

February 2022



Dear supporters of *Friends of Madurai Seed (FMS)*

While Covid continued to rage around the world, for Madurai Seed 2021 was overshadowed by the medical emergencies suffered by Karthik. In mid-May, he was diagnosed with the Covid virus but fortunately recovered after treatment. However, he suffered severe and recurring headaches: a subsequent brain scan revealed a large brain tumour which posed an immediate threat to his life.

He was referred to an excellent hospital in Trivandrum (the capital of Kerala, a neighbouring state), and was admitted there for surgery. This was performed successfully on 29 June, and since then he has made gradual progress, though it will take a long time until he recovers completely. Happily, his mental capacities are not impaired, and he has returned to work with his commitment and drive undiminished.

To cover the medical costs, several FMS members made contributions to a "medical fund" (some very substantial) and I thank them sincerely for their support, as do Elaa and Karthik.

Since Karthik may well have further medical expenses in 2022, *Friends of Madurai Seed* has now established an annual "medical fund" (to which donors can contribute) - it aims to provide a fund of CHF 1,200 per annum, to be drawn on by Karthik as necessary over the year. We hope that this will provide a measure of reassurance and security to Karthik and Elaa.

Despite these emergencies, there were some bright spots. This newsletter provides an overview of the year, and I've also included the end of 2021 balance sheet prepared by Martin, our Treasurer, as an appendix.

As you may recall from last year's annual newsletter, all government schools and colleges in Tamil Nadu were closed in March 2020. On 1 September 2021, years 9-12 and colleges reopened, but years 1-8 remained closed until 1 November 2021. However, schools and colleges closed again on 3 January 2022.

As you can see, local children had no official schooling for 20 months, and teenagers for 18 months. As a result, many lost their motivation, routine, and learning habits - and also forgot some of what they had learned before the crisis struck. In addition, some dropped out altogether and began working instead, as their families were desperately short of money.

In contrast, *Madurai Seed* continued to offer both regular classes and distance learning for all levels, with appropriate precautions, along with a programme of cultural and educational events. It also distributed some funds to 125 children to help encourage their families to keep them enrolled and attending evening classes. In this way, *Madurai Seed* once again persuaded parents of the benefits of education, a major aim of the project.

Throughout the year, *Madurai Seed* provided essential educational and social support to its youngsters, who would otherwise have had no schooling or cultural and social activities at all for well over a year.

Once again, thanks to the great generosity of some individual donors, *FMS* has been able to sponsor a total of 12 college students for the 2021-2022 academic year. Ten BA students received funding for their degree courses, while two BEd students will complete the second of their two-year post-graduate courses to become teachers. We are extremely grateful for these sizeable donations, which will change the lives and prospects of these young people. Thank you once again.

On another note, I have been running weekly Zoom classes with Elaa and Arun since September 2020 to help develop their teaching competencies, as well as improve their language proficiency and writing

skills. Laura and I were unable to visit Madurai Seed in February 2021, owing to the pandemic, and we shall not be able to travel there this coming February either. We hope to return in 2023.

You can read and download *Madurai Seed's* extremely detailed and fully-illustrated annual report for 2020-2021 from the **Downloads** page on the *FMS* web site. Our web site also hosts a **News** page, where you can keep up to date on a monthly basis with developments at *Madurai Seed*.

Once again, the Committee of *Friends of Madurai Seed* joins me in thanking you for your continued support and donations over the past year, and we hope that we can continue to count on your support in 2022. I have enclosed a copy of our updated brochure should you wish to pass it on to friends and acquaintances. You will notice that we have created a "Women's Fund" for members who wish to make donations dedicated to this aspect of *Madurai Seed's* work. You will also see that I have created a QR code for payments to our account, as traditional payment slips will be phased out in September 2022.

Without your help, none of the activities mentioned above could have taken place: the children and young people, the sponsored college students, the volunteer teachers, and the staff of *Madurai Seed* all thank you from the bottom of their hearts.

Finally, I wish you and your families and friends good health in the coming year, with the hope that 2022 will finally see an end to the pandemic, and a return to normal life.

With best wishes

John Potts, President, *Friends of Madurai Seed*  
[www.friendsofmaduraiseed.org](http://www.friendsofmaduraiseed.org)

Appendix: **end-of-year 2021** balance for *Friends of Madurai Seed*

### **Buchhaltung per 31. Dezember 2021**

Vermögen	
Eröffnung 01.01.21	<b>220'548.39</b>
Abschluss 31.12.21	<b>215'373.18</b>
<i>Reinverlust per 31.12.21</i>	<b><i>-5'175.21</i></b>
1 Ertrag	
<b>Total Gutschriften 2021</b>	<b>27'657.00</b>
- Beiträge und private Spenden	22'657.00
- Beiträge von Stiftungen	1,000.00
- KFR/KmS	4'000.00
- Zinsabschluss	0.00
2 Aufwand	
<b>Total Lastschriften 2021</b>	<b>32'832.21</b>
- Administration (Internet, Porti etc)	183.00
- Druck/Werbung	-
- Postkontoverwaltung	187.20
- Banküberweisung an Madurai Seed	32'462.01
- Ausgabe vor Ort (Madurai)	-
- Reisespesen Indien	-