



**What?** Loka is a small school with big dreams along the Punpun river in Bihar, North-India. **Why?** Loka explores (new) ways of learning for a Beautiful, Just and Sustainable World. **Who?** Loka's 100 students aged 4-15, from nursery to grade 10, receive a complete education of Head, Heart & Hand. **How?** At Loka students are equipped to create their livelihoods, empowered to uplift their surroundings and enriched with a sense of purpose.

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[www.loka.in](http://www.loka.in)

## Loka in 2022

### A Year of Many Colours

The year started with a lockdown after which the school could remain open throughout the year. The stability of being constantly open allowed Loka's Team to build something, instead of managing constant change as was the case in previous years. Having the amount of students increase upto a stable number of 100 was a great development. At the same time it posed new challenges due to the huge difference in ages (4-17) and a growing group of adolescents. Throughout 2022, but especially the second half, Loka had interesting guest teachers visiting and various online and live workshops; visitors who came to give presentations on various topics. Both students and teachers were enriched by these fresh breezes entering Loka's school campus situated in a hidden corner of the world.

### Teachers - Skilled & Aligned

Finding teachers used to be a major concern in the remote and rural area where Loka's school is located. Due to a growing network, a more developed infrastructure and decent facilities this was no longer the main issue. Finding quality teachers who also align with Loka's slightly different vision became the next focus. It turned out to be a year that required mostly 'hands on' management to put everything into place, get classes run smoothly and create awareness that school is not merely about obtaining certificates; it is also about behaviour, critical thinking, being able to apply the learning and develop useful skills that can one day help sustain ones livelihood and contribute to the local community.

### Students - Learning & Creating

Highlight of the year was the first big school trip of senior students;

all the way to the International Community Auroville in South-India. In Auroville students learned from farmers, social entrepreneurs and some world class educators. An extensive report with photos and student work can be found [here](#). Upon return, students started to use Loka's space for various social and agricultural projects, initially to learn but possibly later to apply in their village. With this development, the long envisioned transition from being a primary school that teaches basic skills, to becoming a life long learning community that equips students to create livelihoods and enrich their surroundings is slowly becoming real.

### Life Long Learning...

End 2022 Loka is a learning community with 8 full-time teachers, 2 part-time teachers and 100 students learning in nursery-grade 9.

**Loka - More than just a School**





# Loka in Images 2022



Tuesday morning drama by grade 9 students



Class 1 students proudly presenting their work



Teacher Tea Break : learning together



March to Freedom project: creating a board game



World Peace Meditation



A glance into the class room of grade 3 students



Paddy harvest on Loka's Farm



Puppetry Workshop by master puppeteer Sangya Ojha



Presentation by a Commanding Officer of the Indian Airforce



Art Expression Workshop for Loka Teachers



Support for student Rajneesh suffering from leukemia



Learning from social entrepreneur Uma in Auroville



Sustainability/e-mobility workshop by Sushil Reddy & partner



Loka's dogs Vivek and Tara



Students receive gifts for participating in Out of Eden



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## Projects & Activities

Besides being involved in regular education, students and teachers of Loka participated in various projects and activities, such as:

- > **Out of Eden Learn** (International Online Exchange/education programme designed by Project Zero/Harvard) .

- > Journey to **Auroville** (10 days) for senior students to explore future possibilities in the fields of farming and setting up a social enterprise.

- > Two online Photography Workshops by **Artreach India** and **Chennai Photo Biennale**. Artreach also gave a Printmaking Workshop on location.

- > **Guest Classes & Projects** in English, History and Social Studies by educators Shyamala Peri, Pawandeep Kaur and Arianna Cinquatti.

- > Exchange on **science & farming** between Loka and students living on a tiny island in Japan.

- > **Workshops & presentations** by Indian Air Force to explore future possibilities, Prof. Shari Tishman

(Project Zero/Harvard) on Slow Looking and Sushil Reddy on e-mobility & sustainability.

- > **Puppetry workshop** for Loka's small ones by Sangya Ojha, puppeteer for Indian Sesame Street

- > Participation in **March to Freedom** history project by Flow India/DAG Museums/Ministry of Culture to commemorate 75 years of Indian independence.

