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IVDT TRUST

INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

. . . working in India to relieve rural poverty.

It is with real sadness that we have to report the death of Mike Wright, one of the founders of IVDT, and a force that has inspired and sustained our work over the past thirty years. Mike did so much in his life to make the world a better place for those who were less privileged than him. Most of the people who benefitted from this will never know to whom they might owe some of the improvements in their lives, but many of those changes will have a positive effect for generations. IVDT was very dear to his heart; what it has achieved, and will continue to do, will be his enduring legacy.



He and his wife, Margaret, (both seen in the photograph above, visiting a project in Jharkhand fifteen years ago) were the perfect match for this work. His energy and passion, his practical good sense and love for India, combined with Margaret's deep-rooted social concern and organisational skills, meant that they were able to set in place an organisation that has made a positive difference to hundreds of thousands of lives over the years.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support and financial help of all our donors. Many of these were already contacts or friends of Mike and Margaret; many of the others became friends through sharing a concern to help people living in serious poverty find ways to deal with their difficulties. They always saw IVDT as a partnership, a shared enterprise which brought together the generosity of people here in Britain, the commitment and hard work of the project partners in India, and the eagerness of project participants and beneficiaries.

The list of projects which they were able to make happen is seriously impressive. It began with helping people in Tamil Nadu cover the cost of tiles so they could afford to build their own houses, but it blossomed into ways which they would never have imagined. It has taken on some of the most serious issues of our time – gender and caste, corruption, inequality and access to human rights, sustainability and climate change. Some of the projects applied familiar ideas to people or areas who had not been touched before, but many of the projects were truly innovative. The important thing as far as Mike and Margaret were concerned was that the projects should be effective, bringing positive benefits to people in hardship, and empowering them in the process.

This newsletter describes our current projects. None of it would have been possible without Mike and Margaret's initiative and support. We at IVDT with our partners in India hope that it stands as a tribute to what it is possible for people to achieve when we all work together. We can only bring you a small part of our news in this newsletter. If you would like to know more about any project, please do get in touch at helenanightingale@hotmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The DROUGHT of 2015-16

India is no stranger to drought. In the years that I have been visiting projects in Odisha, I would say that about one year in every three or four is considered a drought year, but this year has been exceptional. There is a 43% chance of a drought season in India following an El Niño; it might be a manifestation of climate change; it could just be chance. Or it could be a combination of all of these. Whatever the cause, the effect is devastating.

Odisha is one of the worst affected states, with Nuapada, where we run our Barefoot Lawyers and EMCOR Follow-up Projects, declared a drought-affected district early on. In July the rainfall was 2/3 of the average; in August less than half. But the main problem was the timing. Its failure at a critical period meant transplanting rice seedlings was unsuccessful. Few of our project villages are irrigated and even where such schemes exist, there has been insufficient water for irrigation. This has led to a serious crop loss ranging from 30% to 90%.

Historically the seasonal migration rate in the district has been about 40%. By the end of November it had increased by over 10,000 additional families who could see no other way of feeding themselves. They are paid Rs.10,000-50,000 (£100-500) per family depending on the number who will work, and for the length of time. I mention the figures, because a simple calculation comparing this with payments they might receive if government benefits function properly shows how unnecessary it should be for most of these families to migrate. Most of them will be working at brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh, long hours in brutal conditions, and much of it illegal. We spoke in our last newsletter (2015) of some of the horrors of migration; one of the main aims of our work has been to reduce the need for villagers to migrate.

Learning from the horrors and mistakes of past droughts, the National and State Governments moved fairly quickly with the following measures:

- a) Increasing the number of days of work which each family would be entitled to under the MG National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), from 100 days each year to 200 – an additional 50 days by each of the National and State Governments, with the daily wage increased from Rs.174 to Rs.226 (i.e. an additional 50p per day).
- b) Crop loss compensation should be paid to farmers.
- c) Mid-day meals for young school-children would continue to be prepared and served, even though schools were closed for the summer holidays

In addition, families below the poverty line are already entitled to subsidised food under the National Food Security Act.

With these measures in place, it should have been possible for villagers to remain in their communities rather than migrate. However, as always, things do not work quite as they should and there have been the usual **problems:**

- a) The government administrations have done nothing to make communities aware of what the MGNREGS scheme has to offer, especially during this drought year.
- b) Of the £240,000,000 crop loss compensation due to the State of Odisha from the National Govt., nothing has been paid, which means the State Govt. has been extremely slow in providing compensation.
- c) The same applies to money due to the Odisha State Govt. for 2015-16 under the National Disaster Relief Fund.
- d) When the lists were published of those entitled to a ration card under the National Food Security Act, it was clear there were serious issues in Odisha. Many of the poorest had been omitted, while the wealthiest in some communities appear to have mysteriously found their way onto the lists. The state government took steps to remove the names of those who were not entitled, but no steps have been taken to ensure that those who should be on the lists are able to claim that right.

On the following pages you will be able to read what we have done about the situation in our project villages, and how we have helped many families to protect themselves from the worst impact of the drought. This is good news, and we hope that the coming monsoon will provide further relief.

BAREFOOT LAWYERS PROJECT – Khariar, Nuapada District, Odisha, India

This innovative, Big Lottery-funded project is working with tribal and dalit women in ninety remote villages. We are providing them with the legal skills and knowledge to work for justice and full access to the government schemes and benefits which are designed to relieve poverty. It sounds very dry, but it is making radical difference.

