

## **Report of Ms Lauterbach-Otto of Georg Kraus Foundation about her visit to the Mahadevi school in March 2019**

For more than 10 years, Detlev Gründel and the Mahadevi Association have been supporting Bina and Anupendra Acharya and their women's school in Patan. They call it a school but actually it is an apartment that has been hired to host about 20 to 30 women, aged 18 up to 80, who have never had the chance to attend a school to gain literacy and neither learn Arithmetic nor English. Anupendra is a teacher in a regular school and, as a volunteer, assists his wife as director in the women school and its teachers.

We experience a warm welcome. We do not intend to make it a longer stay but a delicious lunch has already been prepared for us. While dining with the women, we learn about their personal backgrounds and fates. That their families, the husbands especially, are not enthusiastic when the women come up with the idea of going to school. But by the time they understand that there is positive change, that the women can get minor jobs and make some money. This is convincing.

Like in adult education in other countries, the school offers all kind of information and other activities beside the regular lessons: a nurse comes regularly to give information about health topics like hygienics, birth control, gynaecological problems etc. Once in a while they have a meal together, a picnic, or they visit a temple or go on an excursion. This all strengthens the learning process and their community. Important to mention, according to Anupendra, that there is no pressure on the women, otherwise they would not come any more. Their conditions of life and family, their intellectual level and speed in learning are too divergent. This fact must be taken into consideration.

On our tour through the rooms we notice some sewing machines and are told that the women can learn sewing, too. One of them already works as an independent tailor.

Then we are led into the 'classroom' where, on the occasion of our visit, all the women crowd together on the benches and welcome us with a sincere smile. An English lesson is going on. We have a short talk, hand over little presents from Germany. On the farewell, an 80-year-old, the oldest one of the students, gives me a hug. She is an enthusiastic student and attends regularly.

All in all this is a small project, in any case worth the support it gets.

Gaby Lauterbach-Otto (ambassador of Georg Kraus Foundation)

Annotation of Detlef Gründel : The Georg Kraus Foundation has been supporting the sewing courses for years already.