



Sermey Thoesam School - Children & Staff with the Abbot of Sera Mey Monastery - October 2022

SERMEY THOESAM SCHOOL

Annual Report 2022

2022 School reopening

After two years of much disruption, 2022 was a good year of continuity and stability. The new Academic Session of 2022 started on 30th March as scheduled. The children and the staff were in full attendance - giving the year a very good start off!

Being the very 1st Morning Assembly, it was put to good use by the School Management to share directives and guidance that has relevance for the optimum effective running of the School and best possible learning by the children.

As a daily feature, the Morning Assembly, as a platform, would include the Morning Meditation Session of 5 minutes, the chanting of the Praise to Buddha of Wisdom followed by the Indian and Tibetan National Anthems. Thereafter, the School Principal, Headmaster and teachers avail the opportunity to address the gathering with important announcements, topical information, general and also special instructions etc. On important occasions, the Abbot and the Disciplinarian of the Sera Mey Monastery (*the parent body of the School*), address the children and the staff.

As of January 2023 - there were 427 students and 27 teachers (22 lay and 5 monk teachers) at the School. The School Office was with seven (7) staff plus 2 sweepers and 1 cook.

67 students of the School (inclusive of those completing class VIII in 2021 and others who had attained 15 years of age and above) joined the Sera Mey Monastery as full time monks at the beginning of 2022.

A total of 84 new students joined the School during 2022.

A. Staff updates

4 new teachers joined the School from the new Academic Session. As per the Management's felt need in 2021, 3 of them are with B.Ed. & TTC teaching qualifications as put out in the School's announcements. The 4th is a Science Post Graduate and already in the process of acquiring the B.Ed. degree. This criterion will continue to be adopted for all such future recruitments for the long term "teaching & learning" quality improvement in the School. Thereafter, additional 3 more qualified teachers joined the School in October, 2022. The School is very hopeful that "improved teaching" and "improved learning" will happen in the coming months and years.

The School's Principal Geshe Tenzin Topden ended his term of service so Geshe la left the job in June. School's new Principal Mr. Lobsang Jamyang joined the School from 1st July. Mr. Lobsang Jamyang (a retiree) had worked at different schools. He had the longest term of service with TCV Bylakuppe School. He has indeed much experience with not only as a teacher but equally knowledgeable with the administrative fundamentals of a School. It is hoped that the School will benefit much and make very necessary changeovers under his mentorship.

The staff received an increment in their salary plus the benefits of house rent allowance. This is the Management's efforts towards slowly bringing the salary of the staff at par with

the other Schools in the Settlement and Monasteries in Bylakuppe. Needless to say, this will be also very dependent on the sustained support from our donors and sponsors.

Copies of the newly formalized **Rules & Code of Conduct of Sermey Thoesam School** were handed out to all the staff (teaching as well as non-teaching) at the beginning of the Academic Session 2022. Everyone was requested to give it very thorough reading for familiarization and also for taking ownership of this important School document. The document came into immediate effect.

The School Library has a new Librarian as the previous one requested to be relieved of his responsibility. Also new Cook/Kitchen In charge comes in as the term of service of the previous one came to an end. We also have a new Cashier in the person of Geshe Ngawang Choegyal who replaces Geshe Ngawang Lobsang, who was in the position for more than 4 years.

