



## Policy Plan 2014-2019

## The Zanskar Family Circle





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## Introduction

The Zanskar School Foundation (ZSF) was established on August 12, 2009. The foundation's goal is to improve the learning – and if possible the living conditions- of young students in the Zanskar region (Northern India). This is being effectuated by, among other things, supplying the schools (14 at the moment) with education- and sports materials and furniture. The foundation also supplies bedding and kitchenware to the monastery schools where the students stay internally. We also renovate schools and build sanitary facilities. Since 2010, the foundation pays the school fees for a small number of children whose parents do not have sufficient financial resources to pay for their child's education.

The program in which the support for individual children is included (formerly known as: The Study fund) is called "The Zanskar Family Circle".

In addition to the financial capacity of the parents, in 2012, the following criteria have been added: the intellectual capacity and motivation of the child.

The Zanskar School Foundation does not distinguish between religion, gender or political affiliation in the allocation of financial assistance (except those who advocate violence to achieve their goal). The Foundation does strive to increase the number of female students. The reason that we pursue this: women are disadvantaged in India. Also, educated women appear to have a greater positive impact on the local community than men.



### Mission, vision and strategy

Mission: to guide and financially support the children in rural - and deprived areas (our focus area is the Zanskar valley in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir) in participating within high quality education that meets their needs and talents.

Vision: Without good education it's not possible to create personal development and empowerment. In addition to guidance at school, our volunteers accompany the children in such a way that they can take their place in society self-consciously and self-supportingly.

Strategy: by following a complete, high-quality educational process and, if necessary, staying in a guest family setting, SZS offers participating children the chance of a future without poverty. In South Zanskar and Leh, children with the Buddhist religion and in northern Zanskar Muslim children are being supported. An equal ratio of the number of children supported between these two groups is considered desirable. Female students are given priority over boys because of the subordination of girls in both parts of Zanskar consequently leading to a high rate of illiteracy.



### Origin and development

Since 2010, in Leh – Ladakh, four children are financially supported so that they can pursue quality education. Selection is based on the financial capacity of their parents. In 2012, the following criteria have been added: the intellectual capacity and motivation of the child. By adding these criteria starting 2014, children under the age of ten cannot be selected anymore. In 2013 it was decided to only add children from Zanskar.

The number of foster parents needs to be expanded in the coming years. Even with the same number of sponsored children, financing needs will increase. This increase is caused by students who may take up relatively expensive supplementary education. These studies are generally not available in Zanskar and Ladakh.

The monthly cost of these studies, including lodging and incidental expenses are so high that co-sponsorship is unavoidable.

In 2014, it was decided to offer a contract to sponsored children undergoing higher education, so as a result they will acquire a comfortable income after graduation. The contract will state that the sponsored student will pay for an education for one or two poor children within 10 years after finishing his/her study. The number of child support depends on the chosen education. These children will be selected by SZS.



## [The Indian system of education](#)<sup>1</sup>

### The current situation

In the past education was only reserved for the higher Hindu classes. This did not change during the English oppression. On the contrary, the colonial rulers supported this tradition in order to ensure a continuous and loyal supply of lower and middle managers. In this way, the lower classes and 'untouchables' were kept 'ignorant'. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the 'untouchables' discovered the advantages of education. After the declaration of independence and the division of India education was made one of the key points in the policy of successive governments.

The past 40 years huge numbers of schools have been built and teachers have been educated. The quality of primary and secondary education in governmental schools leaves much to be desired. Especially the quality of education in rural areas in general is considered to be poor.

There the school buildings have often poor constructions, in many cases running water, electricity, heating and sanitary facilities are lacking. Many schools do not own the most elementary means, such as school boards, school books, notebooks and furniture. Maintenance is rarely executed. 88% of the school budget is meant for salary payments to teachers and other personnel. Many teachers are inappropriately absent and the methods of education are hopelessly ancient. India spends 4,8% of the BNP on education. The percentage of 'student drop-out's in the rural areas (primary and secondary education) is over 40%.

During the past 15 years thousands of private schools have been founded because of this continuing situation; they are recognized by the government but do not receive any funding. In general, the quality of this education is

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<sup>1</sup> A profile of the Indian education system.



reasonably good. Teaching supplies are present and the school buildings are in a reasonable state. Because these schools aren't subsidized, school money is being levied. The annual amount plus additional costs simply exceeds the capacity of many. This creates proletariat of underprivileged people who can not escape poverty.

On the other hand, a high percentage of available places in supplementary education has been assigned to minorities, low 'castes' and 'untouchables' during the past 20 years.

### The education system

The Indian education system was created during the colonial period and in consequence modelled on the English system.

Primary education: consists of 5 classes. Aged 6 to 11 years.

Secondary education: class 6-8. Aged 11 to 14 years.

Both are mandatory. Only 70% of school-age children, living in rural areas attend these types of education. The percentage of female students is lower.

