



**NOV.
2022**

I V D TRUST

INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

Newsletter No.32

. . . working in India to relieve rural poverty.

Sometimes when it comes to writing our Annual Newsletter, it feels as though we are telling you about struggles, turmoil and victories that are happening far away from our quiet, calm, safe world in Britain. We tell stories of how people face enormous problems – entrenched poverty, precarious climate, capricious government, the pernicious caste system, and so on, and how, with a bit of help and support, they overcome their difficulties. We speak of how, in spite of all that is thrown at them - cyclone, flood, drought, and wilful government policy - they continue their heroic struggle and make the world a better place.

Well, it's a bit different this year! Sitting at my desk in a country that has been beset with so much turmoil and struggle – by which I mean Britain – the work on our projects seems to continue at an enviably serene pace, slowly enabling poor communities to take control of their lives and futures. Of course there are problems such as the global economic crisis and the long-term impact of Covid (and I speak of these on p.9) which affect those in an Indian village as much as us in the UK, but we know that the long-term consistency of the work on our projects slowly bears fruit, year after year, building confidence, optimism and the resilience to deal with inevitable crises.

In this Newsletter we tell you about some of the work our partners have been carrying out, bringing positive and sustainable change. CHALE CHALO continues with the MANGRO Project which each year extends and develops to make such a difference to poor and vulnerable coastal communities. And, while the BALIGA TRUST has grown and branched out, we have been able to continue our support for the remedial education centres in poor areas in Delhi which have been at the root of so much of their success.

We hope that you enjoy reading about the past year's achievements, work carried out by our partners with your help and support. And we hope that it might bring a moment of relief to know that, somewhere in the world, things continue to progress quietly and steadily in spite of all the local and global difficulties; perhaps one day soon we too in Britain will return to a similar state! If you want to know anything more about any of the projects, please do contact us at:

helenanightingale@hotmail.com, and we will do all we can to answer any questions.

In the meantime, we are really grateful to you all, and . . .

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

MANGRO (Community-based Mangrove Regeneration in Odisha) – Looking back at what we have achieved in the past seven years

Over the years, IVDT has funded many and various projects, mostly in rural areas, all of them contributing to positive change in poor communities and helping people move forward to a better future. But the project that is perhaps dearest to our heart, and in which we have invested over such a long period, is MANGRO.

The idea for this project developed in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami which caused such devastation in the southern Indian Ocean. Its impact in Odisha was minimal, but it raised a number of serious questions: why were some communities so much more impacted than others? Was this because of excessive building in vulnerable areas? What were the natural protections against such events? Why were some communities better than others at coping with the disaster?

Even though the tsunami did not seriously affect Odisha, there is a long history of major cyclones hitting the coast in our area causing massive tidal surge with a similar impact, so we had experience of the terrible loss of life and damage that could be caused, and involvement in helping pick up the pieces. The tsunami caused us to stop and think about the ways in which we might be able to increase the long-term resilience of our partner communities. It was clear that there were several factors which exacerbated the impact of both these kinds of disasters:

- the health of mangrove forest along the coast;
- the existence of reefs along the coast;
- the extent of building along the coast;
- disaster-preparedness within coastal communities;
- and economic resilience of coastal communities.

As a small organisation we were not going to be able to deal with all these problems, but we felt that there were ways in which we could make a significant difference in the areas where we work. We could:

- raise awareness about the issues;
- help protect and restore mangrove forest which reduces the impact of tidal surge (and tsunamis);
- help coastal communities prepare for possible disaster;
- help coastal communities improve their economic resilience.

We felt that we did not have the resources to address the problems of reef damage, which is not a significant factor in our area anyway. Nor would we be able to do a great deal about unprotected and unplanned building along the coasts in vulnerable areas, though we might be able to encourage and contribute to debate about this. But we could do something about the other matters. And out of this grew our proposal for the MANGRO Project, Mangrove Regeneration in Odisha, which would help protect poor coastal communities by restoring the mangrove forest and increasing their economic, social and environmental resilience. It took a year or so before we were able to start the on-the-ground work. There were lots of lessons to be learnt, by both IVDT and our partners. Neither of us were environmental specialists, though, as amateur individuals, we had long-term involvement in environmental work. And in Odisha mangrove regeneration was minimal. The emphasis had been on building embankments with varied success. So we didn't even have the expertise of local institutions. We were breaking new ground, and much of our work was experimental.