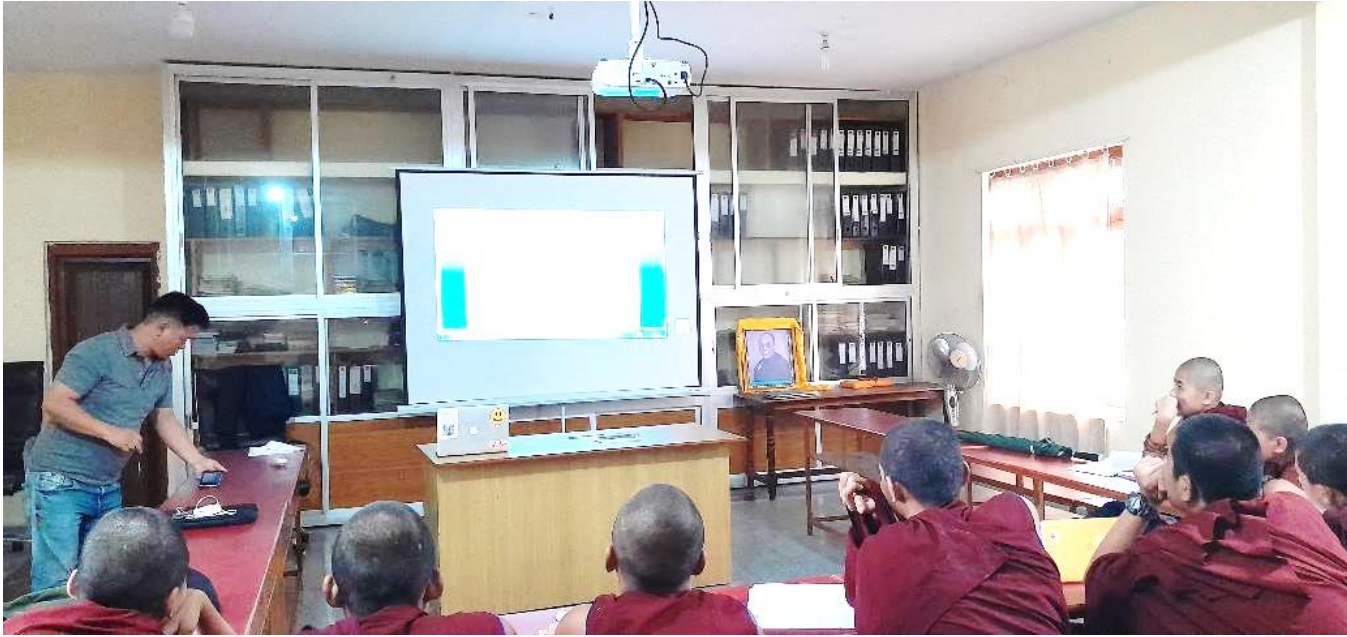
B. Academic

1. To make the lesson division amongst teachers of better coherence and dynamism, the teachers are now divided into 6 Departments: English, Tibetan, Mathematics, Science, Social & the Montessori Sections. This is very enabling for division of lessons effectively and preparation of Teachers' **Time Table**.
2. Two Montessori Sections (1 class of **Upper Kindergarten** & 2 classes of **Lower Kindergarten**) with the necessary Teaching Aids and with improved Montessori



decorations was inaugurated by the Abbot of Sera Mey Monastery. Three teachers are assigned to hold the daily lessons and activities starting from the month of June.

3. **An Audio Visual Room** is now functional with Overhead Projector and Screen i.e. since May, 2022. In addition to general computer literacy, the children of class V and above have lessons in MS Office: MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint and basic workings of the Internet. With the big screen, the teacher is able to reach out to the children more inclusively instead of having to attend to their questions individually - by which everyone is learning more.



Audio Visual Room - Computer / MS Office class

4. A **Special Class** was started for the ex-students of the School who are actually now full time monks at the Sera Mey Monastery. The Abbot of the Monastery understands the need for these young students to continue with classes in English, Mathematics and Science so that they not only retain what they have already learned at the School but also continue to make further improvement so that they have a more enabling knowledge in these for use in their daily life.
5. Tibetan and English Calligraphy are being included in the School syllabus but presently only Tibetan Calligraphy is being taken up.



School teachers and Office staff - October 2022

C. Infrastructure

1. New School Hall

The new School Hall is now functional and put to good use (the repurposed old Debating Hall of Sera Mey Monastery). The Morning Meditation Session & Morning Assembly is being held there on a daily basis. It is a very big convenience during the long monsoon months! School meetings, functions, performances etc. are all being held here. It is very spacious, airy and also has good natural lighting.





Old Debate Courtyard repurposed as School Hall with addition of walls and windows (outside/inside photos)

2. Kitchen renovation

The School kitchen was renovated as parts of its wall on 2 sides were getting very damp and flaky during the monsoon time and also the floor was cracked and broken at many places. Along with the above repairs, shelves were also done. It is now a very spacious and uncluttered kitchen.

On a daily basis, the kitchen is used for making tea for the staff and also cooking of add-on dish for the staff to go with the rice-dal lunch provided by the Monastery kitchen. Once in a while, the kitchen is used for cooking meals for everyone at the School i.e. on occasions like Teachers' Day, Children's Day, School Picnic Day and School Annual Result Day.





Extra-diet of eggs for the children

3. Games Playground

12 outdoor games like Swings, Slides, and Metal Rotating See Saws etc. are now installed in the School ground (nearby the School Hall) with very easy access for the junior students of the School. Children are making very good use of the games during School morning and afternoon breaks.





