

Center for Promoting Justice and Peace Located in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India

How it began

In 2017 I spent a hiatus in the south of India - I wanted to try my hand at “development aid.” During my stay there I met the couple Thanraj and Vini, grassroots workers and social activists. Their work and dedication impressed and inspired me.

I accompanied Thanraj and Vini in their work with the Adivasis (Indigenous people), a neglected people in India existing outside of the caste system. Geographically the villages lie in the States of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

What came of it

- The belief that small organizations are capable of creating great change in poor countries.
- That the Adivasis in India are a “voiceless people” and receive more extreme injustices and humiliation than the Untouchables, going forgotten and requiring support.
- That I met the right people in India: Humans on-site with values following the traditions of Paolo Freire and Mahatma Gandhi; representing the basic idea of empowerment of education and minimal need for monetary assistance.
- That Thanraj and Vini, with their backgrounds (lawyer and social worker), ideals, and experience, are the ideal partners .
- That, in Switzerland, I'm looking for support from within my family and circle of friends.
- And the confidence that we, together, can work towards a more just world!

Where do we stand today?

Back in Switzerland I found people who wanted to assist the project “Center for Promoting Justice and Peace” by donating once or regularly. The target number for donations is Fr. 15'000 per year.

For the sustainable development of the village continued assistance, both financial and non-material from many is required. I am grateful for every kind of support we receive.

After 5 years, on November 25, I will once again return to India to visit the villages.

Projects

5 Projects

For Adivasis and marginalized groups

Region: Pollachi and surrounding area

Timeframe: 2018-2028

Strategic Planning: Thanraj & Vini, Center for Justice and Peace, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu

Project 1: Basic Life Education and School Education

Project 2: Livelihood - training for women

Project 3: Health and Nutrition

Project 4: Promotion of Culture

Project 5: Land Rights & Housing Rights

- **Roughly 150 Villages belonging to Adivasis and Daltis** find themselves within the geographical target location (border region between Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu)
- **Development and implementation in a timeline of 5-10 years.** The project and estimated expenditures within the budget are described in the Link.
A large milestone was the inauguration of the “Center for Promoting Justice and Peace” in January 2019, made possible by the donations coming from Switzerland: A small meeting area in Pollachi for the Adivasis, that require assistance, be it information, support for claiming land rights, hygiene education, and evening classes.
- Thanraj and Vini have provided their voluntary pioneer work to 20 villages between 2018-2022. They serve as “pilot villages” and are great role models! The focus is on “awareness training”: training for education, hygiene, health, nutrition, rights.
- Estimated costs per calendar year: Fr. 15'000.00
Help was guaranteed in the years 2018-2022. Yearly documentation supports the work done so far.

Thanraj (pronounced Tanratsch) **and Vini** are the on-site project leaders and are my contacts. They both speak English and are loving humans, tireless in their dedication to equality and peace.

Thanraj, lawyer, as per the still functioning caste system belongs to the “Untouchables” and was able to study law with the help of a scholarship. He is from Tamil Nadu.

Vini, social worker, is an Adivasi from Coorg, benefiting from her father, Mhutappa, being able to free himself from slavery, and who later on put everything into making sure his children didn't stay illiterate. Vini was then later able to study social work with the help of a scholarship, due to her skill in sports (as a former jungle girl).

Together they are a pioneer couple, both with their connection and how they work together in their understanding of and initiating further volunteer village developments - balancing the preservation of cultural traditions with the needs of the people and villages to provide development with dignity.