



**JUNE
2018**

I V D TRUST

INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

Newsletter No.27

. . . working in India to relieve rural poverty.

The year has seen many challenges for the charitable sector. Because of the work we do and the way we do it, most of this doesn't apply to us, but it has caused us to look carefully at our safeguarding and financial policies and procedures, to make sure they are rock solid. We are pleased that these all hold good, and hope our supporters will find that reassuring. We also make sure our partners have policies and procedures in place matching our own. If you have any uncertainties, then please do contact us and we can let you have copies of the various documents, and answer any queries.

Perhaps the biggest challenge we face in 2018 is the end of funding for two of our major projects – the Step-Up Project in Delhi, and the Barefoot Lawyers Project in Western Odisha.

For three years, up till the end of March, twenty-five remedial education centres run by the **Baliga Trust** in Delhi had received financial support from the **Peter Cundill Foundation**. This work now falls outside their remit – they are focussing on Africa, and on sports activities – so the funding from them came to an end. Zinat gives an account of her first visit to this project, and we describe how we have been able to continue our support, though at a much-reduced level.

Our **BIG LOTTERY**-funded **BAREFOOT LAWYERS PROJECT** will be finishing at the end of June. As we said last year, it is one of the most extraordinary projects that we have ever come across, and it is a real grief that it is ending. Again, please do read about some of the remarkable changes that have taken place on this project, and how we are trying to take this work forward.

We have made a good start on our **CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE ACTION** Project in Western Odisha. The team has identified 450 people affected by CKD, and is leading a campaign to improve support for them and their families. Thanks to the **Quakers and supporters in Cornwall**, we have tested drinking water for heavy metals, and will campaign for safe water in sixty villages. We are still not certain whether there is a direct link with CKD, but, given the level of contaminants, we believe that all these villagers have a right to safe drinking water. This approach governs every aspect of our work on this project, and while we work to improve life chances for people generally, we are also feeding our findings and data to researchers in the hope that it will contribute to the global picture.

The **MANGRO Project** continues to make a real difference by planting and protecting mangrove along the coast of Odisha, helping local people increase their family incomes, and providing environmental education. One of the real achievements of this past year has been the success of a local campaign against illegal prawn ponds. This has been brave work, and we take our hats off to the villagers who have succeeded where the Forest Department failed! Special thanks to the **Just Trust** for its longstanding contribution to MANGRO, and to the many others who help this project.

Please read on to find more about all these projects. We hope these pages give you some idea of what we have done with your generous donations. Thank you. One thing we would like to say to all our supporters and readers, if ever you have any ideas and suggestions, especially for our ongoing projects or sources of funding, please do get in touch. We may not be able to take everything on board, but an outside eye is often very useful; past suggestions have led to new avenues of work, and if you would like to know more about any project, please do get in touch at:

helenanightingale@hotmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

REFLECTING ON OUR WORK – *Helena Nightingale writes . . .*

Sometimes real change can be achieved very rapidly, as with our **BAREFOOT LAWYERS PROJECT**, but it often takes longer for change to be sustainable, and for it to address the root causes of the problem. IVDT is happy to embrace any opportunity where we can make a real contribution, but it is very special to be able to build a long-term relationship with a partner and project. Where this is possible, as with **MANGRO**, our consistent input on a small-scale project can help bring about significant deep-rooted change. This affects not just the environmental and economic sustainability, but also deeply traditional attitudes. Being involved over a long period also help us notice those changes. We have seen it with attitudes to gender; and we also see it with caste.

It is one of the questions which I am most often asked: whether caste is still an issue. I'm not sure quite how reliable my answer would be; I am very much an outsider. However, I do keep my eyes and ears open, and read widely, so I'm probably not too far out of line. It is fair to say that caste is still a big determining factor in the lives of many people, and in Western Odisha there is the additional matter of whether or not you are an adivasi (tribal). Villages are often made up of only one or two castes or groups, and when more than one, there will usually be a clear divide, often visibly different in style if not in wealth. The houses will be different. The three pictures below show the marked difference between a higher caste area, an adivasi village street, and a poor dalit (untouchable) village (though certainly not all dalit villages look as unkempt as this).



If a low caste woman opens a shop, the higher caste women will not use it, especially if it sells food. When I walk down a village street with dalit children, I might still hear a voice calling from a shadowed doorway, "What are you doing with those kind of children?", and not in a friendly tone.



Almost all of those who clean the streets and sewers in the cities are still dalits, almost all of those in senior civil service positions are still high caste. When I speak to doctors or law students, almost all of them have Brahmin or high caste names. One of the projects I visit on behalf of [The Just Trust](#) is based in a community of rag-pickers in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. It is generally only the grandparents who still do this work. Their children have had more education, but the stigma remains and most of them only get work as school cleaners, housemaids, rickshaw drivers – and, of course, rubbish collectors and sewage workers.