Children enjoying the games...

4. Greening: tree plantation, flower pots and flower beds

Tree plantation and also a number of flower beds and pots are now dotting the School compound making it greener, colorful and a joyful place. [



Tree plantation - School Senior Section area



Office, Exam Committee Room and Guest Rooms

5. Staff quarter

The continued need for recruitment of additional teachers is creating the need for additional staff quarter for those Tibetan job seekers who come from outside of the Bylakuppe Settlement. The only way to attract qualified teachers is to provide the minimum standard salary and also staff quarter if needed (in the case of outsiders). The Management is making every effort to meet the minimum salary standard especially for the teachers despite the fact that the School is totally dependent on the contributions of our donors and sponsors.

The existing Staff Quarter has accommodation capacity for only six staff family. 5 teachers are already occupying the "guestrooms" at the School. Sadly, the Staff Quarter and the guestrooms are with very bare basic necessities only - with only 2 small rooms, common toilet/bath and with no proper kitchen unit.

Understanding this very pressing need, the School Management has already taken the decision to construct Staff Quarter of 21 Units with kitchen unit, toilet/bath, bedroom, living room and verandah included. The blue print and the design concept are already passed by the Management. The biggest issue will be the funding for the project. The Management is already in the process of approaching potential donors for the project.

**ESTIMATE OF THE PROPOSED STAFF QUARTERS FOR SERA MEY
THOESAM SCHOOL, P.O BYLAKUPPE, MYSORE DISTT. KARNATAKA STATE.**

Cost Summary

S.no.	Description	Unit	Quantity	Rate	Amount
1	Cement	No	11850	450	5332500
2	Sand 1. Fine,	cuft	25100	60	1506000
	2. Coarse,	cuft	46200	50	2310000
	Coarse aggregates. 1. 20mm,	cuft	51600	50	2580000
	2. 40mm,	cuft	6700	45	301500
3	Stone 1. Cut size,	no	25800	17	438600
	2. Boulders,	cuft	22100	38	839800
4	Bricks 1. CC block (6"x 8"x 16"),	No	27000	38	1026000
	2. CC block (4"x 8"x 16"),	No	6000	33	198000
5	Tor. Steel reinforcement.	T	57	65000	3705000
6	Openings 1. Door (Neem Frame and laminated door),	no	68	18000	1224000
	2. Window (3 track Aluminium sections),	no	42	12800	537600
	3. Ventilation (3 track Aluminium sections),	no	40	4500	180000
	4. Grills (MS rods in simple design)	sqft	1600	125	200000
7	Floor 1. Granite,	Sqft	1510	220	332200
	2. Tile.	Sqft	22000	100	2200000
8	Centering/Shutterind and Scaffolding.	Sqft	61100	35	2138500
9	Earthwork excavation for foundation.	l/s			350000
10	Electrical internal work.	l/s			800000
11	Painting and Distemping.	l/s			1400000
13	Internal and External Plumbing work (including septic tank and PVC water tank 8000 litres)	l/s			1550000
14	SS tube railings and CC topping.	l/s			700000
15	Labour for civil work in super structure.	l/s			6800000
16	Earthwork leveling and retaining wall for the building part only	l/s			1850000
17	Kitchen Cabnets and wardrobes	l/s			2000000
18	Slope roof with manglore tiles.	l/s			1900000
19	Electrical transformer and accessories	l/s			1000000
	Total				43399700
	Contingencies 3% of the total				1301991
	TOTAL				44701691

