

WHERE THERE BE  
DRAGONS  
**PARTNER**

INDIA: ROOF OF THE WORLD



CUSTOMIZED STUDENT PROGRAMMING

Prepared for Paideia School, April 11, 2024

TEL: 303.413.0822 | EMAIL: [info@wheretherebedragons.com](mailto:info@wheretherebedragons.com) | FAX: 303.413.0857

[WWW.WHERETHEREBEDRAGONS.COM](http://WWW.WHERETHEREBEDRAGONS.COM)

## PARTNERSHIPS IN GLOBAL EDUCATION

Where There Be Dragons is a mission-driven organization, motivated to empower the leaders of tomorrow with the empathy and compassion across cultures to do good work in the face of global challenges. Partnership with Dragons will complement and extend your school's academic excellence, offering students authentic opportunities to connect with local communities and grassroots organizations across the world. Intentionally designed itineraries infused with our core curriculum—Global Engagement, Awareness of Self, and Leadership Skills—help students gain a multifaceted perspective on global issues and a deeper awareness of themselves in relation to the global community.

We approach a school partnership as a long-term relationship consisting of sustained collaboration and capacity building. With this in mind, partnerships follow an intentional progression that includes consulting and training, faculty professional development, collaborative program and curriculum design, and the successful delivery of consistent, transformative student programming. Throughout this process, we expect dedicated and ongoing engagement and participation from school administrators and faculty involved in global education.

We know from experience that active collaboration, grounded in a common mission and vision, is necessary for success. When school partnerships are at their best, teachers are trained and empowered to co-create and co-facilitate student experiences in the field and can effectively communicate a shared philosophy and approach to parents and students. Through in-depth conversations and planning sessions, teachers and administrators construct a shared mental model for risk management, program and curriculum design, and cross-cultural facilitation.

On Dragons programs, teachers and students are invited to safely engage their personal edge by embracing physical, intellectual, and cultural discomfort. This carefully facilitated process can lead to monumental student growth and a rewarding shift in school culture. Simultaneously, partnerships are designed to align vision, goals, and risk tolerance across institutions. For this reason, partnerships are most effective when both parties are committed to a long-term dynamic relationship built on active feedback and communication systems that will lead to a shared vision for success.







## OVERVIEW

India. This simple word evokes vivid images of bustling marketplaces, ancient cities, vast golden dunes, and spicy culinary delights. It is a country steeped in contrast, where human-drawn rickshaws park outside internet cafes, where the privileged live surrounded by the poor, and where timeless rituals continue in a climate of modernity and constant change. Here, religious tradition is inextricable from daily life, whether one lives in a remote village in the mountainous foothills or commutes to an office in the city each day. The huge country boasts majestic Himalayan peaks, wild jungles, arid plains, and sacred rivers, yet for years has also been one of the top 5 global producers of the greenhouse gasses that contribute to climate change. India is a country so diverse and complex that it would take many lifetimes to fully explore. However, by immersing ourselves in local communities and cultivating meaningful relationships with the people who live, work, struggle, and thrive there, we can at the very least learn to ask—and hopefully, begin to answer—the big questions that underlie the complexity, profundity, and beauty that define India.

In India: Roof of the World, students dive into the diversity of cultures in India, explore issues of cultural identity and globalization, and focus more deeply on the experience of development issues facing this country, with a focus on the dynamic between millennia-old traditions and millennial modernization. This program provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn from and immerse in indigenous communities of Tibetan and Ladakhi descent whose world and lifestyle is largely removed from the dominant global cultures. We begin in the Ladakhi capital of Leh, hike several days to a traditional remote village homestay, connect with an innovative educational model and local peers, and end with urban exploration of Leh, Delhi and Agra.

