



Piali Ashar Alo

Piali Ashar Alo School

May - August 2021



In the last year and a half our lives and thus our work have changed a lot. In India, all educational institutions remain closed for 18 months. At the beginning of this year, when the situation improved a little, we were able to organize individual lessons and lessons in small groups but at the end of March we were severely affected by the second wave of the Covid-19 and we had to reorganize again. Because we sensed that the second wave would not allow much room for maneuver, we made some decisions that have

strongly marked the last four months. We invited our oldest girls and those who live at home in very poor conditions to live with our family at the school premises. Some parents responded very positively, and 15-20 girls stayed with us. Our small family, which greatly misses Izak, who stayed in Slovenia, became bigger overnight. Although we were also a little worried about how we would be able to take care of everything, we were also very happy that we would not be alone, that our Sara would have some company, and that we could help in these emergencies as well.



After five months of our joint quarantine stay, we are bubbling with joy, gratitude and enthusiasm. We have created our own little beautiful world. At first, we groped around each other, putting together a schedule and assignments. We were also a bit shy in front of each other in our home clothes, with a morning ruffled hairstyle, with a toothbrush and a towel on the way to the bathroom. But after the first initial steps, we relaxed and let

ourselves be what we are: people! In addition to the morning and afternoon lessons, we also cook, dance and sing together, watch movies and talk a lot. Days are filled with lots of laughter and giggles.



Even some parents were initially worried about how the girls would fare. The two girls returned home after a few days. One of them has to take care of her younger brothers; the other needs to help her mother selling vegetables at the local market. It was very hard for both girls but of course the parents are the ones who make the decisions for their children. Some of the girls, however, decided to go home on their own, they were homesick, they had a hard time getting used to a strict schedule, which they are not used to at home. Nonetheless, they said it was a good experience for them and that they learned a lot about how to spend the day constructively. The other girls have stuck with us and we have become a very closely knit family.

Not only our girls have changed, but so have their parents. Some initially brought some kind of treat just for their daughter, but now we can see that they bring just right for everyone. Someone Bengali sweets, someone fruits, mangoes, a watermelon. The girls also told how their parents have changed: they talk to them more kindly, they often tell them that they love them and that they miss them, there is less room for quarrels and conflicts. On Sundays, when they have time off and can go home, they say how happy their parents are and that they spend better quality time together.



We also stay in touch with other children. We continue to organize online lessons and lessons in small groups at the school itself. Also, every month our girls get a monthly food package.

Although we mostly write about our successes, of course the report would not be purely sincere if we did not also mention our failures and disappointments. Two of our girls got married. When the schools finally open, we know that some of our girls will not return. We have no idea how we will be able to make up for everything we missed.

Nevertheless, we look to the future with confidence, storing in our hearts bright moments, which I am briefly describing below.

1. COOK and BAKE



Our girls are great cooks. They have a lot of knowledge from home, and we learn something through the internet. There is no greater pleasure than cooking with friends. During these months, we tasted a variety of delicacies, from Indian snacks to homemade Slovenian



marble cake.



2. WE CELEBRATE



We prepared a real home-made birthday party for our dear Rekhi and Shefali. Rekha said she celebrated her birthday in this way for the first time. Sara and I also celebrated for the second year in a row during quarantine. Well, nothing for that. Girls always



make us feel warm and special. In the months of quarantine, it is all the more important that we know how to co-create beauty and joy in that corner of the world where we are.

3. WE CREATE



We are very, very grateful to our dear friend Mary, who has prepared a virtual workshop for us to make dream catchers. It was not easy, but with perseverance and plenty of laughter, we managed to make very small dream catchers as well as one huge one. Let them chase our dreams until everything comes true.

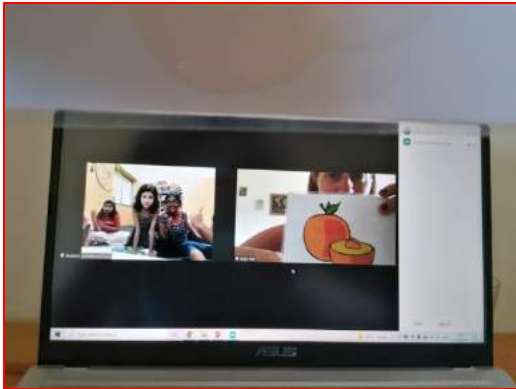
4. TRIP TO THE SEA



And it seems that dream catchers are really worth their name, as something that seemed impossible at all in these times of restraint has come true. We organized a trip to the sea! In a pleasant seaside resort, with a beautiful sandy beach. For most of our teenagers, this was their first experience of the sea and the excitement didn't seem to end.



5. GERMAN AND MUSIC



We are grateful to Katja Vas, our dear friend, a teacher of German and English, who teaches a group of our girls German, and to a pianist and humanitarian Jeniffer Heemstra, who teaches two of our girls classical music theory and piano playing.



When we opened school fourteen years ago, we never imagined that we would be able to offer our children more with each passing year. Just as we always try to offer extra help to weaker students, we also wish to offer extra opportunities to our talented girls as well. We are grateful to all volunteers who help us in these

endeavors.



6. ACCESS TO THE DEAD RIVER CANAL

At the request of the villagers, we helped them build flight of stairs (ghat) to the river canal. This canal, which runs opposite our school building, is very important for the villagers, as this is the place where



they wash dishes, wash clothes, bathe, fish and perform sacred Hindu rituals.





A sincere gratitude to all of you who stand by our side, so that we can continue helping our community.

Yours Piali Ashar Alo Family

www.pialiasharalo.org