BUT I also know that almost all children in our project areas go to school until the leaving age, regardless of caste, and they all have midday meals, which certainly didn't happen fifteen years ago. In the Just Trust Project mentioned above, the youngsters are receiving an education which will help at least some of them become nurses, teachers, maybe even doctors and university lecturers, as will those in our own project areas.

At IVDT we have always prioritised the dalits, the adivasis, the poorest, the women – in other words the most disadvantaged in society. And so do our partners, not just the beneficiaries, but the project teams, volunteers and senior staff. We aim to be positive examples of how things should be. This pays dividends. What we are seeing in our project areas, is that when adivasis and Dalits, and women, of course, have been able to demonstrate their value to the community by leading discussion, decision-making and action, those of higher status have allowed them to take those roles. It's true that when our beneficiaries gain benefits for the village, the higher caste members also benefit. We hope they will learn from their fellow villagers!

So my answer to those who ask me, caste is still a sad and difficult issue, but things are slowly changing for the better, and one day, I hope, there will be no need to ask such a question. In the meantime, caste is one of the important threads that runs through all our work.

Recent funders include: Jennifer Anderson, David Bennett, The Big Lottery Fund, Mike Deeks, The Just Trust, Gillie Howarth, The Network for Social Change, The Peter Cundill Foundation, Quaker Relief Grants, Religious Society of Friends (Cornwall), Ann Scott, Mary Stephens, Roger Sturdy, and many others

THE MANGRO PROJECT



Some of our new mangrove as seen from the estuary.

PLANTING

Over the years this project has been responsible for planting about two million trees. Some of these are general purpose trees (such a strange way to describe a beautiful tree!), and we've reached the point where the demand and need for such trees is now satisfied largely by communities, individuals, and the Forest Dept., so our role in this kind of planting is much diminished.

The remainder are mangrove trees which require more specialised care. Given that the Forest Dept. is now planting more and more mangrove, we have seriously questioned the need for us to continue with our own work. After all, what we are able to achieve by comparison is relatively small-scale. However, it is not all about numbers. In the past year we have raised and planted out 55,000 saplings, of which only 95 have been lost. This is a phenomenal success rate, and it earns us great respect, especially from the Forest Dept. It means that our advice, concerns, and campaigns are taken seriously because everyone in the area knows of the real expertise of our team. If we were to stop running our nurseries and plantations, that respect would soon fade, and our voice would diminish. Because of this it is really important that mangrove plantation remains at the core of our work. The quality of our practical work gives us legitimacy and authority, so the planting continues.

CAMPAIGNING

Meanwhile we encourage the government to take responsibility for mangrove regeneration, and organise community support to ensure the success of their programmes. Six hundred villagers have been involved in this campaign. It would be fair to say that the emphasis on the project has shifted more towards campaigning, though the personal practical commitment by villagers which has been a defining feature of the project, remains as strong as ever.

One of the long-term concerns in the project area is the damage that has been caused by converting forest land to the use of **prawn ponds** – in other words, cutting down the mangrove. Apart from the loss of the forest, no mean matter, this leads to the erosion of shorelines and river banks, and to pollution of the rivers and tidal waters by pesticides, disease and decomposing prawn feed, which are all released into the rivers and damage the local fish nurseries and fish stocks.

We have previously written of the 1 defunct World Bank-funded prawn farm project which has stood abandoned for years. As a result of a long campaign by project villagers about a third of the land involved has been returned to the Forest Dept. from the Dept. of Fisheries. The plan is for it to be replanted with mangrove, and that there should be community involvement in the work and protection of the restored forest. The government had planned for the remaining two-thirds to be re-used for prawns, but the process became so mired in corruption that the idea has been abandoned, and there is a possibility that it will also be returned to the Forest Dept. Our campaign continues.

Many of the prawn ponds are illegal, their owners not local, and the management carried out by the "prawn pond mafia". Our project villagers organised a campaign to have these ponds demolished. It is no small matter; previously the local Forest Officer was assaulted by the mafia, and badly injured, ending up in hospital. Action Groups were formed in each village to hold meetings, carry out discussion with officials, and collect signatures. The activists also got support from various high profile people visiting the nearby Bhitarkanika National Park. It was a victory for the villagers: 296 prawn ponds have been banned, destroyed and the land will be replanted with mangrove. The villagers deserve great respect for their courage in this, and for the way in which they ran the campaign. One of the critical factors was the large number and diversity of people involved:

fishermen and farmers, students and teachers, Eco-club members, writers, poets and artists, Forest Dept. officials, the media, local political representatives, community leaders –



Some of the old prawn ponds, no longer functioning, and awaiting new mangrove plantation

almost everyone in the area took part! We never really believed that this would be possible, and are very proud of what we have achieved. The campaign continues on the remaining eighty illegal ponds.

FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN – FROM SCROLL STORIES TO RADIO

Two years ago we revived the tradition of telling stories with scrolls, which are now regularly shown with accompanying songs at village meetings. Three artists in the area have been trained to make them, and work with children in schools. They provide a focus for discussion and are now being produced on a wide range of themes. It is extraordinary how this ancient method of communication has such power. However, we have not turned our back on more modern methods, and have set up a **Community Eco-Radio Programme** which will be broadcast on environmental matters once a fortnight, starting in October. The staff and volunteers have been trained, and we hope that through these programmes we will be able to reach a much wider audience.



Children present their Climate Change scroll



Balaram gives a cue to the dancers

EDUCATION

Apart from the scrolls, we have two new additions to our collection of environment education materials: “The Brilliant Bird Book of Odisha”, and “The Magic of Mangrove” shown below). These books have been distributed to all the Eco-club leaders in the area, to every school library, and are being sold at the Visitor Centre at Bhitarkanika National Park. In addition a stall was taken at the Odisha Book Fair to promote these books and other material produced by the project, such as “The Hental”, our local Eco-club newsletter. This is such a simple thing, but there is nothing like this for young people elsewhere in the state. We hope it will be an inspiration to others, and trigger more such publications.



Planting trees, campaigning and education are just three of the many threads of the work carried out on the MANGRO Project. We **continue to work with farmers**, helping them to reduce the use of agro-chemicals. Balaram Jena, one of our keenest team members, has been appointed Krushakasathi (Farmers’ Friend) by the Block Office, and he continues to train people on grafting (149 this year) and compost making (130). More than 250 families in his area are now producing compost under the NREGA scheme, and get paid for it with a guaranteed market. Balaram has helped set up village seed banks, each run by 12 women and used by about 50 farmers. He works with local women promoting kitchen gardens, and with farmers promoting SRI, a more environment-friendly method of growing rice.

AND SOME OF THE OTHER WORK THE MANGRO TEAM DOES

The above describes some of the main components of the Project’s work, but there are many other ways in which the project and the team help bring positive change to individuals and communities, some of which may not be directly connected with the aims of MANGRO. For example, we have been able to give legal advice in matters such as infringement of land rights, claiming compensation for crop damage, helping set up Women’s Self-help Groups, promoting and enabling the building of lavatories through government schemes, helping mothers get Birth Certificates for their babies, enabling grants for children studying above 8th Grade, sorting out old age pensions, and so on. Because the team members are aware of the schemes and benefits that are available, it is inevitable that they will be asked for help and support in a wide range of matters. Though not directly related to MANGRO, it means that the impact of our work goes far beyond its key aims, and helps increase the social and economic sustainability of these vulnerable communities.



Two of the new lavatories in Balarampur

One of the most interesting changes we have seen recently is the approach to education. It is hard to remember that only ten years ago learning was by rote. When we ran workshops on new, creative ways of learning, many of the teachers found it hard to grasp what we were doing. We cannot claim full credit for the changes that have taken place since then; that is largely due to changes in education policy at state level. But we have helped prepare many of the teachers in our area so they were a step ahead of the general trend, and already experimenting with the approaches which we had introduced over the past fifteen years.

I would like to finish with one example. I was visiting a school in our area. My visit overlapped with a workshop being run by the Block Education Office on inclusive, child-centred approaches to learning (part-funded by DfID UK, by the way). The school itself had won an award as a Model School. It was filled with paintings, with the children's work. The walls outside were beautifully painted, and the verandas hung with decorations. The garden was loved and cared for. The children sat in groups and worked together. There was a gentle hum, but a quiet discipline, the children open-faced and courteous. It was enchanting. We watched performances of songs, dances and scrolls about why it is important to care for the environment, and how.

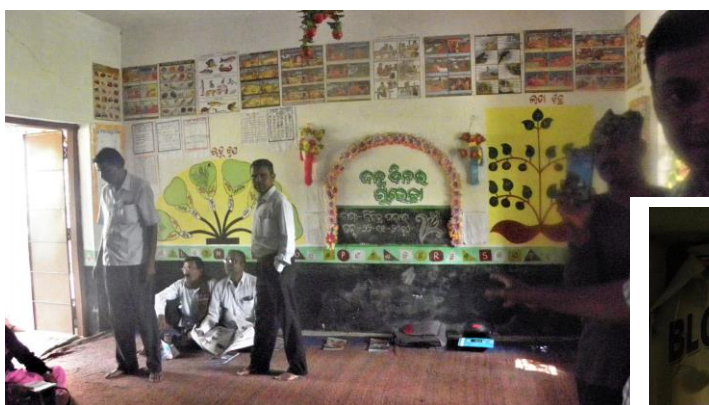


Not only is the school beautiful, but there is plenty of evidence that the children get practical hands-on learning experience. Here there are seeds, and an experiment in germination and growth.

