



Novi Survat Charitable Organisation

(New Beginnings – for the destitute of Goa)

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Newsletter 20 - September 2008.

It is September 5th and as I write this newsletter, outside there is a gale blowing and torrential rain falling. In fact the met office has issued a severe weather warning! Statistics tell us that Devon experienced an average rainfall for August of 160 mm with July being one of the wettest on record - and I expected global warming to turn our garden into a dust bowl with the lawns shrivelling up! Goa has experienced an 'on and off' monsoon season with heavy rains, then a dry spell in the first two weeks of July that delayed the planting of the rice crop but then heavy rains returning with some days as much as 130mm of rain falling in 24 hours.

Damedem.

Because of the monsoons many of the children have been poorly, fortunately not seriously although Nikhil was admitted to hospital with suspected Meningitis which thankfully was not so. Matthew's health is giving cause for concern as the tumour that was greatly reduced by chemotherapy in March has returned.

Due to the problem with water flooding part of the house the girls and babies are still having to live elsewhere and this week sees them moving again to another temporary home.

Day Care Centre.

The treatment room has now been completely covered in deep filled mattresses, the walls covered in protected mirrors, with windows repaired & mosquito netting applied.

Completion of the painting has had to be suspended until after the monsoons and we are still awaiting the installation of the telephone, which has delayed the making of the signboards as we wish to include the telephone number.

I understand that the children continue to progress and respond well to the treatment provided by Dr Ashika and Dr Reena.

Starting Point.

Currently there are 30 children in regular attendance. I am often asked how we select the children who are to be given the chance to attend Starting Point. Each visit to the slum settlements will result in mothers approaching you and begging for their children to be included and Jane decides which will be given the opportunity based on the child's age, potential and has to be sure that the parent really wants the child to be educated and not just looked after and fed each day. In addition some of the children are 'discovered' by Jane: e.g. Prakash was at 5 yrs old working on a building site along with the rest of the family. Jane persuaded his parents to let him attend school and since then he has done well and was able to graduate to St. Teresa's in June of this year. Another boy Kiran was begging on the beach but his parents agreed to let him attend Starting Point and he also has now graduated to St. Teresa's.

This week the storms have damaged the roof of the school allowing rainwater in and unfortunately repairs will not be carried out until after the monsoons for safety reasons.

Registered Charity Number: 1100768

Children attending state schools.

There are now thirty six children attending state schools mostly at St. Teresa's but nine go to Little Flower. In addition we have one boy aged 10 who is partially sighted (he is blind in one eye) who attends Lourdes Convent School in Saligao and Apika who excelled at her 'O level' exams and now attends St. Xavier College in Mapusa.

The 'credit crunch' is also being felt in India and the cost of the lunches provided for the children who attend the state schools has gone up from Rs 5 to Rs 7 per day (from 6.23p – 8.75p) and as the children attend school six days per week this has resulted in an increase of 15 pence per child per week. Not much in our terms but this gives you some idea of the percentage increase in the cost of basic food items, bearing in mind the families we deal with exist mainly by begging or 'rag picking'. Rice, which is the staple diet, is not only rising rapidly in price but is also becoming scarce. This is due partly to the increase in population but also because more is being exported due to increased demand from the 'western world' and China. The rate of inflation in India is at present 13% and rising!

Sponsors, supporters & well-wishers.

As usual space does not allow us to mention everyone who so kindly help, donate or sponsor our charity but I would like to thank every one of you – without you none of the work we do would be possible.

Thank you to Karna who regularly looks after our Indoor Market stall and to Baron who keeps an eye on it whilst it is not manned.

To Jenny Delahaye who donated an original painting, which we raffled, raising over £100.

To all who have donated books and 'bric-a-brac' that we sell on our stall when we have exhausted the stocks of items brought back from Goa.

To Michelle Harvey who was asked to be the torchbearer at the recent handover of the 'Olympic torch' to the Mayor of Witham. She agreed to do so providing she could use the occasion to raise money for Novi Survat. Michelle has asked that the money raised be used to purchase a computer for Starting Point School.

To Vbranch House (a day care centre) and Stallcombe House (a residential home) for children and adults who suffer from Cerebral Palsy, Autism etc for their hospitality and allowing Dr Mina (who was on a visit to the UK to attend her daughters graduation from Manchester University) and I to visit and see how such centres operate in the U.K.

If any of you will be holidaying in Goa this coming season and would like to visit our projects or your sponsored child please let me know so that I can make suitable arrangements.

The web site is still in the process of being revamped and we hope to have this completed in the next few weeks.

Best wishes to you all.

P.S. It is 7.30 pm and still raining, flood warnings have been issued for many local rivers, the sea looks angry and covered in 'white horses' and Pat & I have just watched the lifeboat put to sea! Maybe next summer will be better.

