

It started with a dream...



**What?** Loka is a small school with big dreams. **Where?** At the entrance of a village along the Punpun river in Bihar, India. **Why?** Loka explores (new) ways of learning for a Beautiful, Just and Peaceful World. **Who?** Loka's 100 students aged 4-16, from nursery to grade 8, receive a complete education of Head, Heart & Hand. Older students work at Loka as interns. **How?** At Loka students are equipped to create their livelihoods, empowered to uplift their surroundings and enriched with a sense of purpose.

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

## The Story of Loka

*In 2024 Loka's co-founder Charlotte Leech shared 'The Story of Loka' in Europe, America and India during small scale events.*

Four beautiful gatherings were held on unique locations attended by both those who have been supporting Loka for many years and also new people, curious to learn more about a Small School with Big Dreams in North India and engage in a mutually enriching conversation. The **Annual Friends of Loka Event** was held on 18 April at **Avani retreat centre** amid nature in Brabant, the Netherlands, and started with a puja (gratitude ritual) by Satyam Pahladsingh. Greek artist Eleni Tzatzalos created a table filled with art, food and stories. Gerard & Teresa van Kesteren (**Van Kesteren Foundation**) gave a heartfelt presentation and talked

about their visit to Loka's school in the fall of '23. Charlotte presented *The Story of Loka*, starting with its humble origins: teaching under a neem tree in Varanasi and ending with Loka today: a vibrant learning community along the Punpun river in Bihar. The day ended with a nature walk. The second Loka event **Stories from India** was on 19 April at **Embassy of the Free Mind** in Amsterdam. At this incredible institute that has the vision to share wisdom for a better world, Dutch author Alexander Reeuwijk and Loka's Charlotte Leech shared stories from India. Loka's Chairman Sander Tideman opened and closed the event describing it as *A Dance between Shiva and Shakti*. During the break participants walked in the institute's wild flower garden. On 1 May a **Loka Inspiration Session** was held at **Project Zero**

(Harvard) in Boston, USA. In a room filled with professors, educators, philosophers and creatives, Charlotte shared the captivating journey of Loka's school. Afterwards a conversation emerged and those present thought along about Loka's future direction. Finally, a **Loka Presentation in Auroville** was held for the teachers & students of **Last School**, a beautiful oasis of learning amid nature. Auroville, an international township in South India, has been a great inspiration for Loka throughout the years.

*Loka thanks all people who made these events possible and those who contributed in many ways. The gatherings brought about a sense of hope & inspiration for the future of learning, human unity and the planet. The next Loka events are planned in the spring of 2025 in Amsterdam and London. Stay tuned, we will keep you updated!*





*Loka aspires to move from teaching to learning; from covering to discovering; from divisions to interconnectedness.*

*A school that is unique (खास) and flowing like a river; embracing stories from ancient times, while remaining open for the new.*



## About Loka

Loka's school serves the young population of a village in rural Bihar. Families here generally earn their livelihoods as farmers, day-labourers and through small scale businesses. Loka's 100 students aged 4-16, from nursery to grade 8, receive a complete education of Head, Heart & Hand. The school uses NCERT books created by the Indian government as a guideline. Besides subject learning, students engage in reflection & meditation, practical work, sports and choice classes such as dance, music and drama. After grade 8 students complete their education at a nearby college and stay connected to Loka through projects and as interns. Currently six senior students (Loka's Lions) follow an internship as teachers. Loka is also setting up student-led business units, such as a Guesthouse, Learning Journeys through India and a Loka Cafe & (online) Shop to create livelihoods for students and sustain the future of the school.

## Loka News 2024

- > Art1st continued its 3 year teacher training in 2024, led by artist Ashis Palei. The course aims to make teaching & learning more creative at Loka's school, while connecting to local materials and social issues.
- > Artreach India's former Director Ita Mehrotra organised a paper making workshop led by artist Gopa Roy in February.
- > This summer Guest Teacher/ Artist Tia Pleiman passed away in her home in Auroville. Tia brought Joy, Colours and Love to Loka. She is greatly missed and lovingly remembered by the Loka Community.
- > Loka's farm has been giving rice, wheat and mangoes. We also welcomed calf Radha to Loka's cow family. She is happy, healthy and very sweet.
- > This fall Loka students will participate in The Open Canopy (Out of Eden Learn), an online learning programme by Project Zero. Interns Dinesh and Shankar will guide grade 7 & 8 students in a history learning journey.

