

April 2024



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

Throughout 2023, *Madurai Seed* consolidated and developed its activities. In the **academic year starting in mid-2023**, *Madurai Seed* enrolled 190 learners (102 boys and 88 girls), of whom about 120 attend regularly. Currently (2023-2024), there are 22 student volunteer teachers, and 2 alumni volunteer teachers. There are 17 college-goers: 13 BAs and 4 B Eds, of whom twelve are girls.

Once again, thanks to the great generosity of some individual donors, *FMS* was able to sponsor a total of 17 college students for the **2022-2023 academic year**. 15 BA students received funding for their degree courses, while two B Ed 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 immeasurably. Thank you all.

In summer 2023, all the children in 10th, 11th and 12th standards passed their Government Board examinations. During the year, *Madurai Seed* supported 120 especially needy children in their school studies (books, stationery etc).

In July 2023, I hosted another Zoom meeting for *MS* staff, some volunteers, and donors who have supported B Ed students. This happy event enabled the donors to meet “their” students. We plan to organise another later this year. My weekly Zoom meetings with Elaa and Arun, which began in 2020, are still taking place: these sessions help to develop their teaching and language skills. Elaa also completed her M Ed during the year.

On a different front, *Madurai Seed* organised a “Medical Camp” for 500 children: one was for *Madurai Seed* children, and the other two for local children from Karumbalai. The camps tested their eyesight, and 50 children received glasses as a result. It also organised a cricket tournament for local youngsters, to help make them aware of *Madurai Seed*. It was a success (although *Madurai Seed* didn’t win!) as over 300 youngsters took part.

There were numerous other events: a 5-day summer camp in May for 85 children and teenagers, a food festival in October (25 recipes with 25 groups of students), a celebration of womanhood in November, and many other social and cultural events.

Throughout 2023, the collaboration continued between *Madurai Seed* and colleges in and around Madurai, who send students to conduct their research through case studies, field trips, and internships. Thiagarajar College of Arts & Sciences sent 15 of its undergraduates for a 15-day internship at *Madurai Seed*, and interns also came from the American College in Madurai. *Madurai Seed* also continued its work with two other local NGOs: *Sevalayan Hostel*, which is home to 110 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.

In October 2023, *Madurai Seed* was inspected and approved by FCRA auditors in order to continue to have permission to receive funding from abroad – without this approval, overseas funding such as ours is impossible. (FCRA = Foreign Contribution Regulation Act.) The officials were very impressed by *Madurai Seed*, not least because it actually uses the foreign funding for the stated purposes! The approval is valid for five years.

I returned to Madurai for a two-week visit **this year from 26 January to 9 February**: Elaa, Arun and I had several training sessions during which we worked on teaching skills and ways of using reading resources. Once again, I ran three training classes and this time two practical workshops with the volunteers and some students on “Reading for Entertainment” and “Reading for Knowledge”.

You can read and download *Madurai Seed's* extremely detailed and fully-illustrated **annual report for 2022-2023** from the **Downloads** page on the *FMS* web site. Our web site also hosts a **News** page, where you can keep up to date with developments at *Madurai Seed*.

The new building being funded through a GoFundMe initiative set up by *FMS* members Nick, Maggi and Keith, has successfully raised the CHF 27,000 target. The main structure is already complete (foundations, walls, roof etc) but the interior still needs to be finished (plastering, floor tiling, sanitary and electrical installations etc). Although funding this project is not part of the core business of *FMS*, we are very appreciative of this initiative.

Karthik has made more progress after his brain surgery in 2021, but had to have a further check-up at the hospital in Trivandrum as a scan had revealed another small lesion in the brain. Thankfully, the specialists there confirmed that there was no immediate danger or need for further procedures: they will monitor him every six months. The medical fund that we established in 2022 was again used in 2023 to help to cover his medical costs, and it has also been made available for 2024. Karthik and Elaa are extremely grateful for this assistance, and thank everyone who has contributed to the fund.

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 2024. We are updating our brochure, which will be available for download as pdf. You will see that we have a QR code for payments to our account, as traditional payment slips have been phased out. Please note my **new e-mail address**: johnpotts@johnpotts.info

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 heartfelt and profound thanks.

I have included the end of 2023 balance sheet prepared by Martin, our Treasurer, as an appendix.

An online Annual General Meeting will be held via Zoom on **Wednesday 29 May 2024 at 7pm**: you'll be informed by e-mail beforehand of how to attend. On this occasion, our revised statutes will be presented for approval, to be voted on by those who made donations in 2023. The process of revising our statutes has been a lengthy one, so I apologise for the delay. **Important: if you wish to participate we need your e-mail address, so please e-mail us beforehand to inform us that you would like to attend: johnpotts@johnpotts.info**

Finally, I wish you and your families and friends good health and happiness in the coming year.

With best wishes

John Potts

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Appendix: **end-of-year 2023** balance for *Friends of Madurai Seed*

Buchhaltung per 31. Dezember 2023

Vermögen

Eröffnung 01.01.23	214'740.31
Abschluss 31.12.23	221'347.05
<i>Vermögenszuwachs per 31.12.2023</i>	<i>6606.74</i>
<i>Vermögenszuwachs abzgl. GoFundMe</i>	<i>3604.00</i>

1 Ertrag

Total Gutschriften 2023	42'816.51
- Beiträge und private Spenden	23'775.00
- Beiträge von Stiftungen	1000.00
- KFR/SfT	5000.00 (inkl. Nachzahlung)
- Zinsabschluss	-
- GoFundMe	13'041.51

2 Aufwand

Total Lastschriften 2023	36'209.77
- Administration (Internet, Porti etc)	1176.00
- Druck/Werbung	399.00
- Postkontoverwaltung	138.00
- ZKB Kontogebühren	42.00
- Banküberweisung an Madurai Seed	22'921.00
- Ausgabe vor Ort (Madurai)	-
- Reisespesen Indien	1495.00
- GoFundMe	10'038.77