

# Enfants des Etoiles

Une école pour enfants  
avec autisme & trisomie 21

OU Taaro ke Bacche

à Varanasi (Inde)

तारों के बच्चे



## Newsletter - March 2020

### News from the Association in Geneva

**We apologize that you are receiving this March Newsletter a bit late!**

It was difficult for Marie-Françoise (founder and president of Taaro ke Bacche) to take the decision to return to Geneva even though the school was closed. However, she decided to leave Benares because she felt the need to be with her family in Geneva in these troubling times.



The Geneva association continued functioning in Marie-Françoise's absence.

**Mr. Joseph Hayoz** accepted the responsibility for the administration of the association and organised the Swiss accounting for 2019 with Comptabilis (an accountancy firm for Geneva non-profit organisations). The accounts will be presented at the AGM in May 2020.



Aryan & Marie-Françoise  
Photo © Surya Baudet

**Mrs. Inès Deville** wishes to resign from her post as secretary of the committee for professional reasons. We take this opportunity to extend to her our sincere thanks for her contribution. **Mrs. Ena Singh** will take over this responsibility in the committee.

The following persons will stand for election to the new committee at the AGM:

**Mrs. Marie-Françoise Bisson**, President  
**Mrs. Patricia Bell**, Vice-president  
**Mrs. Ena Singh**, Secretary  
**Mrs. Solange Demole**, Member  
**Mrs. Jhilmil Bahl**, Member  
**Mr. Joseph Hayoz**, Member

**Mrs. Corinne Grand** has been very successful in her continued search for funding from the Geneva communes (municipalities).

We extend heartfelt thanks to our generous donors: Mrs. Solange Demole, Mrs. Anne Senouci, Chantal Fabre and family, the Hope Association and its members, the Geneva communes of Bellevue, Perly-Certoux, Dardagny, Russin, Cologny and Vandoeuvres.

Before returning to Benares in October 2019 Marie-Françoise had applied to the organisation, Genève Ville Solidaire, for funding for a period of 3 years to set up an Early Intervention Programme for autistic children aged 3 to 7, and their mothers. On March 11 we received a positive reply from them.



### **Thank you once again to all our other faithful donors.**

The search for public or private funds is a major part of the activities of Marie-Françoise and the committee. All suggestions of new contacts will be most welcome.

This year 2020 we will be partners in the event known as "THE MEAL" which will take place at the Parc des Bastions in Geneva on 26 and 27 September, together with Alternatiba ([alternatiba.eu](http://alternatiba.eu)), to welcome the Jai Jagat international march ([www.jaijagat2020.org](http://www.jaijagat2020.org)). This enormous international march left New Delhi on 2 October 2019 and is expected to arrive in Geneva on 26 September 2020 (Covid-19 pandemic permitting). Its aim is to promote justice and peace. We will have a stand and one or two tables.

## Life at school in Benares

### **Events that took place before the Covid-19 pandemic**

Several cultural and sporting events took place in October and November 2010. On these occasions Marie-Françoise was thanked warmly for her commitment and the school was awarded congratulatory gifts, as is the custom in India.

- In November, Marie-Françoise was invited by a close friend in Benares to give a presentation on Taaro ke Bacche at a Hindu devotional music concert in Lucknow. At the end of the concert a collection was made on behalf of the project. It was a great success.
- On 29 November Taaro ke Baache had a visit from a homeopathic doctor and politician in the Indian government. He and Marie-Françoise had a lively and fruitful discussion. He suggested to Marie-Françoise that Taaro ke Baache could serve as a model for the Indian government. The visit lasted several hours, especially since Taaro ke Bacche was also celebrating Marie-Françoise's birthday on that day!



Hindu devotional music concert in Lucknow

- In mid-December 2019 Surya Baudet, a photographer from Chêne-Bourg (Geneva), made a 5-day visit to Taaro ke Baache. She took superb photographs of the kids, for which we are most grateful. (See our website.)



Visit from the homeopathic doctor and politician



Finally a new bus ! Our Tata Winger

- On 2 February 2020 we organised a training day for the staff of the school, the theme of which was personal development: "Personal motivation, self-respect, trust and communication between colleagues".

- On 10 February we finalised the purchase of the second mini-bus, financed mainly by the Lord Michelham of Hellingly Foundation. After numerous hassles following the new regulations concerning school buses and their use in traffic, we opted for a 9-seater Tata Winger.