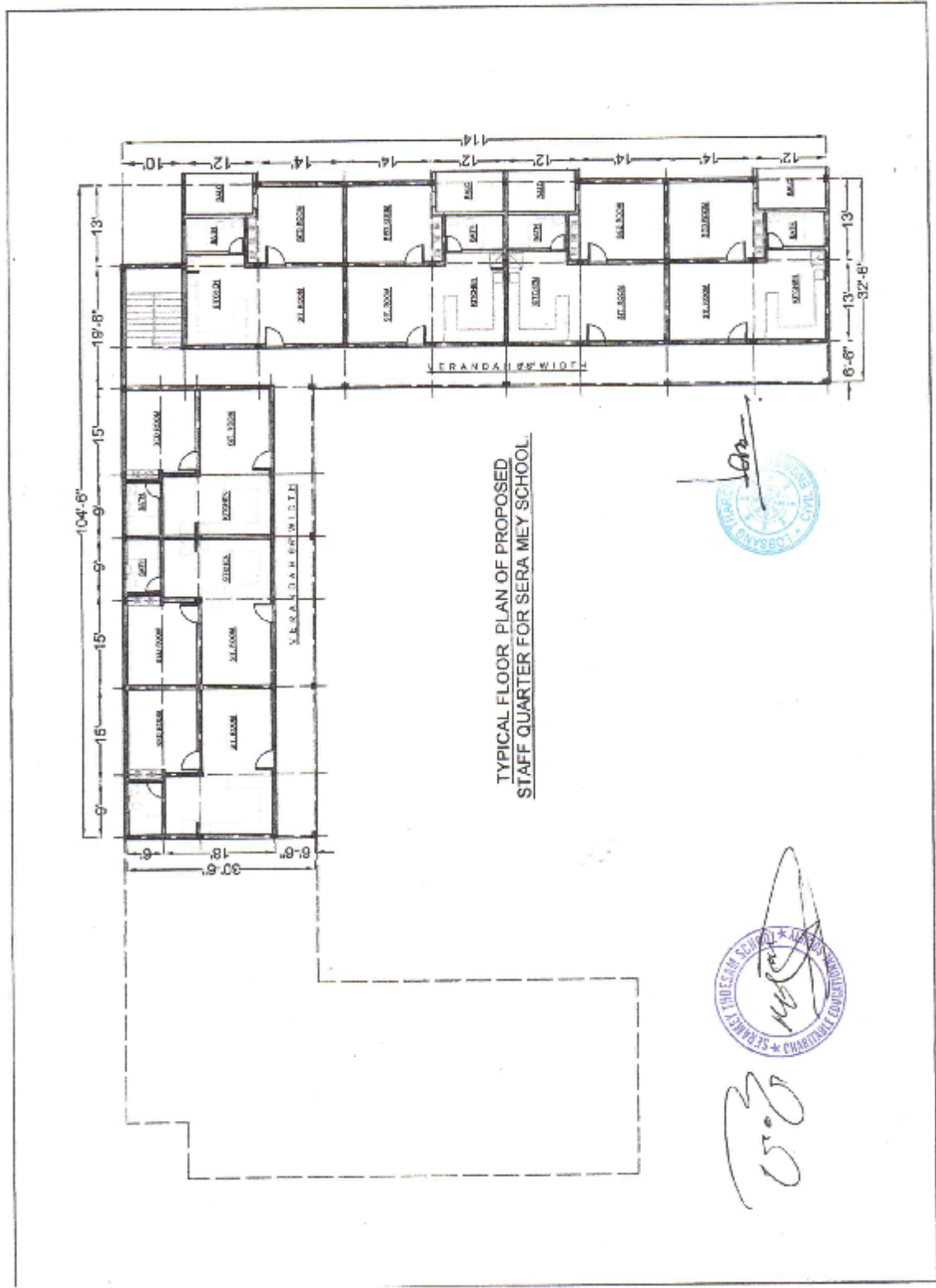
Date: 12/11/2022



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Groundbreaking at the construction site - Staff Quarter



TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN OF PROPOSED STAFF QUARTER FOR SERA MEY SCHOOL.

Proposed Plan - Staff Quarter

D. Workshops

1. Teachers' Professional Development sessions

All the teachers of the School participated and made their presentations to share their experiences and insights for "a common and shared professional development". In each session 3-4 teachers made their presentations on different School teaching, learning & discipline relevant subjects to the audience. These sessions were held monthly from April till December (but no session was held in November due to School break). All the teachers participated with their Presentations and gave very positive feedback about the sessions being of a good learning experience of participation, analysis, exploration, objectivity etc.



The maiden Teachers' Professional Development session in progress...

2. Lesson Plan workshop

The teachers of the School participated in the workshop on **Lesson Planning**. The workshop was for 2 days. The first day included "classroom observations" and also visits around the School. The 2nd day workshop was on HOW TO MAKE AN EFFECTIVE LESSON PLAN inclusive of Lesson Planning, Student Management and How to understand and address students' problems. The workshop of PowerPoint presentations, group discussions/work, question-answers and feedback at the end of the workshop - was found very useful by the attendee teachers. Following thereby and as required, the teachers did the practical task of preparing their LESSON PLAN.





Workshop participants and the Resource Person Mr. Tenzin Dorjee, Head of Academic Section, Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)

3. Theatre & Story-telling Workshop for Pre-Primary Teachers

Our School's Montessori teacher Mr. Karma Dorjee participated in the Workshop that was for duration of 4 days. 10 Tibetans Schools in South India and with a total of 32 Pre-Primary School teachers participated in the Workshop.