Some of those from the training workshop came and joined us (and joined in!), and I noticed an elderly dignified gentleman sitting near me who had tears rolling down his face. I asked what was troubling him, and he replied that he was retiring in two months, and never in all his career had he realised that it was possible to teach like this, for a school to be like this, and he felt that all his working years had been a wasted opportunity. By this time I was crying too, of course! We talked a bit, and in the end, he said that he had decided he would work as a volunteer in his retirement and do everything he could to make sure that all children in his area would have the opportunity to learn in this way.



The walls painted with quotations and decorative friezes, the ceilings hung with garlands, the school is joyous.



Above: Some of the training workshop participants take a break and have the chance to see how Balarampur School works

Right: This ten-day training workshop was largely funded by the UK's DfID, and is making a real difference



Ten years ago I would never have imagined a school like this, a conversation such as this. These changes are not universal across India; I don't see it happening in Tamil Nadu or Delhi. And as I say, these changes are not all because of us. The most we can claim is that we have been part of the process of change, and have helped, in a small way, to prepare many teachers to embrace the changes when they become official. Whoever is responsible, it is brilliant to see, and will in due course transform education for millions of children.

The BAREFOOT LAWYERS Project

This has been one of the most remarkable projects with which we have ever been involved and it is with great sadness that it is finishing at the end of this June. The aim of the project was to work with 9,851 tribal and low-caste women in 98 villages, raise their awareness about their legal rights and government responsibilities, and to provide the skills that will ensure access to the various benefits and programmes to which they are entitled. Over three years, the cost of this has been less than

£20 per woman, And yet the benefits that the project has brought are absolutely massive. Once the project is complete we will do a calculation of its financial worth, but it is clear that we will be able to show a massive “return on the initial investment”, if one should care to phrase it in such a way! Listing just **SOME** of the achievements, the extent of their financial worth will make that clear:



- almost total inclusion for Food Security Cards which provides basic foodstuffs and cooking fuel at a subsidised rate – about 20,000 families;
- 314,250 days paid work each year on NREGA schemes improving local infrastructure;
- 6,724 new lavatories built;
- 1,450 new houses under government schemes;
- 3,135 pensions for the old, disabled and widows;
- access roads for 32 villages;
- check dams, farm ponds and other water-saving and irrigation schemes for 90 villages;
- eradication of illegal demands for money for maternal and childcare services;
- 60% people receiving free medicine;
- provision of schools and sufficient teachers in every village which is entitled to it;
- provision of water and electricity in all villages;
- 98 cases of abuse against women taken up and dealt with;
- and much, much more!

Looking at the income from NREGA alone, without taking anything else into account, that £20 per woman has been turned into £40 for each year, and that will continue into the future. If we take into account that her husband might well have earned a similar amount, that turns it into £80 in just one year, which means £240 per family over the three years. These benefits have been felt, not only by the families of the women involved, but by the whole community. When we add in the other increases in income, savings made, time saved (e.g. not having to walk miles for water), the value of a new house or lavatory, and the general all-round improvement in quality of life - it begins to add up!

But the most important gain has been the confidence of the women, and the respect in which they are held by the community. Only three years ago, these women had no voice at all, and played no part in the decision-making of their communities. Now they are seen as the ones who are best able to make decisions for the benefit of the whole community. What a turnaround!

One of the extraordinary things is that most of them have completely forgotten that, at the beginning, all of this would have been unthinkable. And when you remind them, they believe that it is something they have achieved entirely by themselves! Well, in a sense they have, but that would be to underestimate the absolutely vital contribution of the BAREFOOT LAWYERS team, their total commitment to the people with whom they have been working, and to the project. The project was thoughtfully designed, built on years of experience and a deep knowledge of the area and the people.

Most of the members of the team have been women, and this has been unusual in such a rural area where families are reluctant to let their wives and daughters work in remote villages. Few of them have ever had the opportunity to do this kind of work before, but they have been key to the project's success. We have provided them with plenty of support, but it is they themselves who have forged themselves into such a tight group, encouraging, learning and helping each other. We hope that we will find funding to continue this work in new villages, and to keep some of these women working with our partner, CHALE CHALO. For the others, we can only wish them all the best for the future, and that they will keep in touch, and that they can take the lessons they have learnt out into the world where there is so much need of their skills and talents.