By spending time in a diversity of settings and communities, this program exposes students to the breadth of life that exists in modern-day India and provides first-hand experience of how it is transforming in the 21st century. Along the way, students gain an experiential understanding of a unique cultural identity and spiritual practice, and engage in wisdom traditions that offer profound teachings around spiritual and material relations, challenging our understanding of development, progress, and quality of life. This holistic program offers students the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships to the people and landscapes of Ladakh by directly engaging with local families and peers, while simultaneously cultivating a deeper sense of global engagement, self-awareness, and leadership.

## PROPOSED ITINERARY

### **DAYS 1-3 - Orientation and Skill Building, and introduction to Ladakhi and Tibetan Cultures**

Upon our arrival in Leh, we'll take jeeps to our orientation site about a half hour away. We'll get everyone settled, review health and safety information, and begin setting the tone and preparing for the journey to come. You'll meet your Dragons instructors, set goals, and orient to the program, all while taking it easy to acclimatize to the altitude. Our orientation will be a mix of activities meant to help us get to know one another, important information on staying safe and healthy in this new environment/altitude/climate, and visiting some of the nearby sights, including an ice stupa and the local monastery.



### **DAYS 4-6 Trekking and Exploration, landscapes, spirituality and relationships to land**

As we wrap up orientation, we will start to prepare for our short trek into our homestay village. We'll go over all the essentials of how best to pack our bags, and instructors can help fit your packs in advance of our trek. Trekking in the Sham Valley is gorgeous and a gentle way to ease into this dramatic landscape. We'll cross a few mountain passes to get our bodies and minds primed for the environment. We'll be staying in small villages each night, enjoying the company of the generous and hospitable families who host visitors as a means of creating sustainable livelihoods for themselves.







### DAYS 7-10 Village Homestay, community immersion and subsistence living

Wrapping up our short trek, we arrive at the site of our homestays, in a beautiful village right along the Indus River! The families there are incredibly welcoming, and usually there's some young people around who speak English. You'll also have fun practicing a few words of Ladakhi with incredibly charismatic grandmothers and grandfathers who stay busy tending to the fields and taking care of livestock. We'll be meeting as a group during the day for lessons, activities, and day trips. We may get to help with harvesting in the fields or go for a hike up to the village's summer fields. We'll say farewell to our homestays and travel to Secmol.



### DAYS 11-12 Community Engagement, SECMOL, sustainable education in Ladakh

For nearly 3 decades, the Students Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL) has promoted sustainable living and bolstered education for Ladakhi students. The campus is an incredible place to exchange with Ladakhi teenage peers, and we'll have an exchange with the students who love sharing about their lives and culture and practicing their English with foreign visitors. There will be the possibility for day hikes and spending time next to the Indus River.



## DAY 13-14 Leh - Delhi, Transference and Tourism

After returning from Secmol, we return to Leh. There are many sights and possible guest speakers in Leh, and we'll make our itinerary according to the interests of the student group. Additionally, instructors will give guidance and direction and challenge students to use all the traveling skills that they have acquired. There will also be opportunities to buy gifts and souvenirs to bring back home during these days. We will also shift our focus to our departure, and begin preparing for the transition from India back home and everything that means. We'll have an early morning flight from Leh to Delhi, and then we'll have the option to explore what Delhi has to offer. We'll make plans according to students' interests, but some options include a walking tour of Old Delhi, a visit to the National Museum, visiting other historic monuments and sights, and shopping in some of Delhi's bustling markets. We'll continue our conversations and sessions on what it means for this experience to come to an end.

DAY	PLACE	DETAIL
1	Arrival - Leh	Orientation
2	Leh	Orientation
3	Leh	Orientation
4	Trek	Exploring landscapes and cultures
5	Trek	Exploring landscapes and cultures
6	Trek	Exploring landscapes and cultures
7	Village Homestay	Community engagement and immersive living
8	Village Homestay	Community engagement and immersive living
9	Village Homestay	Community engagement and immersive living
10	Village Homestay	Community engagement and immersive living
11	SECMOL	Education and sustainability
12	SECMOL	Education and sustainability
13	Leh	Transference
14	Delhi	Closure

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Over the course of pre-departure sessions, in-field experiences and post-course debriefs, students engage in learning about self, and place by following an intentional progression from container building to transference. This curricular arc is designed to deliver on Dragons Core Learning Objectives and is built from Dragons Program Components.