Each project village has a Forum of dalit and tribal women. Each forum has appointed two women as Barefoot Lawyers, and two as Community Justice Mentors, supporting the women in their groups. The project team is predominantly female, which is extremely unusual in this conservative area. We consider it important for several reasons:

- Many of the issues women have to deal with would be impossible to discuss with men. A female team can build supportive relationships with the village women, establishing trust and confidence, making it possible for them to speak out.
- For women who have never participated in the public arena and are reluctant to step forward, it is very reassuring to have women as strong role models and support.
- The project provides opportunities to a first generation of young women who have been to college, but for whom little work is available.



The Project team and other staff at Khariar

And for those who might question why we work primarily with women in the first place, our experience shows that the time and energy we invest in empowering women generally produces far better and more long-lasting results than working primarily with men. It is always wonderful to see the awakening awareness and confidence that these village women experience, their excitement as they realise what it is possible for them to achieve. But it is important

for us to work with men too, as we do on other projects, and even on this project which is primarily about women, we do encourage them to work with men wherever it would be appropriate and useful, especially on work schemes which will affect the whole village.

The Barefoot Lawyers, Community Justice Mentors and other women's leaders are all receiving training on a wide range of legal tools that they can use with the women in their villages. These include powerful means such as the Right to Information Act and the Public Service Guarantee Act. For many this has been an exciting adventure, the first time they have ever been involved in anything beyond domestic and agricultural work. Some have found it rather daunting, which is not surprising. Many are illiterate; most had only a very basic education. And, with the best will in the world, legal matters can often seem very complicated. But the team takes a case-based approach, using issues raised by the women themselves, and the training is very practical, helping the women work through how to deal with situations, step-by-step.



Suphari Majhi, one of our stellar Barefoot Lawyers

Just as the project was getting under way, the area was hit by the worst drought in many years. As I went from village to village, the farmers were bringing in the harvest, and many of them reported that they had "not a single grain of rice". The later harvest of pulses looked to be poor too. Many villagers had already left for work in the brick-kilns of Andhra Pradesh, and for most others there seemed to be little option but to follow them once the rice straw had been brought in. It was at this point that we decided the Barefoot Lawyers Project should focus its attention on helping villagers access schemes that had been put in place to address the problem, in theory at least. In this way, the Barefoot Lawyers and Community Justice Mentors could become real experts in a narrower field than originally intended, but could make a vital contribution to helping their communities get through the crisis with the least possible harm, reducing the need to migrate. And then, once the drought is over, the project will be able to resume the planned programme, but with all participants much stronger in experience and confidence.

What the Barefoot Lawyers Project has done

Once it was clear the situation was serious and the District had been declared a drought-affected area, the project team, in consultation with the beneficiaries, decided this should be the focus of their work over the coming months, concentrating on the legal measures and policies which would immediately provide help to villagers. We concentrated on training the women to use the MG National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Food Security Act (as described on page 2), and access crop loss compensation. We organised twelve camps bringing together villagers, project participants, government officials and community representatives. This raised awareness of schemes available to local people, of the duties of local officials, and the procedures to access those schemes and benefits. There has been extensive follow-up work on these areas which is already showing results.



Tracking down those entitled to subsidised food

The following are specific achievements as a result of these efforts:

- a) The Barefoot Lawyers and Community Justice Mentors identified those excluded from the NFSA lists. They helped 10,989 people apply for inclusion, and, so far, **8,059** have been successful. Work on this issue continues. It should be pointed out that for each card issued, food will be provided for a family of four or five on average, **directly benefitting 32-40,000 people** who would probably otherwise migrate.
- b) The Women's Forums discussed what MGNREGS work could be carried out in their villages, and applications were submitted. As a result **3,015 families** received over 60 days work so far (which comes to **over Rs.13,500**, a rather better return than if they were to migrate, and not so arduous). **Another 3,683** have received less work, but further projects are due to start soon providing more work for the applicants. Most of the approved work will provide long-term improvement – digging of farm ponds, land development, pit-digging, preparation of land for tree plantation, constructing footpaths to the forest and cultivated land.
- c) Through direct project intervention, **6,700 farmers** who are eligible for compensation have been identified, helped to submit applications, and received their payments.

The women have acquired a wide range of skills, knowledge, experience and confidence in their ability to bring benefits to their families and their communities. In addition, they have raised the profile of the project which is now widely spoken about in the local media, and whose skills and achievements are recognised and valued by local officials. The women are very proud of their achievements – and their communities are very proud of them. We look forward to telling you about what else they get up to over the next two years.

A PERSONAL GIFT FROM THE PROJECT AREA

With this newsletter you'll find a small plastic pack containing "rolled rice". I had been at a meeting of the Women's Forum in Kenduguda, discussing the impact of the drought and how they could deal with it. As I left the village, a woman, one of the Barefoot Lawyers, came out of her hut clutching a bag which she thrust into my hands as a gift. This was incredibly moving, especially in the light of what we had just been talking about, the dreadful harvest and the terrible hardship that these villagers would be facing over the coming months. It was probably the first thing in her hut that she had been able to lay her hands on and that she could give me, sadly not something that I could make much use of. Given the situation, I wanted this gift of hospitality to speak of the situation of this woman and her friends, so I decided that I would divide it among our supporters (sorry – only possible if you get the newsletter by post). This small pack comes from Mithila. I hope she would be happy that I share it in this way – I think she would.



