



Le Don du Chœur

Chœur d'Enfants des Écoles Privées Genevoises



HIGHLIGHTS

Special Madagascar event in Geneva, 28 March

Geneva private schools

The Great Dictation proves a learning and humanitarian success

Andohasatra-Betioky, Madagascar

First six months of our primary school

- 360 children registered
- Classrooms full
- Nutrition improved

Ta Pen, Cambodia

- 3rd school building opens
- IT classroom operational
- Angkor Marathon success

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New Madagascar school already full Children on waiting list for next year

Every morning since 17 October 2016, a small miracle takes place at Andohasatra-Betioky, in the semi-arid deep south of Madagascar – hundreds of children, who never thought they would have the chance to go to school, line up at the smart new building to start their classes.

In this hungry part of the world the search for food takes priority over everything else. Those who could go to school had to walk 25 kilometres a day to reach their classrooms. Now, thanks to Don du Chœur and its supporters, a new building with 12 teachers is on their doorstep.

After the school opened it quickly reached its maximum capacity

of 360 children, boys and girls in equal numbers – remarkable in itself. About 100 children are on the waiting list for places next year.

For the first school year, two-thirds of the children are in the maternity classes and in the first level of primary, in two classrooms packed with more than 100 children. The remaining third are spread over the other four primary levels, each in its own classroom.

The first few days had their own difficulties. The children had to learn to answer to their family name, to recognise their teachers and find their way round the school. They had no problem locating the canteen – that special place where you get a plate of rice and red beans simply by being



School: food for minds and tummies!

“present”! This is a vital part of the project for these children suffering from severe malnutrition because of the ongoing drought.

As the school approaches its six-month anniversary, a reorganisation of the classrooms is underway. The teachers are keen even if they live some distance away. The Betioky School District is proud of the school, which it aims to make a success of, with the support of the regional office of the Education Ministry. Some local women are developing income-generating activities, with the help of our local partner SOS Villages d'Enfants Madagascar. Andohasatra is coming to life and their families are overjoyed.



Some of the children have learning difficulties linked to malnutrition

The Great Dictation: almost all pupils sponsored at Andohasatra-Betioky!

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of pupils and their teachers at eight Geneva private schools, nearly 340 of the 360 children enrolled at the Don du Chœur school in south Madagascar are now sponsored for their daily meals, uniforms and school supplies for the first year. This amounts to CHF 10 per day per child.

The money was raised through a series of sponsored dictations on the theme of Madagascar. The idea came from an initiative launched in 2013 by the Ecole Brechbühl, one of the participating schools.

Grateful acknowledgements to the children, parents and teachers

at Brechbühl and at the Ecole Eden, Ecole en Musique, Institut Florimont, La Découverte, Geneva English School and to the Lycée Toepffer and Ecole des Nations for their supporting initiatives. Any surplus will be put towards further training of the 12 teachers.



The Great Dictation at its simplest form, in the hands of a four-year-old at Ecole Brechbühl

The event on 28 March

Friends, volunteers and donors involved in the Madagascar project will gather at La Broche restaurant in Geneva on Tuesday 28 March at 7pm. Join us for a relaxed evening of music and friendship and to learn more about the successes and challenges of this exciting project. Sign up at:

 events@don-du-choeur.ch

Charity walk

A Belgo-Swiss couple are planning a charity walk to aid Don du Chœur projects. This summer they and their children, accompanied by friends, will set out from Knokke le Zoute on the Belgian coast to Geneva, a distance of some 800 kms.

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THE CAMBODIA PROJECT

The third school building adds a new dimension to Ta Pen

With its 17 State-sponsored teachers and 550 enrolled pupils – twice as many as when it opened in 2010 – the primary and secondary school establishment at Ta Pen has become a major educational centre in the region.

Educational quality is at the heart of the story, with the aim of offering these isolated "country kids" the same chances as their city cousins. The challenge has been to attract teachers to work in a country school. In Ta Pen, unlike at other state schools, they have teaching materials at hand and work in

classes that are limited to 35 children (instead of the more usual 70). But this requires more teaching space...

The Fondation Coromandel, which has supported the Ta Pen project for six years, grasped the need and agreed to finance the construction of a third school building. At the same time, Geneva's public utilities agency (SIG) has equipped the building with solar panels. In this learning centre the pupils seek to open up to the outside world through their reading, English and IT classes.



30 December 2016: the third building is inaugurated in the presence of Françoise Ferrazzini-Oppliger of the Fondation Coromandel



At the centre's inauguration on 30 December 2016, in the presence of local authorities and in tribute to the Fondation Coromandel, speakers warmly expressed their thanks, in French and Khmer. Thanks were also given to Chamrong LO, director of Don du Choeur Cambodia, who organised and oversaw the work. The achievement of opening up a centre such as this, to develop skills of both the children and their teachers, would have seemed an impossible dream even three years ago.



The school library, with its 1,300 books, opens a new world to these children who have no books at home and whose parents cannot read

Angkor Marathon 2016

Footie feat leads to footwear favour

Hats off to Tanguy and Jérôme of the Collège Sismondi in Geneva for organising a football tournament that raised CHF 1,000 to enable children from Ta Pen to run in the 2016 Angkor Marathon. The money covered the enrolment fees and new running shoes for 43 children and 12 teachers.

The Ta Pen team were among 9,000 runners, both foreigners and Cambodians, and did well. Over the 3-kilometre course they came first in the girls' group and third among the boys. In the 10-km course, six boys figured among the top 100.

Ta Pen wants Jérôme and Tanguy to come and run with them next year!



Arrival of two Ta Pen runners, happy to have got round the 3km course

Your donation will help us help these communities

Don du Choeur

Swiss non-profit association, tax-deductible since 2008

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IT room equipped by Sagemcom

Ta Pen school was visited in December by a group of 20 staff from the Paris-based telecommunications group Sagemcom.

Enjoying an incentive trip for employees, they arrived with 20 laptops which they installed in a network in the new IT room, adding to the 14 already in place. They trained the pupils in their use.

The operation was a huge success. The experience allowed the children of Ta Pen to form a positive view of people from the business world, serious but kind, who enjoyed football and Khmer dance just as much as IT.

A big thank-you from the pupils! The IT room is in constant use and a young specialist teacher is on hand to continue the training.



With the 20 brought by Sagemcom, the new IT room now has 34 laptops



The Sagemcom trainer explaining the mysteries of the internet

PARTNERS

Geneva Association of Private Schools, Brolliet SA, ConnectSwiss, Community Outreach Centres, Fondation Coromandel, SIG, SOS Villages d'Enfants Madagascar, Vaovy La Fondation.