

Report of activities, 2020 -21

Prepared by the Secretary of the Ramuni Paniker Trust for the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees due online on March 24th, 2021

This 2020-21 year has been very atypical due to the Covid19 pandemic which has restricted mobility all over and kept schools and colleges closed during the entire year, teaching has been done online and exams partly presential. We have maintained contact with all our partners and discussed the situation concerning our sponsored students.

1. Board of Trustees. The annual meeting has been called on March 24th under the presidency of Rema Radhakrishnan to review the year's activities, this time it will be held online as travel is restricted. The secretary expresses his thanks for the continued support of the trustees and recognizes the valuable help of Sreekala Devi (assistant to the Board).

2. Ramuni Paniker Scholarship Programme. Considering the disruption in the higher education system provoked by the Covid crisis, with students following online courses and little direct contact with teachers, we have only granted those scholarships in which cases we have received proper follow-up documentation. This applies to students supervised by Rajagiri Outreach and local students under direct supervision of trustees. In the cases of Cooperative College (Olavakode) and NSSKPT Vocational Higher School (Ottapalam) no proper follow-up documentation was received, hence this year the scholarship programme is waived and it will be re-evaluated in the coming academic year.

In total the Trust is supporting 33 students (compared to 60 last year), of these only 5 are new to the programme, and 7 only are boys. Since the whole evaluation procedure has been retarded, scholarships are given towards the end of the academic year, in the course of the month of March. Scholarships amount to 5/6 thousand rupees per student, total expense is 2,11 lakhs (including 16 thousand administrative fee from Rajagiri Outreach).

Rajagiri Outreach: Out of the 31 students sponsored last year, we renew 23 and add 5 new students. They are from all over Kerala, and we continue to support students (6) from Shoranur's Institute of Printing and Government Polytechnic College. In case a function can be organized to deliver the scholarships, trustee B. Jayaraj -who has supervised the evaluation process- will represent the Ramuni Paniker Trust. Cooperation with Rajagiri Outreach, under the direction of Ms. Meena Kuruvila (Project Director), manager Mr. Ranjith KU (in charge of the Higher Education Programme) is running smoothly.

Local students: After reviewing the situation of the 6 students sponsored last year, 5 have been renewed. An amount of Rs. 27.000 has been allocated.

| 3. Finance and administration: Expenditure year 2020/21 : | <u>Rupees</u> |
|--|----------------|
| Scholarship Programme: | 211.000 |
| RO: 168.000 + Local 27.000 | |
| + administrative charge and function : 16.000 | |
| Administration | 34.000 (14 %) |
| Assistant: 18.000 + Audit 7.000 | |
| + Trust registration renewal 5.000 + Misc. 4.000 | |
| T O T A L | <u>245.000</u> |

As a result of this very atypical year, this level of expenditure is 44% lower than last year's, resulting also in a bigger relative impact of the administrative expenses. The Trust income is generated by interest from fixed deposits and donations received from Mercedes Paniker's family and donors from Spain.

4. Intercultural exchange. The Trust is increasing its role as a facilitator of intercultural exchange activities between Kerala and Spain. In particular the following needs reporting:

- a. School-to-school programme. Following on the initial contact made by trustee J G Menon with the Principal of Gurukulam school at Alathur, a relationship has been established with Sant Ignasi school in Barcelona. Each school has identified a project leader (both English language teachers), and it is now envisaged to carry an exchange activity in year 21/22, from October'21 to February'22 according with the proposal made by the Ramuni Paniker Trust, which both schools highly value. It will involve around 100 students from each school (14-16 years old from 9th STD/2nd Secondary). In times of confinement, this type of parallel activity to the strict academic curricula is highly valued, and it also allows to develop specific academic competences (discover values of different cultures, geography and history, English language, digital communications).
- b. "Spain Aunty": this is an initiative of a few family members to produce a fiction film based on the real story of Mercedes Paniker and the Panikers. So far, a script writer (Pavithra Sreekumar) is helping find a producer wishing to undertake the project and we envisage a co-production with Spain. We also count on the advice of Anjali Menon who has been informed about the project although declined to direct herself. If the project progresses, we may ask the Board of Trustees to agree to devote some funds to it, as seed money to make it possible. It could become a very significant intercultural project.

The **Ramuni Paniker Trust Spain**, the delegation of the Ramuni Paniker Trust in Spain, acts as the connecting link between Spain and Kerala. Its president, Agustin Paniker, lectures regularly on issues related to India, in addition to his work as publisher (Kairós). It maintains links with the Malayalee Association in Barcelona, the Barcelona-India Business Club and other NGO,s working in either place with shared objectives.

In 2020 the Catalan government declared commemoration year of Mercedes Paniker to celebrate the centenary of her birth. Several activities were carried, including a video documentary, an exposition and the writing of her biography (to be published in 2021). Her relations with Kerala and the establishment of the Ramuni Paniker Trust in memory of her father, were highlighted throughout.

Albert Pelach Paniker
Secretary

March 19th, 2021



PS. On the 1st of May 21 we held online meeting with students receiving 20-21 scholarship from Rajagiri Outreach. Organized by Ranjith KU, was introduced by Meena Kuruville (RO Director), presented by Albert and Mar Pelach. Dr. Laksmikumari addressed a powerful message to the students, to love their country, to take care of other people following the example of Ramuni and Mercedes Paniker, and profit from Covid times to be more contemplative and read more books. All students introduced themselves. Following the meeting, RO proceeded, in the following days, to deliver the cheques and certificates to all 28 students.