For the beneficiaries, and their Village Women's Groups, they are all ready to work on their own, and several have already started to take their skills to new villages, spreading the lessons they have learnt. If we do manage to find more funding then we will be able to do this on a larger scale, and, if lucky, we'll be able to tell you about that in our next newsletter.

This is such a brilliant way of bringing an enormous amount of change for relatively little investment, and we have been so grateful to the Big Lottery which has made this project possible.



Walking away into the future! Well, not quite; these women are members of a Barefoot Lawyers Group, on their way to take part in a Gram Sabha (a multi-village public meeting) which would have been unthinkable two or three years ago.

This project will be finishing at the end of June, and we all feel very sad about that. In spite of serious challenges managing the finances of the project, largely because major fluctuations in exchange rates which meant the UK value of the grant fell significantly in India, CHALE CHALO and the team were able to make significant savings. We also received some additional help from the Big Lottery. Together it means that the project will finish with a small surplus. This will be used to write a detailed but simple handbook outlining the project and which can then be used for similar work elsewhere. It will contain a wide range of background information, the frameworks for the organisational structure, training material used, details of all legal provisions, copies of application forms and simplified instructions for filling them in and submitting them. We also plan to promote this at State level particularly to other NGOs in the hope that the valuable lessons that have been learnt from the project will be spread more widely.

At the same time, funding applications have been submitted to Indian organisations in the hope that CHALE CHALO will be able to find the money to extend the work they have been doing to a wider area. A submission has gone to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (India); CHALE CHALO has had an assessment visit from them, and Ranjit is waiting to hear whether or not they have been successful. If so, it will provide an opportunity for some of the team to continue their amazing work in a further sixty villages where it is much needed. (For more about the changing world of funding, see below.)



BAREFOOT LAWYERS ARE BRILLIANT! - Most of the Project team with some of the women they work with, an amazing bunch (and Barun, one of the handful of men working on the project, who are brilliant too, of course)

FUTURE SOURCES OF FUNDS

The world of funding is gradually changing. Once upon a time our partners in India and elsewhere were entirely dependent on funds which came from the UK, and sometimes other European or American countries. As India has become wealthier, we have found it harder to achieve large-scale UK funding for major projects, but, at the same time, the range of Indian sources has increased. Many large companies have set up Corporate Social Responsibility units which benefit from tax breaks, and there is a growing number of funding agencies in India itself, supported by donations from wealthy families and an increasing, and increasingly generous, middle class. This is the future for the work of our partners. The transition will be slow, and it will be some years before they will be able to find ALL their money in India, but they are gradually moving towards that. It will be sad for us to lose our long and close link with our partners, but it is altogether healthy, and our hope is that one day no one will need to do this kind of work because all the problems in the world will have been solved – now there's a dream! In the meantime, we are incredibly grateful to all of you for your continuing support, and for the amazing change that you help us bring to people who desperately need all the help they can get wherever it comes from. Thank you so much to you all.

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE ACTION, Western Odisha

I have written much about this project in the last couple of years. We continue to work closely with all those affected in the project villages, about 450 people in all, though in the nature of things the figure changes constantly. We have set up CKD Action Groups in each village and trained them to provide support to those who have CKD and to their families, to raise awareness in the village, and to organise support for the campaign for improved medical services and support. In addition, we are exploring the possible causes of the disease, and there is more of that on the next page.

On my visit in Dec. 2017, I visited many of the affected villages and heard many stories. I would like to share with you a few of the stories I heard in **BHOJPUR**. These stories are typical of those that are told in every village in the project area. With a population of 1,700, there have been 25 deaths from CKD in Bhojpur in the past four years, two in the past month, and 15 people are currently identified as having CKD.

NIKUNJA PATEL's husband died in 2014, aged 33, having been diagnosed only 8 days before. He had had fever and vomiting for several days, so she took him to a hospital in AP (300 miles), spent one day there while he was given tests, and then seven days' worth of medicine. She brought him home but he did not get better, so they went to Raipur (200 miles), where she was told he needed a transplant, which, of course, she couldn't afford, so the doctor told her to take her husband home. They came home at 11.30 at night, and half an hour later he was dead. She has been left with two sons, aged 7 and 5. Three other members of her husband's family have died of CKD: his father and two of his uncles.



