



APRIL/MAY 2014
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NEWSLETTER



Sukhdev and Baba marking the layout



These four toilets serve 530 children. We plan to add 20 urinals, 10 for boys and 10 for girls

Ground Breaking for New Construction

After struggling for the last 4 years in order to find a proper builder who we could trust to build our new classrooms well and at the right price, we have received a reasonable bid from a reputable builder for our new classrooms, Mr. Sukhdev and have now decided to give him the contract. He has built many of the Buddhist Monasteries and Hotels in Bodh Gaya, so we have confidence that he can complete the work in a quality and timely fashion. Mr. Manoj Kumar, who works with

Sukhdev and is like a son to Kiran Lama, will also be helping supervise the works. We hope to finalize the contract and start the work very soon. We have decided to build 2 floors, 4 new class rooms and a hall as we may not be able to build in the future once the Master Plan comes fully into force.

Plans for the new construction can be found [here](#).

Eco Buildings and Toilets

It has been a desire for most of us involved in managing our school that we try to incorporate eco-friendly building and environs in our school. With that in mind, last October, Kerstin hired a taxi and took Sr. Shobha, Kiran Lama and myself to Patna to visit the Tarumitra (<http://tarumitra.org/>) headquarters. Traumatata is Sanskrit for “friends of trees”. It is an international organization largely of students reaching out to promote eco-friendly endeavours.

We were looking to find some alternative construction possibilities to the cement box construction, something that might even inspire the local community, and give a very warm environment to our school.

We saw some very beautiful examples of eco construction there and were quite inspired, especially by the mud plastering and alternative roofs, which gave a very natural and beautiful appearance.

We shared our experience with others involved and there was wide support to pursue it. Then in February, Sr. Shobha and I went back to discuss in more detail with Father Joe, the inspiration behind much of the building there. He said that the one alternative roof he is using of some processed waste paper, is not working out as the animals are eating it and it is difficult to maintain. He showed us in the main building, (the one in the photo) how he had put special bricks in the ceiling and could use less steel reinforcement bars in the roof. It was a beautiful effect, but we could not understand how the bricks would give the same strength as the steel reinforcement, so we were hesitant, as the children’s safety comes first and there is no builder in BG with such building experience.

So with this in mind, we told our builder we wanted to use mud plaster on the walls from the 4 foot level to the ceiling. He was quite hesitant and replied that there was not anyone with those skills and it would be more expensive. So in the end we are going to build a more conventional building.

Taru Mitra Outing



From Top: Tarumitra staff, Sr Manisha & Kerstin;

The Taru Mitra prayer hut

Taru Mitra’s bio-reserve and resource centre for biodiversity.

This room is at Taru Mitra and its roof is made of alternative building materials. Our plan is to copy the shape and dimensions of this room yet not the roof.

Refurbished Computer Lab and New Computer Teacher

In October last year, the decision was made that it is vital for our school community to engage more competently with technology and computers. One of the rooms has since been fitted with furniture allowing for education specifically relating to Information Technology and Communication (ITC).



Sister Shobha, Kerstin Liebchen-Meades, Jackie Vishwakarma, Sister Manisha

A data projector has been purchased already to allow for internet based teaching using the vast resources now available for e-learning/teaching. Ten new computers will be purchased and an internet connection will be set up for the school to complete the set up. Here is a brief introduction of Jackie, our new computer teacher:

Jackie Vishwakarma, a native of Village Mocharim in Bodhgaya has been appointed by the School as the Computer Teacher for Classes VI to X from the new Semester i.e. from April, 2014. He is an expert in the field of Computers and has completed a technical course of Microsoft called MCSE in New Delhi. He has worked in an International BPO, (outsourcing) company for a computer technical profile.

He also has worked with ADOBE for a period of 2 yrs. Besides these, he has also worked in a local school as an English

teacher, as a Marketing Manager with a local hotel in Bodhgaya and also as the Office Manager at the Root institute for Wisdom Culture. He lives with his parents, wife and a child.

Transitions of Teaching Staff

Five of our teachers have left us this year. At least three of them have gone for Government teaching jobs, which require a Bachelor of Education degree and pay about double of our salaries. Some of our teachers have been working to complete this degree and have managed to get these coveted jobs.

