

German industrialist Thomas A Pallushek proves that compassion can cross continents. The corporate czar who came to expand his business is now on a mission to provide quality education to local children.

A different school of thought

“BACK home in Germany there are campaigns calling for prudence, to not waste money on firecrackers, but to donate instead to poverty relief efforts in India. But here I noticed there is so much consumption alongside immense poverty,” says industrialist Thomas A Pallushek. This is a telling indication of the business mogul’s transcontinental compassion, which is now taking root in Chennai with the first bilingual international school in Chennai, The Deutsche Schule Chennai.

Pallushek who moved to Chennai in January to expand his business, soon changed his mind, deciding that education in the developing world was more important. As he devised his plan to contribute to the betterment of our society, his experience came in handy. “I’ve had a lot of experience with education and professional training in the past, but adults are more difficult to teach. The German school will cultivate children’s personal strengths, to help give them a good direction in adult life,” says Pallushek.

He is a proponent of lifelong learning and shares, “Some people can memorize a textbook without really understanding the content, or knowing how to apply the information.”

The Deutsche Schule is unique in Chennai because it is not exclusively for expatriates — in fact, it aims to have 70 per cent of local children. “I don’t want to be arrogant. If this school couldn’t be open to Indians, I wouldn’t have gone through with the project.” The school may be a ‘for profit’ organization but that’s only because that was one of the clauses if they wanted to enrol Indian students.

So far Pallushek is adapting well to life as a Chennaiite — a good thing, because he’ll stay here for at least four or five more years. “Chennai is a conservative city, but has a lot of educated people and a huge potential for growth. The people are very polite and are often very interested in foreign cultures,” he says. “At the same time, the red tape here can make progress very slow. You need a lot of patience and determination. But if you’re persistent and achieve your final goal, you feel great about what you’ve done, and the end result never goes unappreciated.”

—Cadence Mandybura



Deutsche Schule Chennai
Opening: November 2009 (tentatively November 16)
Funded by: private money and charitable support
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