

## Visit to "St. Elizabeth's Convent", Kattiparambu, Dec. 23, 2013

Visitors: Doris and Klaus; Report: Klaus

The Convent School in Kattiparambu is located on a narrow strip of land between the sea and the backwaters. It is a "primary school" from form 1 to 7, so from the 8<sup>th</sup> form onwards, the children - aged about 12 - have to travel longer distances to other schools. For this reason, the Sisters are trying hard to get the authorization to teach the children up to the 10<sup>th</sup> form, which nowadays is not easy to obtain.



Noon.ch has been supporting 55 young people from poor families with a scholarship programme, which will enable them to complete form 12.

In addition, we have been supporting 16 children up to the 7<sup>th</sup> form. The photo below shows the children who have been taken from a backwater area to school in a rickshaw every day since 2012.



Sister Metty, the new "Mother Superior" of the Convent, Sister Lissy, the new head mistress of the school belonging to the Convent, and us had fixed December 23 as the day on which we would meet the children and young people funded by noon.ch on the site of the Convent

Except for the small group of children attending the Convent School, the children of the forms 8 to 12 go to different schools in the vicinity. Sister Metty had informed all the parents personally, so that on 23 December at 10:00 am, no fewer than 39 children appeared in festive clothes, some accompanied by their mothers. Some of the children could not come because of special events in their schools.

Beforehand, we had thought up a way to entertain the children and young people, especially,



as they all speak and understand English. So we came up with a little quiz of 10 questions, which the children – divided into groups of six - had to answer: "Serious" issues such as "When was the St. Elizabeth's Convent founded?" alternated with funny issues: "A farmer has 30 cows, two of them are butchered - how old is the farmer?" There were three age groups with two guessing teams respectively. Right after the obligatory photo session and checking their names against our list, the children started guessing and had a lot of fun. Like almost all school children anywhere in the world, most of

them concluded that the farmer was 28 years old ... On average, six questions were answered correctly.

Now the four winning teams were supposed to find the winner of their respective group with a focus-demanding game: The team members stood in a circle and began to count around,

but, whenever a number was divisible by three, they had to call "BRRR..." instead of the number. To the children's delight, we had played the game with the Sisters first and everybody enjoyed joining in.

During these harmless games, we got in contact with individual children and appreciated their having developed into self-confident personalities. Some had brought along their school reports and others proudly told us of their successes in competitions.

After that, we all ate the snacks and sweets we had brought, and the children were given a good ballpoint pen each. The five "winners" of the competition, however, were awarded a set of 24 Faber-Castell crayons each.



This was a very important morning to us. Not only were we able to get to know the children, but also the new leaders of the Convent, in an informal situation. We are now sure that - just like their predecessors - the Sisters Metty and Lissy will take care of the children's well-being and make sure that the noon-funds are usefully applied.

The Sisters also mentioned a problem we have been aware of for many years: the nutritional situation of the kindergarten children. Many of them are underfed or badly nourished, in particular they lack protein and vitamins. The Sisters have drawn up a little extra nutrition programme in which the children would regularly be provided with eggs, milk and bananas. The cost for one year would be about 1500 CHF. We will report on this matter in our upcoming meeting, and ask the noon-members for their views on it.

COCHIN, 24 Dec

2013 Doris had already had the opportunity to meet the 16 children funded by us, who are attending the forms 1 to 7 in the Convent School on the annual school celebration on 19 December (I had not been able to attend it because of a bad cold). We had already visited some of their families in early December. They live in small huts on the tracks leading through the backwater. During the rainy season the paths are flooded, and it is hard for the children to get to school. The Sisters have established a rickshaw service for this group, which is also part of our support.



In the photos above, we are on the way to different families through the backwater. This family lives in a palm leaf house that is often flooded during the rainy season. There is a small boat, and therefore a daily diet of fish curry and rice is secure. The young woman (the



second from left, in the right picture) was trained in embroidery technique in the Convent, and she now works as a freelance embroiderer. The Convent provides her with orders.



Picture on the left; 11-or-12-year-old children admitted by Direct Donation to the scholarship programme in 2012 (photo taken at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> form in March 2012). Picture on the right; the same children now 13, in the photo taken in December 2013. They are attending the 9<sup>th</sup> forms in different schools in the vicinity. Their training is sponsored by noon.ch.