Rashida, who was teaching geography, had been with us for 19 years and even cried when she was sharing the place our school has in her heart. Raj Kumar, who taught science and math, had been with us for 13 years. Rajesh, who had been with us for 7 years, was teaching history, civics and math. Pritee had been with us for 7 years and teaching the lower classes. Rajini was with us for 3 years and was teaching Hindi and Sanskrit. Pritee and Rajini are leaving to get married.

They are all good teachers and we are sad to see them leave. We wish them well in their new jobs and in their future endeavours.



Committee members: Princey, Kiran Lama and Kerstin, teaching and non-teaching staff of PV school, October 2013

Fresh New Faces

To replace the teachers who have left, a hiring committee was formed with Princy and Kiran Lama from our management committee, a teacher from the Sisters' school, some teachers and students from our school. We held interviews last month.

We hired five new teachers on a one year trial basis. Three of the teachers were

students at our school, Deepak, Pushpa and Aarti. Mukesh and Priyanka are coming from Gaya. All of them are in their late twenties. Pushpa has just finished her teacher's training course with a scholarship from the BDA (<http://www.dharma.org.au/bda/>) in Montessori style primary education.



Deepak Kumar

Joined school	9 th July 2013
Subject(s)	Maths, History, Social Studies & Computer
Taking Class(es)	II, III, V, VI & VII
Address	Gaya
Interests	Traveling & Doing Social Networking



Pushpa Kumari

Joined school	April 2014
Subject(s)	Hindi & Maths
Taking Class(es)	UKG & LKG
Children	No children
Interests	Dance, Craft & Reading



Aarti Kumari

Joined school	October 2013
Subject(s)	English, Geography & Hindi
Taking Class(es)	I, II, III, VII
Children	No children
Address	Gaya
Interests	Cooking & Reading



Mukesh Kumar

Joined school	March 2014
Subject(s)	Geography, Maths, History & Economics
Taking Class(es)	VII, VIII, IX & X
Children	No children
Address	Bodhgaya
Interests	Games, Singing & Cooking



Priyanka Kumari

Joined school	December 2013
Subject(s)	Hindi & English
Taking Class(es)	LKG, UKG, I & IV
Children	No children
Address	Gaya
Interests	Dancing & Sports

We have hired a new Accountant, Mr. Anajan Barua, Partner of Sankar Dutta & Associates, Chartered Accountants from Calcutta. He is well known to Kiran Lama and does the accounts of few other organizations here in Bodh Gaya. He also has a local representative here named Mr. Vishwanath Roy, assisting him, who is also quite competent and dependable.

The new arrangements will save us money as Mr. Barua will audit and file the Income Tax returns for both of our accounts, namely the Indian Rupees and the Foreign Contributions (FCRA) accounts. He will also file the necessary reports with the FCRA officials.

In the past we had to pay a lawyer in Delhi plus an accountant in Gaya who was also charging us for the book keeping work.

After much preparation of all the required documents by Sr. Shobha, Mr. Vishwanath Roy as applied for 80G, Tax Exemption status for Indian donations. Big thanks to both of them.



Rick with Mr Barua

Management Profile

Kiran Lama, a Nepali Indian Buddhist is the Secretary-in-charge of the Japanese Daijokyo Buddhist Temple and has been living in Bodh Gaya for the past 31 years. He is also the General Secretary of the International Buddhist Council of Buddhagaya, a bonafide organization consisting Members of all Buddhist Temples, Monasteries and Institutions in Buddhagaya – and also actively engaged with many other social and welfare activities of various organizations. He has been Secretary of our School's Management Committee and our Society since 2012, and is helping our School in many different ways. In October, 2013 Kerstin and I had stayed at his Temple Guest House and not only did he look after us like a mother, he gave us very sound and practical advice and help, on how and who to go to, to get things done. The more we asked his advice and help, the more we appreciated him. He has connected us with Jackie our new Computer Teacher and an expert; with our builders and with our new Chartered Accountants. He hosts our meetings, serving us lovely snacks and lunches. Whatever our needs are, personal or for the school somehow he helps us find the answer, or does it for us. We very much appreciate his contribution.



From left to right: Kiran Lama, Sister Shobha, Kerstin & Rick



Kiran Lama addressing teachers after kindly offering the premises of the Daijokiyo Temple Guesthouse as a venue for some professional teacher workshops on e-learning.

