



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

KUZUZANGPOLA!

Welcome to the summer edition of our school newsletter. This edition includes a variety of activities and events that took place over the past 6 months. All of these activities contribute in working towards the goal of including a wholesome and holistic learning experience that integrates hands on learning and developing essential life skills. With blessings and

prayers from all the well-wishers and supporters, the academic year 2019 has been successfully commenced from March with a total of 160 students which consist of 123 boys and 37 girls.

Twenty years ago, the school was established with the goal of equipping the under-privileged youth with the knowledge and skills that would help them as they move on in life. Although that is the main priority of the school, we are also now working towards becoming certified for Quality Management System (QMS) and getting the current courses national recognition. Despite the lengthy and strenuous paperwork and processes involved, we are pleased to inform that the school is now fully committed towards this goal and has begun the process. The applications and all necessary paperwork have been submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources. This is a huge step for the school as it would upgrade the school from grade 'B' to grade 'A' and would enable the students to carry a nationally recognized certificate, which would vastly improve the future job prospects as compared to our current institution based certificate.

While the school strives towards its goal of providing thorough and quality education, we are having difficulties in meeting the operational budgetary gap. In hopes of improving our situation, earlier this year we had applied for grant support from Julius Baer Foundation, based in Switzerland. Unfortunately, the application was not approved and our operation budget for 2020 is still not secured. Although we have implemented a few strategies to meet the budget gap, it still proves to be quite a challenge to address immediately. Hence, we would like to request all well-wishers and supporters for your contribution again in meeting the budgetary gap in 2020.

As for the construction of the new classroom building, it is progressing well and thanks to the grants that were matched by Mr. Alan & Mrs. Patricia and the contributions from all the other well-wishers and supporters. The school would like to express its gratitude to everyone who has continued to support this project and would like to extend special thanks to Mr. Alan Bickell and Mrs. Patricia Bickell who has extended the matching grant till the end of the year. The classroom building is scheduled for completion by December 2020.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our main supporters, all other individual supporters and well-wishers for your continued support in making CTAS what it is today and making a big difference in the lives of promising youth in Bhutan.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!

Sonam Choki,
Principal

Blessed by His Holiness Kruba Boonchum

His Holiness Kruba Boonchum, popularly known as “the famous monk of the three nations” (Thailand, Myanmar and Northern Laos), visited CTAS on 19th February, 2019 to bless the school, staff, community and locals around Kabesa.

His Holiness Kruba Boonchum is closely associated with the success of the famous Tham Luang cave search incident which took place in July, 2018. Twelve boys and their assistant football coach were trapped in a cave for weeks and His Holiness was able to assure safety and success of the rescue attempts. It was believed that the hope promulgated by him and the religious rituals he performed has contributed to the success of the rescue efforts. His Holiness brought forth good wishes for construction of the new classroom and conducted a special prayer for benefit of all the sentient beings. His Holiness also made contribution to the construction of the new classroom building.



A promising start to a new school year

The start of 2019 saw a total applicant of 91 against the 36 available seats. Unfortunately, due to reaching maximum student capacity, the school had to turn down many potential applicants. It was very disheartening to see that only six girls had applied and showed up for the interview but since most of the existing courses are not that attractive to female applicants, it was not very surprising. The academic year 2019 started off with a total of 160 students, 123 males and 37 females.

Despite the demolition of the existing class rooms, the new academic session has adjusted smoothly into the temporary classrooms with minimal adverse impact on the quality of learning.



Welcome back, Manisha Rai

The school is pleased to welcome back Manisha Rai, a graduate of the class of 2018, who has returned as part of the teaching staff. Manisha Rai was the first ever female student, in the twenty years' history of the school, to complete the seven year course Lhadri program and now she has returned to become the first ever female Rimu (drawing) teacher. In fact, she would be one of the few ladies pursuing her career in this profession. Lhadri painting is a very male dominated field and it is quite rare for a woman to pursue a career in this particular field and extremely rare for a woman to actually teach the subject itself.

The school is very proud to have produced such a brave and talented student who have struggled against social norms and prejudice to rise up and pave the future for potential female students who might be interested in this field. Currently, she teaches level one students in Lhadri/Rimu.



New Classroom Building! Coming soon in 2020!

The construction of the new classroom building is going in full swing with the target of completion by December, 2020.