Mithila sits in the doorway at our meeting of the Women's Forum in Kenduguda

The EMCOR FOLLOW-UP Project

The DfID-funded EMCOR Project ended two years ago, but, because so many non-project villages were eager to share in its benefits, we decided to extend the work to a further 35 villages. With only four staff, it has been a shoestring project, but drawing on the skills and resources of other project teams at Khariar, and using volunteers trained under the original project, it has proved a real success.

The achievements will be familiar to regular readers of our newsletter. Village Action Groups have learnt to deal with a very wide range of the problems they face, learning about the wide range of government schemes and benefits that are available, how to claim them, and developing the skills and confidence to ensure that they are delivered. The following is a story of just one village.

Before our project, few villages had heard of MGNREGS; fewer knew how to apply for it. The initiative for this kind of work is supposed to lie with the village, but they usually follow the suggestions of the Block Development Officer – mostly access roads. We have long encouraged villagers to apply for work that will increase long-term sustainability of their farming in this drought-prone area, particularly water-saving measures. When discussing this, they always agree with me, but when I'm gone I find they've applied for something else!

I arrived at Bikrampur to find it almost empty because everyone was working on an MGNREGS programme – and what should it be, but a check dam. And this wasn't the first one. The previous year they had built their first one; even in the drought year, they had seen the benefits. The dam holds back the rain water as it runs down a small valley. The water gradually seeps into the ground, raising the water table below the dam, and is available for limited irrigation. It can also be used for breeding fish, for keeping ducks, and providing drinking water for cattle, so it brings all-round benefits. These were really visible below the first check dam, where the little fields were still green and productive. The villagers spoke with enthusiasm, and about their plans to build another in the next year. The programme has brought lasting improvements to the village, increasing the sustainability of farming, meaning that yields are increased, reducing the need for migration, and the villagers were paid to do the work. But, perhaps most of all, this was work they had chosen for their village, and, with help from the government, they had worked together to achieve something substantial.

It is extremely unlikely this would have happened without the EMCOR Follow-up Project. It was our team which brought them the information, explained how they could use the scheme, and helped them make the application. Multiply this by thirty-five, and you can



A check dam can make irrigation possible, increasing yields

see the long-term impact that this barebones project has had on the lives of participating villages. We are really grateful to all those who have helped support this work. Much of the money has come from our general funds, but with a generous annual donation from the **Just Trust** which has made this valuable work possible. We are really grateful to you all. This project is being gradually wound down. The villages are all now part of the Barefoot Lawyers, so still getting support, and the staff have been either absorbed into that project or will be working on the Chronic Kidney Disease Project, as described later in the newsletter.



Villagers earning money while building for the future as they work on the check dam at Bikrampur



BIRIGHAT and the VILLAGE STUDY CENTRE



Hands up those who use the Study Centre. The two gentlemen in the middle did eventually raise their hands – the one on the left likes reading ghost stories, and the man on the right is teaching his wife to read.

Last year we visited Birighat, one of the EMCOR Follow-up Projects. In the discussion, the villagers said that one of the things they would find most useful would be a **Village Study Centre**. Many of the children, mostly first generation learners, had difficulty doing their homework because of lack of space at home and lack of light. We provided the village with £450. They set up a Committee, found a room, equipped it with some books and basic furniture, found a small team of volunteers and the Library/Study Centre was on its way.

There is a wide range of books. The library is open for four hours a day, and all day on Sunday. Ten to fifteen children come daily, and the centre is also widely used by adults, for reference, for learning to read, and for interest. They have all kinds of ideas for adding to the collection of books, and are working on ways of getting government money to buy a computer which can link them to the internet. Exciting times. They are incredibly proud of their Study Centre. We are not appealing for money to create more of these Study Centres, but it is just possible that some of our supporters might be interested in sponsoring one. Do get in touch with us if you like the idea of that. There are plenty of villages which could benefit from a scheme such as this.

PORTRAIT OF A PROJECT WORKER – DEBENDRA BHITRIA

We have known Debendra for years, from the very beginning of the DfID-funded Community Radio Project which ran from 2009-2014. He was the ideal person for a project like that, with many years of working for his community, and a special talent for helping people find the strength and confidence to deal with their problems. But his real talent is as a musician, singer, performer. He is the one who writes a catchy song for every issue that features on the Community Radio programmes, and who provides the background music. He also leads a performing group which goes out to the villages and “educates through entertainment”. One of his fellow performers is also on the continuing Community Radio team, and the wife of a third member of their group is a valued member of the Barefoot Lawyers team. They are brilliant to watch and always draw a good audience. Issues range from Access to Water, Right to Education, Maternity Benefits, or Crop Compensation. It might not sound the most entertaining, but they never fail to have the audience in the palm of their hand. Debendra’s prime responsibility is for the Children’s Rights Programme run by our partner, CHALE CHALO, but his services are used and appreciated by all the projects. It has been a real privilege to have such a talented and committed person as part of the team, and to count him as a colleague and friend.



From a PROBLEM to a PROJECT to a SOLUTION –

How we are addressing the **CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE** epidemic

While Helena was in India this winter, she spent much of her time exploring the issue of Chronic Kidney Disease. Readers of earlier newsletters will know this has been a long-running concern since we first encountered it seven years ago. It continues to be a problem. Where it occurs, it usually affects several villages and many people, but some areas appear to be totally unaffected. Once diagnosed there is no cure for the illness. Many die within a couple of months, most within a couple of years; a few manage to live for longer, though their lives are seriously compromised. Given the impact this has on families which are already very poor, we felt driven to do something about the problem.