Educational Tour to Calcutta



Top: Class 10 students in Calcutta

Bottom Left: The Calcutta Science City

Bottom Right: Calcutta Planetarium

Every year the children of class 10 look forward to going on an educational tour to Calcutta, as they have heard from the past classes what a wonderful experience it is. Two of the students who went with Sr Shobha and teachers have written especially nice stories of their experiences

that we would like to share. I am sure you will enjoy them. We have placed some more stories about the students' experiences in Calcutta on our Facebook page. If you would like to read more, please go to <https://www.facebook.com/pvschoolbg?fref=ts>

Sujeta Kumari

Hai, I am Sujeta Kumari Student of Prajna Vihar School Bodhgaya. I have two sister and two brothers. I am the third girl child of my parents. My father would have not sent me to Kolkata. It is because I am girl. But my school made it possible. This was my first trip to Kolkata when we were told about the trip I was very happy and excited. The faces of the students were brightened.

At Last, the expected moment arrived and we were ready to start our educational trip. We have to wait for three hours. At midnight we started our journey. Our seats were reserved. We were so happy that we could not sleep in the night but just enjoyed the company of one another. We were welcomed by Mr. Kapil Kapoor. He accompanied us through our tour. First day we went to Victoria memorial and Birla PLANETARIUM. In Victoria memorial I learned many historical facts. Birla Planetarium is very big one. I enjoyed seeing stars and planets. I could not think how the whole roof was moving. In the evening we came back to our residents.

Next day was Sunday. We were taken to Science City. Oh. It was wonderful. We saw Evolution park. It was all about dinosaur. How they declined from the earth. There were many things to see. I like most was 3D show and rope way. I learned many facts about geography and science.

The same day in the evening we left for Bodhgaya. It is a memorable tour in my life. I thank Rick uncle and my principal, teachers and all those who made it possible.

Sujeta Kumari

Class X 2014

Sanoj Kumar

I am Sanoj Kumar. I am 15 years old. I am a student of Prajna Vihar School Bodhgaya. I would like to tell you all about my first educational tour. On 31st Jan 2014 I left my home about 6.30 pm. I went to my friends and we all went to the railway station.

After taking our breakfast we were taken to Victoria Memorial. Here we saw different weapons which were used in olden days. Some old costume of kings and queens. It was easy for us to understand the history behind it. I noted every item what I saw. When and how? During whose reign these weapons were used etc. From here we went to Birla PLANETORIUM. We saw solar system, morning star and other planets. It helped me to understand my geography lessons well. From there we went to metro station. It was for the first time I travelled by metro. It was a unique experience. In the evening we came back to the guest house. Enthusiastically I waited for the next day as we were told about the Science City. There we saw Evolution park, 3D Show, Time Machine, and rope way. The most I liked is Evolution park and rope way. In the evening I felt sorry because the tour was over. It was time to come back Bodhgaya. I wish many more children must get this wonderful opportunity.

Many thanks to Rick uncle, principal, teachers and all those who helped us for this tour.

Thank you

Sanoj Kumar

Class X 2014

Scholarship Recipients

Here are some updates about the recipients of some of the scholarships that have been awarded by PV school to past students. We are currently in the process of selecting two girls to receive scholarships for higher education in Semester 2. Keep updated with our process via our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pvschoolbg?fref=ts>

Pushpa Kumari

Hi! I am Pushpa Kumari. I come from Mastipur village, Bodhgaya. This village is one of the very backward areas in Bodhgaya. I am born and brought up

here. We are seven children. My father works in the temple. My mother is a house wife. My parents found it very difficult to educate all the children. Today we are all educated because of Prajna Vihar School. The school is also situated in Mastipur, not far from my house. I joined the school when I was five years old. For nine years I studied in Prajna Vihar School. I finished my class ten from a government school, after class ten I join the Magadh University. Here I struggled and faced many difficulties due to poor financial condition. I finished my bachelor degree in 2011.

One year I was at home. This was the time I was searching for the guidance; I felt my future is unknown. I came in contact with Sr. Shobha and Rick uncle and told about



Pushpa at Daijokio Temple Guesthouse, October 2013

my difficulties. It was time Victor uncle was in Bodhgaya. I met him too.