This is perhaps one of the advantages of being a small organisation, that we are able to be flexible, to try out new ideas, being accountable only to ourselves, our partners and our donors who have been amazing in the sympathy, confidence and trust that they have shown. Of course, we would not do anything reckless. Our funds have never been great and have always been precious. We have never been able to take financial support for granted, but, by working closely with local communities, pooling our knowledge and resources, drawing in expertise, by our commitment and enthusiasm, we were able to learn very quickly and effectively, and rapidly became a focal point for change at all levels – within the community, in local and government institutions and occasionally even at state level.

Our work has always been small-scale, but the cumulative effect over the years has been extraordinary. The key is that we work with communities. Almost all the work is voluntary, and wherever possible we take advantage of government schemes, which enable villagers to be paid to plant mangrove and other trees, develop income-generation opportunities, improve sustainable farming, and generally improve the resilience of local communities. By working closely with government officials, local representatives, environmentalists, teachers and other key members of the community, building networks of concern and action, we have developed a rich and strong base for positive environmental and social change. Our gentle but focussed influence is evident everywhere one goes in the area: in the flourishing trees planted along rivers, roadsides and around homesteads, in the active involvement of communities in disaster-preparedness committees, in the transformation of schools (from drab learning-by-rote to centres of vitality and love of learning), in the active participation and leadership of women in community affairs, in the willingness and courage to take on organisations such as the local mafias.

Looking back at our work over the years, we have gathered together some of the MANGRO content in our Annual Newsletters from 2015 to 2021. This makes for a substantial document, but gives a wonderful picture of the past seven years' work, its variety and scale, and might help the reader understand quite what has been achieved. It doesn't include everything; for example, before 2015 we built a wonderful centre which serves as a base for our work and as an environmental hub in the area. But it covers the wide range of the work under the umbrella of MANGRO, and the heart of the work, which remains the restoration of mangrove. **“ABOUT MANGRO 2015-21”** is about 35 pages long, so we won't send it out to everyone, but if you would like a copy, please do let us know and we would be delighted send you one, either by post or email. (Contact helenanightingale@hotmail.com or 01872 270954)

None of what we achieved happened immediately, but our contribution over seventeen years has been transformational and lasting. This slow, small-scale approach, working WITH communities, not imposing on them, is really standing the test of time. There is still plenty of work to do, and we gradually extend our efforts into neighbouring communities, applying the lessons learnt so that more and more people are able to benefit from this amazing work. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the wonderful team which CHALE CHALO has on the ground, without the commitment and passion of the many volunteers, and without the patient and generous support of our many donors. Together you have helped create a small but growing miracle. Thank you, every one of you. We will continue with this work as long as we have the funds and as long as the need remains and we feel that we can make a meaningful contribution.

It is impossible to list everyone who has donated to this particular project over the years. Special thanks to ACE, The Just Trust, and Gillie Howarth for their long-term support and encouragement, but there are many, many more of you who have been partners in this work and make it possible.

MEANWHILE, the work continues . . .

Community Mapping on Mangrove Status

As part of looking back at our achievements, but mainly looking forward to continuing needs, we have started a process of Community Mapping in our existing MANGRO villages, and in areas into which we have been invited to extend our work. Basically this involves getting the community together and, using an established format, drawing up a map of the trees in their community, in a way which is easy for everyone to understand. It includes different kinds of planting – mangrove, roadside, homestead and fruit-bearing trees – and takes into account matters such as water resources, tidal areas, etc. This gives a clear picture of the existing situation, but also provides opportunities for discussion about the needs of the community, about where future planting would be valuable and successful, and where land is available. As well as serving a purely practical purpose, it is a useful tool in community involvement and builds enthusiasm and commitment to the process of increasing environmental sustainability. When they undertake exercises such as this they feel a much greater sense of ownership of the work.

For example, in Koelipur, villagers, local forest people, and other stakeholders used this approach to explore areas for continuing successful mangrove plantation. They identified suitable river banks where there is a possibility for plantation of around 200,000 mangrove seedlings over the next 4-5 years in a degraded wasteland riverside area adjacent to existing mangrove forest created by MANGRO project which had proved successful. There was discussion about how this amount of plantation could be achieved, and a plan was developed that some of it will be carried out by the villagers under MANGRO, but they would also request the Forest Dept. to take on mangrove plantation in suitable areas.



