

2016/17 has seen a very busy Vidiyal, and NewDawn India has needed to be pro-active in raising the funds for all that goes on during the year.

In early 2017, 9 sponsors made a visit to Vidiyal and we include here some insights into the impact the trip had on them.

Brian writes:

“Sandra and I, together with some friends, have recently returned from a three week trip to India. In the second half of the trip, we were fortunate enough to tour the “Golden Triangle”, visiting some of the main sites in Delhi, Jaipur and Agra, as well as having 3 game drives at Ranthambore National Park, where we were very lucky to see tigers twice at close range, as well as a multitude of other animals and birds.

However, the highlight of the whole trip was undoubtedly the first 10 days, which we spent in the city of Madurai in the state of Tamil Nadu in the south of the country. We were, of course, visiting the centres in the slums supported by NewDawn India. We were also privileged to visit some of the families’ homes. The charity is known in Madurai as Vidiyal, which means a new dawn or new beginning in the Tamil language and helps children in the Madurai streets and slums, who, with their families, have the misfortune to be born into the “lowest of the low”, the “Dalits” or “Untouchables”, in India’s wretched caste system. You wouldn’t believe how much a simple handshake means to these people.

This was Sandra’s eighth trip out there, but it was the first for me, and I can assure you that nothing, but nothing prepares you for the poverty and conditions these poor souls have to endure. All of Sandra’s words and photographs do not in any way compare to the reality. “

Showing inclusion in the slums



Angela writes:

“I was lucky enough to be one of the party of 9 who travelled to Madurai to visit Vidiyal this January. I have sponsored a child for a long time, finding out about the project through Sandra when we both worked at Ipswich High School. Visiting the project and seeing the amazing work that Jim and Sharmila achieve was a truly memorable experience.

We were welcomed when we arrived by various members of the Vidiyal community. The acceptance of the work in the slums is obvious and meeting the alumni who have successfully graduated to find good jobs is proof that the project is achieving highly. The different strands of Jim’s work including sewing schools, child protection, care of the community from elders to babes in arms are diverse but his attitude is always so positive, and his and Sharmila’s obvious love of what they are doing and achieving is heart-warming. It is an amazing project to be involved in and I felt very honoured to visit.

Come to the Curry Evening on October 14th to see a presentation of our experiences.”



Jim with the children at one of the drop-in centres

Dorothee writes:

“Having been involved with Vidiyal for a long time, I finally managed to do what I had been wanting to do for many years: meet my sponsor children. My visit went beyond all expectations and I spent some of the most amazing times in my life at Vidiyal.

My sponsor daughter Raji (16) was amongst the welcome committee at the airport. She looked absolutely beautiful, gave me a red rose and big hugs. Over the course of the 11 days of our stay, we got to know each other quite well.

Graduation Ceremony

One day we were visiting families in the slums and much to my surprise I found myself in her home, meeting her parents who were absolutely delightful. They showed me the family photo album and also all the correspondence (letters, postcards and photos) which I had sent to Raji. They had kept every single item. What a humbling moment. When I saw this, I realized that I should have kept in touch much more regularly.

Another highlight of my time at Vidiyal was meeting my first sponsor boy, Arafat. I immediately spotted him in the crowd and it was a very emotional meeting. Arafat is now a young man of 28 and studying for a PhD in Social Work at university. From his letters to me, I always knew that he had an extremely caring and mature personality. Even though the sponsorship ended after he finished college, we stayed in touch and developed a very special relationship. Meeting him felt like being reunited with a son coming home from university. He came especially to meet me but sadly could only stay for the weekend. Nevertheless we managed to spend a lot of time talking and had dinner together on his last night. In an email sent immediately on his return to university he expressed how much it had meant to him and how secure he felt when I hugged him. He is still very involved with Vidiyal and his help is much appreciated. Much to my surprise, last Sunday, I received Mother's Day wishes. This was so amazing, as it was actually Mother's Day in Germany (not in England) and I am German. Sponsoring a child is such a rewarding experience and can be a friendship for life."