Sr. Shobha advised me to go for the Montessori training to Hazribag. She did all the needful to get the admission. I was sponsored by BDA. On 22nd June I went to Hazaribag with my parents. They wanted to see where I am going to stay and study. I am the first girl from my village to go out for the training. For the few days I felt out of place. I was homesick. It was the first time I went out from the family. But very soon I adjusted. I found the course very tough because classes were given in English. I had to work hard. We were almost hundred girls from all over India. I had to follow strict rules and discipline. It was good for me.

Our teachers were very helpful. All our needs were well taken care. Mentally, physically and spiritually. There I learned many things. I always felt very lucky. Golden opportunity was given to me to upgrade myself and make my life successful. I know my family would not been able to send me for this training. Today I am very grateful to BDA, Rick uncle, Sr, Shobha for the guidance and support I experienced throughout my

training period. I wish many more girls may get the chance to go for the higher studies. Thanks to each and every one who made it possible for me. Many thanks to BDA members.

At present I am giving my service to Prajna Vihar school .

Pushpa Kumari.

Upendra

Our Student Upendra who started PVS in 1991 and who we helped get both BA and MA in Chinese, who then himself secured a scholarship from the Taiwan government to study there for one year, returned from Taiwan last September. Since then besides working part time as tour guide and interpreter for Chinese visiting India, has just taken exam to become an interpreter for Indian Government and next month will take a second exam to qualify for lecturer/ professor at Indian Universities. If you would like to read further about his adventures, please see his report on FB.

Art Show

Sister Shobha and her staff had put together a small art show which the students had created mostly from recycled materials. Rick and I were both very impressed with the interesting and beautiful projects. Another video clip with a bit of a snapshot about the entire visit in Bodhgaya, the art show and the letter writing can be found here: <http://animoto.com/play/K55zxQI81YEKk0RrmPiQ6Q>



Some of the incredible artwork created by PV School students

Health & Hygiene Workshop for Girls at PV School

Based on research suggesting that up to 70% of reproductive health issues for women in rural India stems from stigma surrounding menstruation and the hygiene issues that result from that stigma, as well as a lack of access to hygienic sanitary pads, Sr. Shobha invited Sr. Manisha to the school to address gaps in menstrual health knowledge and provide the female students with a safe space to discuss feminine hygiene and reproductive health issues.

Sr. Shobha's report follows:

On 12th of April 2014 Sr. Manisha gave the workshop on *Health and Hygiene*. 150 girls participated in the workshop. She gave more emphasis on *What Is health and Hygiene*. To remain healthy we need to follow certain rules.

She started with some questions.

1. What do you understand by health?

Nandita: *By health I understand one who is not sick.*

Pooja : *understand a good looking girl who has a charming face.*

2. How will you identify the healthy person?

Usha :Ans. *She is cheerful. Ready to do any work. She/he can work long time. Who can eat well.*

3. According to you what is hygiene?**Priya: Ans.**

Be clean. Keep clean.

4. What is personal and environmental hygiene?

Chandni: Ans. To

keep oneself clean. To keep our houses, school, village and our neighboring place clean.

She spoke about the difference between male and female development and growth.

She spoke about the different diseases which are related to the hygiene and the herbal remedies. She also spoke about menstrual management and the physical growth and development of the female body and cleanliness during menstruation.

She spoke about HIV/AIDS.

Health is not the absence of disease. But today according to the WHO the health is total wellbeing of the person. It includes the physical, economic, social, political and religious aspect.

Many girls expressed that this is the first time someone spoke to them about this subject.

About the menstruation not even their mothers told them. On the whole children are happy about it. They are eagerly waiting for the next class.

Before the summer vacation we will have the follow up programme in next month.



