

# ZPRAVODAJ la ngonpo

[www.la-ngonpo.org](http://www.la-ngonpo.org)

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## Editorial

Dear readers,

We are pleased to present you with the second issue of the La Ngonpo newsletter. Thank you for your feedback to the previous issue. Although in the Czech Republic the first half of the term is over, students in Ladakh are getting ready for winter holidays and the Nepalese people have just indulged in the biggest Hindu festival of the year. There are many exciting things going on within the La Ngonpo project and we would like to share all the news with you.

In this issue, you will find: an article about the very last opening of the La Ngonpo exhibition, this time in Vsetín; the outcomes of the roundtable meeting where teachers evaluated the progress of the project; an insight into the Indian education system through the eyes of our volunteers; and an interview with Jana Sigmundová, a teacher from Úvaly Elementary School. You will, of course, also find invitations to events and information about upcoming activities.

Enjoy reading this issue and we hope it will be inspirational for you.

Your La Ngonpo Team



## Z Obsahu:

What happened  
*information about last events*



*Impressions from other side of the world*



*Interview with a Teacher*



Did you know...?  
*interesting facts about the project*

## What happened

### Exhibition: From Vsetín All the Way to the Himalayas

The very last place where you could see the travelling exhibition La Ngonpo was Vsetín. The exhibition was held under the auspices of the mayor, Iveta Tábořská, and was launched in the local community centre "Integra". The opening ceremony was accompanied by an interactive La Ngonpo lesson for students, which focused on the world around us and critical thinking. It was a successful ending of the exhibition's tour in the Czech Republic. A big thank you goes to Vsetín-Rokytnice Elementary School for co-organizing the event. Here you can see the photos from the event: [http://www.mestovsetin.cz/gp/id\\_galerie=6801&p1=21295](http://www.mestovsetin.cz/gp/id_galerie=6801&p1=21295)



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#### *La Ngonpo the American*

##### *way or Fragments from a Diary of a New Yorker*

*Some time ago we asked teachers involved with the La Ngonpo project if they would mind our intern Kyle coming to their school to observe La Ngonpo lessons as a part of his research project. We really appreciated Kyle's decision to choose La Ngonpo and here you can read about his impressions from La Ngonpo lessons:*

*My name is Kyle McCandless and I am an American student from New York studying abroad in Prague for the semester. My main focus of study is Global Studies, which is what brings me to the Multicultural Center of Prague. I came across the MKC and the La Ngonpo website, interested in the project and how it developed in the Czech Republic. While working with the MKC, my goals for the project were simply to see it first hand; in the classrooms. I was attracted to the methodology and Czech education, which led me to form a trip visiting four different schools around the Czech Republic that hold La Ngonpo classes. I feel it is important for the experience, activities, and discussions that the project represents in order to communicate and learn about different cultures in the classroom setting.*

*My first two stops were in Brno and Pečky. Lenka Dvořáková, the first teacher I met in Brno, is on her second year of teaching the class. Her students were great to be around, watching as they discussed their heroes and what kind of qualities a hero possesses. Lenka had a great connection with the project, proposing the La Ngonpo course to the school in order to teach students about different cultures and other people. Similar statements were made by Věra Křížová, the teacher in Pečky, who has been working with the project this year. She has many reasons for why she wanted to teach the project, with over twenty years of teaching experience, she stressed how multiculturalism and diversity are more visible in today's society. She uses integrated learning when teaching her students, something I witnessed firsthand*



*in her lesson, also about heroes. The lessons I saw in both schools were the same, talking about heroes, and identifying characteristics of heroes and examples of Czech heroes, past and present. For me, I was seeing the project come to life, trying to see how well the methodology worked in the classroom, and how well the students responded to the activities and modules. It was truly a pleasure meeting two wonderful groups of students.*

*Each school I encounter has something new to provide, a new way of teaching the methodology, and a new group of students.*

*Kyle*

## A Roundtable Meeting

### *Students Don't Sit Through the La Ngonpo Lessons*

The teachers from India involved in the La Ngonpo project met in Ladakh in July 2012. Several teachers from the Czech Republic, volunteering in Ladakh at that time, also joined the meeting. The aim of the meeting was to evaluate cooperation, and to talk about possible improvements for the upcoming year. A similar meeting took place in the Czech Republic, too. In October 2012, eleven teachers from the Czech schools involved in La Ngonpo met in our partner's NaZemi's office in order to evaluate the progress of the project, share their experience, and discuss recommendations for future years.

The teachers emphasized the positive impact of the project on students, appreciated the methodological manual's asset to the lessons, and discussed how to motivate the unmotivated students. The main incentive for getting involved in the La Ngonpo project for most of them was the perspective of cooperation with students from a different part of the world, which is a unique opportunity when compared to what other European projects offer. The teachers also came up

with several recommendations for improvement of the project, e.g. exchange study visits in India or Nepal for teachers and later for students too; additional workshops for students, or ways to improve partner communication.

The project was seen not only as beneficial for students, but also for teachers. Thanks to the project students learned to perceive the world and themselves differently; they learned important lessons of respect, independence and self-confidence. Last but not least, they had a great opportunity to improve their English communication skills. The meeting with their Indian and Nepali colleagues in June 2012 proved to be extremely valuable for the teachers from the Czech Republic in terms of professional development.

The roundtable meeting was very enriching and motivating and we would like to thank all the participants for their comments and suggestions, they will certainly help to improve the project as a whole.

