and has taken the creativity learning and education in tailoring of our students to a greater height.

As part of the project, Ms. Chechey, Creativity teacher had the privilege to undergo five weeks training in Germany from 16th June- 22nd July 2019. This has enabled the school to fully operationalize the Bernina 560 machine and using V8 Software, simple traditional Bhutanese designs were digitized. As part of this innovation project, using organic plants, fabrics were dyed and cushion covers were made using the traditional designs developed through the V8 software. The school is pleased with this outcome and hope to carry out more research on the designs and natural dying in 2020.



CTAS Study Tour for Graduating students

The 2019 study tour was a 10-day field trip for the students graduating CTAS this year with the objective of creating new experiences and exposing them to places which are relevant to their learning. The tour took place from 2nd December to 11th December 2019. They visited places of historical and traditional interest in Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Bumthang and Phobjikha. According to the students, the study tour is one event which they always look forward to, and incentive provided by the school for successfully completing their program. Apart from being a privilege, it also gives them great insight and exposure into our rich culture and historical legacies.



General Meeting of the CTAS Alumni

The 2019 final meeting of the CTAS Alumni was held on 14th December. The meeting took stock of the progress, contributions made by the alumni, impact it has created on the school, set target and elect faculty members for 2020. The school thanked the 2019 faculties comprising of the Chairman (Mr. Thinley Dorji), Vice Chair (Passang Dorji, Choezang & Gem Lham) and Assistant (Jurmi Dorji, Sonam Tshering, Kuenga Dorji, Pema Dhendup, Pema Dema & Manisha Rai) for their unstinted support in helping the school, strengthening the bonding amongst the alumni & the students towards realizing the vision “To GROW AND TO HELP GROW”.

The school also thanked the school alumni coordinator, lopen Karma Wangchuk, who played an instrumental role in working as a bridge between the school and the Alumni and making the collaboration a great success. The School congratulated the new faculties of 2020 who were unanimously elected by the members present in the meeting.



A healthy CTAS is a happy CTAS!

All students and staff had the opportunity for a general health check-up from the Basic Health Unit (BHU) in Kabesa, as part of the BHU annual support in promoting a healthy mind and wellbeing while putting efforts in detecting health problems early on in order to safely treat them. The medical group had comprised of four health professionals who performed a health screening of the entire staff and student body and offered necessary advice and medication. The school expresses its gratitude for all of the time and effort put into making the school better with a clean health record.



The 2nd Annual CTAS Parent- Teacher Meeting

Held on August 10, 2019 in the CTAS Multi-purpose Hall, the meeting commenced with the objective of discussing the progress of the students and finding creative solutions for academic and behavioral issues that might pose problems for the school and other students. It was an important partnership effort that allowed both parents and teachers to come together to help the students utilize their full potential. Parents understand their child's personality, habits, strengths, and weaknesses while teachers are in the best position to work with the needs of the student and successfully guide the student in school. With that, cooperation between both parents and teachers provides opportunity for a brighter future of the students.

The school took the opportunity to discuss and share policies on rules and regulations that includes disciplinary actions towards students and consequent leave procedures of students. Parents had shared their concerns regarding the issue and expressed their gratitude to all the well-wishers of the school who had created the opportunity for their children to attend and receive schooling. Overall, the 2nd Annual Parent- Teacher meeting had proved to be very successful and the school management is optimistic of being able to continue improving and contributing towards a conducive learning environment that enhances the performance and well-being of the students.



The Annual CTAS School Picnic

The 12th of October was a lovely day with sunshine and laughter as the students and staff of CTAS worked together to have a picnic aside a river in Chari, located a bit further north of Thimphu. It is a perfect spot for picnic as it is surrounded by lush green forests and spiritual air. It was a fun-filled day that strengthened the bond between the teachers and students and had moments to relax and spend time with each other after a year of hard work. As always people worked together in the kitchen to prepare delicious meals, ran through a series of competitive games, dancing and singing. The day concluded with a Tashi-Labay dance, prayers for the continuing peace and happiness and a clean-up, to "take responsibility for own impact"



Instilling Awareness in Value Education

On the 26th of August, three Scouts expert from the Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, visited the school to provide an inspirational awareness presentation that supported the wholesome development of youth through activities that focus on development of personal values that pursue excellence and a positive attitude towards life. The Scouting Program was introduced in Bhutan in 1970 and is geared towards promoting citizenship education and self-development through joyful, meaningful and challenging activities focusing on the value of sharing, community living, strengthening of brotherhood (sisterhood) and making the youth understand their role in the nation building.

