**A Distinct and Unique Education in Bangalore**

**Luis Boudret concludes his site visits in India at the Parikrma School**

We arrived in Bangalore, a city full of trees and gardens, and perhaps the city with the most order when driving (I did not mention that driving in India is truly chaotic and challenging. Most people walk on the streets, thousands of bikes and mopeds move without any order, and even animals are common in most boulevards and streets within the city limits).

The Parikrma Foundation operates in this city. They have four schools (k-12) within slum areas of the town and a Junior College (school preparing students for skill training programs and professional university careers). The system of education they utilize in those schools is very distinct, unique and compelling. It is a mixture of Montessori and their system. It has a very efficient format for learning and a success rate of graduation above 95%, which is much better than the national average of 8-24%. Most students come from slum areas and, therefore, are migrants from different states, for which the Foundation implemented all English education. This favors their students, as most higher education is done in English.

The system was introduced to some public schools in the area after great success with the support of the local government. The children we met are very confident and well-educated, a distinct difference from other schools visited in India. Although they keep some common Indian customs, primarily due to space, of sitting children on the floors during the early years of school, older children have desks. The school visited has modern equipment in labs, video communication for class interactions and classes taught for mental, physical, emotional and psychological development. They also teach the children to support the community through opportunities like cleaning the little lake in the neighborhood, protecting street dogs, supporting issues at slums, assisting other people in need, etc.

These schools are truly remarkable. Children in India do not interact with adults, but not at Parikrma, where children are always assigned to take us through the facilities and coordinate presentations. Children Incorporated sponsorship supports one of the hostels where children attending these schools live.

Their families cannot afford to take them to school daily, or they may live too far from the school, so they solicit that their child live in the hostel. The hostel is for girls only, and it is also very different from others visited, as the Foundation has rented a private residence near the school and has arranged for the children to live a family life here, with cooperation from all for the upkeep of the house, and the place is genuinely well kept. The children appreciate this opportunity because they live under challenging circumstances with their own family and in a slum area, where housing is under standards and very poor.

CI support is added to Foundation support so the children receive this special housing, adequate nutrition per their needs and exceptional education support. Then, I was sent to a particular school and paid very little or no fees to attend. The support also includes clothing, shoes, health, opportunities for recreation, learning and participation in the support given to any projects taken by the Foundation and the school. This cost is over $50-60, but the CI contributions are a great relief by covering much of this cost. It is truly delightful to participate in such a program. They also keep the CI program current because of the up-to-date technology they utilize. Records are always presented and when missing, a quick contact and we get the information requested. There was interest in building a school some years back, but the prohibited cost has put that on the back burner. They asked if we could increase the sponsorship a bit, and their request was heard, as CI went up by $5 on sponsorship, which will provide incredible support to this unique children and program in India.