### Dragons Core Curriculum

Dragons' core curriculum is our map for teaching to the head, heart, and hands of students by facilitating intentionally crafted and transformative experiences. This curriculum connects nine Program Components through an intentional **Three-phase Progression** to our three **Core Learning Objectives**.



### Core Learning Objectives

**Global Engagement** Dragons courses address issues of social justice and equity, globalization, power and privilege, and sustainable development by exploring the complexity of these issues and how they relate to students' lives. Dragons Instructors role-model a dedication to social justice and a respect for diversity, as well as promote a sense of responsibility based on the belief that every individual can make a difference.

**Self-Awareness** Instructors and teachers skillfully present opportunities for students to reflect on their own lives through new perspectives and experiences, as they connect with others across perceived differences. Programs cultivate student curiosity and ultimately help them embrace their most authentic selves.

**Leadership** Throughout the entire program, students are taught new skills, such as group leadership, foreign languages, responsible travel, wilderness skills, and independent field research. Instructors facilitate this process by modeling authentic leadership, teaching specific skills, and offering feedback and mentorship throughout.

## Program Components



### Responsible Travel

Dragons students are travelers, not tourists. Groups travel in a style that places a primacy on safety while respecting cultural norms and enabling participants to genuinely connect with the people of the countries we visit. It often isn't the fastest or most comfortable way to travel—but for adaptable participants, it offers the most authentic experience and profound learning.



### Homestay

Often the most challenging and fulfilling component of any program, homestays allow students to connect with local people over the mundane essentials of daily life. Homestays are carefully set up with each student's personality in mind to provide the best experience in language immersion and education.



### Trekking

Though programs vary in their degree of physical challenge, exploration of the natural environment is integral to travel. Remote, wild spaces expose participants to a different meaning of place and offer time and space for reflection and observation.



### Learning Service

Dragons seeks to make long-term investments in the communities we visit and teach participants to be ethically service-minded. Groups learn to think critically about service and may engage in a range of collaborative work projects that sustainably address the needs of local communities—from classroom teaching to microeconomic development or hands-on building projects. Our focus is always on learning, exchange, and sustainability rather than the end result of a project.



### Social & Environmental Justice

Dragons courses introduce students to questions that are central to humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each course can explore a range of pertinent development issues, from health care to resource management, environmental impact, children and women's issues, peace and conflict studies, and more. Participants learn through hands-on experiences how the efforts of community leaders and aid organizations positively and negatively impact the region's people, cultures, and environments.



### Independent Study Projects

Students may engage intensively with a particular topic of their choice, often through one-on-one mentorship from local experts. Projects may lean toward the academic or dive into hands-on practice. For example, students may choose to explore themes like political and community activism, tourism and development, or the role of women or children in society. Or, they may choose to apprentice with a master to learn an art form, meditation or yoga, farming, or another personal interest.



### Language Study

Students are not expected to arrive on course with language skills. However, we do expect students to interact with locals as closely as they can. Few things do more to empower participants and facilitate an ease of cultural understanding than frequent language lessons with supportive instructors. On course, students benefit from formal language study as well as learning through immersion.



### Comparative Religion & Spirituality

Participants are introduced to the commonly shared religious and political thinking that has helped to shape a region's cultures. Depending on the region, travelers explore the tenets of various traditions of Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Shamanism, Christianity, Confucianism, or Hinduism.



### Focus of Inquiry

Each course lends itself to different academic themes depending on its location, duration, and learning goals. Programs may be curated to dive deeply into a specific topic, such as minority issues, land-use issues, peace and conflict studies, or cultural preservation through art and performance.



