

THE PIARIST IN INDIA AND KAMDA SCHOOL

The Piarists arrive in southern India in 1994. In 2001, they managed to open new schools in the country in the neediest quarters. In this situation the piarists moved to the Khunti area, in the state of Jharkhanden, living for two years with the local population to identify the community in which it was most needed and necessary to encourage the start-up of a school. To make the decision they met in several times with local authorities, who helped to define the concrete need, identifying the most appropriate



In this way Kamda was considered an area with clear deficits of educational infrastructures and clear demands of several family groups to establish a school to avoid the necessity of traveling long distances to attend one. At that time there were only 6 schools and enrollment rates in the area even lower than in other rural areas. Therefore, an area located on neutral ground to encourage access by different tribal families and toils with whom they often maintained bad relationships and fights was decided. The construction of the simple structure begun in October 2002 and the same month of 2004 the school was inaugurated. It was initially opened up to 4th grade, although the community and the families requested that the school grow to the current 10th grade.

Today, the Calasanz Ashram School, serves 640 students, of which 285 are girls (44.5%) and 356 boys (55.5%). The Piarists have worked very hard to increase the female presence in the school; much progress has been made, although it is difficult to fight the prejudices of many families, their fears and some deeply rooted customs. The munda ethnic group is very reluctant to have their children, and especially their daughters, away from home, even if it is to obtain a benefit such as that involved in schooling. However, numbers improve year by year, more students in the middle and the percentage of girls is increasing.

In order to increase school attendance, the use of bicycles has been promoted so that children from more remote areas go to school. Although families have been reluctant for years to learn to ride bicycles, they have now been routinely allowed to attend classes on a regular basis.

Most boys and girls are aware that going to school and striving is the only way to improve their chances for the future, is something that families have understood and transmitted to their sons and daughters

Next to the bicycles parked in the yard is usual to see the balls passing; soccer is the favorite sport in this school, although cricket follows closely.

When the school opened in 2004, it was done with very humble resources, thinking of expanding and improving the school in the future. Soon the forecasts of students were overcome, so we are in need for an intervention that dignifies facilities and increase their capacity.

With the support of the campaign we can give continuity to the school with funds to pay the teachers and improve their training with courses and workshops. A new, deeper well will be built, to keep water during the dry season, allowing classes to continue; the electrical system will be improved and the construction of an extension or renovation of the building to receive more students will begin.

KAMDA BICYCLES

Not only students use a bicycle to get around. In the battered jungle roads the bicycle becomes one of the most efficient transportation methods; it does not use expensive fossil fuels, so it does not pollute, it is faster and less tiring than walking, and it is easy to repair when it is damaged. Most of the boys and girls of Kamda live about 15 kilometers from the school. Walking would take more than 2 hours,



our school