The school would like to, thank Mr. Alan and Mrs. Patricia for their generous offer of matching all grants raised and thank all the other well-wishers and supporters for their contribution. The grants would be matched by Mr. Alan until the end of December, 2019 and we look forward for your support in meeting the deficit which is to the tune of USD 122,588.



The Ustinov Project

The school was very blessed and fortunate to have received an additional year of support from the Sir Peter Foundation, based in Switzerland, with the objective of enhancing creativity among the students, diversifying products in accordance with recent trends, generating additional revenue for the school and enhancing and enabling the students to secure job prospects.

This is the fourth of receiving support from the Sir Peter Foundation and so far, their support has been invaluable and instrumental in taking our creative tailoring education program to greater heights.

As part of this program to support the creative tailoring in the school, with the kind support of the foundation, Ms. Chechey, creativity teacher has completed a six-week training course in Germany (June 17-July 23), to gain proficiency in use of Bernina 560 and V8 Software for development of various creative apparel and embroidery designs. The skilled gained would be essential in reforming the creative tailoring education in the school and enable the students to create new designs and embroidery, further evolving their understanding of tailoring and encouraging creativity and initiative.

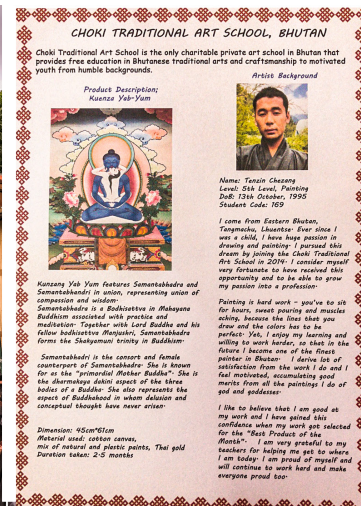
The modules from the training lesson will be used as basis to develop curriculum and structured class for the creativity class starting from August 2019.



The Launch of the “Best Product of the month”

In our efforts to nurture a sense of “quality” among the students and encourage them to continuously strive for excellence in craftsmanship, the school has initiated the Best Product of the Month (BPM) award system. In this system, the best works of the students are carefully selected through a strict criteria and the best works are then displayed and presented in a special section of the showroom. The students whose product got selected are awarded a certificate of excellence along with an honorarium to recognize his/her achievement. This initiative has been very successful as it has motivated many of the students to improve their craft and work hard to get their craft selected for the award. The proceedings from the sale of the best products are priced a bit higher as a strategy to meet its budgetary gap.

The initiative was launched on 25th May in a simple traditional setting with Lhabsang Thruelsel (rite of purification and cleansing) and Marchang (wine oblation ceremony) to invoke deities and seek their blessings for successful endeavor of the initiative.



Alumni Support

The alumni of CTAS have been uniquely supportive in our efforts to enrich the learning experiences of the students. They have either been supporting us with technical expertise or monetary contribution.

Six alumni supported a 3-week project that taught the students how to draw and carve a special painting that the school has never done before. Mr. Choezang, Mr. Tashi Tobgay, Mr. Sangay Choeda and Mr. Dorji Namgyal taught the fifth level students of Lhadri to carry out a special art, Kunzang Yab Yum (Samantabhadra with Consort, which represents the primordial union of wisdom and compassion). They had been fully involved with the project start to end, including the validation and assessment of work.

Mr. Pema Dhendup and Mr. Kinley Wangchuk taught the fifth level carving students to carve Chopei Lham (Offering Goddess), which is a new product for the school and is in promising demand in the market.



Alumni expert, Mr. Thinley Dorji, serving Alumni Chairman helped the final year students with the fine-tuning aspects of painting.



Alumni expert, Mr. Tshering Nidup taught the students on application of painting fine gold techniques (Serig).



Alumni Support Contd...

Alumni expert, Mr. Sangay Tenzin helped assist the final year students with the last and most difficult step of the thanka rendering process which is painting the eyes, lips and nose. This is the most important step and needs great expertise as the success or failure of a thanka often depends on whether the face is well painted. Hence, the support from the alumni expert on this final stage of the thanka painting has been most appreciated.



Enhancing ICT Capabilities at CTAS

Mr. Thomas Trub and Dariu Foundation have contributed computer equipment towards enhancement of Information Technology (IT) knowledge and skills of students. The support of ten desktops have provided opportunity for more students to take IT lessons, which otherwise has been constrained given the limited number of computers in the school. In addition, the six laptops received from the Foundation has enabled equipped the staff to enhance their efficiency and improvement in performance. The school is grateful for this valuable contribution which has enabled us to further improve the learning and teaching in school.

