



Education for children from needy families

December 2012

Dear Friends,

now in the Naveen Nursery & Primary School in Varanasi (India) the second part of the school year has already begun after the half-year exams in October. After a very hot summer the cooler season has come for which all schoolchildren as well as teachers always wait most ardently. It dates back only one month that we celebrated Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights in which the houses are decorated with many small oil lamps so that the light may win over the darkness. Now Christmas, and with it the winter holidays up to the second January week stands shortly before the door.

Looking back it was a busy but also unusual year for us. Like last year in spring preparations took place for the yearly school celebration in March. The teachers practised folk dances and other performances with the children. It was a very successful event and this was not only due to the tasty snack which the children received after the presentations.

What made the year so different to the previous years was because new actions took place and brought movement in our routine school activities. In April we could carry out a workshop with Juhi Pandey of the Tara Trust from Goa with the children from third to the fifth grade. In this activity children painted T-shirts with cranes on it which were sent to Japan to the children affected by the Tsunami as a sign of sympathy and connectedness.

In the still hot month of September our first Volunteer Kerstin (student for social work, Regensburg) from Germany. Kerstin together with Janani (our daughter) created with the schoolchildren a very beautiful school calendar with many created ideas. Kerstin, being for the first time in India, showed great adaptability and understanding for the school children as well as Benares.

Aaron (comparative religion graduate) and Kate (psychologist and present scholarship holder) from America are with us from October till May 2013. While Kate does handicraft and paintings once a week with the children, Aaron has taken over the English lesson from class first to five. It is tremendous how Aaron is providing attention to each child and coming to class with lots of preparation and diversified ideas. Due to this experience we are now ready and interested to deploy for the coming school year 2013/14 once more a volunteer for the subject English, as it is not easy to find a local English teacher.

Kate with her decorative creations has inspired our children as well as teachers with her ideas and changed our simple classrooms into nothing but small jewellery boxes. Kate's knowledge of Hindi is also of great advantage!

The Australian university teacher Geoff offers a further training course of several weeks to our teacher team once per week at the present moment. Geoff knows India and also Benares already very long and since he speaks Hindi can be in direct conversational contact with our Hindi speaking teachers.

We feel very much supported by our connection with the Italian non-profit organisation Progetto Utopia. Danilo, founder of Progetto Utopia has a long-standing India experience and acts as mediator in finding volunteers and instructors for teacher trainings. As an architect he produces our architect's plans for the renovation and enlargement of the school voluntarily and stands in an advisory capacity aside!

We hope very much that next year we can begin with the renovation and annexe works. In summer we gave admission to 50 more children in various classes. Many we had to refuse though it was hard to stand the rush of the parents' request for admission. Now on account of the raised number of children we have put a space in our own residential building what can be, however, only a limited makeshift. All donations which we run primarily still go in the maintenance of the school. Presently our school still just survives with the donation support, including the medical care of scanty women- well known to us-, and most minimum salaries for the teachers and other issues. That is why our first priority is still to guarantee the running school costs and the improvement of certain conditions (sufficient staff, qualified teachers, appropriate salaries etc.). When this is ensured, we can reserve additional asset for the reconstruction and renovations.

With the help of the Circle of Friends of Wider Vision Foundation Regensburg (Germany) a benefit tour took place in September to Nepal and Tibet. Monika Zierl as chairperson of the Circle of Friends had invited to a talk of Neel Pratap in Regensburg. Neel, our Asian tour guide, organised the tour and accompanied the travel group to Kathmandu. Pictures and a travel report in addition will soon be shown on our web side www.widervision.org. We would be glad, if in 2013 another tour can take place to Tibet or India. Please, contact us through our email office@widervision.org. In Germany you can reach us at the telephone numbers 0941-46524874 or 09402-5042790. Neel is to be reached from the 15th of December to the 6th of January here in Germany.

Last but not least Janani and I were guest in the Montessori school in Regensburg at the end of November. We informed the combined fifth and sixth class with her class teacher Heike Hitzfelder about the work in the Naveen School! Heike is also a member of the Circle of Friends of the Wider Vision Foundation Regensburg. We were pleasantly surprised about the active questions of the students. The children achieved a great success with the Christmas bazaar on the day of the open door on the 2nd of December where they could sell many coloured manual labours brought from India like scarfs, necklaces and little pockets in favour of the Naveen School.

We felt enriched and encouraged with so many volunteer services and assistance this year. Quite a hearty thank-you to all for their ambitious application and thinking of us! For any of your contribution we thank you from our heart – it helps our school's sustenance. Any help, no matter big or small, we welcome as a blessing for our work in India! Thanks for your trust and support!

A Blessed Christmas and a fulfilling New Year, also in the name of the teacher team and the children from India,

Birgit Pratap



Our volunteer Aaron during his English lectures with class 2 children

The barriers and difficulties of our outer life are only there so that our soul can prove their power, and by overcoming obstacles is realizing its true nature

Rabindranath-Tagore
Indian Poet and Philosopher

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