- > **Teacher-Parent-Student meetings**: one in-depth round of meetings took place with all parents and ongoing conversations are being held with parents of students who require special attention.

- > Every child received one hour **'homework class'** a day during which teachers and seniors guided students in making their homework. Since such a support structure is lacking in their homes.

- > Classes have been extended with one hour (4:30-5:30) with **contemporary Indian dance and sports sessions** given by local professionals.

- > Teachers participated in a

**Worldwise Learning** online book study. Senior students gave a presentation about Loka in front of global teachers during one of the sessions.

- > Loka's partner Artreach India offered an **expressive art workshop** to teachers during which they reflected on their role as an educator.

- > **Art1st** Education Director Lokesh Khodke visited Loka with dance/movement artist Amritha Sruthi. They conducted workshops for students and teachers and explored ways for Art1st and Loka to connect and collaborate with its founders.

- > Two students studying in grade 11 (Secondary Education) follow tuitions outside Loka every morning to prepare for their board exams. The afternoons they spend at Loka where they are **engaged in projects, receive guidance and teach younger students** with which they earn some pocket money -this supports their independence and future plans.

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## School as a Space of Learning and Joy

by Loka's co-founder *Charlotte Leech*

This is how I love my classes to be. Out in the open, with the endless sky as a roof, amid greenery. Children diving deep into important and relevant topics such as Planetary Health or Human Migration and learning from and with each other. Everybody is attentive, interested and engaged. Alert and fully alive. Here the Lions are sharing some of their insights with the younger Banyan Trees. My class is never complete without the presence of cats;) It's basically about creating this homely environment, an uplifting atmosphere in which learning emerges naturally and in many ways. We all grow together; there are no toppers and losers. Just human beings deeply listening to each other and realising that with our different perspectives, together we can touch upon



something fresh and new. I wish the same for the world. Instead of these manmade divisions that cause and feed wars, we can also choose to be more open, humble and learn together, from and with each other and realise that we need not be afraid of our differences as they make life interesting and beautiful. I learn every single day from my students. Our being so very different in every single way creates something magical; our exchanges seem endless and vast and touch upon deep matters and joyful delights. **Learning at Loka:** [www.loka.in](http://www.loka.in)

## Visitors of Loka: sharing thoughts, reflections & visions

In November '22 the Italian primary school educator **Arianna Cinquatti** spent 20 days at Loka's school in rural Bihar.

Educated at Oxford University as an Archeologist, she later followed a Forest School Course in the UK and started working as a teacher at primary schools and as a homeschooler. Arianna came to India and Loka to explore different kinds of education and new ways of learning. She turned out to be an inspiring Loka educator who naturally navigated through cultural differences, and more. She managed to build beautiful relationships with everyone: the children, teachers and founders. But also: the space, the plants and pets.

**Arianna:** "There is not one style of teaching; there are many. Also regarding what works best for students, there are many colours. We can use them all. At Loka, I saw many beautiful activities. I feel

inspired. It is good to listen to students, sometimes it is also good to be firm if students need this. At Loka there is a sense of community which I hope to bring back with me. Instead of thinking 'what can I do' to ask 'what can WE do to uplift this place and enhance the lives of students?'"

**My message for Loka students:**

The light and brightness of Loka can make it into a shining place in this world. Keep on learning in a way that can be meaningful. Find yourself and what you want to bring about; for your community and the world. Never lose hope; it is possible to bring about goodness and light."

