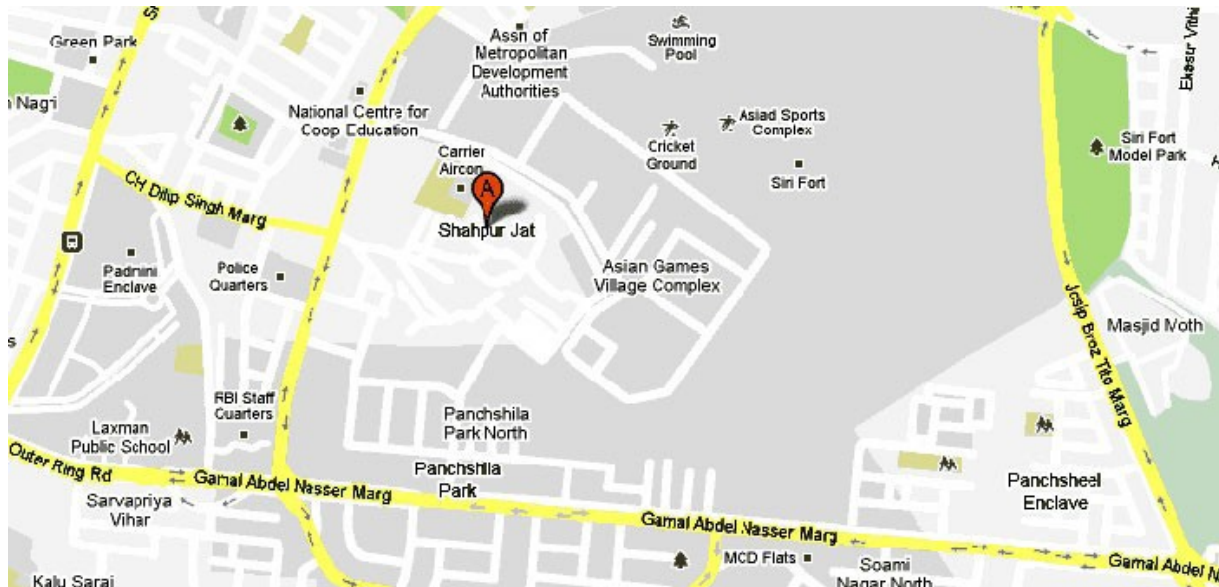


Visit to two CFH learning centres (Concern for Humanity) out of four. The afternoon schools are situated on the outskirts south of New Delhi and supported by the association CFH.

On arriving at Mrs Arpana Luthra's and Amit Kumar's office in Shaphpur Jat, which is also available for CFH, we were heartily welcomed by them. Arpana handed us all the requested documents on the association and the children. Arpana and Amit are, as social workers, the ideal women to manage the CFH learning centre. As their main occupation they create studies on village development for domestic and international organizations of government.



Arpana explained to us the situation of the families; where they come from and the concept of the afternoon schools in the slums and villages on the southern outskirts of Delhi, founded by CFH, as follows:

Most children go to a local school in the morning, which is within walking distance. There are only very few children at CFH who do not attend school. These are those whose lower knowledge at the age of over ten years makes it impossible to go to school in a class together with the youngest ones. The aim is to prevent the children from dropping out of school and enable them to improve their school achievements.



The afternoon school starts at 1:30 pm and ends at 5:00 pm. The teachers, who come from the same region as the children, go through the school work with the children of the morning school, furthermore, they teach them literature, personal hygiene, social behaviour, and handicrafts.

Most these children belong to the first generation of their families who go to school. Therefore they receive no help from their parents. The classes of local schools are so overcrowded that teachers are not able to care sufficiently for the children.

Accordingly, these school lessons are only of little benefit to these children. This is the standard situation of children from immigrant families.

The children's parents travel from Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh to New Delhi to work. They are very poor, can usually neither read nor write, live without social security and speak a foreign language. They regularly visit their villages of origin,

where they have their roots. But that is why the children are frequently absent at school, and they would hardly be able to catch up on missed lessons without any help. The children look after their little brothers and sisters when their parents are away at work.

Recently, one of the slums has been demolished, as it had been built illegally on a piece of land of the government property. This was a great challenge for the families and for the small school in this slum. Most of them found a place in the nearby village school. Despite the high rents of the tiny rooms they have once again increased significantly. After an exhaustive search, the teacher found an affordable room for the CFH afternoon school.

The last bus stop of the bus to Delhi is in this village. The families had no alternative but to pay the high rents there. Early in the morning, the parents go to a special meeting point where the day laborers are hired for Delhi.



Following our conversation in the office we visited two of the afternoon schools. The class room was tiny and packed full with bright children who listened to a story with great interest about a small country called Switzerland with high snow-covered mountains, where only half as many people live as in Delhi.

There was a blackboard in the class room on which the text from the lesson was still written. We asked the children, with Arpana's help, to write a word in Hindi and then, Klaus who had learned this style of writing, had to read it to them. Initially, the children were too shy to come to the blackboard, but when they realized how Klaus struggled until he could read the word, they had a

lot of fun, and finally, they wrote several words. When we asked what class would Klaus be in, if he wanted to start school - like a shot said a girl in a cheerful voice "in the first class!" This caused then a real outburst of hilarity in the whole class.



The children made beautiful little clay sculptures in their handicraft lessons and painted them colourful. Arpana chose us to name the first three winners. The sculptures were based on Indian topics which we did not understand and so could not know how well they met the criteria. Therefore, we chose the winners according to the artisan's skills and originality. We had no idea whether the children could understand our choice or not. Nevertheless, at the end, an award ceremony for the first three prizes was performed.



Photo: award ceremony with Arpana in the middle

In the small yard in front of the class room, Amit is taking a photo of us with the whole class.



Behind left is Arpana of CFH and behind right is Klaus of Noon

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