



Novi Survat Charitable Organisation

(New Beginnings – for the destitute of Goa)

31 Foxholes Hill, Exmouth. EX8 2DQ
Tel: 01395 276148. Email: admin@novisurvato.org
Web-site www.novisurvato.org

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Pat & I spent two weeks in Goa holidaying / working where we had the pleasure of Julia & Roger's company. A party of 22 students from Colchester Institute were also there and they spent most of their time visiting/working in the school, Day Care Centre, Asro Damadem and some slums. They did a fantastic job entertaining the children as well as repainting almost the entire school making it a lovely place for the children to be. Students from Colchester Institute who are in their final year of studies have been visiting Goa and spending time working hard and entertaining the children for the past seven years.

Thankfully the Indian monetary problems we experienced in November are easing but the fall in the value of the pound following the Brexit vote is still costing us an additional 20%.

Day Care Centre.

Although still struggling with staffing problems we are delighted to hear that one of our earlier physiotherapists Smisha intends to return to work in the next few months after the birth of her baby. It is hoped to recruit an occupational therapist and a speech therapist in the not too distant future which would enhance the current work carried out by the physiotherapists and fulfil our original aims.

Sometimes it is difficult to imagine the outcome of the many hours of therapy the children go through especially given that the Day Care Centre is a costly project but when you see the improvement to their daily lives that can be achieved it becomes clear that it is money well spent.

Starting Point School.

The new school was given a complete makeover by the students of Colchester Institute who despite not being artists did an amazing job painting murals in every room. The students also treated the children to a day out on Morjim beach with a lovely lunch and lots of fun paddling in the sea, making sandcastles and generally having a fabulous time.

Academically the school is proving a success with up to eight children expected to graduate to formal education in June.

Educational Sponsorship Scheme.

We had a lovely day where we met most of the students who have graduated from Starting Point over the past twelve years and now attend formal education. They were entertained by a magician, a disco and enjoyed a lovely lunch at the Taste of India in Calangute. We were able to present the students who had passed their 10th standard exams with their prizes of Rs 1000 (equivalent to £12). Each of the five are now studying for their 'A' level (equivalent) exams and must be an inspiration to the other younger students. Many thanks to all the educational sponsors who have, by their donations, given these children a fantastic opportunity which they would otherwise not have had. To see these young children grow up to be young men and women achieving such high standards is very rewarding and who knows where the future will lead them.

Registered Charity Number: 1100768 (U.K.)

Outreach work

Whilst we were in Goa we were able to visit one of the very bad slums in the Bicholem area. It is amazing how happy the people seem to be despite their predicament. Their 'houses' are made from rubbish and consist of one 'room' measuring about 12 ft square where they eat, sleep cook etc. For the privilege of using the land they are charged a rent of approximately £41 per month. It is here that you witness real poverty which is a far cry from the 'poverty' that we hear about in the UK. We were saddened to see that there are still street children as young as 12 – 18 months on the streets begging as late as 10 pm. They are usually accompanied by their siblings who in turn are only about 5/6 yrs old. We are not able to provide much help for these except to give them food and drink whenever we saw them and you do wonder what the future holds for them.



A typical Bicholem slum house



Street Children begging late at night.

Sponsors and supporters.

Thank you to Alison Spurrel and all others who donated clothing for us to take out for the school children and for the families living in the slums, some of which have little or no clothing to wear. During our visit to the Bicholem slum where we distributed fruit to the children the adults thanked us for the clothing that had been given out in previous visits by Jane and 'Cookie'.

Many thanks to the knitters Michelle, Julia & Pat who are constantly busy knitting clowns, dressing dolls and are now knitting the annual Easter Egg chicks, bunnies, ducks mice etc. Thank you to those who have donated Cadbury Cream Eggs to go into these.

For those of you who remember Str Jessie who for many years was senior sister at Asro Damadem I am pleased to say I spoke to her on the telephone and she seems in good health and as cheerful as ever. She is currently working near Mangalore looking after elderly people.

As for the cricket we didn't do very well against India this winter so let's hope for greater success against Australia in the summer test series!

Storm Doris has just passed and we in the South West were lucky to only feel the fringe of it but Spring is on the way, the daffodils, snowdrops, polyanthus etc are all in bloom and we have much to look forward to, so best wishes to you all. Remember if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Clive.

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