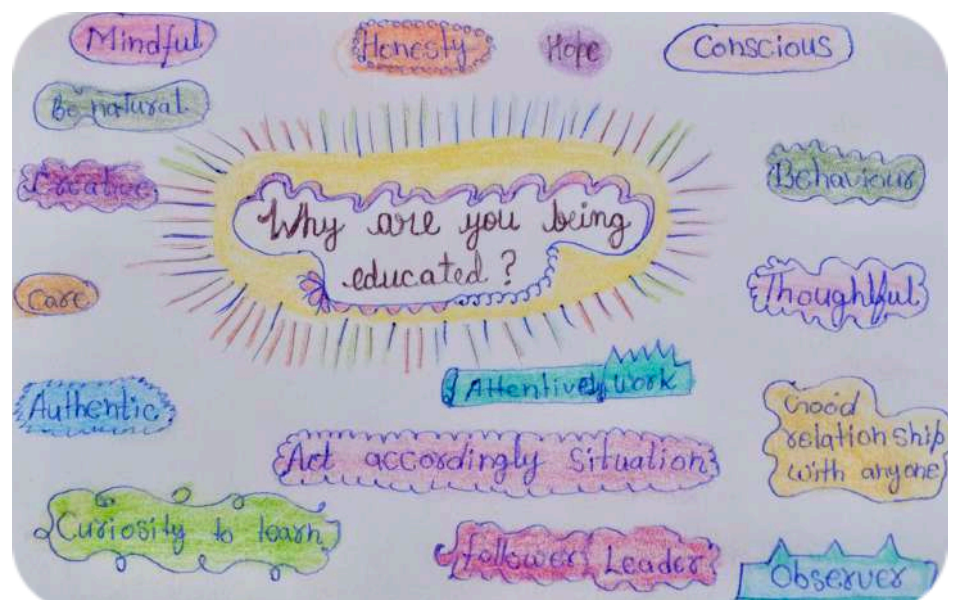
**Photos:** Arianna taught English at Loka in unique ways. Mostly through storybooks and plays. Here grade 5 students are practicing the play 'The Creation of Rice'.



"This is the first time I'm visiting a school, as a visitor, as a person who is expected nothing from, but to learn with children. Right now I feel, my, this experience can be life changing in a way that how uninterrupted by curriculums/hierarchy learning happens for me as a teacher. I will try to keep this feeling inside me and do the same thing in an official setup -in my every day classes back in Varanasi. I wonder how this can happen, but I would love to try it." **Pawandeep Kaur** currently works as an educator at the Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI) Rajghat Besant school in Varanasi.

**'Why are you being Educated?'**

Sanatan asked himself and created a diagram with answers in his journal. When asked why he did not mention passing exams in his overview, Sanatan replied that exams are a measuring instrument; not an aim by itself. And as to obtaining a job he said that if education aims for all mentioned points a job will be its natural consequence. And not just a job; much more than that: joy, purpose, supporting ones community and a mind that never stops learning.