The basic learning on computer skills were first introduced in 2012 and since then, over 100 students have availed the opportunity to learn basic IT knowledge and skills.

The school is grateful to Ustinov Foundation who had provided desktops last winter and now with the gap closed by the Dariu Foundation, we have enough desktops to enable all interested students to take proper IT lessons.

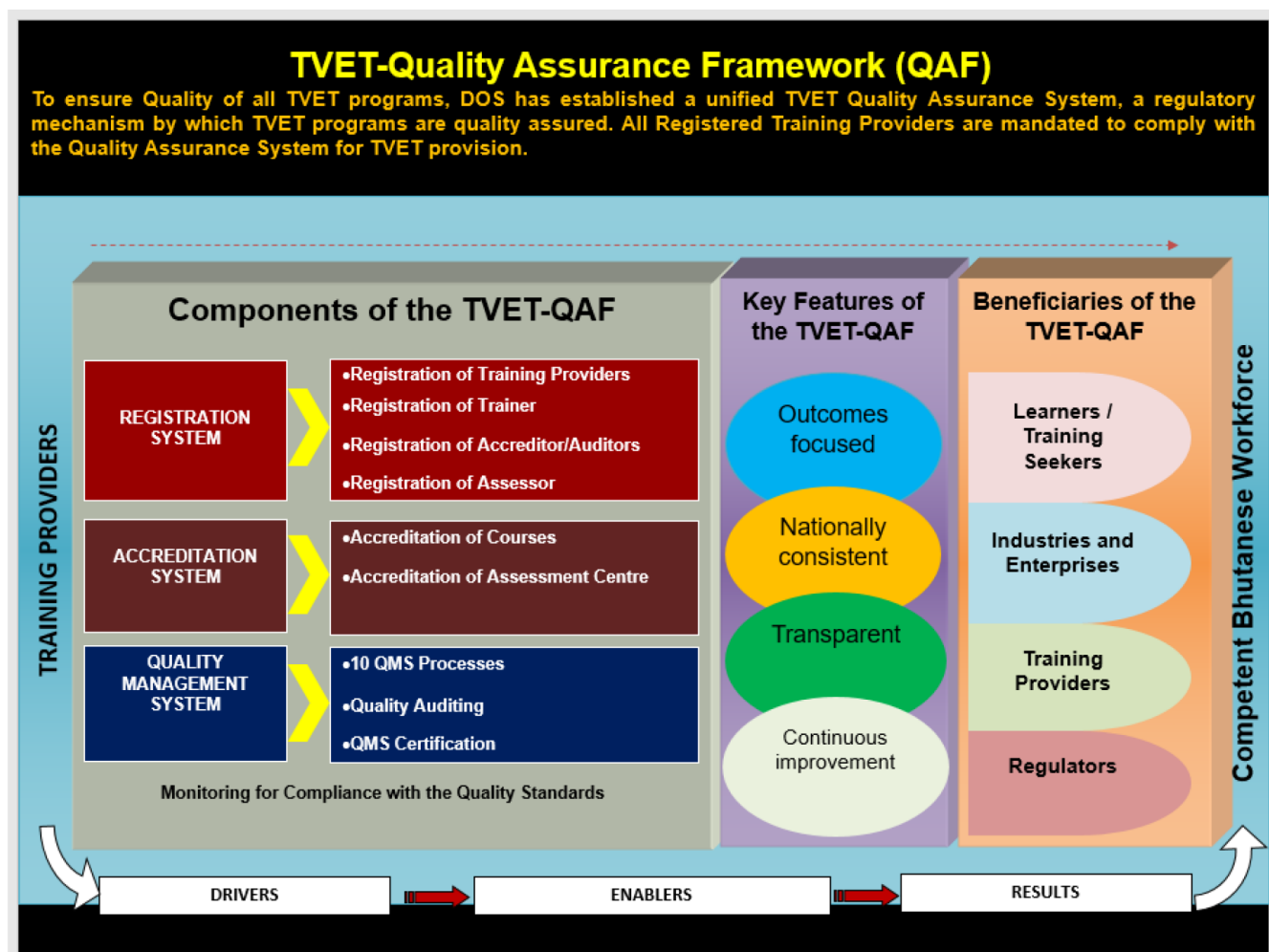


Setting sights on the QMS Certification

QMS (Quality Management System) is a quality assurance measure for continuous improvement in delivery of quality training and education, initiated by the Government of Bhutan. CTAS has submitted an application to the Ministry of labour & Human Resources for QMS certification. If approved, the school is hopeful of achieving grade 'A' institute in the country. Currently we are in position 'B'.

