



## Principal Foreword



As the year came to a close, I am filled with gratitude and reflection on what a remarkable year 2024 has been. It has been a year marked by progress, achievements, and countless blessings—all made possible by the unwavering support of our supporters. This year again stand out as a successful year. We celebrated the graduation of 49 students, the highest number in our history, including 18 young women, bringing our total alumni to 372. This milestone represents not just numbers but the transformative journeys of individuals who have embraced the skills and values imparted at CTAS. While we have faced challenges, including students unable to complete their programs due to personal circumstances, it is heartening to see that many have still found ways to carve out a livelihood using the skills they gained here.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to welcome an anticipated surge in admissions, confident that our infrastructure is ready to support this growth. The new classrooms completed in 2021, coupled with the soon-to-be-inaugurated multipurpose hall, reflect the extraordinary generosity and vision of our supporters. This hall, made possible through the matching grant support from Alan and Patricia Bickell and contributions from all supporters, will create a more conducive learning environment for our students. These spaces are not merely buildings; they are a testament to the shared commitment to nurture young talents and preserve Bhutan's rich heritage. Starting next year, students will benefit from these facilities, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this possible.

At the heart of our mission lies the transformation of underprivileged youth—a legacy inspired by our late founder, Dasho Choki Dorji. While we continue to strive for self-sustainability, we remain deeply grateful for the kindness and support of our patrons, which enable us to pursue this vital work. In alignment with our sustainability goals, 2025 will mark the launch of the Living Museum and exhibit of additional crafts such as wood bowl carving, sculpture, and bamboo work. It will provide students with invaluable exposure to these important crafts, broadening their skills and opening up new career pathways. Depending on its success, we envision gradually expanding our curriculum to encompass all 13 traditional crafts of Bhutan. This evolution will offer underprivileged youth even greater opportunities while making CTAS a hub for immersive learning and a must-visit destination for those seeking deeper insights into Bhutanese arts and crafts. The Living Museum and additional exhibits will officially open on February 21st, coinciding with the Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the King.

Thank you for walking this journey with us and for enabling us to provide hope and opportunities to so many deserving young individuals. Your generosity and belief in our mission have been the cornerstone of our success and we look forward to your continued support. As we look forward to embracing the challenges and opportunities of the coming year with optimism, we remain inspired by your unwavering support to continue on this mission.

Wishing you and your loved ones a prosperous New Year

Thanking you and with heartfelt gratitude

(Sonam Choki)  
Principal



## A Space for Growth and Opportunity

The completion of the Multipurpose Hall is a dream realized, thanks to the unwavering support of Alan and Patricia, along with all our generous supporters, and the incredible fundraising efforts led by Koenraad and Lynne through the CTAS Trans Bhutan Trails initiative. This remarkable achievement would not have been possible without your kindness and belief in our vision.

This new facility is more than just a building—it's a beacon of hope and progress for our school. It addresses the long-standing challenge of space constraints, providing a spacious dining area where all our students can finally eat together comfortably. During events, no longer will half our students have to remain outside while staff and parents occupy the limited seating.

Beyond solving these practical issues, the Multipurpose Hall now serves as a beautiful space for extracurricular activities and houses a new school showroom, which will significantly enhance our ability to generate revenue. What makes this project truly special is the students' involvement. With great pride and dedication, they adorned the building with exquisite traditional Bhutanese paintings and wood carvings, showcasing their immense talent. This experience not only gave them the opportunity to contribute to an iconic asset of the school but also helped them gain invaluable skills and confidence to excel in their future careers.

We are deeply grateful for your generosity, which has transformed this vision into reality. Starting next year, the school will proudly use this space, and its benefits will ripple through the lives of our students and community for years to come. We thank each and every supporter who made it possible to realize this dream project and being part of this incredible journey.





## Celebrating Achievement, Gratitude, and Inspiration

This year marked a historic milestone for the school with the highest number of graduates ever—49 students, including 18 young women—showcasing the school’s growing impact and its commitment to empowering underprivileged youth.

The graduation night was held on 30th November. As usual, the graduation party was hosted by the graduating students and coordinated by the senior students who will graduate next year. The event was graced by Rinzin Namgay Dorji, the eldest son of the Founder. Parents and guardians joined the festivities, enjoying vibrant cultural performances and heartfelt exchanges of gratitude.