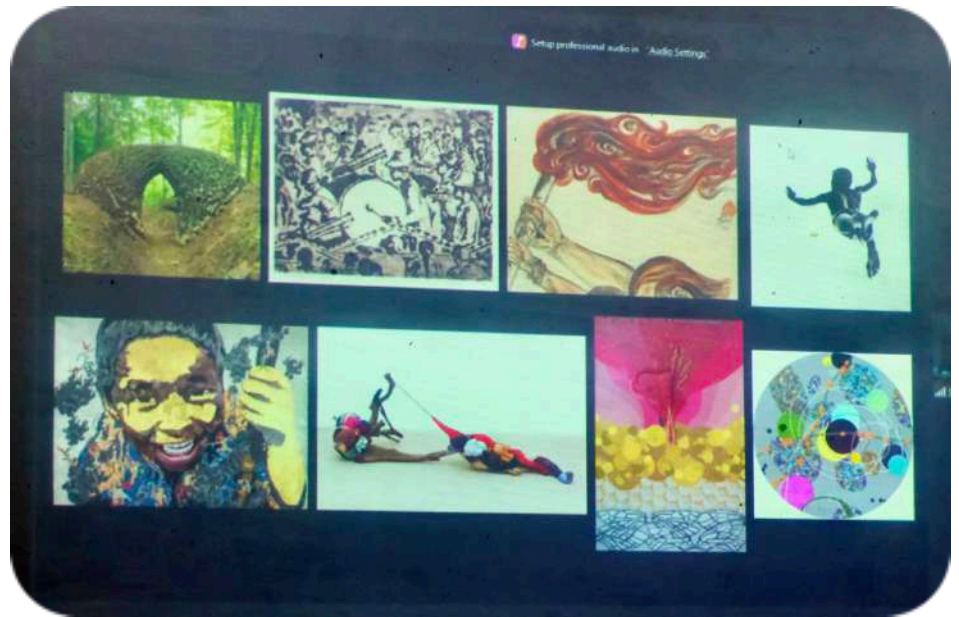




# Slow Looking at Freedom with Shari Tishman

You will learn many things if you look for yourself.  
~ Shari Tishman

To close Loka's participation in the March to Freedom/75 years of Indian independence project by Flow India/DAG Museums, Shari Tishman (Project Zero/Harvard) led an online Slow Looking at Freedom session for a group of 13 students aged 14-17.



Shari opened the session with a photo of her visit to Loka, beginning 2019. As a warm up exercise she then asked us all to remember a colour that we noticed today. Then we explored some art works. One of the art works was K. C. S. Paniker's *The Edge of the Canal, Malabar 1953*, published in the book 'March to Freedom - reflections on India's independence' (DAG) with the following text: *In some remote and rural parts of India, Independence was just an announcement on the radio. One set of rulers far away were replaced by another. What does freedom mean if it feels so disconnected from our daily life?*

**Shari** - Our ideas of freedom often have to do with faraway places. Some connect with our daily lives. When I think of Freedom I think of colours; of people being able to express themselves. Which of the following pictures connects to any idea about freedom you might have (see above photo)?

**Dinesh** - The photo of a forest with twigs made into a bridge connects to me. Due to the freedom of human beings many other species have to suffer because people put themselves in the centre of everything. When I look at this art work I imagine a more balanced world where not just people but all species live in freedom.

**Shilpi** - When I look at this bridge it resonates with me and symbolises the possibility to create new things; in a group and in unity. Together we can create something strong and beautiful and in that working together towards a higher aim lies our freedom.

**Shankar** - The individual branches are placed in a way that together they are hard to break. Unity is strong and this strength in unity symbolises freedom.

**Madhu** - We need a free mind to create something in conscious unity. For me this picture expresses a freedom of mind.

**Sanatan** - For me the picture with two hands holding the burning torch speaks of freedom. It is about equality of male and female; both genders being able to equally express their thoughts and ideas in this world.

**Sandeep** - The picture with the man free floating through the sky symbolises freedom. To be free we need to create our own path.

**Shari** - It was a pleasure to look closely at art with you. You formed your own interpretations, and used artworks as metaphors for constructing your own ideas about freedom. That is pretty impressive!

**Shari Tishman** is Senior Research Associate at Harvard Project Zero and Co-Director of Out of Eden Learn.

## Inspiration

My name is Shankar and I stand for Freedom and Originality, for myself and others.

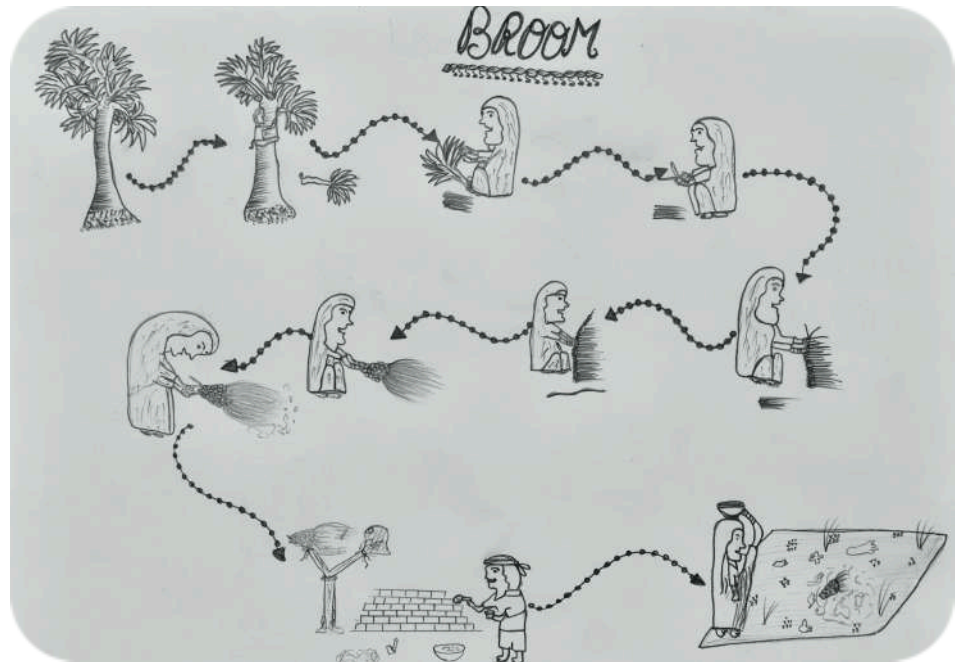
Shankar (16) studies books about gardening and farming, makes drawings of plants. He co-created and manages Loka's experimental garden and farm. And when given the chance to teach, Shankar will share with other students what he learned based on his ongoing research and daily practice. Loka students are slowly and increasingly starting to realise there are more possibilities than aspiring to become an engineer or doctor -and more than often ending up in the land of lost dreams. Besides focussing on acquiring literacy skills and understanding and applying subjects (rather than just mechanical rote learning) -what matters is taking initiative, commitment, courage and living a life rooted in values. Shankar: "Keep walking on your path no matter what."