*Should you be interested in the meeting's minutes, contact Romana Vylitová,  
[projects@mkc.cz](mailto:projects@mkc.cz)*



## Project Evaluation

The financial support of the project by the European Union is coming to its end and that is why we invited an external evaluator, Inka Píbilová, to evaluate the project as a whole. The evaluation has been under way for several months and we will soon have results which we will publish on our website.

A survey among the Czech teachers showed that partnerships with schools abroad is the main motivation for both students and teachers to participate in the La Ngonpo project. On the contrary, participants can get easily discouraged if good communication doesn't meet their high expectations.

Most teachers agreed that La Ngonpo lessons were rather different from the ordinary ones. The modules Hero, Migration and Water received the highest rating. The modules were perceived as very time-consuming in the context of the project as a whole as well as of individual lessons. The following additional themes for a potentially extended manual were suggested: school, religion, culture, food, nature and climate change. Many teachers also mentioned good communication on the part of Multicultural Center Prague and a high quality of the methodological manual. ■

## Volunteers in Ladakh

### Impressions from the other side of the world

India and the Czech Republic are two very diverse countries with different approaches towards education. This opinion was shared also by the volunteers who had the chance to look into the education system in Ladakhi schools, and to compare Czech and Ladakhi students. Some of the volunteers were worried whether their teaching style would be interesting for students from a different cultural background.

A class full of curious but disciplined Ladakhi students turned out to be a pleasant surprise. What's more, a positive, proactive and responsible attitude of Ladakhi students to school was one of Pavlína Horáčková's (Šternberk Secondary School) most powerful impressions: "Not only they showed great respect to us, but they were also very active during the lessons. It was a pleasure to teach them because they

were very polite, helpful and eager to learn something new. Most Ladakhi students are very modest and mature, and comply with strict rules at school without problems, unlike some Czech students."

Martina Dvořáková (Nový Rychnov Elementary School) spoke of Ladakhi students highly as well and stressed their curiosity when talking about the Czech Republic, its education system and the La Ngonpo project. She mentioned also how hardworking the students were and how they always obeyed the instructions, all that despite the poor conditions: "The classrooms were incredibly small and students crammed into desks."

Not everything was perfect, though, and teachers from the Czech Republic had to cope with the fact that time passes more slowly in Little Tibet than it does in Central Europe, and people are rarely in hurry. Time management of La Ngonpo lessons proved to be the most difficult challenge. "We were 15 minutes late on the first day because the headmaster called all the students to the courtyard to inform them about a picnic which was going to take place the following day," commented Pavlína Horáčková.

In Ladakh, our teachers gained not only professional experience but also inspiration for their personal lives. Will the people of Ladakhi tend to live simple lifestyles with few materialistic possessions, they are generally happy; in comparison, we live in luxury but it does not necessarily mean we enjoy our lives. "It made me think about our values and what we could learn from Ladakhi people," concluded Kateřina Borovičková (Eliška Krásnohorská Secondary School).



## Interview with a teacher

Jana Sigmundová teaches at Úvaly Elementary School. She first learned about the partnership for cooperation with schools in India at a specific educational methodology La Ngonpo last autumn.

**What were you most interested in? Why did you decide to join the project?**

I was interested in the idea of students being in touch with children from a different part of the world. I teach English, so I see this as a strong motivation for students. My colleagues supported me immediately, which was a decisive factor, too.

**What do children think about the project?**

La Ngonpo lessons are different than other classes and students are well aware of this opportunity the others do not have. They are creative and they both work and have fun.

**What is your experience with cross-curricular links?**

It is all about communication and being helpful. All the teachers in our school understand how important and unique the project is and that's why our cooperation is more effective.

**In which classes do you use La Ngonpo?**

We use the La Ngonpo methodology in more than 5 subjects (e.g. English, Czech, Social Sciences, GDE etc.), which keeps the workload for each subject balanced.

**What do you think other schools could find attractive about La Ngonpo?**

First of all, it's the methodology. It's well-prepared not only for cooperation with India but you can use it in many different ways. The methodological manual can as well be used on its own as an excellent source for Global or Multicultural Education, although it would definitely be a pity not to be in contact with a class abroad.

**What should teachers think about before they get involved in the project? (What to arrange? What to expect?)**

They should certainly put together a team of at least three teachers who would have some basic knowledge of the methodology and tasks related to the project (website, outcomes, and subjects). Then it should be clear, for example, how much English will be used and how students will be involved in updating the website.



Afterwards it is very important, I think, to choose carefully the class which will participate in the project. I recommend having a mock lesson with different elements from the methodology, during which you will observe students' creativity, willingness to communicate and respect for rules, and pick the suitable class accordingly.

## Did you know ...?

- you can post the La Ngonpo banner on your website and show your outcomes to other schools? (if you do not have one, ask for it on [global.edu@mkc.cz](mailto:global.edu@mkc.cz))
- you can get a DVD of Out of Dreams (or you can download it here: <http://vimeo.com/46029488>) and use it in your lessons? Our partners, NaZemi, are working on a methodological manual which will be available by the end of the year.
- most Nepali schools were closed from mid-October till mid-November because of Dashian, the biggest festival of the year, and Tihar (Diwali), the festival of lights?
- most Ladakhi schools (except for SECMOL) will be closed from December 2012 till February 2013 due to winter holidays, and you will, therefore, have to wait for their partner answers? Ask your partner schools about exact

Haven't you found you were looking for? Send us an e-mail and help us improve the newsletter!  
Contact: [global.edu@mkc.cz](mailto:global.edu@mkc.cz)

