



Anthony's Charity

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<http://www.AnthonyCharity.org>

« *Educating the children for a better world* »

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The admissions for the year 2006 have just started and we will have 400 children in a month's time. (Academic year in India is starting in July). I could see the director of the school, looking around to make room for the teachers as there isn't sufficient place to have a proper teachers room. We have to immediately start building a second floor for the school to have enough class rooms for the children coming in 2007. The new floor will have 9 class rooms for another 400 students and a room for a library and general activities. The estimate for the construction is 60.000 euros, but like any construction work, we can expect the budget to be a little more. Our hope is to have the work going on well and the new floor be finished fast.

While in India, I checked the accounts of the school. Each cent you contribute is used in the best way possible.

*Marc Valentin,
Président*



I was in *Dugawar* in the month of February. Seeing the children in Saint-Anthony's School growing gives a lot of strength to go ahead with the work we have taken up. Our wish is to reach out to the maximum number of those children who otherwise would be staying home.

Jena and Annie, two more workers for our village animation program

Being the second year of the School, the year 2005 was a period for us also to evaluate the progress of the children and response of their parents towards education. Knowing the locality, special measures have been taken from the first year itself to involve their parents. Since most of the parents of our children are illiterate, they think educating the children means sending them to school and the rest is the responsibility of the teachers. Back at home from the school, they often go out in the field with their animals and come back to school without doing any homework.

To make this situation better we have been organizing family visits where the teachers meet the parents and conscientize them. Yet we felt that the children need a better atmosphere for their over all development and better collaboration from the parents are essential as they grow. To meet this demand, we have appointed two more staff members : *Jena* and *Annie*. They go to the houses of the children who need special attention and spend more time, also during their visit to the villages, they visit other families and identify very poor children, specially girls, for the sponsorship, and prepare the family slowly to send them to school for the coming year.

Annual Sports Day

You may remember that last year, we had celebrated the annual day of the School with a cultural program with dances and songs. This year, the annual day was actually a sports day. To inculcate team spirit to the children, different games were chosen carefully. The day passed with lots of amusements and we were all happy with it. Usually in Indian Schools, only the children who win first, second and third places get a prize. We are not very happy with this approach which value competition too much. For this reason we made the teachers to understand that we value effort more than competition. They arranged the program



accordingly, putting also the accent on team spirit. Prizes were given to the winning children but a consolation prize was there also for those who are not so good at sport or didn't win the games. *Pallavi* is in Class II, she is a very smart girl and she is very good at studies and at cultural activities. But on the Annual sports day, she was in tears as she didn't win any prize in spite of participating in several games. We told her we were very happy with her performance and when she got the consolation prize, she was happy.

New village Leader

The village leader (called «*pradhan*» in India) is the more powerful person in the village, he/she is directly elected by the villagers for a 5 years term. In the last election held in August 2005, the seat in *Dugawar* was reserved for the women and a woman called *Kranti Devi* was elected as the village



