



Newsletter 05 – November 2007

Content:

- Model school
- Teacher's training
- New batch of volunteers
- Ganesh festival
- Village schools

Model school

Teachers training

After a long fruitful period of school in Visakhapatnam, on October 10th our students set off for their villages. Ten busy weeks of learning had passed since their last vacations. They were looking forward to see their families and the students were visibly excited about going home. Like in any farewell, there also was a bit of sadness, and it is good to know that we were not saying goodbye forever. For the teachers and volunteers, however, school life went on, irrespective of the children's departure. How comes? More than 40 teachers from the Balamitra village schools (43 teachers, to be precise) came to Visakhapatnam in order to attend the four-days long teachers training at our model school.

These regular teacher trainings are an appreciated opportunity for our teachers to share and



Main lesson with our 2nd class teacher Rhada

discuss their individual experience with teaching. Furthermore the teachers are introduced to new teaching methods, which may render their future classes even more creative.

During the teacher training, we began every day with a class of rhythmic activities and games, to sharpen the teacher's attention. In addition these classes had an awakening effect and gave everyone plenty of energy to follow the theoretical classes during the morning. The theoretical lessons were on education in Waldorf schools, new teaching methods, main-lesson subjects and health education. In the afternoon, practical classes took place. In music classes both English and Telugu songs were taught. In the speech classes, the teachers were introduced to imaginative methods for teaching basic sentences of the English language. Furthermore, we practiced juggling and clay work and –wow- the Balamitra teachers turned out to be really enthusiastic and talented students of artistic and fine arts.

New batch of volunteers

In July and August, our five new volunteers from Germany arrived and succeeded the former batch of volunteers. Their main task is teaching common subjects like English, music and all kind of artwork. Furthermore they are involved in the work of Samata, especially in campaign work and fieldwork.



English class in 3rd grade

Our timetables had to be modified as the new volunteers brought in new subjects. Peter and Felix build up a drama class. It is a great pleasure to see how the students learn to use English language more fluently through improvisation exercises in drama classes. Soon the students could improve their abilities in bargaining on the market through little role-plays. They also have learned how to introduce themselves and describe their family background. Another new subject is the juggling class of Solveig and Maria. Children made their own juggling balls out of balloons, filled with sand. After a lot of patient exercise, all of the students were able to juggle two balls; some of them already have juggled successfully with three balls. Fabian's music class may not be a new subject. However, he faced the students with new



Volunteer Fabian playing the recorder with Shankar

elements, such as canon singing or new songs for the recorder flute.

For the three guys of the volunteers this social work is an alternative to German military service (in Germany obligatory for males). The two young women serve as volunteers in the framework of a practical social year. For all of them, volunteering with Samata is a great opportunity to gain experience in the social and educational work. Moreover, they gain the chance for personal growth by the mutual sharing of knowledge, expertise and awareness with the gorgeous Adivasi children.

Ganesha Festival

Starting on September 15th, the birthday of Ganesha, who is the elephant god, is celebrated throughout nine days. In this festive period, Indians commonly worship statues of Ganesha until, after a traditional ceremony, they carry these statues in a procession to a river or the ocean, where finally the Ganesha statues are drowned. Already in the beginning of September, we started preparing the Ganesha festival in our school. In art classes the students made little Ganesha figures out of clay.



bright colours. They visibly enjoyed the traditional festival ceremony that



took place in school and they were proud of their own, self-made, felicitous figures of Ganesha. And being proud of your own work and deeds, is important for all of us.

Village schools:

In the past two months a remarkable change took place in our village schools. The government started to operate eight of our forty Balamitra Schools; all of them are located in the Adivasimitra area. Samata sent the former teachers of these schools to different Adivasi villages where they have founded new Balamitra Schools. Trying to involve parents more in school life, we started organizing regular parent meetings. Subjects of discussion are local problem, sanitation issues and the crucial nourishment issue. Fortunately most of our students are not literally





Kitchen garden at one of the Balamitra schools

undernourished. However, they mostly do not receive daily meal, as officially promised by the government. This may change. Inspired by the gorgeous kitchen garden at our model school, some of the village teachers have taken the initiative in order to provide their children balanced meals. They have created their own school gardens in which they plant all kinds of vegetables such as ladyfingers, cucumbers, potatoes and corn. Their perseverance already has been crowned by success. Vegetable

soups and curries are now prepared with the products of these school gardens. Unfortunately some of the gardens lately have been damaged or even destroyed by the heavy rainfalls of our current rain season. In any event, our teachers won't give up and rebuild these gardens.

As much as we try to inspire the teachers concerning creative teaching methods, we are also interested in a mutual teaching process. Last year two of our former volunteers started an exciting music project. They recorded a respectable collection of original Adivasi songs. Now our current volunteer Fabian continues this work. He recently took a trip to the Sahugudu area and recorded further songs. One purpose of this project is to promote both modern and original songs can be taught to our children at the model School.

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Appeal:

You can contribute to our efforts by way of donations in materials or money. Financial contributions to Samata are exempt from Income Tax under Section 80G and has a contribution regulation act (FCRA) number from the Central Government which allows it to receive foreign funds. Please make Cheques payable to 'Samata'. Legal Status:

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