It is beyond IVDT's means to establish the medical cause and cure, but we will ensure these matters are addressed by those with the means to solve them. In the meantime, there are a number of practical steps we can take to help reduce the risk of people contracting the disease - ensuring drinking water is safe, training for proper control and use of agro-chemicals, reducing the use of aspirin, ibuprofen and NSAIDs, reducing the consumption of alcohol, and ensuring people drink enough when working in high temperatures. We can also ensure people receive the help they need when they do become ill. This has been the *raison d'être* of the **Chronic Kidney Disease Action (CKDA) Project**. If you'd like to know more, please contact us and we will happily send you the full project details. Our enquiries and discussions at an international level have brought together people from all over the world to try and discover the cause/s. We will help by linking our project with the global study. But our prime responsibility is to help the people in our project area who are suffering terribly.

We carried out an appeal last year and into this year. We are still short of the total amount that we need, but there is enough in the fund to cover the first year, and we will continue with our efforts to bring in funds ensuring the work can be carried on into future years. This is an opportunity to thank all those who have contributed. What we are doing is very innovative and very important. We believe that it will make a real difference in our project areas and elsewhere in Odisha. We also think that once we have shown how effective it is, it can act as a model for addressing this or similar issues elsewhere. We are very grateful for your support in helping get this project under way.

While Helena was in India, apart from taking part in the international CKD conference in Delhi, she also met with government and medical officials in Delhi, Bhubaneswar and local Districts. She visited affected villages in both our project area and elsewhere in Odisha, and carried out wide-ranging questioning and discussion about the circumstances and impact of their condition. At village meetings, people brought along their medical records for her to



CKD-affected villagers show us their records

look at, and patiently told the history of their illness, diagnosis and treatment. Questions were also asked about the water supply in the village, the kind of work (almost all agricultural), the hours worked, agro-chemicals used, and possible links with caste or with other illnesses such as malaria, diabetes. One of the things Helena had previously noticed was that in our project areas there is a significant overlap of fluoride-affected villages (high levels of fluoride in the water leading to life-threatening fluorosis)

with CKD-affected villages. There is no apparent direct causal link, but if high levels of fluoride are getting into the water, then maybe other contaminants and heavy metals might be too. This is the direction in which medical opinion seems to be moving in Odisha, an opinion generally shared by those affected who have naturally given the matter a great deal of thought.

There is little by way of support and services, guidance or help in our area for people with CKD. There are no kidney specialists in the District, which is surprising considering the high incidence of the disease. Patients pay large amounts for their treatment, and get into debt to cover the bills. When the money runs out, the medicine stops. People live in terror of contracting the disease, or having someone in their family affected by CKD, and they begin to imagine that the slightest ache or pain is kidney disease.



In spite of his exhaustion this man came to share his medical records.



Fourteen CKD-affected villagers in Narsinghpur, patiently trying to come to terms with their illness

Most people have to travel a great distance to reach hospital for diagnosis, and are then passed on to hospitals even further away. One of those hospitals might be Cuttack, a whole day's travel from Nuapada. Helena visited another affected area, Narsinghpur, which is only one hour from Cuttack, two hours from the capital Bhubaneswar, and therefore near to hospitals with specialist departments. Narsinghpur is not one of our project areas, and it has an even higher incidence of CKD than Nuapada. Two visits were made, the second with a doctor from the UK originally from the area. The incidence and increase in the disease was shocking.

In one village, half the adult male population had been diagnosed with the disease in the past ten months since it first appeared. Narsinghpur is very different from where we work, but we share a concern for this serious issue and will work closely together so we can learn from each other and give each other support.

OUR PROJECT PLAN

We are convinced that the situation in Nuapada is serious, with possible wider implications. Apart from Narsinghpur, we have heard of other pockets in Odisha which are affected, but little information is yet available. We are certain that investing time and energy into a CKD-project will be worthwhile, especially for the villagers who are or might be affected by CKD.

Our proposal has three key objectives as follows:

A. Identify the scale of the problem, so that it is possible to provide the necessary support to those affected, and to further understand the possible causes of the disease. We will start by working with the twelve villages in our project area which are the most seriously affected, but will carry out incidence surveys in all our other 75 villages.

B. Raise awareness of the disease, amongst the villagers as a whole, their representatives, health workers, government officials, Self-help Groups, and other NGOs. This will cover symptoms of the disease, possible preventative measures, possible treatments, and rights to medical and financial support from government. The programme will ensure that everyone who is entitled to help, and everyone responsible for provision of services, understands very clearly their entitlements and duties.

C. Campaign to ensure that the government takes responsibility for the issue, provides the proper services and support for those affected. This will be conducted:

- locally within the District, holding service providers to account;
- and also at state level, working with other activists and organisations from affected areas and on related issues such as fluorosis, to ensure that research is carried out into CKD, and proper policies are put in place, implemented and monitored.

As mentioned above, there is still no clear understanding of the cause/s of this deadly disease. The situation is complicated, and it is possible that it might be a combination of causes which leads to the disease, one thing exacerbating another. We feel under a moral obligation to do what we can; it would be irresponsible of us to ignore this issue. We would never be able to look these people in the eye again. But we also believe we can make a real difference.