Mr. Tenzin Dorjee, Head of the Academic, Department of Education (CTA) was joined by 2 Resource Persons from **BOOKWORM Goa**.

An excerpt from the Workshop report:

The resource persons for the workshop were Sujata Noronha and Shreya Sinha alias Alia from Bookworm, Goa. They took sessions on why stories matter, sharing childhood memories of stories and activities, language and types of stories, prop making and storytelling, theatre games and work, etc. On the final day, all the participant teachers were given hands-on experiences of storytelling at STS Kailashpura. Karma Dolker, Librarian of TCV School Bylakuppe and Tenzin Dhaze of Help Tibet Trust, Bylakuppe helped in displaying story books and in translating the sessions in Tibetan for the teachers throughout the workshop.



Workshop in progress - by one of the Facilitators from Goa

E. School Extra-curricular activities

Along with the regular classes, the children very much missed the extra-curricular activities at the School during 2020 and 2021. So this year it was with much anticipation and excitement that the celebrations like Teachers' Day, Children's Day and the Annual Picnic Day was enjoyed to the fullest! Participation was also very encouraging for the English & Tibetan Debates, English & Tibetan Essay Contests for the students of class V and above. The Children's Day was the most special day for the children as they enjoyed the performances by the teachers, the football matches with the teachers, other games like tug-of-war, balloon bursting, and Sack race and so on. Everyone i.e. from the Kindergarten sections to class VIII and the staff all took part to make it a special day for the children. There was also special lunch and dinner prepared at the School for the children and the staff.



The Debate in progress...the competing participants on the dais



English Debate prize presentation



Football match between senior class sections



It is lunch time!!!

F. Examination, School Annual Day & School Break

As regular classes could be held after a gap of 2 years, it was also good that regular examinations could be held as before. The class tests, Term Tests and Annual Examination were all held on time and in an atmosphere of normalcy.

Total students in the School as of December, 2022	427
Total students appearing for the Annual Examination 2022 held from 13th January, 2023 onwards	427
Total number of successful students	378
Total number of unsuccessful students	49
Overall Pass Percentage of 2022	88.52%

OVERALL SCHOOL TOPPER: GELEK JAMTSE OF CLASS VI	94.44%
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Gelek Jamtse of class VI - School Topper for 2022 with an overall 94.44%



Annual Exam 2022 in progress

The marks from the Class Tests and the Term Tests are aggregated with the Annual Examination marks to have the overall view of the students' LEARNING in 2022. 12 students could not clear their 2021 examinations and had to repeat their classes in 2022. As many of the children are already over aged when they join the School due to reasons like late start of schooling or lack of schooling at all as they come from very remote areas in the Himalayas, some of them become very over aged when they finally complete class VIII (*in a regular School, a child completes class VIII when he/ she attains the age of 12/13*). But here at the School, there are students who are in their late teens and still being in class VIII only. In a general situation, due to overage, many avenues of admissions and also job recruitments come to be barred due to set age limits but here, at the Monastery, the novices are already permanent Sangha Members when they join the School and each has the opportunity to pursue the Doctorate in Buddhist Philosophy (the **Geshe Degree**) dependent on their aptitude and capability and NOT age.

G. Health



Health Centre Nurse doing the Presentation

1. Dengue spread control

As a precautionary measure, on 18th May the staff of Sera Mey Health Centre was to the School and gave a presentation on the spread, control and treatment of Dengue. A number of dengue cases were being reported in the Monastery early May so immediate action was needed so that it does not spread to the larger populace of the Monastery. The staff also spoke in detail, most importantly, what everyone concerned can do to avoid the breeding of the dengue mosquito. The children took good interest and also put questions to the speakers to have a better understanding of their responsibilities.

Fumigation of the Monastery area was done at regular intervals.

2. Hepatitis vaccination

In early June, few Hepatitis B cases were being reported about in the Monastery. Three of the cases were being treated at the Sera Mey Health Centre - of these 2 (twins) have the disease as hereditary from the parents. All three are on medication and need to continue the same. Due to the early intervention by the Health Centre, further spread of the disease could be brought under control. All the same, as a precautionary preventive measure, the Staff and children of the School were given the Hepatitis shots - 1 shot was given on 15th July and the second one a month later. The 3rd shot became due and given on 12th January, 2023.