## Out of Eden Learn Core Learning Journey 2

Out of Eden Learn is an online learning programme thoughtfully designed by Project Zero (Harvard). Children from all over the world are invited to slow down, share stories and make connections. In 2022 Loka's Lions (grades 9) participated in *Core Learning Journey 2: The Past and the Global*. One of the footsteps or activities was *Connecting Everyday Objects to Bigger systems*. Its purpose was to invite students to look closely at an everyday object and then make connections between what they notice and bigger systems that the object might be part of. Shilpi (15) chose a broom made by her mother:

In my village people respect the broom as Goddess Laxmi. I use it everyday for cleaning my cowshed and home. In my village we have palm trees and in summers there is one man climbing them to take their juice. My mother asks him to cut leaves for making the broom. In my drawing you can see the making process. After the broom is no longer working we hang it together with a soop (grass object used to clean rice) where a new house is being built for bringing goodness to our new home. After that the broom is thrown in a field where it easily decomposes. That is the story of the life of my broom and it is connected to people, my home and nature.



## Drawing Neighbourhood Maps Out of Eden Learn

For *Core Learning Journey 1: The Present and the Local* Loka's Peacocks (grade 5) were invited to think about their relationship with a certain place by drawing maps of their village as seen through their own eyes. The maps did not have to be accurate or similar to existing maps. Below map was made by three students who expressed the community spirit of their village by creating this drawing together.



### My Village My World

By: Suraj, Anchali and Chanchali

My village is very beautiful and there are so many animals. Most people are connected to farming and one school is there called Loka, one Punpun river too. Most houses are pucca (brick) and some houses made of mud. There are few cars. So many trees and plants. Some people care for trees and plants. My house is on the map. Its roof colour is blue. Its border is green and door colour is grey. In my house total ten people, eight rooms. In my house so many animals like cows, goats, ducks and hens. Festivals are celebrated in my house and guests also come- so many children and people.

