

Visiting the educational project in Yulchung, Ladakh, Northern India

As a trainer and specialist lecturer at the Coach-Trainer Academy Switzerland (CTAS), I regularly meet wonderful people and their stories through my courses. Last year, during the NLP specialist training, I had the pleasure of meeting Trudi Vetsch and learned about her educational project in Ladakh. CTAS decided to support this initiative with a generous donation.

Trudi, an enthusiastic hiker, told me how she went on a trekking tour in the North Indian Himalayas a few years ago. From the beginning, she was fascinated by the mountains and the people who have managed to survive in this harsh environment and adapt to increasing modernization without giving up their ancient Ladakhi traditions.

At the initiative of Lobzang Rinchen, the project leader and a resident of Yulchung, she developed an educational program for remote mountain villages. The aim was to support adults in their culture and give them a voice to the outside world. Shortly thereafter, she founded the association *Education for Adults in Ladakh – Himalaya* (EAL) and has since been traveling to the region for several weeks each year.

"I would so love to visit Trudi there" – a thought that immediately took root in my mind. And indeed, it became reality sooner than expected. In August of this year, I traveled to Northern India with a friend to meet Trudi in Yulchung. I was full of joy and curiosity! I also had a check from CTAS in my luggage, which I was able to hand over to the villagers.

CTAS donation of 1000 CHF for the educational project in Ladakh

Yulchung lies at an altitude of 4,000 meters in the Ladakhi region of Senge La, surrounded by impressive 6,000-meter peaks of the Himalayas. The village community, consisting of 12 families, is shaped by the women, who take care of the children, households, and animals and cultivate the surrounding fields with barley, peas, carrots, and other vegetables familiar to us. The women also mainly attend the meetings to discuss how EAL donations should be used. Last year, at their request, a craft room was built and equipped with basic essentials (thick sitting mats, tableware, etc.). Since then, the women have had an undisturbed space to work on handicrafts and hold classes.

In August, when we visited, classes were on break. The women gathered daily for a few hours to spin their own sheep's wool and make socks, sweaters, and wrist warmers. They hoped to sell these to passing trekking tourists. I happily joined in and picked up knitting needles again after a long time.

It touched me deeply how openly and kindly the women welcomed us and how naturally we were able to participate in family life. Although we didn't speak the same language, communication worked beautifully through laughter, eye contact, touch, working together, and sharing butter tea and chapatis. The simple life in community and surrounded by these majestic mountains filled me with deep humility.

After our departure, Trudi visited other mountain villages she supports. "One thing I've learned and internalized through CTAS training is not to give advice, but to look at what is needed," she said about her work. She always discusses with Lobzang Rinchen and the women what is important for the communities and what should be realized next. She was very happy about the sponsorship from CTAS. It makes a significant contribution to teacher salaries, enabling lessons in English, math, and the Ladakhi language Bhoti.

This journey was a fulfilling, enriching, and valuable experience for me. I am deeply grateful for the warm and caring hospitality I experienced during a week in Yulchung and two days in Nyaraks. My thanks go to CTAS, whose donation enables valuable education for these wonderful people, and my

admiration goes to Trudi and Lobzang, who are passionately committed to preserving and supporting the vibrant Ladakhi culture.

More information

EAL: eal-himalaya.ch

CTAS: coach-trainer-akademie.ch