We are extending the process of community mangrove mapping in exploring new areas where we have been invited to get involved and help communities to protect and restore their mangrove forest, particularly in Suniti areas under Mahakalpada Block, but this extension to the work will depend on availability of funds.

Using this process, we have been mobilising communities to identify suitable planting areas, and enabling them to take action, either themselves, or by making applications to the Forest Dept.

Alongside this process we have been updating our data base and the current status of our direct mangrove and general tree plantation, as well as that carried out through the Forest Dept with the demand and support of the project team, villagers and others. It is clear that, due to our interventions, hundreds of acres of unused empty land on river- and creek-sides, both private and government, have been successfully covered with mangrove. We have a very high survival rate, and continue the expansion of this work wherever possible. **Over two-and-a-half million (getting on for three million) trees have been planted.** Apart from all the benefits that this has brought to local communities, it is a significant contribution to addressing some of the issues of CO₂ emissions.

Community Education



In farmyards, office halls . . .

A series of day-workshops were held across the project area, bringing together experienced volunteer activists and those who were new to mangroves. In total, almost a thousand people took part, three-quarters of them women. They learnt about mangroves generally, and had the chance to explore their enormous value and why they should be protected.

The Community Mapping process mainly involves key members in each village, but it is important to raise awareness in the wider community as well, and this has always been of fundamental importance on the MANGRO Project. It is an ongoing practice, not something which can be done once, and finished with. This year, as fears of Covid and the constraints it imposed were relaxed, it was important to rekindle enthusiasm for environmental concern.



. . . and school verandas, villagers come together to learn about mangroves



A range of methods is used to engage participants. You may remember reading about the local tradition of using scrolls to present stories, and we have revived that tradition, especially among the communities that have migrated from West Bengal. It is a very accessible and effective way of introducing a subject, and provoking consideration and discussion of the issues involved.

And learning songs about mangroves helps to remember and internalise the lessons they have learnt, while giving a sense of unity.

These gatherings are very important in maintaining support for our work, and a way of recruiting volunteers who help with all the various project activities: the constant work of looking after tree nurseries and plantation, working with young people in Eco-clubs, campaigning, administrative work – writing applications to the Forest Dept., applying for income generation programmes – and so on. Without all the valuable work of all these volunteers, the MANGRO Project would not be possible.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION THROUGH SCHOOLS AND ECO-CLUBS

It is essential for any development work that the whole community is involved, and, in order for it to be sustainable, it is particularly important that young people come with us. They are our future, and the time that we invest in them is an investment in our future. Apart from that, our children are quick learners, and enthusiastic teachers, taking home the lessons that they learn in school and Eco-clubs, leading campaigns, and carrying out practical work.



From the beginning of MANGRO we have involved young people, worked in schools, and set up Eco-Clubs, so that children have the chance to learn about their environment, to act responsibly and make decisions that are good for both their communities and for the natural world. Several of our Eco-clubs have won state awards for the excellence of their pioneering work, and one of the greatest

pleasures of visiting MANGRO is the infectious enthusiasm of the young people.

Once the constraints of Covid were eased, we were able to resume our work with the Eco-clubs, and that includes the regular visits that they make to the MANGRO centre, and to the mangrove nurseries and plantations. Here they can learn about mangroves, and then see at first hand the various stages of the work that goes on. They are naturally impressed with how quickly a few small seeds turn into the beginnings of a forest!



AND THE PLANTING CONTINUES . . .

The children are able to help in a wide range of ways, primarily with the raising of general trees which they plant around the school campus and community. However, the work of mangrove plantation is the province of adults. It is hard and very wet work as you can see from the picture, and there is a risk involved because the area is beset by crocodiles and water snakes. There is generally someone keeping watch while the men are working in the water, and if anything dangerous is seen, the men get into the boat very quickly. Here we see them filling a gap alongside some of our previously planted trees. In another eight years or so, these young plants will have reached this height, and the existing trees will be even higher, a grand sight, and protection against tidal surge, a wildlife haven, and a valuable CO₂ bank.



