



Piali Ashar Alo

Piali Ashar Alo School

May- September 2017

Looking back at the past several months, we are certainly grateful to all the sponsors, musicians, volunteers and organizations who paid us a visit. The last few weeks were dynamic and full of diverse activities that helped us forget about the monsoon rains, the tropical humidity... the difficult weather conditions. We organized three musical concerts, a medical examination for all the students as well as their parents. We also organized a workshop on the subject of adolescence and growing up and were visited and helped by volunteers.

1. OUR SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Right before the summer holidays, we received a visit from Dr. Susanne Pechel, President of the German CED Foundation that sponsors 55 of our girls. We spent a very pleasant day together, discussing our successes, challenges and also visions for the future. Dr. Susanne is a great inspiration for us. With her team, she supports over nine projects across the world.



We also received a visit from the Rozanc family from Slovenia. The Rozanc family sponsors one of our youngest girls. Parents Sonja and Edo brought their three sons with them – young schoolboys Lovro, Jakob and Nace. Our school was a short stop for them in their wider travels across India.

It's now hard for us to imagine the months of July and August without our POTA volunteers. Their visit provides us with a great opportunity to

practice our English. We also learned a little German and continued with extra-curricular dance and arts activities. Above all, spending time with our volunteers provides us all with the opportunity for mutual learning. It is a time of positive energy and an awareness and celebration of difference. The volunteers also spend quite a bit of time and effort preparing for their visit and collecting donations in support of our school prior to their arrival.



2. MEDICAL EXAM AND WORKSHOP ONGROWING UP AND HYGIENE

Sincere thanks to Shomota (www.shomota.com), which prepared a workshop on the subject of adolescence, changes in puberty and a detailed explanation of the menstrual cycle for our girls and their mothers. Menstruation still remains a taboo subject in many parts of the Indian culture. A woman is perceived as being impure while she is on her period, so she shouldn't enter a holy temple and often, not even a kitchen. Many taboos are associated with menstruation and these types of workshops help to break the myths. Several projects across India are currently working to change this mentality and we are happy to report that important and encouraging progress is being made.



Among its many activities, Shomota creates and distributes natural hygiene products for women. These are made of fabric and are eco-friendly. Women in villages across India are increasingly using synthetic products but proper waste disposal hasn't been simultaneously provided. Shomota's initiative is therefore all the more important, both from an educational and from an ecological perspective.

A sincere thanks also to the ARGOBBHAWVA organization for carrying out a medical examination for all of our students and their parents. Thanks to them for the distribution of free-of-charge medication and for holding a workshop on the subjects of upbringing and marriage among youths. We hope and trust that this is just the beginning of continued collaboration that will enable us to continue to do more in our community.

3. MUSICAL CONCERTS

We organized two musical concerts in cooperation with the SIDDHA Foundation and #Live in



Music. This is an excellent opportunity for our students to become familiar with different types of music... from classical to modern... so that they can dance to a different beat and even get to know different instruments from up close. The most interesting instrument for our students was the double bass... or the 'dinosaur violin' as we jokingly called it.



We also received a visit from internationally renowned sitar virtuoso, Rohan Dasgupta. He prepared a short musical concert for us and was also joined by one of our volunteers, Ivana Kocevar, who played a bamboo flute and by Sandip, an excellent player of the Indian tabla drums.



And so that we don't just listen to music, we're also learning to create it ourselves! Two young musicians are teaching our students to sing, play the harmonium and the guitar. Who knows, maybe one of our young students is a future musician!

4. CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY

This year was the 70th anniversary of India's Independence, so we made all the more effort to create a special celebration. Our students performed by dancing, singing and reciting homeland poetry. We raised the flag and thanked each and every person who helped to ensure that we live in a free country today.



5. BALL-TO-ALL

The Ball-To-All organization (<http://www.balltoall.org/>) works under the slogan: "Every kid can have a ball". They send soccer balls to kids around the world who never had one and sent us 30 soccer balls that we distributed among our own students as well as other children in the village. Let every kid have a ball and the chance to play, all around the world! Thank you for this great initiative!



6. ABOUT US IN THE MEDIA

Our school was featured in Slovenia's Jana magazine (<https://govori.se/zanimivosti/mojca-gayen-luc-upanja-za-indijske-otroke/>) and newspaper Gorenjski Glas (<http://www.gorenjskiglas.si/article/20170925/C/170929871/1039/luc-upanja-za-indijske-deklince>)

Thanks to all of you who help us!

Mojca and Anup Gayen

www.pialisharalo.org