A highlight of the event was the presentation of the Founder Inspirational Award to a deserving student. Generously sponsored by Lynne and Koenraad in loving memory of the Founder, this prestigious award, along with precious gifts and medals for diploma graduates, added an extra layer of significance to the occasion. The school extends its deepest gratitude to them making this evening truly memorable and inspiring for all.



## Honoring the Founder’s Legacy: Founder’s Day

The graduation day was also celebrated as the Founder's Day. Therefore, as a heartfelt tribute to the late Founder, the Alumni, students, staff, and the Founder’s family gathered for a special prayer session in his memory, offering butter lamps and prayers. The event celebrated the enduring legacy of the Founder, whose vision and dedication continue to inspire the school’s growth and success.





## Leki Wangdi Wins 2024 Inspirational Award

The 2024 Inspirational Award was presented to Leki Wangdi, a 4th-year painting student and the school captain, during Graduation Day, which was also celebrated as Founder's Day in honor of the late founder. Based on nominations submitted and voted on by the students, Leki's outstanding qualities were evaluated against several criteria, including academic performance, competition achievements, attendance, participation, volunteering, disciplinary records, and leadership.

This award, established in conjunction with the school's 25th anniversary to honor the memory of its late founder through the generosity of Lynne and Koenraad Foulon, aims to recognize the most deserving student. The school is pleased with the outcome, as Leki has truly earned this recognition through his outstanding contributions. He also won the first position in the snow leopard art competition, organized at the school in commemorating the international snow leopard day on 23rd October this year.

Leki expressed heartfelt gratitude upon receiving the prestigious award, vowing to continue working hard and inspiring his fellow students. With two more years until his graduation in 2026, he remains committed to producing quality artwork to support the school's initiatives. Many of his creations have already earned the title of "Best Product of the Month," a testament to his exceptional talent and dedication. Leki is determined to maintain his high standards and extend support to his peers through his artistry.

In addition, Leki has been commissioned as one of the illustrators for an upcoming book by Mrs. Alia AlShamsi, a renowned author and illustrator from the UAE. Representing her country at international book fairs and art exhibitions, Mrs. AlShamsi currently serves as the Cultural Programming Manager at the Louvre Abu Dhabi. This collaboration not only underscores Leki's remarkable skills but also aligns with the school's vision of creating platforms for emerging talents to gain global recognition and career opportunities. The school eagerly anticipates the release of this inspiring publication featuring Leki's artwork.

In an inspiring gesture, Leki has volunteered to sponsor a student in 2025 using part of the payment he received for his illustrations. This act of kindness and his commitment to giving back reflect his generosity and dedication to helping another underprivileged youth acquire valuable skills at the school. Such an exceptional act truly deserves recognition and serves as a worthy example of inspiration for others.





## CTAS at the Karigari Art Exhibition, India

With the generous support of the Embassy of India to Bhutan and the India-Bhutan Foundation, the school had the honor of participating in the Karigari Art Exhibition in Kolkata, India. Organized by the Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC), this initiative celebrates the golden heritage of Indian craftsmanship through a harmonious blend of handicrafts, traditional fine arts, and exquisite textiles. The exhibition serves as a vital platform dedicated to preserving and promoting India's diverse folk arts and crafts, many of which are endangered and at risk of being forgotten. For the school, it was a profoundly enriching experience to represent Bhutan's arts and crafts on this prestigious platform. In addition to demonstrating its skills and creativity, the school benefited from valuable learning and networking opportunities. Moreover, the event enabled the school to sell student-created artifacts, raising some revenue for the school.

The exhibition took place from December 19 to 22, 2024. The Embassy of India to Bhutan and the India-Bhutan Foundation generously covered airfare and accommodation for three participants from the school and provided free exhibition space. The event proved immensely beneficial, and the school extends its deepest gratitude to the Embassy of India to Bhutan and the India-Bhutan Foundation for this invaluable opportunity.



## Donation of Tailoring Machines Boost Resources

Six sewing machines—three for embroidery and three for tailoring—have been generously donated by Mr. Kapil Siliwal of Citizen Udyog, a renowned Indian sewing machine manufacturer established in 1964. These machines address the shortage of equipment at the school, ensuring that students have adequate resources for effective learning and skill development. The school extends its heartfelt gratitude to Citizen Udyog and Mr. Siliwal for this generous and impactful donation.





