

JADWAR



Children are discovering what will be their environment for the next few years of their life as students in our school...

A humble beginning of a great journey

On 13th April, on a sunny morning at 7:30, 42 children from the neighboring villages assembled for the first time in front of *St. Anthony's school in Jadwar*. They were welcomed by a group of students and teachers from our already-existing *St. Anthony's schools (Dugawar & Rahrai)*.

As the children moved in line for the first assembly, their parents stayed back, curiously watching the first day events. Thus another milestone in the history of the school and the village was laid with this humble beginning.

More children started to join the school as the news spread in the villages about the school starting to function. Meanwhile we closed the school for summer vacations on the 15th of May, we had around 120 students. We accepted the request of some parents from



Roy Mathews, our project supervisor was also part of this 'first day at school' in Jadwar.

the region to extend the class till grade 3 as they really wanted to bring their children to our school from the far away city schools. We look forward to welcoming more students in July and August, when schools restart, after the summer vacations.

Mehak conducted the first assembly of *St. Anthony School, Jadwar* with her students. She has been an outstanding student throughout her student's life and now as a teacher, she is giving back what she has learned from the school.



This is her testimony:



My school journey started on 4 July 2004 and I am proud to say that I was the first girl child who took admission in St. Anthony's School Dugawar. As I stood at the side of the children conducting their first assembly in Jadwar, my memories

went back to 20 years. I was part of the group of kids conducting the first assembly of my school on the first day. During the last twenty years, I witnessed the changes taking place in our really remote and backward society, thanks to our school. My passion and positive experience from my school lead me to follow the same path in the teaching profession and I consider it not just as a profession alone, but as an honor. I can clearly see the future awaiting for this new school in Jadwar with the facilities and opportunities for the betterment of the children of this region. I have no doubt, the coming generations will benefit from this new school and our St. Anthonians will transform this region as it did in and around my village. Wonders happen in this remote corner of the world, thanks to St. Anthony's. I am proud to be part of this big journey of our school.

Healthcare in our new school of Jadwar

Roy Mathews, our project supervisor lives in the school campus of Dugawar. He is away from his family. They are in Kerala. (Around 2500 km from our projects.) His two daughters, Arunima and Anjana are medical doctors. They come regularly to spend some days with their father. They use this period of time to help conducting clinics in the villages and attend to health-related issues of the students and the villagers.

On 13th May both of them were present and conducted a clinic in the newly opened school of Jadwar for the following few days. Many villagers took this opportunity to get health care from them. The health condition

of the women and children is often not good enough. A lot of malnourished women and children came. We provided them free medications, vitamins, etc. If any major issues are diagnosed, they are referred to the hospitals and we do the follow-up.

Jadwar's staff residence

It was not immediately in our agenda to build a staff quarter in Jadwar. But the situation changed really fast as we appointed a couple from South India as the new headmistress and director of the new school. They are well experienced and also know the local language: Hindi. It became a priority to accommodate them with some basic facilities which are not available in the village houses. A simple plan for the staff residence is made and the work started in May. We hope to get apartments ready by August. It will help us attract new teachers.



Healthcare is provided in the new school of Jadwar.



Jadwar : A new construction started at the back of the school. It is the staff residence.

Anitha, a new Animator

As mentioned in the previous news letter, we were on the look out for a female staff for the village development program in the area of *Jadwar*. Mr. Singh, our newly appointed social worker proposed Anitha who worked with him earlier and we are happy that she accepted the offer.

Anitha is a mother of three children and her husband is a farmer. She has finished her bachelor's degree and done Physical Education and Yoga training. She lives 12 km from the project and uses the local transportation to reach the project. Singh and she took over the work started last year by our field staff from *Dugawar* projects. Microfinance through Self Help Groups to eradicate poverty, promotion of education by motivating the villages to send their children to school, especially girls, seminars on gender equality, medical clinics and health care, etc. are the programs being implemented. Singh admitted his two children in the school and rented a house in the nearby village. Anitha's children are over aged for our school so she will continue to come daily from her home.

Board exam result of class 10 & 12

Both the result of classes 10 and 12 were published by mid May. This year, the overall pass percentage of Class 12 is 87.33% and class 10 is 93.12% at the national level. We have 100% pass in class 10 and 98% for class 12. Nisha topped the class 12 with 95%. Nisha wants to prepare for her entrance exam of Medical Science and her dream is to become a medical doctor.



India overtook China to become world's most populous country.



India becomes the most populous country

India's population has grown by more than one billion people since 1950, the year the *United Nations* began gathering population data. Nearly half of its population is below the age of 25. According to the *U.N. World Population Prospects 2022*, India's population is expected to rise till 2050 and then to decline.

Though there are many factors leading to this population explosion, the main reason is the severe lack of education, especially among the girls in the remote rural areas. As we move from one village to another, it is heartbreaking to see the number of children wandering around and the children helping their parents instead of being in the school and learning. These girl children will be getting married from the age of 13 (*unofficial marriage*) and will be mothers of several children meanwhile they reach their early twenties. Only education can make a difference to this situation. It is not easy to tell the villagers to reduce the number of children because religiously orthodox and conservative people in the village are against the use of family planning measures. Also there are myths, misconceptions and negative attitudes towards specific contracep-

tives. Our approach is to make them aware of the importance of having enough space between the children and to have the number of children they can afford in order to have a healthy family.

We are happy to see the changes taking place in the *Dugawar* project area. The new generation opts for two children, either they are girls or boys. They are educating their daughters as well. In *Rahrai* project area, things are slowly changing and in *Jadwar*, the average number of children per family is 6. We started to work at the grass root level and hope to make a difference in the coming 10 years' time.

Global Hunger Index 2022

The *Global Hunger Index* scores are based on the values of four component indicators: *undernourishment, child stunting, child wasting, child mortality*. India has fallen to 102 rank out of 117 nations in the *Global Hunger Index*, which is the worst in South Asia. Neighboring *Pakistan* and *Bangladesh* are doing better than India. Studies show that poverty is getting transmitted to the next generation and a vicious cycle of poverty for close to 10 percent of India's population continue to persist. In 2017, the prime minister *Narendra Modi* promised to eradicate poverty by 2022, as part of his "*New India*" agenda. Still there are no indications of change as such. Microfinance through SHG is the best tool to eradicate abject poverty. Skill development programs along with microfinance help them climb up the ladder of development. We have seen the result of this program, we are extending it to our new projects.



Children in the village with *St-Anthony's school* admission form.