One of the key factors that keeps on emerging is contaminated drinking water. We have therefore decided to run another project in parallel with CKD Action, and this will be to provide **safe drinking water** to everyone in the affected villages. We are seeking funding for this separately from the CKDA Project, but the two will run in parallel. Clean drinking water is a basic human right, and the Indian government has a legal obligation to ensure that everyone has access to it. It patently fails to do this, as many of our project villages show. This aspect of the project will vigorously campaign for the government to provide safe water, by provision of wells, and using and maintaining adequate filtration units where necessary. We hope it might reduce the incidence of CKD, but, in the words of Neil Pearce of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, "Regardless of whether or not we eventually discover that this is the cause of CKD, it is something worth doing in its own right."

MANGRO – Community-based Mangrove Regeneration, Odisha

Naturally we try to bring you the good stories, ones that demonstrate what an excellent job we're doing with the money you have given us. But we also try to tell you about some of the problems that we encounter, the struggles we face in trying to bring about change. The way we address those problems is also an important part of the project. It's often difficult to solve the problems, sometimes impossible, but we try to be creative. Even if we do not achieve our prime goal, then dealing with the issue can be very empowering and provide an opportunity for villagers to develop valuable skills and confidence. Now, if all of the above has prepared you for some bad news, I hope that the following will come as a relief!

In our last newsletter we wrote about the enormous amount of planting we had been able to achieve – 437,000 trees in one year, stupendous for such a small project. We achieved this largely by accessing government programmes such as the MG National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. This enabled poor people to get paid work for programmes that were intended to improve the local infrastructure or environment. Unfortunately, the current central government has reduced the amount of money available for these programmes (except temporarily in the drought-affected areas). There has been a general reduction of 30%, with the Dept. of Horticulture and PRIs facing a heavier reduction of 50-60%. And this has put paid to much of the collaborative work that we have been able to carry out in recent years, though we continue to encourage communities to submit applications for tree planting work.

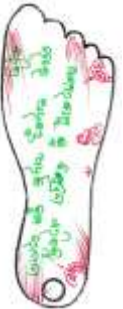
In addition (and I fear this might already be striking a chill into your heart), we had hoped to submit applications for mangrove plantation under the joint World Bank/Odisha Govt. Inter-coastal Zone Management Project (ICZM) which aims to secure the coastline against damage from storm and tidal surge. We have regularly reported on the progress of this project, an ongoing saga of corruption and incompetence. The Forest Department has eventually decided not to put the work out to tender because of all the problems they have faced. For example, over the past three years, almost nothing of the work supposedly carried out by contractors has survived, and the department has refused more than 30% of the payments. Where this work has been carried out within our project area, we have trained and supported community groups to monitor its progress, and have regularly submitted reports to the authorities and raised the issue in the media. I think we can fairly take the credit for the Forest Department's decision. The programme had promised so much, but in an area beset with corruption and incompetence, it was probably doomed. The good news is that the work will still be carried out, and properly, by the Forest Dept. We have worked closely with them, earned their respect and have a good working relationship especially at Block and field level. We will continue to work with them, especially involving the community in the programme so that we can increase the chances of the newly planted areas surviving to maturity. In truth, the Forestry Department has the capacity to plant far more than we would ever be able to do, and we will do what we can to ensure that they actually do this.

And the final bit of news in another ongoing saga – the defunct World Bank-funded prawn farm project. We announced last year that the process of transferring the land (once upon a time, mangrove forest) from the Fishery to the Forestry Dept. It all looked good, but then nothing happened. MANGRO organised a campaign amongst the communities of Sasanpeda, and this eventually resulted in the first 25 acres (out of 1,500) being transferred, a very small but significant achievement. Their campaign to get the rest of the land transferred continues, and at the time of writing this, meetings are being held to discuss strategy and build support with Government officials, the media, and everyone who can potentially help their campaign. They are planning a door-to-door collection of signatures which will be submitted to the state government. A more subtle part of their campaign is the proposed planting of mangrove in selected areas – a kind of guerrilla forestry. We have written about how the women of Sasan already did that in the grounds of the prawn farm project's abandoned office building, a small plantation which has now matured into forest. We'll let you know how this all goes in our next newsletter, and the next, and the next . . . !



CLIMATE CHANGE DAY

Readers may have followed the build up to and negotiations at the Paris Climate Change Conference in December of last year. It is an issue that is close to the heart of people on all our Odisha projects, not least because they are very vulnerable to the early impacts of global warming. Most of them make almost no significant contribution to global warming, but as more people become more financially secure, they are tempted to increase consumption, with the risk that their carbon footprint will grow dramatically. This was the theme of the Climate Change Day which we ran for young people at our MANGRO Centre. There was a wide range of challenging, educational and entertaining activities, and one of those was that they should write “carbon foot-print letters” to people in the UK, asking them to take measures to reduce their carbon consumption so that people in less fortunate parts of the world should not be threatened by global warming. Some of you who receive this newsletter by post will find a “foot-print letter” enclosed. There aren’t enough for everyone - sorry about that - and most of you will be unable to read the Odiya writing! But I’m sure you get the message, and it is an important that young people on our projects understand they are part of a shared world.



