**Kargyak Sun School**

**celebrates its 10th anniversary**

On September 21st, **Kargyak Sun School** will celebrate the 10th anniversary of its opening. There, in one of the last places on Earth, the original Tibetan culture survives at the elevation of 4200 m. Before the school opened, the village of 200 heads had only 10 members who could read and write a little. To get an education, children were sent away to boarding schools in faraway towns. Today, the Sun School has its alumni and thanks to the project, people stopped moving away from the village.

**Surya** non-profitnot only supports the school and teaches classic school subjects. It also educates the villagers about basic hygiene and first aid, supports the traditional handicrafts and helps with reforestation of the area. Surya volunteers had also taught the villagers how to grow vegetables in the greenhouse during the winter months. All of this without any funding from the EU and the Czech government. *“The project is supported by donors who understand and appreciate its unique mission,”* says the project author and Surya founder ***Jan Tilinger.***

Surya also supports the locals in strengthening their awareness of the unique character of the local culture. *“Further mission of the project is to maintain the original way of life in remote corners of the planet and to prevent unnecessary migration,”* explains Tilinger. The Indian government plans to build a trans-Himalayan highway in the area, and thus, the people of the remote Kargyak village will have a chance to survive in dignity the inevitable changes brought along by the highway.

The Sun School is designed as a zero-carbon house. Using solar power, the school is heated throughout winter to comfortable 17 degrees Celsius. This is why the school is open year-round and holidays can take place in the summer when most villagers are busy in harvest.

Today, The Sun School in Kargyak is known worldwide, inspiring the villages in the area to build similarly constructed schools. Jan Tilinger succeeded in fulfilling his original goal – to design a model building for broader use in the area. His work was presented at a number of European universities. In his lectures, he shows how some development projects can run efficiently with respect to tradition and living conditions of the locals.

The final goal of the Sun School project is to become independent of the non-profit Surya. *“We aim to teach the locals to take the operation and the technical support of the school upon themselves and to be able to cut the imaginary umbilical cord that ties them to Surya one day,”* says Tilinger. Then, Surya will be able to begin helping elsewhere. Some new projects in developing areas are already under way.

You can also support Surya at [www.surya.cz](http://www.surya.cz) by purchasing photos in the gallery.

Journalists may download photos at Surya website. For print-quality photos, send a request to jan.tilinger@suryaschool.org