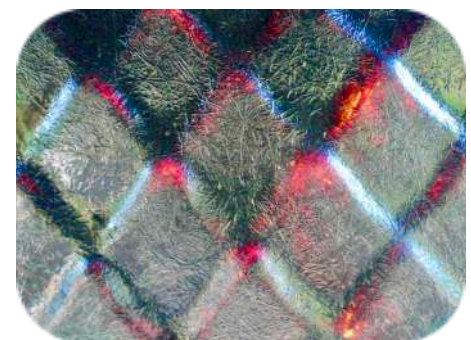
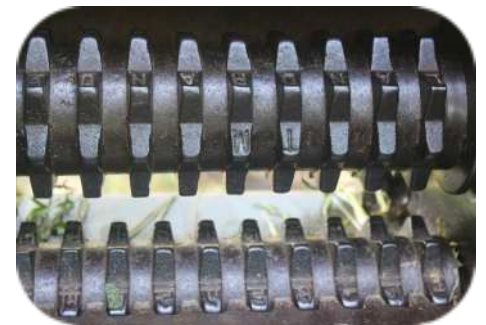
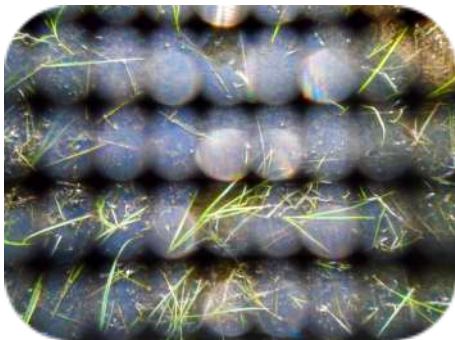
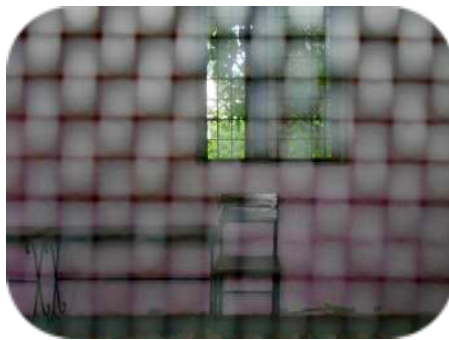


# Portraits of Spaces

*Loka Students guided by Chennai Photo Biennale & Artreach India*

A selection of student photos made during an online Photography Workshop by Artreach India and Chennai Photo Biennale. New words included: composition, balance, abstract, filling the frame, a frame within a frame, symmetry, contrast.

Student question: What is the difference between shape and form?



**Photo descriptions:** Big photo: stair railing close-up. Small photos from left-right/up-down: Detail of a tractor wheel; looking into the classroom through a mosquito net; school bell from below; looking at a field through the trampoline net; light shining through an slightly opened classroom door; close up of a grass cutting machine; inverter close up; staircase; sunset light shining through the roof of the playground slide. Photos made by students of grades: 8-11.



# Portraits of Living Beings

*Loka Students guided by Chennai Photo Biennale & Artreach India*

## Student Reflections

**Shilpi** - When making a photo, we have to think of many things: background, foreground, light, colours, composition.

But also: simplicity. How can we make things more simple? It brings about a certain depth; I learned that in less we can actually see more. **Vikash** - We

need not visit special places to make photos. We can stay in our village and apply the photography techniques we learned. Good photos can be made anywhere. **Subhas** - I learned using a

more complex camera. And to see a story in the photo. We can take a photo with creativity. That is the art of photography. **Ankit** - I learned new words connected to photography. We

dived into details. And I have roamed many times through my village but with a camera I noticed things I never saw before. We were not making photos to show; we were making photos to learn.

**Om Prakash** - I learned about contrast and thinking about which colours to combine while making photos. **Nitish** - Hidden things were appearing during the workshop. It was more than just making a selfie. Our mind was more

concentrated and exploring what all is possible. **Madhu** - We made photos in tune with nature; without destroying or cutting anything. **Sandeep** - We

became more conscious of the process of making photographs. Photography is actually quite complex. In a single image we can find everything. The simple is also complex, because it contains everything. **Pavan 2** - There

are many techniques we can apply to make interesting photos. **Shankar** - Attracting in Simplicity is what I learned. Simple photos can attract. These are

meaningful photos; not just images of illusions we want others to believe. **Sanatan** - Photos are more than just capturing an occasion. It can also add meaning and value to the work we do; we can apply the art of photography in our life. I made photos I never imagined

making. **IMAGINE THE IMPOSSIBLE**





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## Dream in Progress

*Loka's School: Expanding and aspiring to one day be the most beautiful school in the whole wide world. Because Beauty opens our hearts to Truth, Compassion and all other things Great and Glorious.*

In 2022 infrastructural projects that started in 2021 were continued on Loka's 2,4 hectare campus..

