



# Summer 2020 Updates on the Work

## TIG's NEW CAREER MENTOR PROJECT

For the past few years TIG has been thinking about how to best support our older students to encourage them to complete high school and enter work that can help elevate them out of poverty. We now have a cohort of ten students, two in Nowgong, three in Khajuraho and five in Varanasi, ages 12-17, who need that support. When the TIG group was in India in February, they interviewed each of the ten students about their interests and goals. There are big career aspirations among the group – artists, teachers, electricians, the medical field, the military and tax collectors. We then began researching career awareness programs in their schools and communities to see what resources were available locally. In Nowgong, the school offers a program. In Khajuraho we created an individual plan for each student. In Varanasi we couldn't find a local resource, but our tutor Roli has just completed an Antarang internship to teach career awareness workshops. TIG donated funding so she could improve her simple tutoring room by purchasing benches, tables and a whiteboard. Once the virus restrictions are lifted she can offer our students Saturday career workshops. Two TIG members have offered to become virtual mentors for the aspiring artists in the group, including selling the recent artwork done by one of our students. We're excited about this new project and will keep you posted on our progress!

## CAREER MENTOR PROJECT

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY AID APPEAL

### DONATION TO CORONAVIRUS FUND

The pandemic continues to ravage India, currently ranked 3rd in the world in coronavirus deaths. While some parts of the country have started to open after a lockdown that began March 25th, our families are still living in lockdown areas and unable to find work. Since March we've been sending each family a small bi-weekly stipend for food (a total of \$9,100.00 USD to date) and anticipate doing so until they can find work. Additionally, the May death of the grandfather in one of our Varanasi families has impacted our budget. TIG assisted the family by paying the extensive medical bills and helping with funeral expenses.

It's still unclear when schools will re-open. Most of them seem to be offering some form of online learning; however, most of our students have been unable to access classes because they don't have updated cellphones, laptops or wifi access. On a positive note, our parents, many who never attended school themselves, are very concerned about their children falling behind academically. TIG is also concerned, particularly for our older students and those who struggle in school. We're investigating low-cost ways to support them in the event the schools are closed much longer. [Please Donate Now!](#)

# SPOTLIGHT

## Learning in Nowgong

The [GCM Convent School](#) is a Catholic school in the town of Nowgong where one of our Khajuraho families now lives. When the family moved, we asked them to find a school and they selected GCM which three of their children, ages 15, 13 and 11, now attend. The school has been operating for 48 years and annually educates 1200 students from nursery school–12th grade. While the school is Catholic with 44 secular teachers and four teaching nuns, 99% of its students

are Hindu including our students. There are several reasons the parents chose CGM; their children can attend school there through 12th grade, it's within easy walking distance from their home so they can participate in its secondary extra-curricular program, and the school has a rigorous academic program that includes instruction in English. Additionally, we've recently discovered that high school students can take career awareness classes to expose them to possibilities after graduation, a program that can support our Mentoring Project.



*Father Justin,  
Manager of GCM  
Convent School*



GCM, like all schools in India, has been shuttered since April because of the virus. The school has recently begun to teach online classes and the family has somehow borrowed three cellphones so all three children can resume school.

*Sakshi works on a rangoli with her fellow classmates at GCM Convent School*



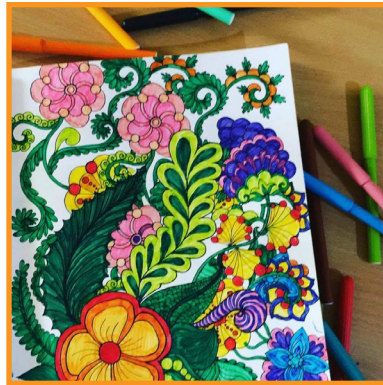


# Meet Sakshi Ahirwar



Fifteen- year-old Sakshi will be entering 10th grade at the GCM Convent School in Nowgong when the school year begins. We're particularly proud of Sakshi as TIG began supporting her when she was four years old. Back then we paid for her to go to pre-Kindergarten and today she's a high school student with the longest tenure of TIG support. Completing 10th grade is often the end goal for many Indian students in poverty who have to quit school to help their family or, if girls, become wives in arranged marriages.

A determined student and star athlete, Sakshi plans on graduating from 12th grade. She's captain of her school basketball team and was named best overall athlete at school last year. English and choir are her favorite subjects and in addition to her extra-curricular involvement in athletics, she belongs to an after- school choir group. TIG is also paying for a math tutor to help her in her weakest subject. Her career goal is to become an artist so individual TIG members are helping her explore that career with donations for art lessons through TIG's new Career Mentoring Project.



*Sakshi is trying her best to keep up with her art studies during the lockdown. Here are some samples of her work.*

