

Making a Difference

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It has been now over one year since we launched our initiative to help Chirumalar school in India. We formed our group OurNewChapter to have an identity in Belgium for our fundraising activities.

With the support from Proma ASBL (www.asblproma.be) we have been able to ensure all the funds we receive are channeled to India via an established Belgian organisation. Moreover this allows donors to benefit from a tax rebate on their donations if they wish as Proma will make the official tax declarations.

Our objective has been to support the studies of grade 11 and 12 students at the school. Otherwise there was no possibility for the students to continue their studies beyond the age of 14 or 15.

Without the higher secondary education studies the students have very little chance of getting a job and thus escaping the spiraling poverty that awaits them.



The school provides the children with a better education to help them appreciate what the future could hold for them. The importance of education has fortunately been embraced by parents. Whilst the parents know their destined way of life may not change, their wish for their children provides hope and aspirations that the same will not happen to them. Moreover, the children may later be able to offer more stability to their family as a whole by earning a stable regular income. These will only remain as hopes, wishes and desires if nothing changes for the children. Our project aims to make the possibility of changing the lives of the children a reality and give them a better start in life.



It should be noted that the students regularly win awards in regional and district competitions. This really shows they are committed to their school and to making changes in their own lives.

What has OurNewChapter achieved to date?

Since we began our project we have raised over 9000 euros through fundraising events and received donations.

Our objective for 2018 was about 5000 euros.

For 2019 we have a target of 10000 euros.



In 2018 we had organised many initiatives

Cooking lessons; Indian tea parties; Quiz night, Collection boxes. A Charity Concert.

Christmas Carol singing, Donations from communities and individuals.

Sales of greeting cards and spices made by the Chirumalar community back in India.

We extend our thanks to different communities for their involvement and support in our events.

We are happy to name a few – Our Lady of Mercy parish, St Anne's Parish, Uccle, the Waterloo commune, St John's International School, Japanese families in Belgium and Indian friends including the Tamil Speaking community in Leuven.



In 2019, we will continue with

Cooking lessons

Indian tea parties

Stands at events

Collection boxes

Charity concert (**Saturday 25th May 2019**)

Luncheon events

What can the school achieve with the funds ?

We could pay for the school tuition and exam fees, equipment and books for the current students and the new intake planned for June.

We could contribute towards the salaries of the teachers. Please note the teachers are not paid by the state.

To donate, please send via bank transfer to

asbIProma – IBAN BE71000017331169

communication – Chirumalar pedagogy (2018/52)

Consider to set up a monthly virement
(standing order) of 7€
this will help one student study for a year



Below are extracts from messages sent by the students. These were translated for us as the original text was in Tamil.

I want to be a police officer. I want to score 95% in my final exams.

I do physical exercise regularly in order to achieve my dreams. Chirumalar School has been very helpful to me in many ways. I had been studying here from 4th standard onwards. I love my school very much.

I want to become a Software Engineer so that I can become a Manager in a reputable bank. That is why I chose computer science as one of the subjects. My father has the same dream as mine. The subjects are heavy. But for the sake of my father's dream I study hard. Maths and chemistry are the toughest subjects. Chemistry does not remain in my head. Maths is much tougher than 10th standard but my family needs me that is why I try hard.

I want to be a good and genuine person who loves people in life. These days I study up to 10 o'clock in the night. Commerce is my favourite subject. Gradually I will achieve smaller goals and become an IAS officer finally. I have to protect my Tamil people who go through a lot of difficulties. I concentrate on my studies and increase my general knowledge. I wish to abolish the caste system and want to see a country where even a person from a lower caste can achieve greater heights.

I want to become a doctor. I am a botany student. So far I have studied well. I want to get a good name to my parents, school and teachers. For the final exams I will have to spend more time studying. I will work hard towards that.

My dream is to become a chartered accountant. I am an accountancy student and I always scored first or second in the exams. I want to score 100%. My father struggles hard. Surely there will be happiness one day. When I become a CA, I will help create a corruption free government. My first salary will go to the school and my home. I will work hard to realize this dream.

My dream is to become an Economics teacher. That is why I chose economics in the school. I spend almost 12 hours a day for studies both in the school and at home. I receive blessings from my parents and teachers. I will go to a school where I will be teaching economics one day. Teacher's job is a noble service.

My dream is to revolutionize agriculture. Agriculture is being given up and a lot of poor farmers these days commit suicide. To settle this issue I have to revolutionize agriculture. These days I meditate a lot of this. I am hopeful that my teachers will guide me in the right direction. I do read some books related to this. Peasants have to get not only bumper crops but have to get an optimum price for their hard work. I have already spent a lot of time in the library looking for books in this direction.

I have to study well and I want to become a bank manager. My mother, father and Father here at school are keen in me studying well. I love my teachers very very very much. If I get a good job in the future then I can protect my family. Thank you so much. Greetings to you.

I want to be a professor in a university. I always seek the help of my friends when the subjects are tough. My teacher is very good in computers. I have similar dreams. I am also good in sports. More than the subjects I am more interested in computers and sports.



*The project location is **Marungapuri** block in Tiruchirppalli district in Central Tamilnadu in South India. Marungapuri block has 330 villages, small and big. Vellakulam where our school and centre is situated is almost in the middle of these 330 villages.*

*Ten years back we started **Chirumalar (Little Flower) School** because, we felt a dire need to educate the rural youth with a standard education. Therefore, we followed **constructive Pedagogy!** This is the first school in the state with this pedagogy, which is totally children centred! Children would have the freedom to question and learn. The basic philosophy of the pedagogy is; "if an environment is created the children can construct knowledge". This was a big shift from the existing pedagogy all over the state, Instructive Pedagogy!*

We wanted this opportunity to reach first the rural children, the dalits, the girl children and the economically deprived ones. We have at present 452 children in the school who come from nearly 100 villages and hamlets. Almost all of them come from the families of peasants. Most of their parents are either uneducated or schooled a few years only. Therefore, many of our children in the school are the first generation children getting formal education through our school.

The furthest village is situated nearly 30 kilometres far from the school. We have a few school vehicles to bring the children from these remote villages where public transport facility is either nil or seldom.



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