

FRIENDS OF SHAMAYITA MATH

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June 2021

Dear members and friends of Friends of Shamayita Math

Fortunately, the corona restrictions in Denmark have eased so much that it was possible again to arrange a summer event in our organization. It took place Saturday May 29. in the garden at Bente Hagelund. After a longer period of bad weather it turned out that summer had arrived so we had a lovely afternoon. We had a beautiful and moving cultural event with Indian songs and dances headed by Deepshikha Daga. Indian street food and drinks were available and we had plenty of opportunity to talk and interact with those present, many of which had Indian background. It would have been nice if more of our members had attended to enjoy this experience. We collected almost 2000 DKR to Friends of Shamayita Math.



We enjoyed Deeps Dancing Divas cultural programme

Unfortunately, the corona situation in India is much more serious. It has been a huge challenge to handle the situation in this big country. There was a steep rise in infected and deceased people in May - the situation is now better.

Shamayita Math has many other activities than schools: hospital, agricultural and craftsmanship education, sewing workshop etc. The hospital is functioning and the hospital staff vaccinated, but it is not possible to follow all corona protocols, so the hospital cannot receive corona patients. But luckily they are able to treat patients with other health problems as usual before corona.

The Indian government provide rice for free to needy families. This can keep hunger away, but is not healthy if proteins like vegetables, eggs and a little meat is not added.

The end-of-term examination for the upper class was cancelled for all schools in India. The Convent School has been closed and the students sent home with the possibility for online education. However, not all students have laptops or smartphones or they live in rural areas without IT-connection. Students at the Convent School from poorer families get education for free, while those who can afford it pay. It is a big economic challenge for Shamayita Math to pay salary to teachers and instructors, but not getting any income from students and cancelled activities.

Village schools and public schools have been closed apart from a short period in March until the 2. wave overtook. There are now children who have not been to school in almost 1½ years. In the villageschool we support it has been possible within the rules to have a kind of emergency schooling of smaller groups outdoors some days a week - but this cannot compare to real daily schooling, which also include a hot meal. The situation has motivated some families to send the bigger children to day work. The mothers at Shamayita Math fear that many of these children will never return to school.



Corona-teaching in a village



Rakhiceremony – tying of friendshipbands

We in the board of Friends of Shamayita Math are in close contact with the general secretary and other leaders, called Mothers. They tell that the corona cause people to slow down. They don't make plans for the future but live from day to day. The uncertainty cause stress and depressions. Mothers feel the emotional problems are bigger than those arising from corona. Corona can eventually be reduced by vaccinations and immunity amongst those affected, but the emotional scars can be difficult to heal.

Last year India passed a rule, that all donations from foreign NGOs to Indian NGOs should be transferred through a special branch of SBI in New Delhi. This would take effect from April 1 this year (2021).



We sent money to Shamayita Math before Christmas in accordance with the existing rules. However, the amount was returned to our account in our Danish Bank. We have several times contacted Shamayita Math regarding their approval of an account at SBI. It seems most of the employees at SBI in Delhi has been sent home due to corona, so it take a very long time to get registered for the several thousand Indian NGOs who get donations from abroad.

It seems rather contradictory that at the same time India wants support from abroad, rules are implemented that prevent this. So we cannot transfer money until we are certain that they reach Shamayita Math.

Unfortunately, and maybe worse, the situation with the closed schools make it difficult to get status of the children being sponsored by some of our members. Therefore, we will wait collecting sponsorship money until we get updated information. We sincerely hope that the schools can reopen in the near future.

In spite of these problems, we are sincerely convinced that it has enormous impact on the spirit of everybody working at Shamayita Math, that someone in Denmark remember them and try to help and support in difficult times. We hope that all members and friend continuously will back up our work while we wait on clarification in the bank issue.

In the end of 2020 we were 51 members. We really wish to get more members, so if you know somebody who might be interested please tell them about us. Info can be found on www.friendsofshamayita.dk - We are also on facebook.

We had our yearly general meeting on February 15.

Those (re)elected to the board were:

Lars Fynbo, chairman.

Bente Hagelund, secretary and accountant.

Deepshikha Daga, event manager.

Lise Hagelund, coordinator of volunteers and web-site.

Sarah Nissen, coordinator of volunteers.

Thank you all for your support. I really hope for better times where it will be possible again to visit our friends in India. I wish all of you and your families a safe and pleasant summer.

Lars Fynbo
Chairman of the board