Earlier this year a graduation ceremony was held for all those Vidiyal children who have achieved a degree or equivalent. These ceremonies are held every three years and news of this one even reached the Hindu newspaper.

It is good to see so many young people moving into jobs that were once beyond their dreams and we can see the difference that Vidiyal has made in their lives.

Article in "The Hindu" newspaper and graduation ceremony

Becoming a graduate against many odds

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI: Thirty first-generation graduates from socio-economically oppressed communities, predominantly involved in conservancy work, from Melavalas here were felicitated at a function organised by Olirum Mugangal, an association of youngsters who studied with the support of Sakthi-Vidiyal, a non-governmental organisation.

Speaking at the function, C. Jim Jesudoss, Executive Director of Sakthi-Vidiyal, said education was the key for emancipation of down-trodden communities.

"It is heartening to see the transformation here, with many graduates successfully getting employed in different fields," he said.

S. Asha, secretary of Sakthi-Vidiyal, stressed the role parents could play in ensuring that their children did not drop out of school.

R. Ramkumar, secretary of Olirum Mugangal and one of the first graduates from the area, said the event was organised once in three years. "This is the third event. We are around 100 first-generation graduates in the area. In the present batch, there are more girls than boys," he said. Highlighting the importance of felicitating the graduates, he said, "It will serve as an inspiration for parents and children the reason why we conduct the function in our area."

Awards were given to special achievers among the graduates, including one who is successfully employed in the Public Works Department after clearing Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission Group IV examinations and another person who is pursuing doctoral research in social work.

PROUD MOMENT: Twenty six first-generation graduates being felicitated at a function organised by Olirum Mugangal in Madurai on Sunday. — PHOTO: R. ASHOK



Visiting the slums

During our visit we were welcomed into many homes, a truly humbling and moving experience. In one of them we met a family with two sponsored children whose father we were to see again a little later. He was working in the big gutter (open sewer) which runs beside the homes in the Melavasal slum. His aim was to find metal particles which could be polished up and sold for a few rupees.



The sewer in Melavasal, showing the father in the distance and then closer up.



New centre in Melavasal

Thanks to the work of the Vidiyal alumni, a new centre has opened in Melavasal. As a result of the work with the communities and the relationships built up, the alumni have been offered use of a building rent-free.



NewDawn India information

Forthcoming events at Capel St Mary Methodist Church.

23rd September Plant and Cake Sale & Coffee
Morning 10am—12 noon

Come along to buy your plants and bulbs, enjoy a coffee in friendly surroundings and treat yourself to some home made cakes.

14th October Annual Curry Evening 7 for 7.30 pm.
Come along to hear two sponsors speak about their first visit to Vidiyal. Booking for this is essential. Please contact Brenda Sturgeon on 01473 310125 or at sturgeons71@gmail.com

IMPORTANT

If you are happy to receive up-to-date news and these newsletters via e-mail please send us a working address. Also, if you change e-mail address, please let us know. Postage and printing costs continue to rise and it is a big help if we can cut down on these. The cost of posting a newsletter to you alone would provide 10 meals for a child. Just send your address to s.e.davies10@gmail.com.

