

St. Anthony's Schools at Dugawar and Rahrai are just 33 km from each other as the crow flies. By road, it takes around 1h15. This distance is very convenient and provides interesting synergies.



Each time I visit the project, I am fascinated by the speed in which it is expanding ! Last summer the construction of the school building in *Rahrai* was just in the initial stage. In less than a year's time, the school is functioning in its full capacity ! Young girls and women from

the villages come for different training programs, a group of teachers is staying there, and the children are running around ! *St. Anthony's School Rahrai* is picking up and making our aim of « *Educating the children for a better world* » coming true in this part of the globe ! A survey report I recently read says that a person in an urban area has a 93% greater chance of acquiring training than someone living in a rural area ! How true it is, there is hardly anything here. In this context, all our works bring much more value to the rural region deprived of any opportunity.

I spent 6 weeks in the project this summer. It is difficult to share all the experience with you,

but I can say that we enter into the daily life of the local people, in different ways. The whole community profit in one way or other, directly or indirectly from the project. The work is more effective as we can help the women through the micro credit.

Jyoti is another example I would like to share with you. *Jyoti's* parents own no land and have no job, they are very poor. Her mother joined the micro-credit program run by *Anthony's Bread* and took a loan of Rs.10000 for her husband to start a small restaurant, at the side of the road, near the town. Now he is earning some income by which he can afford to send his older son to *St. Anthony's School Rahrai*. *Jyoti* being a girl was told to stay at home. She was really sad that her older brother could go to school and she could not. Our field workers selected her under the *sponsorship program* and today, she is so happy ! *Jyoti* is just one among so many little children who are and who will be benefiting from this project. I acknowledge the untiring and selfless efforts of many in the project and thank each of you for your generous support to make this project take off in *Rahrai* !

Marc Valentin, President





The St. Anthony's School of Rahrai

Our target of getting the school building ready by the beginning of April, in 10 months time, was certainly ambitious. Starting the school early, at the beginning of the new academic year gave the villagers the possibility to see the school already functioning. Admission of students was permitted until the end of July.

On April 10th, one day before the starting of St. Anthony's School Rahrai, I visited the school office where parents were gathered to register their children. One of the parents approached me saying, « *Madam, you have made a big mistake* ». I was so excited to see the school getting ready for its first day and this comment really shocked me. He continued : « *this area is really backward, if you had gone closer to the city you would get many more children and people there are better off and want to educate their children in good school.* » Many parents who are from the near by towns approached me complaining about the wrong selection of the locality.

I could feel the resentment of a group of parents who are from a better background. Though the region has majority of poor villagers, there are some landlords and educated families who send their children to good city schools. Now they want to bring their children to St. Anthony's School, but they are really scared of the kind of poor children whom we would admit in the school. They tried to persuade the management to take only the children from good families, or to take interview of the parents before admitting their children, like in the city schools, so that only children from good families will be admitted. We made it very clear to all that we have come here to help the most needy who cannot afford the better schools, however, we keep our door open for all, and it is their choice to join us or not. They did not have many options though...

First day of St. Anthony's School, Rahrai

A very humble start on 11th April. Not all the students turned up though. Fr. Borgia, the president of the local organisation, the village



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leader and the priest of the local temple, and a few parents, all of them joined the morning assembly to grace this occasion. Thus, it marked another mile stone in the history of *Anthony's Bread* and in the history of this community, for years to come !

There was a request from the locality to extend to class 2 for bigger children who are already attending some schools. So, we have now 176 students from nursery to class 2.

July 23rd, the Inauguration of the School

An occasion to get together and to share the joy of a new beginning ! We organised a feast on this occasion and shared a common

meal. The children, parents, village leaders, architect and his team, staff from *Dugawar* and *Rahrai*, well-wishers, all gathered here on this occasion. The program was in the open and the rain in the area started from early morning, miraculously, it did not rain near our school during the function !

Teachers really did their best to prepare the small children for cultural programs. *St. Anthony's School Dugawar* actively participated in conducting some programs and the children from *Rahrai* also prepared programs on this day. The women's group from *Dugawar* and *Rahrai* were also active in the program.



Variety of cultural programs were performed at the inauguration of the school.



Teachers in Rahrai

Search for teachers started well in advance. Though advertisement was given in the local news papers and television, we could find only one teacher from the locality. Though we managed to get enough teachers from out station, we could not find a competent person to take charge of the school as Head Mistress. The best option left before us was to persuade the headmistress of *Dugawar*. She has been with us during the last 6 years and has good experience and commitment.

The teachers are staying in one of the class rooms without any proper accommodation facilities. They all collaborate to this temporary adjustment. We have employed a guard for the night for their safety. It might not be possible for us to construct a new staff residence before two to three years time, so we planned to modify two class rooms in the first floor of the school building for their accommodation.

Transportation

Villages are scattered and no transportation is available to reach the main road from these villages. It's impossible for the small children to reach the school unless the school picks them up. Very few parents are ready to take up the responsibility or have the possibility of bringing their children to school.

Initially we hired two mini vans from the locality to transport the children and promised the villagers to provide one bus by July first week, at the re-opening of the school. The price of a 42 seater school bus is around 25 thousand euros. We could not afford to spend

25 thousand Euros for the bus at this time. We managed to motivate few parents to get a second hand bus for *Dugawar*, so that, we could send one of our buses from *Dugawar* to *Rahrai*. Luckily it worked out. However, when the school started in July, we realized that we cannot manage with one bus because the number of children also increased. So, we again hired two more mini vans. Since they were not reliable we needed to find a more permanent arrangement. We waited for an occasion to find a good second hand bus, and luckily after two months of search, we found a good bus with 42 seater, which was from 2012 model for 10 thousand euros. With these two buses, the transportation problem for this year is solved !

First floor construction started

As mentioned in the previous newsletter we have 8 class rooms on the ground floor. Currently 5 class rooms are used for the students, one class room is used for lodging the teachers and one class room used for the Self Help Groups and women's training programs.

This situation left us with no other option, but to continue with the first floor for the next year. As you see in the picture on the previous page, the roof casting of the first floor is finished and now we will have the resident area of the teachers ready by the end of October.

Molly S.,
Project manager



The colour of the uniform is different from St. Anthony's School Dugawar.