- At the end of February we organised a 3-day seminar for the Taaro ke Bacche staff and 2 external professionals on the theme of Early Intervention for children aged between 3 and 7 years with autism. The speaker was Indrani Basu of "Action for Autism" in Delhi. This seminar is part of the Early Intervention project funded by Genève Ville Solidaire, mentioned above.



Seminar about early intervention with Indrani Basu



## Good news for the future

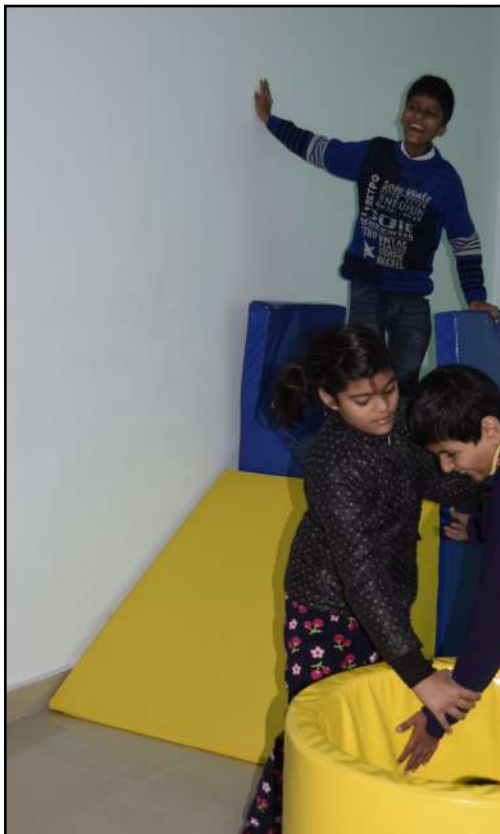
**Taaro ke Baache has now acquired a certain reputation:** a child with severe autism was referred to Marie-Françoise by the "National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences" in Bangalore, a city in south India.

Furthermore, Marie-Françoise is also friendly with an Indian couple in Benares, both psychiatrists working in a government hospital. This collaboration helps to provide early diagnosis of diagnose autism and Down's syndrome and care to the families at Taaro ke Baache. This type of collaboration is one of the aims of our project, "Children of the Stars", i.e. **to promote understanding of autism in the community in Benares.**



Angel, Manu & Aryan - Photo © Surya Baudet

More good news - in early March a new opportunity arose for a project involving the **creation of a gluten- and casein-free bakery** providing adolescents with special needs with training in this field.



Angel, Manu & Aryan  
Photo © Surya Baudet

We plan to cooperate with the "Learn for Life Empowerment Project", an NGO whose aim is to offer young needy persons free training and employment at the "Brown Bread Bakery", a bakery providing organic and sustainable items. This company, founded by Michael Schmid from Germany, has existed in Benares and Delhi for over 20 years. It funds its own school for 150 children from the slums in Benares. Thus, young persons with developmental problems can be integrated into an "ordinary" team.

Together with other centres for children with special needs, we had also started preparing for World Autism Awareness Day (2 April). The programme included a Round Table at which it was planned to launch an association of parents of children with autism in Benares.

**For Taaro ke Bacche all has not come to a stand-still with the pandemic !!!**

Even though schools were closed on 16 March, that Marie-Françoise left Benares on 20 March, and that the quarantining of the population was decreed by the Indian government on 24 March, we felt it was important that our specialised educators, the psychologist, the manager and Marie-Françoise remain in touch with families so as to offer them support and encouragement to organise activities with their children at home, so we set up a plan together with the parents. Contacts are maintained by Whatsapp and email.

Marie-Françoise is very grateful to note that both parents and professionals are highly motivated.

This is also an opportunity for everyone to become more accustomed to using the computer and computer networks for communication, and to get help with installing the TeamViewer application.

### *A few more photographs of life in Benares*

All following photographs © **Surya Baudet**

You can also visit her website here: <https://suryabinath.blogspot.com/>



Nishu



Manu & Om



Manu



Visit from Aryan's family



Kushagra & Mamta



Kartik



Kushagra & his brother



**Our websites:**

[www.enfantsdesetoiles.ch](http://www.enfantsdesetoiles.ch)

[www.taarokebacche.in](http://www.taarokebacche.in)



Aryan,  
Angel  
& Om