The extra storey on Loka's school was completed which was a huge task and long envisioned dream. Furnishing and finishing the classrooms remains to be done due to lack of funds and is postponed until 2023. Two rooms with attached bathrooms were completed for (guest) teachers and recently hot water systems have been added. Four bathrooms were constructed in teacher and guest rooms. Drip water irrigation systems were placed to prevent water wastage and ensure survival of plants throughout all seasons. A sport court was half completed, finishing work will take place in 2023. Wooden Office and School furniture (desks, tables, chairs, cupboards) were purchased. A trampoline and wooden benches now enrich the Playground. Other investments include a keyboard for music classes, a second hand motor bike to transport teachers and a battery and inverter for the school. *It's an Ongoing Process*

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## Loka's co-founder Sanat Kumar

"If we want to deeply understand what education is, we find there is no ready made answer, nor is there one answer. More than an answer it is an experience, which is different for everyone; an ongoing journey of discovery that lasts a lifetime and beyond."



## Balance Sheet Stichting Loka (Loka NL)

### Credit

Balance on 1/1/2022	€ 84.570
Donations & other income	€ 52.866
Total	€ 137.436

### Debit

Donations Loka NL to Sarvodaya (Loka India)	€ 86.200
Costs Loka NL	€ 483
Total	€ 86.683

Balance Sheet 31/12/22 € 50.753

### Expenditure by Sarvodaya Society (Loka India)

Loka's Centre - operational Costs	€ 62.350
Loka's Centre - Investments	€ 23.850
Total	€ 86.200

**Operational costs** are structural costs, such as: school materials, salary teachers & supporting staff, electricity, communication, school trips, workshops, courses, projects, school van, maintenance and office supplies. **Investments** included: creating windows and plastering of the new storey on the school building, finishing four (bath)rooms for guests and teachers, 2 digital cameras, keyboard, trampoline, trees & plants, furniture for the office and library, benches for outdoor spaces and an inverter and battery for the school. Due to less income than budgeted finishing and furnishing of the new storey on the school is postponed until 2023.

**Thank you** to all kind people & organisations who supported and encouraged Loka in many ways! Special thanks to: Gerard & Teresa van Kesteren, Michaela van Wassenaer, Hans Leewens, Anneke Teulings, Riky Boom, Martine Stevens, Susanne Voss, Anne Datema-van Kesteren, Pia Lefèvre, M. Leinweber, Ritu Khoda, Lokesh Khodke, Mariska Sijmons, Ceciel Fruijtier, Bruno Romboli, Miranda Korz, Danielle Winter, Paul Palmarozza, Reingard Braun, Family Witteveen, Carel Bergfeld, Kate Edwards, Bernadette Jones, Ellen Nagtzaam, Toos Lodder, Danielle Kahn, H. Smits, Simon Broekhuizen, Brenda v. Lier, R.A. v/d Graaf, Thomas Müller, Geeta Sharma, Gaurav Tiwari, Petra Manefeld, Shyamala Peri & Krishna, Anarya Dodes, Arianna Cinquatti, Rahul Gabhawala and the people of Auroville.



### Founders, Boards & More

#### Founders

Sanat Kumar, Charlotte Leech  
Loka India (Sarvodaya)  
Nityanand Sharma, Dhananjay Pandey

#### Loka NL (Stichting Loka)

Sander Tideman, Alain Hubers  
Anne Wibaut, Trudy Kamsteeg,  
Wendy Nordemann

#### Advisers & Ambassadors

Shari Tishman, Paul Palmarozza,  
Rizio Yohannan, Sandeep Kumar

### Collaborations & Support

#### Art1st

Artreach India

#### Chennai Photo Biennale

Cornelisse Foundation

#### Flow India

Jacoba van Wassenaer Fonds

#### Stichting Nunc

Out of Eden Learn

#### Triodos Foundation

Triple Value Foundation

Van Kesteren Foundation

## Donations

### European (Dutch) Bank Account

IBAN NL04 TRIO 0254 4577 38  
(Stichting Loka) BIC:TRIONL2U

### Indian Bank Account

(Only for donations within India)  
Account nr. 28490100019100  
Bank of Baroda in name of  
Sarvodaya Society, IFS:  
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