Workshops such as the one delivered by Sr. Manisha on health and hygiene and delivered outside, under the tree

For more information about innovations in feminine hygiene and health issues, we recommend these links:

To learn more about the 2013 documentary Menstrual Man about Muruganantham, visit <http://www.menstrualman.com/>

To read more about Muruganantham's story, the BBC featured a recent profile on him at <http://bbc.in/1i8tebG> or watch his TED talk at <http://bit.ly/1n594l6>. You can also view his company's website at <http://newinventions.in/>

For resources to help girls prepare for and understand their periods - including several first period kits - visit our post on: "That Time of the Month: Teaching Your Mighty Girl about Her Menstrual Cycle" at www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=3281

To help your tween understand the changes she's experiencing both physically and emotionally during puberty, check out the books recommended in our post on "Talking with Tweens and Teens About Their Bodies" at <http://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=2229>

From Little Things, Big Things Grow

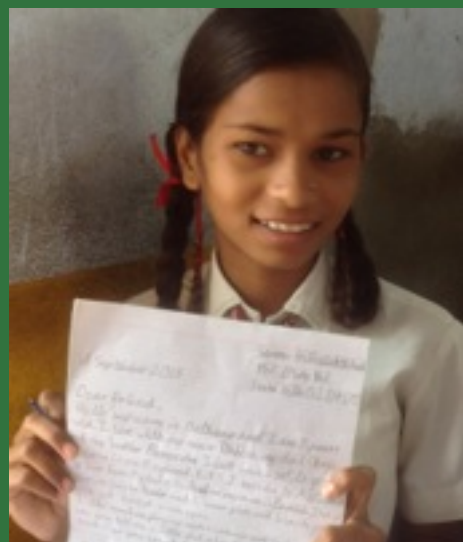
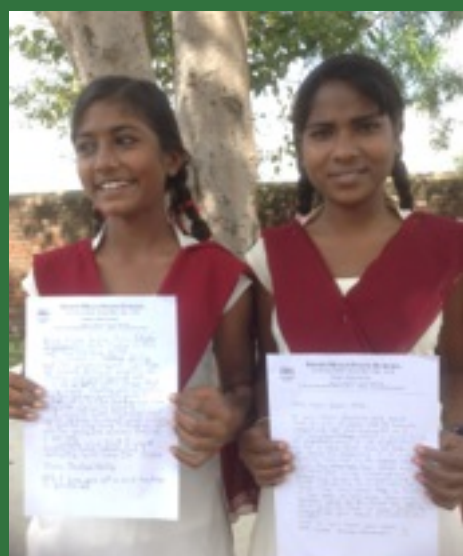
In October 2013, before departing for Bodhgaya, two of my friends very skillfully helped put together a most beautiful *PATH* picture drawing. The idea behind this is to visually capture one's goals, hopes, passions and plans for the

immediate, medium and long term future. My vision of this *PATH* displays my hopes and wishes for the Prajna Vihar School and the Bodhgaya community.

Once we arrived in Bodhgaya, Rick and I went to the school regularly, attended and initiated countless meetings and were involved in many of the nitty-gritty organisational things relating to the running of the school.



PATH picture drawing



Above: Students with their letters for Australia.

Right Top: Kerstin delivering letter-writing workshop to students.

Right Bottom: Sr. Shobha with the letters from students in Australia

Whilst away on this adventure, I wrote a blog in which I explored various issues about the education that PV School delivers and the workings of the Bihar State Education Board, amongst other things. If you would like to read more about this, my reflections can be found at: <http://kliebchen.edublogs.org/>.

One of the areas close to my heart was *community*; not only community in Bodhgaya but also my own community here in Brisbane. So the idea of a letter writing project was born. Two school communities participated. Here is a brief video clip to visually support the idea: <http://animoto.com/play/1YhDl6DGo5Pr6qCoR9LXSg>



Apart from working with the students and helping them read and then respond to the letters they received I also worked with the teachers and offered two teaching training workshops. Both workshops were combined professional training days with the teachers of the Amar Joti school and those from the PV school. The first day

was on thinking and learning tools and the second on e-learning. Apart from the small issue of electricity failure and two hours delay of connecting to the internet on the day I had planned to share with the teachers many of the wonderful things the world wide web can offer in education, both days were a real success.



Teacher Training Workshops

As well as delivering training workshops, Rick and I also spent some time with the teaching staff to listen to their suggestions for improving the teaching and learning environment at PV School. One simple suggestion was the

installation of a water purifier so that the staff and students have access to fresh drinking water.

We will continue to work with the staff at PV School to continually improve and support the school, staff and students.



Aarti, one of our new teaching staff with the new 'Aquafresh' water purifier.

Financials, Budget & Faculty

PV school's 2014 budget, 2013 expenditure and updated faculty profile list can be found [here](#)