Higher education: grade 9 -12. Aged 14 to 17 years.

courses:

Primary education class 1 and 2: the native language, mathematics, hygiene and practical life.

Primary education class 3-5: as above plus environmental education.

Secondary education: Hindi, English, the native language, math, science and technology, social behavior, art, health and social skills.

Higher education class 9 and 10: as above plus mathematics, social studies, and vocational/professional preparation.



At the end of class 10, they will be taking difficult exams. The results are decisive for further studying and/or a continuation (class 11 and 12). Higher education: class 11 and 12. These years are the gateway to a higher and professional training and to complete a university study.

Three studies are acknowledged:

Science: physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology and zoology complemented by those who have chosen the medical direction.

For those who have selected technology, these medical classes aren't applicable. They are taught computer science and engineering.

For those who have chosen social studies, subjects such as: history, geography, art, philosophy, psychology, political science, languages and music are offered.

Class 12 ends with exams. High scores are necessary for admission into a higher profession or to be allowed into university. The schools for professional training and universities select based on the results obtained taking into account the extra places for lower castes, untouchables and minorities.





## Execution

### Selection

Every year the board determines on the quota regarding the division between the various communities and gender. The total number of children that will be selected depends on the number of potential sponsor parents.

The volunteer(s) visit the schools supported by SZS, consult teachers and mutually select children based on intellectual capacity, the child's own motivation and financial capacity of its parents.

Before the child is told, both its parents will be informed by the school manager, the teacher and volunteer. Items to be discussed are:

- Purpose of the meeting
- Reasons for selection
- Information on the Zanskar Schools Foundation
- Number of years/Process in time
- Parental obligations
- Obligations of the Foundation and the volunteer
- Agreement of both parents

This meeting will be followed by a discussion with the child concerned, the teacher, the school manager, both parents and local volunteer. If the child is not willing, the proposal is off. The child will not be forced.

When the child agrees, the contract will be signed by both parents and the SZS volunteer.

### School selection:

The child will be placed at a private school from the 6<sup>th</sup> class, if needed internally. Such schools are not available in the southern Zanskar region. Therefore, we shall in principle divert to Leh.



## Volunteers

The volunteers have an important task, they are of the utmost importance for the success of the Zanskar Family Circle program. The local volunteers select the children, together with the teachers. (see under: 'execution')

When the child is an intern at school, the need for someone to rely on may occur. The local volunteer can be that person. Because of lack of means of communication and poor communication infrastructure, the children are not able to reach their parents in southern Zanskar. The local volunteer is the contact for all matters concerning the child. He/she stays in contact with the volunteer from the originating area of the child. He/she is responsible for the program, on behalf of the Foundation. The local volunteer (from the originating area of the children) informs the parents.

Once or twice a year the children go home. They visit their family during two weeks summer holidays and 6 weeks during the winter period.

### Finance:

The Foundation strives to transfer school payments by bank transfer, if possible. The program manager and treasurer of the Foundation decide if this should be executed differently, with regard to additional banking expenses and/or negative exchange rates. If so, one of the board members will pay these expenses in cash to the local volunteer (who will sign a receipt for cash advance)

The volunteer should send the payment receipt within two weeks (by e-mail) to the program manager.



### Scheduled Tribes Certificate / Permanent Resident Certificate

The Indian government encourages local inhabitants and minority groups to participate in (personal) development, in order to keep up with the development of India. Therefore the Scheduled Tribes law has been implemented. Inhabitants of Jammu & Kashmir qualify for this certificate. This law provides the reservation of extra positions within public services/local government and in schools for higher education and university for those who obtain the certificate. Before application of the STC, the applicant is obligated to submit the PRC. Because of this long term procedure, the process will already be started by the local volunteer when the child attends class 11 (highschool).





### Funding

As from Q2-2014 Zanskar Schools Foundation does not support individual children. The first quarter of 2014 sponsor parents have been found for those children that were financially supported by the Foundation. All (present) nine children are presently being supported on the long term, either partially or in full. Further selection of children will only start when new sponsor parents have enlisted.

The study fund will have sufficient resources (€ 3.000,-) to encounter possible loss of sponsor parents as well as to pay for extra and unforeseen expenses. The volunteers do not receive any financial compensation. Any cost, such as local travelling and communication, will be paid from the study fund. These cost must be agreed upon in advance by the program manager. In order to have sufficient means in the study fund for aforementioned expenses, the revenues of market sales and income from other activities will be submitted to the reserves of the study fund.

Both sponsor parents and the chairman of the Zanskar Schools Foundation will sign a sponsor contract, stating the obligations of both parties. Actively recruiting sponsor parents will be coordinated by the program manager, supported by the board members and Dutch volunteers. Name promotion and information about the Foundation and specifically the Zanskar Family Circle is crucial.



Annex 1 Chart of India







Annex 2 Chart of Zanskar

