

March 2023



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

After two very difficult years, 2022 saw the return to a degree of normality in Karumbalai and at *Madurai Seed*. The threat posed by Covid was significantly less, and Karthik made good progress after his operation in 2021. Although he still has some facial paralysis, his mental faculties are as sharp as ever, with no loss of speech or cognitive capacity. The medical fund that we established in 2022 was used to help to pay for therapy and other medical costs, and the fund will be continued for 2023. Karthik is extremely grateful for this assistance, and thanks everyone who has contributed to the fund.

2022 marked some very impressive developments at *Madurai Seed*. In addition to maintaining its successful programme of evening classes and extra-curricular activities, it has now become a resource hub for colleges in and around Madurai, who send students there to conduct their research through case studies, field trips, and internships. This is a remarkable development for a small and very localised NGO – it has become a peer partner with much larger (and prestigious) educational institutions, with both sides profiting mutually.

In September 2022, a group of pupils and their teachers from a leading international school in Kodaikanal (a hill station about 100 km north of Madurai) stayed for several days and took part in activities and classes with the *MS* youngsters. The visit was very successful, and is another example of the growing reputation of *Madurai Seed* in this part of Tamil Nadu.

Furthermore, *MS* also works with a Chennai-based IT company called *Infoview*, which has funded some community projects in Karumbalai, including getting families legally registered or finding them affordable accommodation. This connection was made possible through an ex-volunteer from *MS* who now works for *Infoview*. In this way, *Madurai Seed* is supporting some adults in the community, as well as their children.

Madurai Seed also continues to work with two other local NGOs: *Sevalayan Hostel*, which is home to 90 boys from the surrounding area and which runs a similar programme to *MS*, and *Kaleidoscope*, which organises and hosts creative and cultural events such as film, theatre and music performances.

Government schools and colleges in Tamil Nadu finally reopened in 2022, although the effects of almost two years with no face-to-face classes and extremely minimal distance-learning classes have been severe. Many children became completely unused to attending school at all, losing their motivation, discipline and learning habits. *Madurai Seed* continued to offer its regular classes for all levels, along with its programme of cultural and educational events. Gradually, levels of concentration have improved and classes are getting back to a normal routine once again.

In the academic year starting in mid-2022, *Madurai Seed* enrolled 225 learners (115 boys and 110 girls), of whom about 120 attend very regularly. Currently, there are 15 student volunteer teachers, and 2 alumni volunteer teachers. There are fifteen college-goers: 11 BAs, 1 BEd, 1 MPEd (physical education teacher) and two post-graduates, of whom twelve are girls. Five are 'scheduled caste', the accepted term for Dalit, the lowest of the low.

In 2022, all the children in 10th, 11th and 12th standards passed their Government Board examinations. Once again, thanks to the great generosity of some individual donors, *FMS* has been able to sponsor a total of 14 college students for the 2021-2022 academic year. Twelve BA students received funding for their degree courses, while two BEd students completed 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 and their families. Thank you once again. In July 2022, I hosted a Zoom

meeting for *MS* staff, some volunteers, and donors who have supported BEd students. This enabled the donors to meet “their” students and it was a very happy event. We plan to organise another this year.

My weekly Zoom classes with Elaa and Arun which began in September 2020 are still taking place: these training sessions help develop their teaching and language competencies. Arun successfully completed his MA in English in 2022, and Elaa will complete her MEd in 2023.

No visits to *Madurai Seed* were possible in 2022 owing to the Covid situation in India, but I was able to go this year from 29 January to 9 February, and it was a great pleasure to meet Karthik, Elaa, Arun and everyone else in person once again after an absence of three years. Elaa, Arun and I had daily training sessions during which we worked on teaching skills and ways of using some online resources. Overall, I was very impressed by the developments outlined above, and also by the new intake of volunteer teachers, who were very motivated and self-confident. I ran three training classes and a practical workshop with them and students from 11th and 12th standards on “how to present yourself at interviews”. One very impressive outcome was learning their career ambitions, especially those of the girls: they aspire to be maths teachers, microbiologists, botanists, accountants, IT specialists, engineers and police officers.

You can read and download *Madurai Seed's* extremely detailed and fully-illustrated annual report for 2021-2022 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 2023. I have attached a copy of our brochure should you wish to pass it on to friends and acquaintances. You will see that we have a QR code for payments to our account, as traditional payment slips have been phased out.

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 send their profound thanks.

I've included the end of 2022 balance sheet prepared by Martin, our Treasurer, as an appendix.

An online Annual General Meeting will be held via Zoom on 11 November at 17.00: you'll be informed by e-mail of how to attend. Please do send us your e-mail address if you haven't already done so. Our revised statutes will be presented for approval, to be voted on by those who made donations in 2022.

Finally, I wish you and your families and friends good health in the coming year, with the hope that 2023 will be a peaceful and happy one.

With best wishes

John Potts

John Potts, President, *Friends of Madurai Seed*
www.friendsofmaduraiseed.org
john@johnpotts.org

Appendix: **end-of-year 2022** balance for *Friends of Madurai Seed*

Buchhaltung per 31. Dezember 2022

Vermögen	
Eröffnung 01.01.22	215'373.18
Abschluss 31.12.22	214'740.31
<i>Reinverlust per 31.12.22</i>	<i>-632.87</i>
1 Ertrag	
Total Gutschriften 2022	26'167.00
- Beiträge und private Spenden	19'467.00
- Beiträge von Stiftungen	6'700.00
- KFR/KmS	0.00 (2021 bereits überwiesen)
- Zinsabschluss	0.00
2 Aufwand	
Total Lastschriften 2022	26'799.87
- Administration (Internet, Porti etc)	117.00
- Druck/Werbung	576.25
- Postkontoverwaltung	338.62
- ZKB Kontogebühren	14.00
- Banküberweisung an Madurai Seed	25'754.00
- Ausgabe vor Ort (Madurai)	-
- Reisespesen Indien	-