FROM SMALL SEEDS – A KITCHEN GARDEN PROJECT FOR WOMEN IN THE BHITARKANIKA AREA OF ODISHA



We are now in the second year of the Dangamal Kitchen Garden Project which was designed to provide relief during the Covid pandemic and into the future, by working with women to improve the diet of families and increase their income. At the start of this project, the prospect of hunger was one of the key issues currently facing people across India, especially for those who rely on paid work. This was partly as a result of Covid. While Covid has retreated, it has had a long-term impact on the economy, and this has been exacerbated by the global financial crisis which is bringing inflation and economic instability.

So far over 1,400 in 24 villages have received training, 80% of them women. The training has introduced them to a range of familiar and new crops, and has helped them identify suitable areas where plots could be established in the village. They were each given 15 kinds of seed, and learnt how to plan and set up their gardens, how to raise and care for their plants, to harvest the vegetables when the time comes. They are able to exchange ideas for protecting their crops from animals (and human) damage, and have training in compost-making, and the making of natural fertilisers and pesticides.

Several seed banks have been established, so the women save some of the seed from their harvest, learn how to store it properly, and will be using this in years to come, to share amongst the group, gradually extending the range of plants that they grow.

Most of the produce is used by them for their families, and has brought real improvements to the diet, as well as addressing some of the long-term problems of malnutrition (e.g. high levels of anaemia) It has been particularly valuable because it has been harder to find paid work, so families depend more and more on what they are able to produce themselves. Many of those involved wonder how they might have coped without their vegetable gardens.

As someone who is a committed vegetable grower, this project gives me special joy. I think of all those beautiful neat rows of plants, lovingly cared for, vegetables waiting to be turned into delicious dinner. And I know how proud these women are of what they grow for their families – or for sale when there is more than they need for home use.

The BALIGA TRUST

One of the themes of this newsletter has been the real value of investing in projects over a long period, and this has been the case in our relationship with the Baliga Trust. We have been involved with them for almost twenty years, providing just a small amount of money at a time, but maintaining our commitment to their work, and supporting them in a range of ways as they continued to grow. We have always valued the quality of their work, which speaks in the vitality of everyone involved – staff, teachers, volunteers, families and especially in the children. We still provide funding to help support Remedial Education Centres, and our funding means that the Baliga Trust is able to carry out additional activities with the children – drama and music, sports and visits to some of the national institutions in Delhi, activities in which these children would never normally be able to take part. All this with the help of our donors. Thank you, all of you.



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



Play and learn in a Remedial Education Centre Children get regular health and eye checks at the Centres

STOP PRESS: We are delighted to announce that Ashok, who leads all this valuable work at the Baliga Trust, has recently been elected as National Convener of the Campaign Against Child Labour. This is a tribute to his leadership, concern and commitment to the rights of children, and to the quality of the work he does.

A Story from the Street:

Kajol – A journey from Darkness to Light, Beggings bowls to Books

Kajol lives in the slum area of Okhla flyover, Delhi. She belongs to a family that begs for a living, their ancestral occupation. She lost half of her left leg in a tragic accident when she was only two years old playing at the railway line. Her uncle who was also a beggar in the same area took care of her during that time. She joined in the begging, and this continued till she was twelve years old. She tried to start her education but due to lack of knowledge/guidance she could not get admission in any school; even the government school wouldn't accept her due to her condition, but her mother always encouraged her to keep trying. Then, by chance, she came in contact with the Dr A V Baliga Memorial Trust which took her under its wing, and gave her the support she needed for study, including her admission, tuition, teaching-learning material, counselling, and even staying in a Paying Guest House when necessary. Her determination, combined with the long-term support of the Baliga Trust means that she is now taking regular classes for her Bachelor of Arts at the prestigious Jamia University. She had been offered many jobs but opted for higher education, determined to take that as far as she could go. Kajol's achievements are due to her tremendous grit, but also to the support that she has received over many years.



COVID, The ECONOMIC CRISIS and their impact in India

It is difficult to disentangle the impacts of Covid and the global economic crisis, but there is no doubt that things are very difficult for almost everyone in India, in both rural and urban areas. Ranjit from CHALE CHALO, and Ashok for the Baliga Trust, have both kept us up-to-date with the situation in their different areas, Odisha and Delhi.