The **3-times-a-week** provision of extra-diet of fruits and egg is helping to augment the nutritional needs of the growing and very active young boys keeping them at bay from ailments especially seasonal & contagious ones thus effectively reducing the incidences of sick- leave from the School.

H. Visitors to the School during the year

1. Students' Group from the US - July 2022

We were happy to welcome and host a group of Tibetan students from the US who were on a visit to Sera Jey Monastery for the Summer Camp - a total of around 60 children. Most of these boys and girls are American-Tibetans born and brought up in the US and having known only the American way of life. They were shown around the School, interacted with the children and the teachers. Later on there was a Q&A Session in the School Hall presided over by the Abbot of Sera Mey Monastery and the School staff. Cold drinks and snacks were served to all. We hope that it was a good learning experience for them - an experience of empowering assimilation!



Interactive session with the visitor by presided over by the Abbot Sera Mey Monastery

2. Donor visitors from Vietnam - October 2022

Sadly, due to the pandemic Lockdown, it was not possible for our donors to make their visit to the School to meet the children and the staff and also to see the developments at the School.

We were surely very happy that a group of our very kind donors from Singapore (*sponsors belonging to Singapore, Malaysia, USA & China*) could come on visit a year before the pandemic lockdown i.e. in August 2019.

As situation remained much improved during 2022, our kind donors from Vietnam could very kindly make a visit to the School. Three of our very kind donors: Mrs. Quach Trinh, Dr. Ngo Thi Ngoc Trinh & Mrs. Lan Anh Tran had about a week at Sera Mey Monastery and the School. They were able to see the tree plantation, flower beds and flower pot arrangements around the School compound that was possible with their kind financial assistance. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to them for their support also with the teachers' salary and the improvement work that will be done for the 3 Montessori Sections with new Montessori standard tables and also proper lighting system.

It was regrettable that they could not meet and interact with the children and the Staff as the School was closed for the Autumn Break.

3. Donor visitor Dr. Loksang from Spain - December 2022

Dr. Loksang is a Tibetan Medicine physician settled in Spain. Dr. Loksang had earlier, together with his two friends, contributed towards the furniture purchase for the 9 new classrooms that came up in 2020 and also a part replacement of furniture for the old classrooms. Our School Principal very kindly showed him around the School and briefed him on the developments at the School. It is always good for a donor to have a first person experience

4. Students' Group from Australia December 2022

A group of students were on a short visit to the School (17 students & 4 staff). They had come to TCV Bylakuppe to study Tibetan language as they do not have this opportunity in Australia. They were given introductory information on the School by the Principal and later shown around the School classrooms, Library, Office, kitchen and so on. These Tibetan children are born and brought up in Australia so they have known only the Australian way of life. So it was good for them to "experience" the Tibetan way of life here in India: the Settlements, Schools, Monasteries and so on. The interactions and their queries/answers, we hope, have been good inputs as they strive to familiarize and assimilate with the Refugee situation here in South India.



School Principal Mr. Lobsang Jamyang interacting with the School children Group

G. School Website

The School's website is now working and we will request all to visit it when you find time to spare. The domain or the website name is: www.sermeythoesamschool.net We will hope that the website will help us build a strong relationship with our donors and supporters! Your feedbacks are most welcome!

Lastly, our gratitude and prayers...

We take this opportunity to thank you all, our very kind donors and sponsors for your very generous contribution to the School's overall running costs - whatever the School have come to achieve; it is all because of your support and blessings! With the most cost effective use of your very generous contribution, we are able to maintain and also further improve the facilities at the School and specially make the very necessary improvement in the salaries of our teachers. There has been a steady improvement in their salaries since 2020 and their salary slowly getting closer to the standard salary scale in the Schools around here. The School is committed to bring about the most possible betterment of the situation for our teachers in regard to their salary and very necessary facility like staff quarter and so on. Good and dedicated teachers will surely be the main yardstick by which we want to take our School forward in the years to come so that we successfully meet the School's aims and objectives.

We are grateful for your very dedicated encouragement and support and we pray that the same be continued in the coming years so that the School can continue to serve the needy and deserving children.

Once again, our heartfelt prayers that each and every one of our kind donors sponsors and supporters may be blessed with peace, good health and prosperity in 2023!

Thank you for making the difference in the lives of so many needy and deserving children - helping them on their path to learning, empowerment & growing into a good human being!



**Children & staff
Sermey Thoesam School
Bylakuppe**

January 2023

