

In 2016-2017 steunde het WwF een project in India. Met een bedrag van € 3000 kon de Anita Methodist School in Chennai, Tamilnadu Montessori materiaal aanschaffen en leraren trainen in het werken met deze materialen. Na afloop ontvingen wij het volgende verslag.

For the Love of Math

Chennai, India
3 July, 2017

A famous Tamil poet-to-be, while young, was asked by his teacher what he thought of Mathematics (or *Kanakku*, in Tamil). He nonchalantly replied, “kanakku, manakku, aamanakku...” which loosely translated, meant something like “mathematics, problematics, bittermedics.” Though it displayed the young kid’s love for word play and rhyme, it became a banner cry for Maths-haters for generations including the ones in Anita Methodist School now.

Part of the problem was how Mathematics was being presented to the students in school, in most schools. With unimaginative blackboard methods Mathematics was being shoved down uninterested throats in monotonous classes. In 2016-17, thanks to the grant from the World Mathematical Foundation in Netherlands (represented by Mr Wim Kuipers) we set about correcting that.

After much research, we picked on the Montessori methods and tools to be brought into the curriculum. Look at some of these tools in the pictures attached. Expert trainers from the Montessori Institute trained our teachers over many sessions in the right usage of the tools and techniques. With a host of simple yet innovative material, we began helping students *DISCOVER* Mathematics concepts themselves instead of the teachers explaining to them. Math classes were suddenly more engaging, thought provoking and exciting. As one teacher put it, “students were now able to visualize and grasp Mathematical concepts instead of merely mugging up formulae.”



We could use these methods among classes 3 to 8. The response from the students was very encouraging. The material helped them comprehend abstract concepts. Mathematics at school is slowly becoming fun and not a set of complicated rules.



At the beginning of every year we open about 15 clubs for student enrolment. This year the Maths Club was suddenly overflowing with requests. Like the other popular Clubs, now we could take in a maximum of 70 (35 juniors and 35 seniors). Where in the previous years students thought Math club is boring, they now like to experiment with the colourful material.

We thank the World Mathematical Foundation and Mr Kuipers for the thoughtful gifts. What you have set in motion, we hope to take forward in the years to come.