## A Student's Perspective

Hi everyone! This is Dinesh, one of Loka's family members. I have been a part of this school from the beginning. According to my experience, Loka puts energy into the conscious growth of rural areas, without damaging local traditions and works for a balanced world and not for greed for only urbanisation. My school works for need, not for greed. We students are being guided towards real education and proud of our culture so we can't ruin ourselves by blindly copying and pasting others. We believe academic knowledge is a petal, not the flower itself. Our school works on the growth of a child through head, heart and hand to create useful & unique human beings in this world. Anyone can come and feel this experience and be a part of good work; Loka is a place open for all beings. *You are most welcome.*

## Loka Prayer

May Truth protect me  
Protect my Teacher  
Protect us both  
May Peace and Peace  
and Peace  
be Everywhere





# Monsoon season at Loka: Paddy (rice) Farming

*In August the paddy saplings were transplanted from a nursery into the fields by local farmers. This process is known as 'ropani' and accompanied by the village women singing traditional folksongs.*



## Slow Looking on Loka's Farm

*Loka students observing the world around them. Zooming into something they notice. Looking closely, making a drawing with descriptions, thoughts and wonders.*





## Loka is entering a new phase

### Students working as interns



*Intern Shilpi (16) has learned at Loka since she was a small girl. She recently started teaching grade 1 students as an intern and is sharing her experience with us.*

Hello everyone! I am Shilpi and I am going to share my experience of being an intern at Loka with you. Every day I am learning from my new friends, my students, and I hope they also learn much from me. When I am with them, hours pass like minutes. I try every moment to give my best to them. My students are brilliant because whatever I share or experiment with them, they learn fast. One day we went outside for a

learning activity and when we came back in the classroom everyone was thirsty due to the heat. They asked to drink some water and I gave permission and they all drank water from their water bottles. Then I told them that I too am thirsty... before I could finish my sentence they all rushed to me and asked 'please drink from my bottle'. Then I drank a mouthful of water from each bottle and everyone was happy. My students are always ready to speak the truth and help anyone. Their cheerful natures give me courage and strength, for our school and for the world.



## Meet some of Loka's Interns

### Experimental Garden

*"By observing the plants, working with the soil, a gardener becomes also a poet. New words and thoughts emerge, inspired by the garden."*

Besides teaching grade 2 students, Loka intern Shankar manages an experimental garden. "I do not feel I am working - it is more about learning and discovering. This garden is like a classroom to me. When working here I get fully absorbed and birds surround me. I learn about the soil, about the germination of seeds, what helps plants grow, how to deal with certain insects and making compost. I often forget the time and then the setting sun reminds me to wrap up and go home."



### Art Classes

Loka intern Sandeep (17) teaches art. He grew up in the same village as his students and followed his education until grade 10 at Loka's school. He can relate to his students like no other.

*"I want to create awareness within my students through art and creativity."*



# Loka opens for residential stays

Stay in a beautiful and peaceful surrounding at an inspiring learning community along the Punpun river in rural Bihar. A space where the past, present and future meet. Loka's amazing team is ready to welcome you!



## Staying at Loka

Loka is a contemporary learning community on a unique location set along the Punpun river at the entrance of a remote village in rural Bihar, North India. Its soil has a rich history; on it great emperors once tread, fearless warriors went into battle, humble farmers ploughed the land and the Buddha walked barefoot on his way to share The Four Noble Truths with the world. From 1 October 2024 the Guest House opens for visitors interested to stay in Loka's lush green community, work remote from a beautiful and peaceful location or have a retreat. From here you can explore India's ancient seats of learning: Varanasi (180 km) and Bodh Gaya (100 km) and students can take you for a walk through their village and share the local history. Loka is also open for small groups/retreats upto 12 people.



The Guest House is managed by students and it supports Loka's school and community.

### A Journey of Learning

Loka also organises and assists with pilgrimages along ancient and contemporary seats of learning in North India, both for groups and individuals. Combine a visit to Loka with stays in Varanasi, Bodhgaya, Rajgir and/or Nalanda. From simply booking your hotels and taxi's to being guided and having a private driver & car during your entire trip - everything is possible.