Girls at the MANGRO Climate Change Day, hanging up their “climate change footprints”

MARVELLOUS MANGROVES

Without education the practical work of our projects be less sustainable. Local people need to understand why they should care for the environment. It is difficult to persuade them that this matters when people are very poor and find it hard just to keep their families fed. MANGRO has been incredibly successful with this. through its Eco-clubs, its work with school teachers, and in the community. There has been a major and lasting change of attitudes in the area, and we see it with the enthusiasm with which communities campaign for tree-planting, manage their own nurseries and plantations, make compost and natural fertilisers and pesticides, and care for the wildlife of the area.

A new feather in our cap is a collaboration being established with the Global Education Officer of the international Mangrove Action Programme. Martin Keeley has development a brilliant programme of mangrove-related educational resources, “Marvellous Mangroves”. Ranjit attended training that Martin carried out in Bangladesh, and then welcomed Martin at MANGRO where he carried out training of teachers and held workshop sessions for children. Several months later MANGRO, the teachers and children were still talking about it with great excitement. One teacher was able to repeat what Martin had said, word for word, and it was impossible to stop him! They are translating the material into Odiya, and we look forward to more exciting sessions with Martin who will continue training the teachers, who will then train other teachers, and so on. The content of his work is amazing, the presentation of the material and its delivery is irresistible, as is Martin himself. We work hard to do everything that we can ourselves, because we know how important it is, but sometimes, when we find someone like this who is prepared to work with us, it is such a relief. It is brilliant to have this fresh input.

In the meantime, publication of our own books and teaching materials continues, in Odiya for use in local schools, colleges and Eco Clubs, and in English to be sold to visitors at the Bhitarkanika National Park. These books complement Martin’s work excellent, providing guides to local wildlife and activity books to engage the interest of children. We are especially grateful to the **Oxford Funding Network** whose gift some years back has made this valuable work possible.

The money for **MANGRO** comes from our general funds, so it is supported by many people, and in different ways. We have been particularly grateful to the **Just Trust** which has given substantial donations over the past few years, the **Peter Cundill Foundation**, and the **Network for Social Change**. You have all contributed to a project that continues to make incredibly valuable changes to the area and to people's lives.

The project is primarily about planting trees, especially mangrove, but we have also been concerned with wider environmental issues, training hundreds of villagers to make compost and natural pesticides, keep kitchen gardens and fruit trees, and move towards sustainable farming. One gap in our work has been sanitation, which we consider to be of fundamental environmental importance. Ranjit took us to a group of remote villages he thought might be suitable for such a project,

Subanapur is the home village of Baluram, one of our keenest volunteers. We could see his influence as we walked round the kitchen gardens. He talked with great enthusiasm that had obviously infected others. At first it seemed slightly chaotic, but once the eye was tuned it, the abundance was apparent. The gardens were arranged round a fish pond (the source of an excellent lunch). There were lemons, produced by grafting learnt on the MANGRO Project, bananas, papayas, pineapple, guava, mango; ginger, turmeric, chillies, tomatoes, aubergine, potatoes, ladies fingers . . . shall I go on? It was lush and delicious. *Baluram shows off some of his produce*



self-sufficient in food – all they need to buy is a small amount of oil, sugar and tea.

It sounds idyllic, but it is also very precarious. The abundance is largely due to lessons learnt by Baluram on the project. While the village rejoiced in what they had achieved, but were also aware that a bad harvest could immediately put them in desperate straits. When we visit a village we usually look to see what differences we have made, but in this case we were thinking about what we might have to offer. It was clear there were enough people in this village with the commitment to make a success of anything we suggested and in our discussions a number of concrete ideas emerged.

The villagers talked about the seeds that they used (not bought), and we realised how valuable these were. In most parts of Odisha, farmers now buy in their seeds. Many varieties developed over centuries to suit the particular conditions of a village, have now disappeared. We suggested that a **catalogue** should be made of all the seeds they use, and a **seed bank** set up. We explained how it could work, and they were very keen.



One SRI rice farmer rejoices at his harvest

We also talked about **SRI, a method of growing rice** which is more sustainable. It was agreed to send Baluram and another young man on a short training course so they could bring back the method, try it out, and train others to use it. Some of our readers will recall this was tried out in another area some while back (funded by the Quakers). A farmer using it in Nuapada was one of the few to have a reasonable crop this year – a happy man, and we hope his success will lead the way for others.

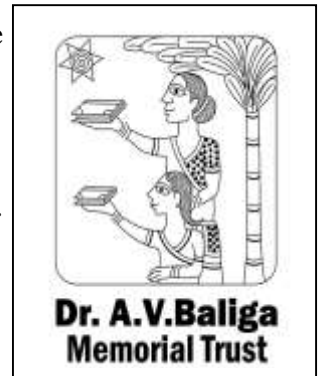
The third suggestion was that we take advantage of MGNREGS and other government schemes to provide sanitation in the village. These schemes are unlikely to last forever, and already we have seen cuts in the funding, so villagers should use them while the money is still available. Using MGNREGS and other schemes, they could be paid to do the work, and some of the construction cost could be covered by other programmes. This project will need us to provide training and organisational backup to the villagers to enable them to get this off the ground, and we are in the process of applying for funds to do this. The funding will be for twelve villages in the area. We'll let you know how it goes in Subanapur.



Baluram has already started to construct a latrine

The BALIGA TRUST & the STEP-UP PROJECT

We have supported remedial education for out-of-school children in the Delhi resettlement areas for many years, but last year we received additional funding which made it possible to support 25 Remedial Learning Centres for an assured three years bringing stability of provision to over one thousand children. This extra money came from the **Peter Cundill Foundation**, and we are fortunate to have their support.