Both our partners were very actively involved during the Covid crisis of the past two years. They raised awareness of the disease, and how it is possible to protect oneself. They helped the most needy in their areas gain access to government support and services, food, medical help, etc., which was invaluable in such a difficult time. They both did all that they could to provide education support to school children while the schools were closed, and the Baliga Trust carried out remarkable mental health support to young people, including regular Sunday group sessions where children developed self-care kits. The number of Covid cases is now very low, and the vaccination programme has been fairly effective.

But the long-term impact has been serious – (in Ranjit’s words) “loss of learning, loss of businesses, loss of employment, loss of income, and less money even for basic food and day-to-day living needs for the increasing numbers. Covid has shaken the economic foundation of a good number of rural families and their conditions have been aggravated due to continuous inflation. More and more families are falling back into the web of poverty and income, food and nutrition insecurity.”



The sky is the roof for many migrant workers

During the pandemic children lost two years of schooling; there is now a huge gap between age targets and achievement, with little effort to address the problem. There was a massive loss of paid work, over 81%, not all of it temporary. And hundreds of thousands of people working in the NGO sector also lost their jobs and are struggling to survive with whatever work they can get. Migrant workers who left Delhi during COVID are now back in search of livelihood and work is hard to come by. Construction work is reduced because of the economy, and migrant labourers struggle to find two meals a day and shelter for the night.

India is not immune from the global economic crisis. Inflation is very high and it’s visible in our project areas, both in Delhi and Odisha. Even in the festival season, markets are less crowded than they would have been three years ago. The impact is less in rural areas, where many people have a degree of self-sufficiency in food. But for those in the towns and cities, or for those who have no land, it is hard to find money to buy the food needed by the family. Many families had to take out loans during Covid and are unable meet repayments because of continuing lack of work. A real concern is that the subsidised food scheme which provides a ration of free cereals for around 70% of people will stop at the end of March 2023. If/when it is stopped, then 30-40% of people will face acute hunger and maybe starvation.

One of the most serious impacts has been the drop in income for our partners, CHALE CHALO and the Baliga Trust. As Covid hit both individual and corporate donors, income dropped. Funding for many NGOs dropped to about a quarter of what it had been previously. It is slowly recovering but to only half of the previous level, just when the need is steadily increasing. There was a time, maybe five years ago, when it seemed as though poverty in India was reducing. A number of government decisions, exacerbated by Covid and the global economic crisis, is reversing so much of the positive change which had been achieved, and we are very worried about what the future holds for many of the people with whom we work. Now, as much as ever, we will do all that we can to help our partners continue their valuable work.

Recent funders include: *David Bennett, Mike Deeks, Gillie & Catherine Howarth, The Just Trust, Douglas McIlDoon, the Merali family, the Network for Social Change, Religious Society of Friends in Cornwall, Ann Scott, Anthony Stevens, Mary Stephens, and many others*

SUMMARY of IVDTrust accounts for 01.04.21 to 31.03.22

Balance on 01.04.2021

Nat. West Bank	13,159.30
COIF	<u>231.15</u>
TOTAL	<u>13,390.45</u>

Income for the year

Covenants & donations	24,901.02
The Just Trust	3,000.00
HMRC Gift Aid Refund	<u>5,123.36</u>
TOTAL	<u>33,024.38</u>

Expenditure for the year

CHALE CHALO, projects	21,668.00
The BALIGA TRUST	7,000.00
Transfer and bank charges	198.00
UK admin., memberships, etc.	0
Fundraising costs	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	<u>28,866.00</u>

Balance on 31.03.2022

Nat. West Bank	17,317.68
CAF	<u>231.15</u>
TOTAL	<u>17,548.83</u>

The accounts have been independently examined and will shortly be submitted to the Charity Commission.

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.



And if you would like to read a summary of our work on MANGRO over the past seven years, **ABOUT MANGRO 2015-21**, you can download that from our website (www.ivdtrust.org). Alternatively, if you let us know, we can email or post you a copy. Please contact Helena Nightingale, 7a Rosewin Row, TRURO, Cornwall TR1 1HG, 01872 270954, or helenanightingale@hotmail.com.

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.

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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 the first time you make a donation. 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 which it is not possible for us to keep in touch and let you know how your donations are being spent. We'd be grateful if **new** contacts 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 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