

Auroville, November 2012



Dear friends and donors,

At the beginning of this year, we were preoccupied with the aftermath of the devastating cyclone which had hit our region on 30.12.2011. Massive clean-up work had to be done everywhere. Fallen trees and huge amounts of leaves had to be removed, and it was weeks until electricity was restored everywhere. Despite this, at Deepam this year, the scene is visibly “constructive”. At the end of January, we started with the **construction of a care-takers apartment** which is needed for security and for ensuring that the infrastructure of Deepam is well maintained. Our team member Gopal, who is himself challenged by polio, will move into this apartment with his wife and his little girl. Until now, he has had to travel by scooter on a dangerous road from his far-out home village to come to work. As a care-taker, Gopal will take up some extra duties such as ensuring that our water-tanks are filled, that no fans are running at night and that all doors are safely locked. Gopal has been employed at Deepam since 2007 and has specialised in speech-therapy and the provision of hearing aids for our children.

Twelve **solar-panels** have been mounted on top of our roof and an inverter and a battery bank have been installed to be able to pump water, and to run some ceiling fans without depending on the increasingly unreliable electricity grid. At present, we have an average of fourteen hours power-cut per day!

Another good news is that we finally got the use of all the rooms which were used in recent years for inpatient care by the nearby Health Centre. Now we are busy doing necessary **repairs and renovation** in this old part of the building. The wooden roof-structure, which was severely damaged by wood-borers, has been already replaced. At present we have a beehive of activity with many masons and carpenters. Some days there are as well the plumber and the electrician with their helpers around. We face noise and dust and it needs extra time and patience to plan and to coordinate all this work, to get estimates, and to select suitable materials. We are looking forward to being able to use all the rooms for individual therapy work for our children and for vocational training for the older ones.

Suresh is very proud of his new home in his far-out rural village! He suffers of hearing loss and is one of our garden helpers at Deepam. Suresh receives from us weekly pocket money and a monthly sum for his saving book. For him the lunch and snacks, the health-care and the attention which he receives at Deepam is important. His parents are uneducated and work for daily wages in agriculture. Suresh's father is severely addicted to alcohol and his younger siblings are still attending school. The family was living in a tiny old house with very bad foundations, which had developed cracks and was in danger to collapse. With the help of donations we were able to build a bigger house with solid foundations, a proper concrete roof and a simple bathroom with toilet. Our condition for making this building was that the family members would participate in the construction work to be able to save on labour charges. Construction proved difficult as it did not rain for six months and as a consequence the wells in that village almost dried up. In addition the next water connection is far away from their place. The family of five could be settled in their new home before the heavy monsoon rains set in.

Sathya is one of our young women who has one-side of her body paralysed and is mentally challenged. Some time ago her family had started to build a more solid house, but than their resources run out. We could help with the material to finish this construction. It is a relief for us to know that Sathya now has a toilet and she does not need to go anymore into the open fields.



In the last months we have also been busy with **health check-ups** for all our students. We brought them to different hospitals to see specialists in several departments, for orthopaedic assessment, appliances and a few for surgery. Several of them were screened and treated for tuberculosis, heart problems, gynaecological complaints and epileptic disorders. We were able to make helpful contacts with a paediatric and an orthopaedic doctor who appreciate the work we do for the local children and are ready to support us in an extremely pleasant and generous way. A lot of follow-up was needed to refer children to doctors in different hospitals, to apply specific physio-therapy exercises and appliances, and to make sure medication is properly taken. Especially for the children who needed to be admitted to hospitals, it was necessary that their parents were informed and cooperative. All this was a huge additional work for our dedicated team members.

For ever grateful we will be for our first school van which was donated in 2003 by DIK (Deutsch-Indisches-Kinderhilfswerk, a German-Indian children's association). With this vehicle we were able to pick up more children & youth from the surrounding villages and provide treatment and education for them. This time we would like to say thank you to another German association called Aktion Weltkinderhilfe for their generous donation for our **new school van** which was delivered in October!

Angelika was for six weeks in Germany in August and September and was able to meet many of our friends and supporters whom we want to thank for their support for our work with the children who face disability. It is wonderful to know how many people, in different places of the world feel connected with Deepam and carry us! Only with your help has it been possible to develop our project to where we are today! For the first time, a wonderful evening event with an Indian dancer and with slides about our work at Deepam was organised by the **German-Indian-Society** in Karlsruhe. This was a warm German-Indian coming together.

At Deepam, we started to make the Christmas trees for the greeting cards in the middle of the hot tropical summer, and we joked that it keeps us cool. We hope you will enjoy this little gift which is intended to **express our gratitude for all your support**. Our children and our team members would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and send you best wishes for the New Year!

With warm regards,
Angelika Ehrle & Selvi

See our website for more information and photos:
<http://www.deepam-auroville.in>

