



March 2017

*Newsletter based on Deodas Shetty's report from 27th February*

*This newsletter follows the previous one addressed to all donors in October 2016 regarding the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September.*

**Reminder:** Gandhi Education for Development is a French association which supports the actions of Gandhi Sevam Ashram, an Indian organisation that operates in the Udupi district (Karnataka state, South India), focusing particularly on children from Dalit tribes.

**News from the academic and educational support centres**

Two new centres opened in addition to the 6 existing centres. They started operating in the middle of the year. These centres, which are in the village of Kokkarne, are welcoming children from the Kunbi tribe for the first time. A teacher from this tribe has been recruited to manage the two centres and, like the others, he lives and teaches in the village. Some 89 children are currently being helped with their schooling in this way. The average attendance per class is broken down as follows:

Places	Number of children	Number of teachers	Teachers' names
<b>Kotebagilu, Thallur</b> (Adi Dravidas) 2014, 2 centres	18 (8 boys, 10 girls)	2	- Nirmala - Deepika
<b>Shankara Narayana, Bedrakatte</b> (Koraga) 2014, 1 centre	12 (5 boys, 7 girls)	1	- Chaitra
<b>Krodabailuru, Shankara Narayana</b> (Adi Dravidas) 2014, 2 centres	17 (9 boys, 8 girls)	2	- Shanta - Sunita
<b>Hale Amasebailu</b> (Koraga) June 2015, 1 centre	15 (8 boys, 7 girls)	1	- Sreelatha
<b>Olabbailu, Kokkarne</b> (Kundi) end 2016, 2 centres	27 (14 boys, 13 girls)	2	?

Every week, the social worker Ganesh Shehy visits the centres to follow the children's progress and also to meet their families when absences or illnesses are observed. Along with the teachers, he follows the personal journey and problems of each child. Here are some examples:

### **Bailoor centre**

**Name:** Bharat (boy)

**Level:** 5<sup>th</sup> grade

**Parents' occupation:** Farmer

**Pupil's wish:** To become a police officer

**The pupil's point of view :** Before I started coming to the centre, I was interested in games. Since I started going to the centre I have been more focused on my learning and I am trying to improve it. I am interested in learning new things and knowledge in general. I also think it is important to be well-behaved in front of older people.

**The teacher's point of view :** Before he started coming to the centre, this child was hyperactive and sure of himself. Little by little he has improved his behaviour and achieved satisfactory results in his learning. He has good leadership qualities. Importantly, he doesn't hesitate to ask questions when he doesn't understand.

### **Thallur centre (Kote bagil)**

**Name:** VIKRAM

**Level:** 6<sup>th</sup> grade

**Parents' occupation:** Farmer

**Pupil's wish:** To become a teacher

**The pupil's point of view:** I need to improve my communication skills because I want to become a teacher. Little by little, I am overcoming my shyness and I am starting to gain self-confidence.

**The teacher's point of view:** This child is a hard-working pupil. He is dedicated to his learning. Hindi was difficult for him and he was hesitant to read it. Now he reads Hindi fluently. Before, he was also hesitant to take part in group activities. Now, he participates in singing activities, story reading and craft activities. He has skills in mechanics and electricity. He has leadership qualities.

### **Bailoor centre**

**Name:** PRAJNA (girl)

**Level:** 5<sup>th</sup> grade

**Parents' occupation:** Farmer

**Pupil's wish:** To become a doctor

**The pupil's point of view:** Before I started coming to the centre I wasn't reading much and I didn't have a sense of discipline. Slowly, I have improved my reading skills and my time management. Now, thanks to my teacher, I mix well with my classmates.

***The teacher's point of view:*** *In the beginning, she was frequently absent. Now she is more diligent. She is full of energy. She shows an interest in her lessons and doesn't forget to ask questions. Now, she is a well-behaved and disciplined pupil.*

The tutoring classes are always held from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.. The language spoken at home is different from the one spoken at school, which is Kannada. For this reason, teachers are putting a lot of effort into language teaching like Kannada, Hindi and English. Since the Indian government's policy is now to bring all children from primary to secondary school level, the language classes held in schools to help students move up into higher-level classes have suffered. That is why language learning is an important aspect in the tutoring centre.

