



Model Farm
The Green
Upper Poppleton
York
YO26 6DP
mail@projectmala.org.uk
www.projectmala.org.uk

Mala News

Patrons
Felicity Kendal CBE
Maharaja of Benares
Sir Mark Tully OBE
Lady Young
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An action programme for the elimination of child labour in rural India

Greetings!

Village life - 50°C heat in India

Recently our newspapers have been full of the heatwave in Europe where temperatures are said to be reaching mid 40°C. In India it is normally very hot in June but this year has set new records with temperatures regularly hitting 50°C. This has brought renewed problems for the running of our schools.

From the 11th May to the 30th June the Government ordered all schools to close due to the danger of children having to walk to school in the hot sun.

Our schools opened again on the 1st July but only in the early morning. The children start lessons at 6am and are on their way home by 11am. The picture shows how they protect themselves from the sun. The long summer closure will affect our children's learning too, as there will be less time to complete the curriculum for the all important Board exams next year. This is a big worry for Mukesh, the Headmaster of Project Mala schools, and his team.



The hot weather has even made the lorry drivers change their schedule. The GT (Grand Trunk) road, is near our schools and is the main east to west highway in India like Route 66 in the USA. It runs right across India for 2,700 kilometers (1,700 miles) from Chittagong in Bangladesh to Kabul in Afghanistan.

This is normally heavy with traffic but now it is deserted as the lorries travel overnight.



To add to the problems of the hot weather, it has not rained in our area since September 2018, so most of our wells are now dry. This drought is one of the five worst for the last 100 years.

The lack of water has been a challenge for the children to find water from wherever they can and bring it home for cooking and drinking. Our staff have also had to hire tankers to bring in water.



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Robin Garland
Project Mala
01904 341004
mail@projectmala.org.uk
www.projectmala.org.uk

