

# Walking for a cause

Two Englishmen are on a seven-day walk to raise money for a little school in Mandrem. **DIANA FERNANDES** catches up with the duo

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Andy Burns and Henry Dixon have long been regular tourists visiting the scenic shores of Goa's beaches. This time around, however, they're doing a little more than just sightseeing. The duo which hails from UK, have taken to walking from Pollem, along the Karnataka border in the south to Tiracol Fort in the north to raise money for a Our Lady of Rosary school in Mandrem.

The 150 kilometre Great Goan Walk estimated to take around seven days began on January 17 from Pollem to Betul. Betul to Bogmalo was day two's itinerary and yesterday's was a transfer to Caranzalem, a walk from Caranzalem to Marriott, Panjim, a boat ride to Sinquerim and a walk from there on to Baga. Day five includes a walk from Baga to Siolim and Siolim to Morjim and to finally culminate with a walk from Morjim to Tiracol fort on day six.

Dixon who runs an international marketing consultancy in Manchester and Burns, a Chartered Accountant and Chairman of a London media consultancy loved the idea of walking to the sight of beautiful terrains, estuaries, headlands and beaches and instinctively decided on the walk. They've also been



part of the UK charity group Give A Book and have been working with the Our Lady of Rosary school in the village of Mandrem. They helped the school in building a library and now plan to use the funds raised to help with computer equipment and other vitally needed basic school resources.

"We've been very privileged in every way, so we thought of some way of giving it back," says Dixon while Burns adds, "We got to know the place and interact with the students, so we knew it was a nice thing to do."

The main aim however, is to highlight the importance of education in today's world. "The modern world is so focused on those skills, manual labour is reduced and the need for people to understand technology has increased. If you can't read and write, you can't get anywhere," says Burns.

"Education and literacy is at the heart of everything. If you aren't literate, you don't have a job, you don't have a job,

you don't have any money. If you don't have a job you have problems with your children and what grown ups do, they get into crime. So for me literacy is at the heart of everything. Without it nothing can happen," adds Dixon.

Walking they say, is something the British are culturally born with and that combined with the friendly Goan atmosphere was the perfect setting. "Culturally, we British walk a lot. Walking is a very big pass time in the UK. There is a clear start and finish here in Goa because it isn't very big. Also, people here realise what it is we are doing and have generally been so helpful with giving directions," says Dixon who finds the Goa walk much shorter and hotter compared to his 600 mile walk for cancer in the UK a couple of years ago.

The Englishmen have managed to get donations from many of their UK supporters some of whom include Investec, Concise Media, UHY Hacker Young and Green People.