Teachers are encountering a lot of difficulties with maths. Each teacher tries to develop a special teaching method. In one class, multiplication tables are practised every day. In another, children have weekly exams on the subject. In some classes, the children sit around the teacher and each of them is tutored. In others, the children sit in groups and the teachers move from group to group.

On Saturdays, the children can play indoor games, dance, and enjoy other recreational activities.

A big event occurred on November 15<sup>th</sup> 2016. Children from all the tutoring centres gathered on a high-school field and took part in sports, cultural activities, quizzes and speeches. Quality food was provided (breakfast and lunch) and the winners received prizes.

Teachers gather every month and exchange news on pupils' attendance, new teaching methods and their plans for next month.

As specified in the previous newsletter, the Karnataka government's tribal welfare department has ended the funding for "primitive tribes" which had made it possible to open 10 teaching centres based on the Deodas Shetty model. Deodas Shetty has lobbied the government to reconsider its decision, emphasising the need to choose teachers from the same local community as the children, which had not been taken into account in the government programmes.

### **New prospects:**

In the previous newsletter, we reported that the association had received financial support from the organisation Children & Future Monaco, which organises the No Finish Line trail, sponsored by big companies, to fund equipment for projects supporting disadvantaged children. We received a sum of €4,630.

With this financial help, Deodas Shetty, who is continuously striving to promote the learning of scientific subjects and maths, wants to build a science tutoring project for pupils from Kannada-speaking local government schools in the Udupi district.

Scientific education is key to a person's prospects of securing a high-potential tech job. Children from tribal communities tend to have no interest in science learning and tend to hold a deep-rooted belief that scientific subjects are difficult. This phenomenon is increasing due to the lack of science teachers and teachers skilled in scientific demonstration in schools. There is also a lack of equipment and instruments to trigger children's curiosity and interest.

The project is to create the first centre with scientific equipment intended to be used by local schools as well as to create a scientific programme for primary and secondary classes.

This project has been prepared with the contribution of local schools' principals and teachers, who have been very receptive to it. Deodas is also supported by an old organisation named Parivartana, which also works to promote the education of tribal children. This organisation manages a centre with trained teachers where over one hundred primary- and secondary-school children live and study.

The first centre is currently being set up in Kaup, in premises rented in the name of Gandhi Sevam Ashram, and will receive physics, chemistry, biology and astronomy equipment. The instruments have been selected according to the school curricula until 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

*List of scientific equipment being procured for the support of science learning*

*TV & computer, DVD x 2*

*Microscope, telescope, galvanometer, scales, calliper, pendulums, heat conductors, acoustic devices  
Measuring cylinders, Bunsen burners, test tubes, pipettes, density meter, skeletons, etc.*

*Cassettes, project book, science books, learning cards  
2 storage cabinets and one table*

Initially, this project will be done with 5 schools and will benefit 150 pupils. A science teacher trained in the use of the equipment will be recruited to provide the tutoring. It will also be necessary to acquire a mode of transportation to take the equipment from the centre to the different schools. The project will start during the back-to-school season in June 2017 (in India the academic year runs from June to April).

Little by little, other local schools could be included in the project, by seeking additional financial assistance to open a second centre in Haladi.

It is the first time that such a project has been developed in local schools using the Kannada language. The current budget only covers the scientific equipment. The effective launch and the future of this project will depend to a large extent on how much additional financial aid we are able to secure, and on how much interest is shown by the Education Services of the state of Karnataka.

Alongside these efforts concerning scientific subjects, special attention must be paid to English learning. We have noticed that, as the years go by, the level of students studying in Kannada at governmental schools falls behind that of pupils studying in English. The use of cassettes for English lessons is part of the project but much more needs to be done on this issue.

### **Other actions**

Finally, beside activities related to children, Gandhi Sevam Ashram continues its action for local tribes. The principal advancements regard new housing, the improvement of roads to access tribes' homes, access to drinking water, the re-housing of migrant workers, and the organisation of Adi-Dravida tribes.