NewDawn India

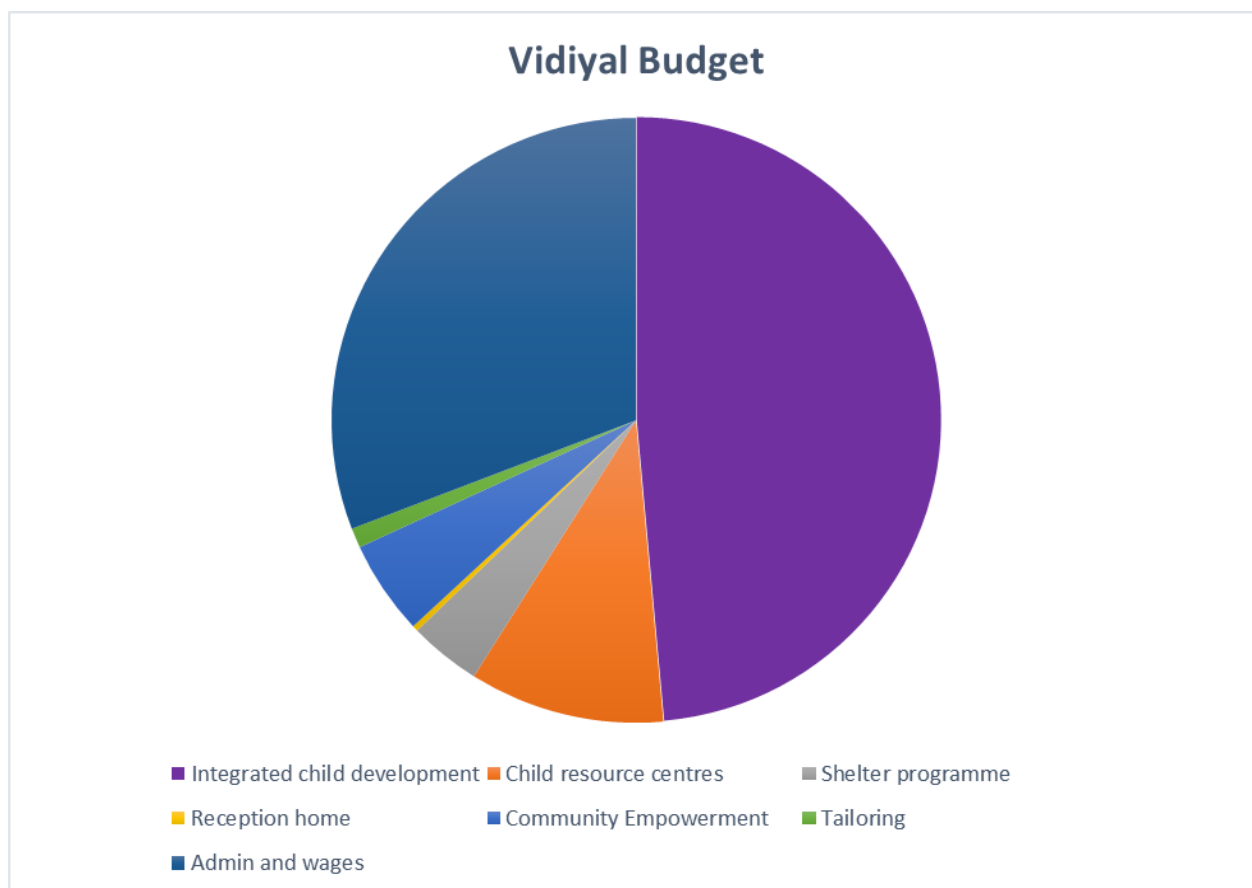
We would love to see more people practically involved in the work of NewDawn India. We would be grateful for help in any area but particularly in fund raising and advertising to raise awareness of the charity. Contact Sandra Davies on 01473 311148 or s.e.davies10@gmail.com

NewDawn India funds

Raising money to maintain the work of Vidiyal becomes harder and harder. People are often wary of supporting needs in India, in spite of it containing a third of the world's poverty. We are proud to be able to say that all your money goes directly to the work of Vidiyal. Jim Jesudoss sends us extremely detailed accounts so that the trustees can be confident of the ways in which the funds are used.

The following page shows a breakdown of how the funds are allocated to the different needs, along with a bit more detail about the categories. We hope that you will find it helpful.

A breakdown of where your money goes



Integrated child development

325 children spread over 7 drop-in centres

Supplementary food

Play materials

Library

Martial arts

Camps

Training and workshops

Education (including higher education)

Admin and wages

Salaries of Vidiyal staff

Vidiyal postage and printing

Tailoring

Training for slum women and drop-out girls

Rent and electricity for premises

Community empowerment

Programmes for mothers and fathers

Programme for the elderly

Staff and volunteer development

Reception home

Welcome kits for those children admitted through Childline

Shelter programme

Upkeep of Muthupatti drop-in and shelter home

Provision of child care and clothing for 2 children

Child resource centres

Excluding Muthupatti

Maintaining the drop-in centres

Rent and Electricity

Travel and fuel