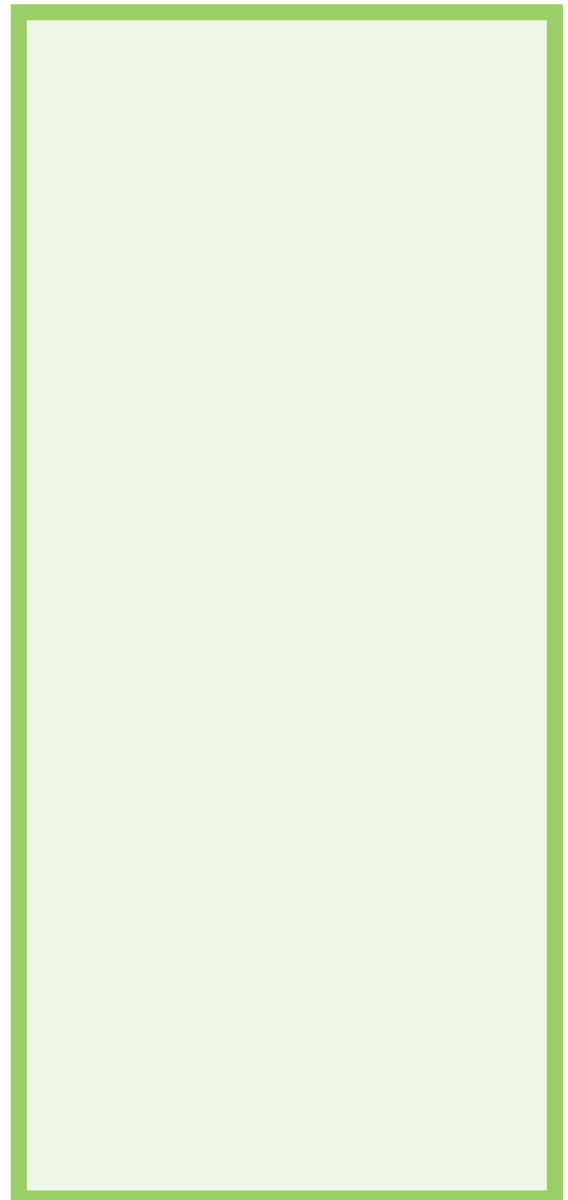
Kranti Devi, *pradhan* of *Dugawar* is giving a prize to one of our students at the sport's day. At the back you can see the building of the teachers. The work at the building is in the final stage.

leader. Though she is the one officialy in charge, she remains inside the house and it is her husband who does all the activities. It is the same with most of the women leaders in North India. Laws made by the government to empower women are not effective, what is the point to alternate men/women as village leaders if the husband of the elected woman is taking the real power ?

Since we want to empower women and wanted to change this situation, we convinced her husband (you know now that it is always the husband who decides for the wife in India...) to have *Kranti Devi* to be the special guest of our Saint-Anthony's School's Annual Day programme. The programme was starting at 11:00 and she arrived at 14:00, just before the end. However we were very happy to see her coming ! Though this is probably the first time she was coming into a common place, she seemed cool and relaxed. She told me that it was the first time that she was seeing the Saint-Anthony's School. The school is 3 minutes walk from her house, just at the entry of the village !

Sugar Mill blocking the roads

The main cultivation in the locality of Asmoli is sugar cane and there is a sugar factory in 4 kms distance from our school.



The villagers are selling their sugar cane to this factory. During the season of sugar cane the public transportation passing in front of this factory is held up for hours or even for the whole day due to the huge trucks carrying the sugar canes to this factory. It is awful even to think of an emergency, wanting to reach the hospital in the near by city. The more irritating part is that the places where these trucks are suppose to stand is inside the mill compound and at this place they built a temple and planted trees ! So, the public road is used for parking the trucks...



The Mill keeps the local police in their good book and police take no action whatever may come. On this picture, trucks are aligned but most of the time they completely block the road...

As a consequence, the School has been facing problem with the transportation of the children. Often the school bus reaches one to two hours late and sometimes without bringing the children. This has been interrupting the education of the children and the timing of the school. In spite of our repeated request, they have been not taking any action and it came to a stage that we had to gather all our parents and villagers to take an action. After that they told their workers on the road to arrange place for the public transport. We are watching to see how long it last.

In India, often might is right and the weaker sections are silenced, it has been this way for centuries and the people are so submissive to this corruption as they grew up in the culture of accepting the inequalities. They don't express any feeling towards any common problems unless some one comes out with the issues and motivate them to act.

Molly Sebastian,
Project manager

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Anthony's Charity is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to work with and for children. We believe that all

children deserve the basic right to health, education and a future where they can realize and demonstrate their true potential.

We are funded through the generous donations of individuals. Our headquarters are in Belgium and our work is done mainly in northern India. Our newsletter is sent quarterly to all our supporters.

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