Regular readers will be familiar with how these projects work. The Learning Centres are in three resettlement areas. On the surface these communities appear to be flourishing, with so many more facilities than they could have dreamt of in the villages they came from. Apart from rag-picking, rubbish-sorting and servicing the local community (shops, etc.), work is hard to come by without travelling. Men, and some women, travel considerable distances each day to work as rickshaw drivers, on building sites, and as domestic workers. Wages are very low, with little job security, no insurance, no pension. It is hard to earn enough to feed a family and it shows, especially in the faces of some of the children. For all the opportunities that they face in the town, we seldom see the likes of these children in the villages of Odisha – dry rusty-coloured hair, thin cheeks, ashy-yellow dusty-looking skin. Despite the cold, many of the children are not wearing enough clothes, and they shiver. Some lucky ones have trainers, some have flip-flops, many have nothing on their feet.



The classes are held in rented rooms, mostly tiny, the standard 3 x 3.5 m. There may be a window, but most rooms are lit by the open door. The children take off their shoes before coming in and sit cross-legged on a rug, in their age groups, about twenty in total, ranging in age from seven to twelve (though many look much younger). The walls are often bare brick, though some are cemented over, maybe even painted white, which certainly makes it a little lighter. They all have a light bulb, though

not very bright – but that is common in Indian interiors where people are accustomed to living in perpetual gloom. There is a small white- or black-board on the wall, and large boards on which are mounted children's colourful paintings and work, learning materials, posters, maps and so on. These certainly cheer the place up and make them seem welcoming and warmer.

The teacher works according to the school syllabus, using the prescribed textbooks as a basis, but the team develops new ways of approaching the learning, and makes teaching materials, so that the children are engaged and actively involved in the learning. And each Learning Centre has access to a well-stocked library and resources centre. The children attend for three hours a day, and are soon enthusiastic about attending and learning. Their progress is regularly checked. Within six months of the project start, every child had shown improved performance, many by one grade, some by two or more grades. There was a thirty percent increase in those with an A+ grade. The project works closely with families and teachers to ensure that these improvements are sustained and children will continue to flourish.

Thanks to the Peter Cundhill Foundation we have been able to extend this opportunity to very many more children than we have in the past. The difference it makes to these children is measurable – research shows clearly the difference it will make to their lives as they move through school, to college, and into adulthood and work. But how do you measure the shine in their eyes and the grins on their faces?



The Kala Kutir Project

We first came across the work of the Baliga Trust through an exhibition that they held at the India International Centre following the bulldozing of their Kala Kutir Centre in one of the slum clearance operations of 2001. We were drawn to the exhibition by the joyous sound of children singing, and then were doubly pleased when we saw their beautifully displayed artwork. Speaking with the children, with the Secretary, Mrs Ray, and Ashok Kumar, then one of the project workers, we learnt the stories of these children and the transforming project with which they had become involved. The circumstances in which they live is described on the previous page. Becoming involved with the Baliga Trust is one of the most positive things that is likely to happen in their young lives.

The creative programme has been particularly important because it is what draws children to the Centres in the first place. It helps them to learn what it means to focus and give attention to a project – a painting, a song, a piece of drama. They learn to work with others, and then learn to value more academic skills, which means they are more willing to sign up and stay with remedial education classes. Since meeting with the Baliga Trust project we have done whatever we can to help the work they do with children. A grant has been made almost every year, and in recent years this has been covered by a generous donation from the Just Trust.

This money supports the remedial education programmes, and all the extras – library books, and book clubs, outings to museums, involvement in city-wide children's events, sports activities and art classes. If the remedial classes make up the body of the Trust's work with children, all these extras make the heart and soul. It doesn't just draw the children to the centres; it draws visitors like us too, and continues to hold us, just as it did the very first time we met them.

We are really grateful to everyone who has supported this work – **the Just Trust, the Isle of Man Government and ACE**, as well as all those many people who contribute to our general funds.



FROM MIDNAPUR to MADANPUR

Staying with creative work, but returning to Odisha – we'd like to tell you about our scroll-painting project at MANGRO. Over the past sixty years waves of people have migrated into coastal Odisha from Bengal, driven by drought and desperate poverty. They settled in the forest, feeling at first as though they had leapt from the frying pan into the fire, but then began to shape a life and create new communities. Many of our MANGRO villages are Bengali. It was mainly they who cut down the mangrove forest to carve out fields, to provide fuel for cooking, to make fishing boats. But when there was almost no forest left, and they discovered how vulnerable their actions had made them to storm and tide.



These villages have been our most enthusiastic in protecting what remains of the forest, recreating what was lost. They have set up tree nurseries and plantations, campaigned for the regeneration of the ex-World Bank prawn farm, and carried out "guerrilla" tree-planting when the government refuses to take responsibility. Most came originally from Midnapore, the home of an ancient tradition of travelling story tellers. These

"chitrakars" sing their story illustrated with a painted scroll. We invited one, Manu, to take part in our Climate Change Festival, bringing a scroll that tells the story of global warming. It was amazing to reunite the Bengali communities of Madanpur with their cultural heritage. He is now making two scrolls for us: the story of the migration to Odisha from Midnapore, and the story of the mangrove forest. When the scrolls are finished we will put them up on our website. In the meantime, if you want a taste of what it might be like, have a look at the following Youtube link which shows a woman telling her story of why trees matter: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCMX_6wPHdI (Youtube – 'Patachitra de Bengale'). I hope you enjoy it, and our scrolls too, when they are ready.

