

In this newsletter we have several updates from Jim Jesudoss in Madurai from a very busy Vidiyal.

Firstly he has written to tell us about the celebrations for the recent graduates within the Vidiyal community:

### 2<sup>nd</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY OF VIDİYAL

There was overwhelming joy felt in the air at the 2<sup>nd</sup> graduation ceremony jointly organized by Vidiyal and Olirum Muhanal (the alumni which is called The Radiant Faces) on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014, right inside the heart of Melavasal slum in which Vidiyal was founded some 20 years ago. The community witnessed the ceremony with awe and felt proud about the success made by their children. An elderly lady came to me in tears and said “we were in chains of illiteracy and bondage and used our thumb impressions for not being able to put our signature on any documents. Vidiyal has enabled our children to break the chains of slavery and illiteracy.”



**The graduates— an inspiration to the Vidiyal children**

Yes, it is true that we made a commitment 20 years ago and stood with the community in their joys and sorrows. When we started Vidiyal there was not a single graduate in the community and most of the children would drop-out from school at 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> standard. Through our Child Resource Centres we strategized to break this with a rights based approach. The community also stood with us and the children responded so well to the unconditional love that we showed them. Even today the entire focus of our work is ‘social inclusion’ and ‘self esteem building’ which enables the children to set their goal and empower them to achieve the goal.

We had our first graduation ceremony in June 2010, and this time 17 children received their graduation awards for their achievement in various fields including, Teaching, Nursing, Social Work, Economics, Religion and Philosophy, History, English, Rural Development Science, Political Science, Physics, Botany, Road Transport, Business Administration and Business Accounts and Computer Animation. The young people in our alumni form the core team for the programme which brought stunning impact in the community.



Dr.Sujatha Rita, our president who also mentored these children in several training programmes gave away the awards. A few community leaders also shared the podium.

The most important thing is that the community felt that this is their achievement too. The success didn't come easy in the hands of these graduates. Having utilized the opportunities provided at Vidiyal they broke several barriers like the caste system, poverty, social exclusion and slavery. I spoke at the Graduation ceremony and thanked the community for the trust and confidence they had in me and in Vidiyal and assured them that I will be with them till the end of my life. We did remember you all and thanked God for NewDawn India and your support and encouragement which has taken us to this level. This is not just an end; the journey is yet a long way. I asked the community to have a dream for their community. A dream that no child dropout from school and we celebrate 100% success in the near future.

## JIM'S NEWS ABOUT A COMMUNITY LIBRARY

We have also opened a Community Library which will run with the support of our present volunteers and alumni. The community leaders and members thanked Vidiyal for this. This is going to be a milestone for Vidiyal and for the community. Thanks to New Dawn for the funds that we could use Rs.10,000/- from the budget which is allocated for our children's library.



**The new community library in the centre of the slum**

I felt very happy while typing this article for you. Thanks for your continued support, love and encouragement. It's only because of your unshaken support we could achieve this. Let us continue to toil hard and achieve so much in our life time. This is God's liberation work and I believe He has chosen us for this work. Let us join hands to continue His mission.

## SOCIAL ACTION GROUP

Here Jim tells us about the work of this group:

As you are aware we inculcate the value to serve others in our children. In the past, the Social Action Forum of Vidiyal has adopted one home for the elderly or home for children with special needs to serve them through out the year. It has served at the time of Tsunami in running trauma intervention camps for the affected children and has run cyclone relief camps at Pondicherry and Cudalore. This year this forum planned to organize a work camp in Kodaikannal Hills to serve the Paliyar Tribes there.

**Village Clean up:** The first and foremost need of this village was 'cleanliness'. Though this Village was located in a sylvan environment, surrounded by misty mountains the community didn't care much about the cleanliness. The children of Vidiyal cleaned up the entire village, involving the children and youth of the village in the clean up drive to make them understand how to sustain it with their participation. The community was amazed at the transformation in the village.

### ***Painting the school for tribal children:***

Another team of Vidiyal children who had artistic talents worked hard for two days and painted the school for tribal children. The school looked anew with colourful paintings and interior decorations on the wall. The children of the village very much appreciated this.



**Awareness campaign:** Vidiyal Children interacted with the people of the village through a door to door campaign. It was painful to notice that children of this village do not study beyond 5<sup>th</sup> standard and go for work. The importance of education and the ill effects of child labour were stressed in this campaign. In the evening the Vidiyal children performed Tamil folk dances to catch the attention of the entire community and the same messages - importance of cleanliness and education - were reiterated.

**Activities for children:** There were 20 tribal children participated in the activities organized which included singing, games and competitions. Every child participated was presented with a play kit which was bought from the money that Vidiyal children contributed and raised.

Everyone felt happy and the children of Vidiyal came back with the "joy of giving".

**A date for your diary**

**Annual Curry Evening 2014**

**At Days Road Church, Capel St Mary  
Saturday 18th October**