This is **BHANU PARA BHOI** on the left. Her husband had died in Sept. 2017, having been diagnosed just two weeks previously. She had noticed that his face was swollen, so took him to the hospital in Khariar (20 miles), where the doctor sent her to Nuapada (50 miles), who sent her to Burla (200 miles) where he stayed for four days having tests. They suggested that she give him blood which she had been unable to do. On the way back to Khariar, via Sambalpur, they saw another doctor who told her that he was in the last stages, that giving blood would have been no help, and she should take him home because he might die at any minute. When they got back home, she called an Ayurvedic doctor, but his medicine caused him to vomit blood, and he died a few days later, leaving her with three children, all boys. (20, 15, 3).

miles), where he was told both kidneys were damaged. They then went to the Mission Hospital at Khariar who told her he could have a kidney transplant for £13,000, obviously out of the question. She then took her husband to an ayurvedic doctor in Nuapada for three days, but the medicine caused him to vomit uncontrollably. They came back and visited another ayurvedic doctor, and then went to the Khariar government hospital where he was prescribed medicine which made no difference. Then to the Ramakrishna Hospital, where they were again asked for £13,000 for a transplant, so she took him home, and he died within six days. She was left with 5 children aged five to sixteen, three of them pictured with her above.



These are just three of the many stories I heard, in just one of many villages. They illustrate typical sagas of frantic trekking round the countryside from hospital to hospital in search of help. This might give the impression that it is just men who get CKD, but about a third or more of those affected are women: I spoke to three women in Bhojpur who have CKD, and similar numbers in other villages. We still don't know why it is more common in men. It is possible that they are more prone to get the disease, or that there are exacerbating factors to which the women are not so exposed. This means that if contaminated water is a possible cause, it is probably not the only one.



Thanks to pressure from the Project team and the CKD Village Action Group, the Asst. District Medical Officer and a fellow doctor had visited Bhojpur to collect information and take blood samples from 31 people who feared they might have CKD, confirming 15 cases; the other 16 were suffering from a number of other conditions. As part of our campaign for improved medical services, the Medical Office is considering the request for provision of free medication for CKD patients at the nearby Primary Healthcare Centre. Thanks to the efforts of the village CKD activists and the Project team, all those who have lost husbands and wives to the disease have received bereavement payments and get pensions and other benefits which provide some help in difficult circumstances. One of those involved in this village is Bhujbal Punji, a local businessman whose wife is the village's Anganwadi Worker (i.e. Child and Maternity Care Worker). It is amazing to meet people like this in every village who commit a great deal of their time to support those who are in such desperate need. As I said earlier, Bhojpur is just one of 48 project villages, all with similar stories.



Village activist, Bhujbal Punji, on the left and one of the CKD-affected villagers to whom he gives support.

CKDA is working to provide support for all those affected, to raise awareness and campaign for proper government provision. It also liaises with specialists and researchers who are trying to understand the nature of this illness, its causes, and possible treatment. It is possible that it is caused by a combination of factors, and we are passing on all the information that we are able to gather on the project in the hope that, one day, we will have a better understanding of the disease and can reduce its incidence and impact.

A CLEAR SOLUTION

One of the possible causes of CKD is contaminated water. We already know that many of the project villages have high levels of fluoride in the water. This occurs naturally, and the incidence of fluorosis is fairly high. If fluoride is being dissolved in the groundwater, we thought it possible that other toxins might also be present. It is important that we say that there are researchers who also consider this a possibility. There are only two laboratories in Odisha which are capable of testing for heavy metals, and the obvious thing was for us to invest in our own equipment, train the staff to use it, and test the water ourselves. This would not have been possible without the support of a **Quaker Relief Grant**, and a number of generous donors in Cornwall, and we are very grateful to them all.



Villagers help us take samples of drinking water from their tube well. It is important to involve them and help them understand why we are testing their water

We have tested 147 different sources of drinking water in 48 villages for arsenic, cadmium, mercury and lead, and the results are alarming. Almost every result has been above the safe level. For arsenic the mean is twice the safe level, for cadmium, three times, and for mercury it is four times. The villagers have no alternative source of water. Filters help a bit, but not much, and are expensive, though not as expensive as bottled water.



Back at the Office, Harishankar and Ranjit test all the samples and record the results

A report of the test results has been prepared and is being used as the basis of a campaign for safe drinking water in 60 villages in the area. Coordinated by the CKDA team, it will be led by the CKD Village Action Groups with the support of Women's Self-help Groups and villagers generally. We do not know whether or not these contaminants really do contribute to CKD, but everyone has a right to clean drinking water, and the government has a responsibility to provide it. This is the kind of action in which our partner, CHALE CHALO, has a great deal of experience and within the next year we expect to see that a government plan to provide filtered, piped, safe water is being implemented. We will then make sure it is regularly tested and the results published so everyone in the area can be sure that their water does not contain these high levels of toxic contaminants.