## Course Progression

### Phase 1: Orientation and Skill-Building

The skill-building phase for any global experience begins with an active inquisition into students' current skills and knowledge and then an intentional mapping of what they need to effectively engage with self and place. This includes providing students with necessary health and safety guidelines and cultural context. This phase begins in the first group meeting and continues through the first third of the in-field experience.



### Phase 2: Practicing and Immersion

Once a student has been provided the necessary skills to engage with a place or an experience, instructors offer ample opportunity for students to apply these skills. Instructors encourage students to 'fail forward' as they face challenges, as well as give and receive feedback to achieve competency and personal growth.



### Phase 3: Expedition and Transference

The final phase offers space for each student to define their own needs, pursue knowledge and understanding on their own accord, and engage their community using their learning and growth up to this point. Expedition may manifest in many forms such as a group service project, a capstone presentation, or student-led travel.



## DRAGONS INSTRUCTORS

In the field of global experiential education, Dragons instructors set the industry standard. Since our founding, we have consistently provided a student-to-instructor ratio of 4:1. All instructors are carefully vetted and undergo rigorous background checks. Once hired, instructors receive intensive training in Dragons pedagogy, risk management, and emergency response. Unlike other organizations, Dragons does not sub-contract with local ground operators who then farm out on-site work. All on-site personnel Dragons are hired, trained, and managed directly by Dragons, and they are fully integrated into the Dragons community.

Here are a few facts about our instructor community:

### **Life Experience**

When not guiding with Dragons, our instructors are graduate students, returned Peace Corps Volunteers, U.N. development professionals, veteran guides, and career teachers.

### **Mature**

Dragons Instructors average 30+ years of age and are well-educated, resourceful, responsible, and deeply knowledgeable.

### **Area Experts**

Instructors are experienced living and working in the countries where they guide; they bring academic experience in relevant topics and intentional curricula.

### **Highly Trained**

Instructors are trained in risk management, group facilitation, communication and interpersonal skills, experiential education, and ethical community engagement.

### **Diverse**

51% male, 49% female; the majority were born outside of the U.S. and are multilingual.

### **Inspirational Educators**

Instructors are committed to the participants and deliver meaningful cross-cultural engagement as well as deep experiences of personal learning, reflection, and growth.

As a Dragons partner, Lawrenceville faculty would collaborate with veteran Dragons instructors to co-author profound programming. Instructors are brought in to help design and support programs, share their rich regional knowledge, and work alongside teachers to facilitate profound learning while traveling. Working with a Dragons instructor is not only an inspiring learning opportunity for students, but also a rich investment in professional development for teachers.



## PROGRAM COSTS

**Program Dates:** May 2025, 14 days on the ground

**Program Cost:** \$3,600 (10 to 14 students)

**Est. Flight Cost:** \$1,750 (Atlanta to Leh roundtrip)

**Est. Total Program Cost:** \$5,350

*Actual flight costs and total cost will be finalized with a requested flight quote issued upon confirmation of the proposal.*

**Sponsored Teachers:** 2 teachers ground costs are sponsored with 10 students enrolled

**Program Includes:**

- Facilitated collaborative program design process.
- Pre course readings and introductions for students.
- Option for pre-departure virtual sessions.
- All program-related ground costs (meals, lodging, ground transportation, entrance fees & permits etc.)
- Risk management and emergency response systems throughout.
- Post-course communication and connection to key organizations.

**Payment Timeline:** A deposit to hold dates, due 360 days prior to travel. Remaining balance due 120 days prior to travel.

## NEXT STEPS

1. **Review** program proposal, ask questions, make adjustments.
2. **Confirm** the proposal by emailing or calling Simon Hart.
3. We'll send you a **contract** and invoice for the deposit of (20% of the minimum students' tuition).
4. Then, we'll schedule the "**Launch Conversation**" to introduce you to our incredible Admissions and Program Direction team and build the timeline for remaining tasks.