



Piali Ashar Alo School

October-December Report 2014

In the month of December, we're successfully concluding another school year. As the Indian winter comes upon us, the days become cooler, so we've taken advantage of this time for



Sports Day and a trip to Kolkata. To make this December even more festive, we've also decorated a Christmas tree in our new school.

In these last weeks of the year, we were especially happy and honoured to receive a visit from Ms. Romana Jordan, who has been helping our school for a number of years. The environmental-humanitarian action project *Preserve Slovenia-Help India* is now already in its seventh year. With the proceeds collected in the 2008/2009 school year, we were able to purchase the land on which our new school proudly stands today. Over the past six years, 139 organizations have successfully participated in this project, together collecting more than 311 tonnes of paper and 27,059.28 Euro for our cause. We therefore owe a great debt of gratitude to Ms.



Romana, who has made many large and small contributions to ensure that we are able to help more than 100 children today. But Ms. Romana didn't just come for a protocol visit – she and her son Gaj have been our active volunteers for the past two weeks! Romana and her son were also joined by our volunteer, Ana. Our students were very enthusiastic about all of the interesting and informative activities that filled their school days. Ms. Romana taught our eldest students to knit and spent time making creations out of clay with the younger ones.

Meanwhile, Gaj, Ana and the children solved puzzles, weaved bracelets and made decorations for our Christmas tree. In the course of all these activities, we also had time to practice our English. Our visitors were able to visit the homes of some of our students and so experienced the real beat of the Bengali village countryside.

1. Special Events



SLOVENIAN NATIONAL DAY IN KOLKATA: On October 14th, we celebrated Slovenian National Day and presented our school to Her Excellency, Ambassador Darja Bavdaž Kuret. The celebration was also joined by eminent theatre actress Polona Vetrih, who showed a great interest in our work. We hope that our next meeting will also be at our school. Warmly welcome!

CHILDREN'S DAY



On November 14th, we celebrate Children's Day in India. This year we invited a magician whose tricks and charisma delighted our students, particularly the youngest ones. Older students zealously participated in a quiz that was prepared by our teachers especially for this occasion. Of course, the celebration wouldn't be complete without chicken curry, Bengali sweets and small gifts.

SPORTS DAY



Sports Day is a day that we all look forward to as the students are very excited to compete in different sports activities. But this time it was not only our students who competed – our teachers and



visitors also took part. The students enthusiastically encouraged us as we tried to find a clay pot and break it with a wooden stick blindfolded. We didn't succeed on our first try but eventually we did find the pot and we also did brake it! Sports Day also provides an opportunity for the students to dress up in various masks and costumes. This year we were delighted by a beggar, two Hindu goddesses and a seller of dishware. Ms. Romana awarded the winners with practical gifts.

VISIT TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK



We were finally able to sing the song "Wheels on the bus go round and round,



round and round"... outside of the classroom, while sitting on the bus that took us from Piali to the amusement park in Kolkata. Given the length and challenge of the ride, there was also plenty of time to sing other songs! But we didn't mind – afterwards, we were able to ride on the children's train, spin on the carousel, take a boat around the fishpond and really get the most play out of the playground! This really was a wonderful conclusion to our school year.



2. Connecting with the Community

You'd probably agree that it's nice to be able to wash your face with clean water every morning just by going to the bathroom sink. But in our village of Piali, the situation is different. For the villagers, the fish ponds are very important – this is where they wash themselves, do laundry, wash dishes and also catch fish. Access to clean



water is provided by wells with hand pumps that wives and young women go to with large jugs so that they can bring water home to their families. For some, this road is long. Therefore, in cooperation with the Humanitarian Light of Hope Association we decided to fund the excavation of a clean water well to make this water more readily accessible.



In the new (school) year we are enrolling new students into our youngest class. Some of the parents come to see us by themselves because they wish to enrol their children in our school. But there are also many other children who remain “forgotten” at home, so we go around the village ourselves to visit the

homes of families who have children that are of compulsory school age. Sometimes we go by bike, sometimes on foot. A group of villagers always gathers around us. This also provides an opportunity for us to talk about how important it is for all children to attend school and how important education is for attaining a higher quality and greater fulfilment in our lives.



We send you our warm greetings with a group photo that was taken when Andreja, Andrej, Marjan and Aljaž came to visit us from Maribor during the last days of the year.



We thank all of you who stand by our side and wish you a Happy New Year!

Mojca and Anup Gayen, Piali Ashar Alo

www.pialiasharalo.org