# Workshop on Recycling and Waste Management

On 24th August 2024, Gross International Nature (GIN) conducted an enlightening workshop at the school, focusing on waste management and the importance of recycling. The session provided our students with valuable insights into waste segregation, identifying recyclable household plastics, and sustainable practices that help protect our environment. The workshop highlighted the importance of correctly identifying and segregating plastics, emphasizing the recycling rules which will always be remembered and followed at CTAS. As part of our commitment, the school will implement a three-bin system to efficiently sort recyclable materials and reduce overall waste.

In addition to their informative presentation, GIN generously sponsored a delicious meal for the entire CTAS community, making the event even more memorable. We are grateful for this collaboration and the positive impact it will have on our students and staff. Furthermore, 12 waste bins were donated which will enable the school to segregate the waste properly and step towards a cleaner and greener future.



## Bhutan Ecological Society Expo

The school is delighted to receive an invitation from the Bhutan Ecological Society to participate in their expo held on September 7-8, 2024, at Namgay Heritage. This two-day event aimed to build youth interest, capability, and partnerships to promote sustainable waste management practices, with a special focus on the critical issue of plastic waste in Bhutan's rivers and environment. As part of the broader "Reimagining Effective Partnerships for Tackling Plastic Waste and River Pollution" project, the expo provided a dynamic platform to educate, engage, and empower the Bhutanese community, especially the youth, in championing plastic-free rivers.

Representing the school, Mr. Sonam Norbu, an instructor and team leader of the safety and waste committee, along with four students, had the valuable opportunity to attend this significant forum. They expressed that it was a remarkable exposure to interact with representatives from schools and institutions across Bhutan. The event provided them with a profound learning experience, equipping them with knowledge and skills to become effective advocates for waste management and reduction at the school.



## Celebrating International Snow Leopard Day

The celebration of International Snow Leopard Day at Choki Traditional Art School, now an annual event since the school's 25th Anniversary in 2023, was observed on 23rd October for the second time this year. The event was graced by the head of the local community as the guest of honor, alongside officials from WWF-Bhutan, the Forest and Park Services, the principal and students of Kuzugchen Higher Secondary School, Druk Ralung Monastery principal, and other community representatives.

The day successfully highlighted the shared vulnerability of the snow leopard and Bhutan's traditional arts and crafts, both of which face extinction without preservation efforts. An art competition centered on the snow leopard saw excellent participation. Additionally, a skit focusing on the conservation of snow leopards and the preservation of traditional arts was performed, further emphasizing the day's message. The event proved to be a fruitful effort in raising awareness and promoting conservation within the school and the community.



## Introducing Modern Art Techniques

With the support of its alumni, the school had the privilege of hosting a well-known artist who taught the basic techniques of modern art to 70 painting students. Mr. Tsheddar Dorji, a renowned artist in the country, is known for his contemporary art and lifelike clay statue-making. It was a great honor and privilege for the school to have him as a resource, thanks to the support of Alumni Chairman, Kinley Wangchuk. This project successfully achieved its dual objective: providing students with the opportunity to learn modern art techniques while also serving as a platform for them to create artworks for the Snow Leopard Art Competition, held in celebration of International Snow Leopard Day on 23rd October.





## School participate in Mineral Pigment Workshop

The school participated in a three-day Mineral Pigment Workshop organized by the Department of Culture, Royal Government of Bhutan, for 32 artists across the country. This ancient art technique, using natural minerals to create pigments, remains a vital part of Bhutan's cultural heritage. Participants, including the school's painting teacher, Karma Wangchuk, were trained in pigment painting and showcased works such as Buddha paintings. The experience provided valuable insights into pigment sources and techniques, which will be introduced to students, helping to preserve this traditional art form for future generations.



## Journey of Entrepreneurship with SEED Program

A heartfelt thank you to the Loden Foundation and Impact Hub for hosting an inspiring two-day workshop, Student Empowerment through Entrepreneurship Development (SEED), on November 8-9, 2024, at the School! This program has given some insight to our young artists to explore their entrepreneurial potential and envision new pathways for creative entrepreneurship.

We're thrilled to share that a team of five students from the school won a cash prize of Nu. 30,000 for their innovative business proposal, selected from five competing groups. This fund, awarded by Impact Hub Thimphu on November 29, is to be invested in their proposed business idea. The team was guided on utilizing the funds effectively to bring their concept to life, with an emphasis on capacity building, creativity, and practical experience. The ultimate goal of the program is to nurture entrepreneurial talent, foster business potential, and contribute to Bhutan's growing pool of creative professionals.