### Enquiries/Reservations

E [booking@loka.in](mailto:booking@loka.in)

M 7004470797 (WhatsApp)

### More information (link)

[Loka Homestay Brochure](#)

*See you in the Land of Magadh; where a great past, an exciting present and visions for a Bright & Beautiful Future meet.*



## Loka Reflection

### What is your Religion?

**Teachers, students and Loka's Founders share their thoughts**

**Nandini-** My religion is being human. What we have we can give to everyone. If we have love, we can give love.

**Aneesha-** My religion is wisdom. Wherever we are, wherever we go, we need wisdom. We learn every step of life, That is also why we are here at a school: to learn and grow.

**Dinesh-** My religion is consciousness, from that everything else comes. If we are present minded our actions become more conscious.

**Sanatan-** My religion is humanity and progress in life. Wherever we are we need to progress and to progress also shows our dedication towards humanity.

**Shankar-** Work is my religion. From work comes love, care and joy.

**Shilpi-** Learning is my religion; how we learn from each other and our surroundings in many ways.

**Sapunam-** My religion is love. When we love something, we value it. Every single day we can fall in love with nature and fall in love with our work.

**Sanat-** Creation is my religion. I always like to create something. Ultimate creator is nature, we are just instruments; part of a larger puzzle in which we all have a role to fulfil. What we create has a purpose.

When we buy a bicycle, to own a cycle is not the purpose, but to use it. Just like that, when we create a beautiful space, to own it is not the aim, but that it is used for the purpose for which it has been created.

**Charlotte-** To add beauty is my religion. While living in Europe I used to rent neglected apartments and transform them into something beautiful, using my own hands and dreams. Now at Loka I have the chance to add beauty to a place that is meant for a whole community. And adding beauty not just to a place, but to human souls. >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>



# Loka's Friends and Partners:

## Joining Hands for a Bright & Beautiful World

Loka's 100 students recently received three fresh new sets of school outfits each. Besides the usual yellow and green, we have added purple this time. These colourful outfits allow for children from all backgrounds to wear a decent set of clothes and feel a sense of dignity. Their outfits are practical for both classroom/academic learning as well as feely moving about and engaging in sports. Loka students look wonderful -and are delighted! Many thanks to Thriwe, Loka's new Indian CSR (Corporate Social responsibility) partner for making this possible!



Loka thanks its supporting partners:  
Van Kesteren Foundation and Thriwe India

### What your contribution as a Friend of Loka means

Loka's school is situated in a village in a remote part of India. Parents of students generally work as small scale farmers and day labourers. They are unable to afford fees for quality education. Through Loka, their children have access to a unique school that educates students to shine in their full potential, uplift their surroundings and inspire the world. Invest in a Bright & Beautiful planet through an education that keeps our interconnectedness at the core of everything! As a Friend of Loka you receive regular updates and are invited to (online) events.

More information/Contact E [info@loka.in](mailto:info@loka.in) W [www.loka.in](http://www.loka.in) (school site)  
W [vriendenvanloka.nl](http://vriendenvanloka.nl) (Dutch site)

An English language 'Friends of Loka' site will be added soon!



## Inspiration

Loka is more than 'just a school' it is a new perspective on a world that challenges us. Increasing social inequalities, climate change and depleting resources demand from us that we revise old ways of thinking about growth, prosperity and education.

~ Sander Tideman  
Chairman Stichting Loka

### Founders/Boards/Advisors

#### Founders

Sanat Kumar, Charlotte Leech

Loka India (Sarvodaya)

Nityanand Sharma, Uma Prajapati, Gautam Kumar

Loka NL (Stichting Loka)

Sander Tideman, Alain Hubers

Anne Wibaut, Trudy Kamsteeg

#### Advisors & Ambassadors

Shari Tishman, Gaurav Tiwari,

Wendy Nordemann, Ita Mehrotra

### On Location

Sapunam, Nandani, Anisha, Prasadh, Sangeeta, Malti, Sarita, Dhanraj and Deelip

### Inspiring Collaborations

Masterclasses art by Artreach India. Three-year course teaching art as a subject by Art1st. Football training by a professional coach Shreeja India. Slowing down, sharing stories and making connections through The Open Canopy (was Out of Eden Learn).

## Donations

### European (Dutch) Bank Account

IBAN NL04 TRIO 0254 4577 38

(Stichting Loka) BIC:TRIONL2U

Vrienden van Loka site

[vriendenvanloka.nl](http://vriendenvanloka.nl)

### Donations within India

Account nr. 28490100019100

Bank of Baroda in name of

Sarvodaya Society

IFS: BARBORAMNBS

MICR: 221012023

Paypal International

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