The session had quite an impact on the students as it provided an opportunity for future engagement and learning. Since the skills provided by the school alone cannot hope to make a good human being, the session had an incredible effect on the students and the school is grateful for the opportunity given. The list of interested students has been submitted for registration in the scouting program.



'Youth Forum' at CTAS

The CTAS students attended a 'Youth Forum' on "Sexual Harassment, Substance Abuse, Anti-Bullying, and Suicide Prevention" organized by the Kabesa Youth Centre, under the Ministry of Education. The forum was conducted at CTAS on October 25th and was also attended by students from Dechencholing Higher Secondary School and Kushichen High School.

The awareness program was conducted by Dechencholing Higher Secondary School Counselor, Kabesa Health Assistant, the Generation Youth-Peer and the Youth Center staff and volunteers. The program was found to be very educational and beneficial for the students as it can help reduce risk of our students becoming involved in unsafe activities such as using drugs, alcohol, teenage pregnancy and committing suicide.



An Offering of Merit Accumulation

The CTAS community, which included staff, students, neighbors and the Choki family, had the privilege of offering tea and snacks to over 400 monks who had completed their Yarney, which is a 45-day long summer retreat at the Tango Dodena. En route to Pangrizampa from Tango, the monks had passed by the school and the community had seized the opportunity to make this ceremonial offering for the benefit of all sentient beings and the Dharma of Buddha.

The origin of this retreat practice is believed to be an Indian custom established by the Buddha in the Vinaya Sutra and is now widely practiced in Bhutan and other Buddhist countries. The main idea behind the retreat is to avoid killing of the countless tiny beings, that are said to spring forth during the rainy season and so, the monks must remain indoors to focus on their spiritual practice and development. The alms-seeking round performed by the monks clad in saffron robes who carry bowls at the end of the Yarney, symbolizes the return of the monks to their respective villages after the retreat.



A Success Story: Thinley Dorji, Chairman of the Alumni



Hailing from a remote village in Lhuntshi in the eastern-most part of Bhutan, Thinley Dorji was a student at the CTAS who had joined the school in 2002 and successfully graduated in 2009. Due to financial difficulties and personal circumstances, he was forced to drop out of primary school in 3rd grade. Today he is standing on his own feet, while supporting his parents and three siblings and says that CTAS has made this possible and attending the school had been the best decision of his life. “The school has provided me the opportunity to develop myself and now, not only am I able to support my family but I can also give back to the school by supporting the school as the chairman of the Alumni Association. Supporting the school in every possible way has given me immense joy

and satisfaction and I am glad that this year we were able to successfully bring many alumni resources and experts that helped the school. I hope to be able to continuously support the school”.

Today he is working with another successful alumni, Sangay Tenzin, who had graduated from the school in 2007. Sangay Tenzin has repeatedly proved to be a role model and an inspiration for the students at CTAS and provides employment opportunities for our students. Thinley Dorji has collaborated with Sangay Tenzin on numerous occasions and carried out many projects together. Some of his works can be seen in the Kilikha Monastery in Mongar and Sefu Monastery in Wangdiphodrang. Thinley Dorji talks about the incredible progress he has made since the beginning and says “I am proud to see my works all over the country and being able to uphold our traditions and preserving our arts and crafts is something that I take great pride in. I am grateful to the school and all the well-wishers and supporters who have created such an opportunity and paving a bright future for youths like us. I wouldn't be where I am without it and I am thankful and happy to be where I am now.”

CTAS resubmit proposal for support to JBF

While there have been some significant developments towards future sustainability of the school, there is need of immediate support to meet the budgetary gap and hence the School has resubmitted its application for support to Julius Baer Foundation (JBF), Switzerland. While we hope and pray for a positive outcome, there is no guarantee and hence the school would like to humbly request for your continuous support.

We remain ever grateful and indebted to all our supporters for sustaining the school thus far and empowering as many youths of Bhutan to become productive citizens.



We still need your continued support to sustain our programs

TO SUPPORT US, PLEASE CONTACT US AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESSES

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