## CTAS's Annual Yarney Ceremony

The CTAS community proudly participated in the annual Yarney ceremony, offering tea and refreshments to over 400 lams and monks who completed their 45-day summer retreat at Tango Dodena, a Buddhist university. This marks the sixth consecutive year of the school's involvement in this sacred tradition, which aims to avoid harming small creatures during the rainy season and promote spiritual growth. The ceremony included ceremonial offerings, generating immense merit and blessings. The school's participation brings profound joy and strengthens its commitment to spiritual practice and community service, thereby nurturing community bonding. In recognition of the school's dedication to observing this tradition for the benefit of all sentient beings over the years, the head of the Buddhist University awarded the school with a certificate of appreciation. The merit accumulated is believed to bring good health and prosperity to all supporters of the school, students, staff, their families, and all sentient beings.



## School Picnic; 19th October



## Generous Support from Albrecht Kiesow Foundation

The School is thrilled to announce a significant financial contribution from the Albrecht Kiesow Foundation, Germany, for the year 2025. This generous support will greatly enhance the school's resources and facilities. The foundation can also issue tax receipts for donations, providing an additional avenue for fundraising, alongside support from the Himalayan Youth Foundation in the USA and the UK. CTAS extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Foundation for their generous support and the opportunity to route donations through their foundation, ensuring continued educational excellence for underprivileged youths and cultural preservation.



## Alumni Achievements: A Year of Progress

The 30th of November began with the General Alumni Meeting, showcasing the remarkable milestones achieved under the leadership of outgoing Chairman Kinley Wangchuk. Alumni not only surpassed membership and financial contribution targets but also mobilized expertise from within the alumni network and external collaborators. These accomplishments have set a new benchmark, enabling sponsorship for two students in 2025 and laying a strong foundation for the incoming leadership team.



## Iconic Pangrizampa Bridge Project

The school is proud to contribute to the painting of the iconic traditional bridge at Pangrizampa, Thimphu with authentic Bhutanese paintings. Spanning 35 meters, this traditional motorable bridge uniquely blends modern technology with traditional architecture and is the first of its kind in Bhutan. As a landmark project, we are honored to have our students participate in its traditional decoration, providing them with valuable on-the-job training and experience.

This special project holds significance for the school for several reasons: it allows our students to gain hands-on experience in a high-profile endeavor, helping them learn beyond the classroom and prepare for future employment; it supports and strengthens collaboration with our alumni, fostering mutual growth and sustainability. The project's contract was awarded to one of our talented alumni, a 2011 graduate who has since established a thriving career. Partnering with him on this unique project not only highlights the success of our graduates but also reinforces the school's commitment to building a community that thrives together.





## How you can help?

HELP EDUCATE AN UNDERPRIVILEGED YOUTH

### You feed them for a lifetime

USD 2.6 can cover three meals, lodging and tuition for a day

USD 2850 - 5700 can support a student from three to six years.

Help make a difference in the life of a young Bhutanese youth.

Help a student become a professional painter, carver, embroider and weaver and succeed in life

If you have any questions, please email [sonamctas@gmail.com](mailto:sonamctas@gmail.com)



Your support has already transformed the lives of many underprivileged youths and preserved the cultural integrity of Bhutan. We look forward to your continued support in sustaining our program. You can contribute through any of the contacts below. All donations are tax-deductible and will go entirely to support the deserving students at CTAS:

**A - [Himalayan Youth Foundation US](http://www.hyf-us.org)**  
106 S. Interlachen Avenue # 619  
Winter Park, FL, 32789, USA  
[www.hyf-us.org](http://www.hyf-us.org)

**B - [Himalayan Youth Foundation UK](https://www.hyf-uk.org)**  
7 Hallam Mews, London  
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**C - [Albrecht Kiesow Foundation](https://www.albrecht-kiesow-stiftung.de)**  
Brückenstraße 30  
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<https://www.albrecht-kiesow-stiftung.de>  
email: [info@albrecht-kiesow-stiftung.de](mailto:info@albrecht-kiesow-stiftung.de)

OR, You may kindly contact the school at:  
Sonam Choki ([sonamctas@gmail.com](mailto:sonamctas@gmail.com))  
or Dorji Wangmo ([dorjiwangmo197@gmail.com](mailto:dorjiwangmo197@gmail.com))



**THANK YOU & KADRINCHEY LA!**