SUMMARY of IVDTrust accounts for 01.04.15 to 31.03.16

Balance on 01.04.2015

Nat. West Bank	11,965.71
CAF	<u>231.15</u>
TOTAL	<u>12,196.86</u>

Income for the year

Covenants & donations	12,699.23
The Just Trust	7,000.00
The Big Lottery	65,831.00
The Network for Social Change	6,736.75
The Peter Cundill Foundation	31,489.00
HMRC (Gift Aid Refund)	<u>1,571.25</u>
TOTAL	<u>125,327.23</u>

Expenditure for the year

CHALE CHALO	1,239.00
MANGRO & EIEIO	10,844.89
EMCOR FOLLOW-UP	4,500.00
The Baliga Trust	31,034.00
Misc. Projects in India	550.00
BAREFOOT LAWYERS	51,721.00
CKDA	950.00
UK admin., publicity, training, etc.	857.33
Bank charges (transfer to India, etc.)	217.00
Fund-raising costs	<u>42.86</u>
TOTAL	<u>101,956.08</u>

Balance on 31.03.2016

Nat. West Bank	35,336.86
CAF	<u>231.15</u>
TOTAL	<u>35,568.01</u>

A large transfer was made to projects in India very shortly after 01.04.2016, reducing what might appear to be a very substantial balance.

GIVING to IVDT

Without your help it would be impossible for us to continue with our work, so all donations are always very welcome.

GIFT AID - If you are a taxpayer, then you can make it possible for us to reclaim the tax on your gift – it gives us an extra 25% on top of your donation, and that can make a tremendous difference.

REGULAR GIVING by Direct Debit – Regular giving makes it much easier for us to plan our work. If you feel that you could manage to give in this way, we would be especially grateful.

DONATIONS can be made online using Paypal through our website: **www.ivdtrust.org**

or by post to:

7a Rosewin Row, TRURO, Cornwall TR1 1HG with cheques made out to 'IVDT'.

PLEASE NOTE THE NEW POSTAL ADDRESS

Gift Aid and Direct Debit forms are included with the newsletter. Thank you.

We will continue to send out newsletters by post to those on our mailing list, but we are trying to reduce our costs, so if any of you would be happy to receive the newsletter by email, please do let us know, and we can make sure that that happens in future.

Contact us at:

helenanightingale@hotmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We hope you enjoy reading about our work and some of the things our projects achieve with your generosity. Over the past year we have asked for money for the Chronic Kidney Disease Action Project, and also in memory of Mike Wright. We want to thank everyone whose has given specially to these appeals as well as those who give regularly - some have donated in both ways. We feel very proud of what we help happen, bringing positive change to the lives of so many people; it would not be possible without your help. Your donations make a tremendous difference to the lives of tens of thousands of people and communities.

The need for support continues – there are always more ways to spend money than raise it! Details for making a donation are enclosed.

If you would like more information about any of our projects please get in touch with Helena at helenanightingale@hotmail.com. She will be happy to send more detailed reports and will try to answer any of your questions.

Thank you to everyone.

IVD Trust, Charity No. 1013316. Registered Address: 7a Rosewin Row, TRURO TR1 1HG

Trustees: Zinat Bennet, Zara Bieler, Kim Devenish, Gabriel Grouas, Erskine Holmes, Helena Nightingale

01872 270954 helenanightingale@hotmail.com www.ivdtrust.org

MAKING A DONATION

None of the work that we do would be possible without the financial support of people like yourselves, and we are grateful for all the help that you give us. If you would like to make a donation, then cheques (made out to **IVDT**) can be sent to us at:

IVDT, 7a Rosewin Row, TRURO TR1 1HG

If you would like to make a payment directly into our account, the bank details are as follows:

National Westminster Bank, 32 Cornmarket Street, OXFORD OX1 3ES
Sort Code: 54-21-23 Account Name: IVD Trust A/c. No. 87213508

If you wish to be a regular donor, please use the **Monthly Standing Order Form** below. Regular donations help us to plan ahead for our work and fundraising, but all gifts are welcome. If you want us to know about your gift, please let us know, then we can thank you properly, and for those of you who are tax payers, there is a **Gift Aid Form** as well. Many thanks to you all.

.....

MONTHLY STANDING ORDER INSTRUCTION – Please complete and send to YOUR bank, and NOT to IVDTrust.

TO: The Manager, (name of bank)

Address

Please pay from my account each month on (date) the sum of £ to the IVD Trust (Charity No. 1013316), Account No. 87213508, Nat. West Bank, 32 Cornmarket Street, OXFORD OX1 3ES (Sort Code 54-21-23)

This monthly payment to start on (date)

Signed **Date**

Bank Account No.

Address

P. S. If you want us to know about your gift, please do let us know, and then we can thank you

GIFT AID *If you make a donation to us we are able to claim back the tax that you have paid – 25p for each £1. All you need to do is fill out this form. Thank you very much for helping our work and for making your gift go further.*

Please return to: Integrated Village Development Trust, 7a Rosewin Row, TRURO TR1 1HG

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (Surname & initials)

Address:

..... (Postcode)

Email

Gift Aid Declaration: I would like Integrated Village Development Trust to claim back the tax on my donation of £ (amount)

SIGNATURE DATE