



Newsletter N 5 – September 2018

Reminder: Gandhi for Development is a French organisation which supports the actions taken by the Indian organisation Gandhi Sevam Ashram in the Udupi district, in the state of Karnataka, Southern India, aimed at children from Dalit tribes.

Creation of the website and change of the organisation's name

The big news is that the organisation Education for Development now has a website called 'Gandhi Education'. The name of the organisation has since been then changed to 'Gandhi Education for Development', a change officially recognized in an amendment to the organisation's articles of association, decided at an Extraordinary General Meeting held on 15 March 2018 and officially recognised by the prefecture on 1 August 2018.

The new organisation's logo will replace the one used until now.

The organisation's website is accessible at: www.gandhi-education.org

As you will see, this website is organised around a menu that enables visitors to:

- Find out more about the organisation, its purpose and the kinds of actions it supports, but also its origins and the way it works together with its Indian partner the Gandhi Sevam Ashram organisation, as well as with Deodas Shetty, the person in charge of the organisation and who leads the actions;
- Have an overview of India and Indian society, both from an economic and social viewpoint, with a focus on the caste system existing there, especially the issues regarding Dalits, also known as 'Scheduled Castes' or 'Untouchables';
- Find out more about the Scheduled Castes living in the state of Karnataka, at whom our actions are aimed;
- Become aware of the different initiatives to provide tutoring for children from these groups of people;
- Discover through photos the places, families, children, teachers as well as the kinds of actions carried out;
- Access downloadable documents, such as leaflets, newsletters and slideshows, which are available in some menu items;
- Become aware of how much your support means and the ways you can contribute to our actions;
- Become aware of the progress achieved through our actions. The 'News' section contains the latest updates on the actions carried out and on ongoing projects.

This website was created through a partnership with the Institute of Intercultural Management and Communication (ISIT), which is a higher education institution located in Arcueil, just outside Paris. It was made by several groups of students from this institute as part of applied research projects, conducted during the second year of their master's degree under the supervision of their computer science teacher and course leader, who has strongly supported the whole conception of the website.

We hope you will enjoy our website.

If you have any feedback or comments for us, please do not hesitate to send them to us by e-mail at gandhi.education1@gmail.com. They will be highly appreciated.

The continuation of tutoring for Dalit children

Reminder: After their day at school, children arrive in the leased premises situated in the dwelling place of their families, which is always away from villages. Tutoring classes are carried out for two hours every evening from Monday to Friday and on Saturday afternoon.

Running two hours of daily tutoring usually includes:

- A greeting song;
- Reading time for each pupil, with questions asked by the teacher;
- Recital of multiplication tables by the entire class;
- Doing homework;
- Maths exercises assigned by the teacher, with individual correction of each pupil's work;
- Singing practice in English;
- Recital in English of the vocabulary learned, including figures, numbers, days of the week, and months of the year;
- Reading of a text from the English book by each pupil and reading aloud to the teacher.



In India, the first day of school takes place during the first week of June, after the holidays.

The start of the school year also marks the resumption of tutoring classes. Three of the existing centres currently have over twenty-five pupils. As a result, several new centres needed to be opened and now there are ten of them. An additional teacher has been hired. However, the number of pupils has decreased in two of the other centres, with only ten pupils left at the end of August, which is below expectations. It is thus necessary to know the reasons behind this decrease and address them by visiting the families of the pupils concerned.

Fortunately, since the resignation of the previous welfare worker occurred a year ago, Gandhi Sevam Ashram has recently hired two new welfare workers. Their role is to visit all education centres to guarantee the consistent monitoring of pupils and meet their families in case of non-attendance at classes or illness. They work closely with the teachers to monitor the personal development of each child and the problems which arise for them at school and in their family.

This is a crucial role to guarantee a regular presence in the dwelling places of the tribes and with families. Bonds created with families are essential to make them aware of the benefits of maintaining schooling for children and letting these children receive tutoring offered to them on a daily basis. The welfare worker is also in charge of ensuring the effective functioning of the centres. He or she must also organize outings, camps, meetings, group activities, celebrations, all of these representing opportunities for children to assert themselves, boost their self-esteem and contribute to their personal development.

For both centres experiencing a decrease in the numbers of pupils, these welfare workers will go to meet the families concerned in order to understand what is going on. For example, they can enquire whether the non-attendance of their children at tutoring classes is due to a lack of interest from these children or from their families, or whether it is due to the particular situation of the families, who hold back their children to make them do work tasks at home or in the fields. The welfare workers will also check if the children keep going to school, and so on.

All centres are equipped with educational materials and play equipment. A teachers' meeting is held each month on the basis of detailed reports of their activities, Training sessions, which are greatly appreciated by the teachers, are also held. A trip has been organised for teachers to visit the Mysore region. A sports plan, involving taking all the children to a sports ground, has yet to be arranged due to the difficulty in finding a car to take them in.

Tutoring in science studies based on first-hand laboratory experiments

Reminder: The science learning programme launched by Gandhi Sevam Ashram is aimed at other schools than the ten centres that we support. Kannada-language government schools lack laboratory tools and equipment to stir pupils' curiosity and spark their interest, as well as science teachers trained to demonstrate basic experiments.

The initiative taken by Gandhi Sevam Ashram consisted in creating a centre in Kaup, in order to receive the scientific equipment required for teaching physics, chemistry, biology and astronomy. An initial trial was launched for 6th and 7th grade pupils at two schools, based on chemistry experiments relevant to the curriculum of both years, as per the pupils' textbook.

This was the first time that scientific equipment had been introduced into two schools from the state of Karnataka and that such teaching methods had been used, especially among Dalit children. This marked the start of a major project, which would have to prove its worth to the state of Karnataka over a period of at least three years before the administration would establish a programme for supporting reinforced science education across the board in Karnataka schools.



Practical work restarted in August in a few schools. Several elementary schools up to 7th grade and schools up to 10th grade were also contacted repeatedly with the aim of establishing working relationships with them. The overwhelming response was positive and a few of them even expressed their wish to help with the practical work.

Initially, ten higher elementary schools and five high schools were identified, all situated no more than 5 km from Kaup, where all the scientific equipment is stored. This made it possible to cover 300 children in higher primary schools and 150 in other schools.

During visits, the science teachers were asked to prepare a list of all the experiments they would teach per term and to plan the practical lessons.

Requirements for chemicals and tools will be reviewed as the programmes are implemented in the schools that will be involved.

Rickshaws are rented to transport the tools and chemicals.

A teacher or an assistant able to teach practical work in schools is needed. The idea is to recruit science students who could do the practical work. They are very much in demand and have not yet been found. So, for the moment, Deodas Shetty, who is in charge of Gandhi Sevam Ashram, continues to perform the practical work in some schools. However, he won't be able to keep doing this in the future.

One of the social workers is partly assigned to this project, in order to maintain the dialogue with the higher elementary schools and see how it might be possible to help them in the development of these practicals, or even to make them into extracurricular activities as well.