The BALIGA TRUST

IMPRESSIONS OF A VISIT TO THE STEP-UP PROJECT IN DELHI,

JANUARY 2018 by Zinat Bennett

(Zinat is one of our trustees and it was her first time visiting an IVDT-supported project)

There was a lot to absorb in one go, but overall the visit provided me with a very good introduction to the work and the challenges that our partners in the Baliga Trust face.

First Impressions

Although located in North Delhi slums, the 25 study centres were well run considering the very restricted spaces in old buildings that are difficult to access. The space was well used, the two main centres have clean drinking water and toilet facilities. Almost every inch of wall space available was used for exhibiting the children's artwork and educational posters. We began the visits by meeting teachers and a very impressive group of women who have been key in promoting the study centres to other parents. The advocacy has clearly worked, judging by the numbers of students who have elected to attend classes in their spare time.

Classroom visits

Art activities

I was impressed with the enthusiastic artwork, however this was very much in keeping with the colourful traditional folk styles illustrating patterns and decorative motifs rather like the Madhubani style, occasionally telling a story. It would be great to expose some of these gifted children to different techniques and perhaps freer styles of painting or sculpture using their imaginations. For example, there was only one black and white painting of an actual landscape, nothing like what was visible around the settlements.

Literacy and Numeracy

We watched an arithmetic lesson being conducted using cards, which seemed to engage children, although not all the boys were equally attentive. The teacher was using modern teaching techniques rather than the rote methods so often found in traditional Indian schools.

The language class was very impressive: at Holambi Kalan a very serious young girl recited a poem in Hindi telling a story of a felled tree and the impact on birds and bees in a stunning manner. Clearly, I was very impressed both with the message and the delivery. However, the standard of English generally was not very high, although the younger students were better when conversing in English. In a corner of one of the centres, some children were absorbed in watching an animated film in English; perhaps videos and CDs might prove to be an effective method for improving their oral English language skills so necessary for getting better paid jobs in Delhi.

On the negative side, the study centre libraries were a cause for concern. There were very few books and those that were there were in poor condition and of dubious quality.

ICT Education (not funded by IVDT)

We saw an introduction to IT skills being carried out at one of the centres. This was focussed on using Microsoft Office. It would be interesting to see how much can be achieved in six months. The IT network sponsored by the MahindraTech was well equipped and connected to the Internet at the SMART Centre. It was very ambitious; teaching older students Java programming in six months in part-time sessions starting from scratch is a big ask. It will be interesting to follow their progress. Perhaps a local area network with a few workstations with a pre-loaded server with books and educational materials would be a cost-effective way to distribute learning material to overcome the current paucity of library resources at the STEP-UP Centres (Internet access is not currently readily available at all the centres).

Lifestyle and personal safety issues

There was a major emphasis on promoting safety for women at all the centres. The need for this became apparent when I read the national newspapers reporting the escalating instances of abuse of women and girls.

Health issues appear to have been effectively tackled at the centre by the youth groups who have campaigned for clean water and hygiene facilities. And children have access to advice on personal hygiene for day to day living, such as healthy teeth. It was encouraging to see activities such as touch rugby being played with mixed teams of male and female players. Some very impressive young leaders in the making!



**Dr. A.V. Baliga
Memorial Trust**

THE STEP-UP PROJECT, BALIGA TRUST, DELHI



The young lady who so impressed Zinat on our visit to a Step-up Centre

Over the past three years we have provided support to twenty-five remedial education centres in Delhi's slum resettlement areas. This was thanks to the Peter Cundill Foundation, but, sadly, they are unable to continue their funding. These centres do outstanding work, and we were determined that at least some of the centres continue their work until we or the Baliga Trust can find funds from elsewhere. IVDT has made a grant to cover the costs of a staff member searching for sources of money and making applications. This would normally come under "Core Costs" and it is almost impossible for small organisations to cover the costs of this vital work. We also agreed to cover the costs of two centres for the coming year, so at least some of the work would continue. Gradually, the Baliga Trust has managed to find enough money to keep thirteen of the twenty-five centres in operation. We are really pleased about this. It was hard to think that these children who had been doing so well would suddenly be left without the educational support which makes such a big difference to their lives. We will keep this project under review, and hope to find the money to reopen all the other centres. In the meantime, we have been very grateful to the Peter Cundill Foundation for backing this work so generously over the past three years.