Apart from carrying this value certificate, it will also expedite the school to have its courses nationally accredited and enable the students carry nationally recognized certificate. This will provide level playing field for our graduates when entering the job market and have better future prospects.

Although the entire process place additional burden on the management, it is worth the effort given the huge opportunity presented before our students and in shaping their lives. The school management is committed towards achieving the certification and accreditation of the courses at the earliest.



TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence 2018

The school is pleased to share with all the well-wishers and supporters that the school has been recognized with a Certificate of Excellence for the two consecutive years; 2018 and 2019, which is all thanks to the consistently great reviews that we receive from the visitors.

The last one was received in 2015. The school will continue to work hard to maintain this reputation for years to come.



Growing visitors

The number of visitors visiting the school is gradually increasing over the years. We are only half year through and already exceeded last years' record. With the increase in visitors, the sale of artifacts produced by the students is also on rise, which is a good news as it will help meet the operational budget.

The sale thus far for the last four months is Nu. 813,204 (USD 12,000). Our target is to increase the sale revenue to USD 35,000 by end of the year.

Year	No. of visitors
2013	175
2014	243
2015	157
2016	137
2017	152
2018	274
2019 (as of June)	278

Introduction of the Tailoring Specialization Program

For the first time, the tailoring course has been provided with a specialization program that aims to ensure better employability of the graduating students who have completed their two years' program. The program was created based on feedback received from the students, who expressed their concerns of the lack of in-depth knowledge of specific fields which may then pose difficulties in entering the job market. Therefore, the school has started providing specialized options from this semester onwards. The feedback we received were very positive and encouraging. We also hope to improve the quality and standards by adopting and implementing standard measurement sizes such as medium, large and extra-large. The categories that are aligned with the market requirement are as follows:



1. Traditional dress making (Kira, Tego & Wonju)



2. Religious items/Choezay (Thanka, Chubu Gyltshen, Ten Khep, Gyltshen)



3) Souvenir Creativity (Handbag, Purse, Cushion cover, Bed Runner, Table Runner etc)

Celebrating the 20th School Foundation Day

Twenty years ago, the Choki Traditional Art School was founded by Dasho Choki Dorji. Although the actual school session began in March 1999, all of the auspicious rituals and prayers took place on the 17th of May, thereby making May 17 the School Foundation Day. Commemorating the school foundation day is very significant as it provides us opportunity to reflect and thank all the supporters, both within and outside for their contributions, and teachers & staff who has worked tirelessly throughout this incredible journey and contributed to the establishment and growth of the school.

Owing to the construction of the new class room and space constraint, this year the celebrations were limited to just the alumni, staff and students. It was a lively day with entertaining acts, songs and dances performed by the students and the alumni. The energy and passion of the students were clearly visible through their performances and the celebrations were lighthearted and merry. The celebrations were graced by the Founder and his family members and coinciding with the significance of the day, the awards for Best Teacher, Best Student of the Year, Best Supporting Staff and best voluntary staff were also awarded.



Best Teacher of the year 2018



Best Supporting staff 2018



Best Voluntar staff 2018



Best student of the year



Traditional welcome dance



Skeleton dance

School Rimdro

The fifth annual school rimdo (ritual ceremony) was held on 12th April 2019 at the newly constructed temporary class. The Rimdo was presided over by Tulku Thugten Sherab Yuser, the reincarnation of His late Holiness Chabjay Gedun Rinchen.

The ritual was performed for the well-being and happiness of all the sentient being- including our students, staff, supporters, donors, well-wishers and for continued sustainability of the school. The students, teachers and their families were fortunate to have received purification and long life blessings from the Tulku in the afternoon. The day ended with everyone blessed, their negative karmic action purified and imbued with a sense of thriving prosperity.



Any support for 2020 is much solicited

Despite all efforts to earn additional revenue to meet the budgetary gap, challenges still unfold. Furthermore, the application for support from the Julius Baer Foundation, was not successful and hence the operational budgetary gap for 2020 has not been secured. The school would like to humbly request for contributions from our supporters and well-wishers. While strategies are being planned to sustain ourselves, until then, your continuous support towards our school is invaluable and much appreciated.

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. THANK YOU ALL!

We wish you good health and lots of happiness.