SOLE CENTRES (SOLE = Self-oriented Learning Experience)

Last year Helena and Ranjit met Prof. Sugata Mitra in Newcastle. You may have heard of his "Hole-in-the-Wall" computers for Delhi's street children featured on Radio 4 a couple of years ago. Another of his brilliant and successful ideas is creating centres in areas of deprivation where children can have free access to computers and the internet. The idea is that the children use the technology to direct their own learning and problem-solving. A key feature is the "Granny Cloud" where children can link up with English-speakers in the UK, Canada or New Zealand, and hold conversations. I had the privilege to be present at one of these in the Sunderbans, and it was great fun as well as being truly educational. Children can work

towards gaining an English Language certificate from Newcastle University once they have completed a certain number of hours of conversation. We have two sites which would be possible for centres like these: one in Narela at a Baliga Trust centre, and one in Sundargarh, Odisha, on an education project which CHALE CHALO is running on education for tribal girls. It looks like both of these will be possible once we manage to find the money to cover the costs of setting them up and running them. Everyone is very excited at the possibilities that these might offer to children in their area.



A "Granny" session at the SOLE Centre in the remote Sunderbans, helping children learn English

CHILDREN'S STUDY CENTRES, TIRUNELVELI, TAMIL NADU



Some of the grannies who still work as ragpickers. They are very concerned that their grandchildren get the best possible education so that the prospects for the future will be better than they themselves had.

The Just Trust has been a long and loyal supporter of IVDT's work, and we have been very pleased over the past two years to carry out the monitoring for one of their non-IVDT projects in a small city in southern India. It has been an interesting task, partly because it gives Helena the chance to see a non-IVDT project, and partly because of the lessons we can learn from it, and maybe even pass on to the Centres. There are four Study Centres on this project, and they are very simple, basic safe places where the children can come and do their homework and lesson preparation. These centres are in very poor communities, originally ragpickers as I mentioned earlier on the second page of this newsletter. The children are all first- or second-generation

learners. Their homes are very small with little space and facilities for quiet work, so the centres are a refuge where they can get on with their work and receive help from the Leader. These centres do valuable work, helping give the new generation a better chance for the future. One of the most moving things about visiting the centres is the way that the parents and grandparents come along to tell me how the children are doing. This kind of family support will be invaluable to the children.

Provisional SUMMARY of IVDTrust accounts for 01.04.17 to 31.03.18

Balance on 01.04.2017

Nat. West Bank	37,326.25
COIF	232.04
TOTAL	37,568.01

Income for the year

Covenants & donations	25,815.73
The Just Trust	5,200.00
The Big Lottery	70,683.00
Quakers (BYM)	6,000.00
HMRC Gift Aid Refund (for 2 years)	9,170.33
VAT Refund	1,664.00
Interest (COIF)	0.96
TOTAL	118,534.02

Expenditure for the year

MANGRO & EIEIO	15,987.70
The Baliga Trust	7,367.00
Misc. Projects in India	2,425.29
BAREFOOT LAWYERS	63,885.69
CKDA	19,083.47
GRAMODHAYA SSS (for Just Trust)	2,200.00
UK admin., publicity, training, etc.	640.43
Bank transfer charges	198.00
TOTAL	111,787.58

Balance on 31.03.2018

Nat. West Bank	44,304.73
CAF	233.00
TOTAL	44,537.73

A transfer of £25,607 was made to projects in India very shortly after 01.04.2018 reducing what might appear to be a very substantial balance, and much of the remainder is earmarked for spending on projects later in the year. This summary is provisional pending the audit which will shortly be carried out. When complete the accounts will be available on the Charity Commission website.

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:

47 Brome Place, OXFORD OX3 9LR or
7a Rosewin Row, TRURO TR1 1HG
with cheques made out to 'IVDT'.

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 all that our projects are achieving with your generosity. We feel very proud of what we help happen, bringing positive change to the lives of so many people, and it would not be possible without your help. The need for support continues – there are always more ways to spend money than raise it! Please help if you can. Your donations make a tremendous difference to the lives of people and communities.

Details for making a donation are given on the last page. Thank you to everyone.



On the MANGRO Project, more villagers are growing chemical-free vegetables, and they don't even cut down trees to make the protective walls – mud does the job.

IVD Trust, Charity No. 1013316. Registered Address: 47 Brome Place, Oxford OX3 9LR

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

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

MAKING A DONATION

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. We also need your consent to keep your **details**, and there is a form for that below as well. Very 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, Cornwall 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

KEEPING YOUR DETAILS

By law, we need to have your consent to keep your contact details. Without these it is not possible for us to keep in touch and let you know how your donations are being spent. We would be very grateful if you could sign the following and post it to us at **IVDT, 7a Rosewin Row, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1HG**, or send an email to helenanightingale@hotmail.com, letting us know that you are happy for us to keep your details.

I, (name), of (address)

..... Email

do give my consent that IVDT may keep my contact details as given above, and may contact me with news and information about their work.

Signed Date