



Dear Friends,

The Climate Emergency

We are writing this Newsletter as the COP27 Climate Conference is happening in Egypt. That has prompted us to think about the effects that the climate emergency might have on you, our supporters, the Fund itself and our partners in their various situations.

Some years back we helped the Jeevan Jyothi Hospice to install a solar water heating system. That was primarily a response to the price of firewood in Tamil Nadu, and perhaps neither Sr Anastasia nor we were thinking of its benefits in reducing carbon emissions. When the AHM Trust asked for a contribution towards solar panels for electricity generation this year (see next page) we supported that and commented that it might set a good precedent. So, in our small way, the Fund has started to respond to the emergency.

None of our partners is a major carbon emitter, all being quite modest organisations, but all use electricity from their local grid. Some quick research indicates that Kenya is an exemplar in generating nearly 90% of its electricity from renewable sources, India is mid-way (at 40%) and South Africa is trying to wean itself off coal with only ~15% renewable generation; the UK, by comparison, is nearing 50%. We know that the effects of climate

change are felt more severely by those more generally vulnerable which clearly includes those that our partners support. Even small reductions in the use of grid electricity can help. Miriam wrote about “lifting a tiny corner”; perhaps this is the modern equivalent?

We feel we should encourage our partners to invest to make a contribution to planetary carbon reduction and to take measures to protect their operations. We hope you are attuned to these issues, and that this would find favour.



Solar water heater at Jeevan Jyothi

GRANTS FOR PROJECTS

In the spring of each year we aim to settle the funds we will be able to send to our partners. You will know that their main need is to keep the services to their communities running, and we support that first. But we also try to find money to help with any capital ("one-off" in our parlance) items that would really help to improve things. Such items vary enormously: vehicles, computers, books, water tanks and buildings have been reported previously in these newsletters. Here is a selection from this year's one-off requests with pictures to show progress. Not pictured are solar panels for AHM and books for CODI. All together, we sent some £33k for these items.



Jeevan Jyothi asked us to help in the overdue painting of the hospice building.



RUADT needed to improve the security of their campus with new fences.



Sr Rani at Mannackanad Special School aimed for a new playground levelled within the wooded land below the school.



DEEPAM requested laptops for administration & training and for use in their after-school classes.

Continuing with our theme of providing brief histories of our relationships with partners, in this issue we cover AHM.

Ambelai Heinrich Memorial Trust

The Fund's new partnership with the AHM Trust made the front page of this Newsletter twenty years ago. As ever with southern India, the connection was forged via Bro James Kimpton, and we were able to step in as funding from other sources declined. £3k to extend a clinic and two years running costs (£9k pa) were promised; this year we have sent £3.6k for solar panels and £21k for maintenance, so you can see how the partnership has developed.

AHM was founded by the late Shashi Desai and his wife Renata and named in memory of their fathers Ambelai and Heinrich respectively. Both medical doctors, Shashi (from north India) and Renata (from Germany) had moved to Bodinayakanur in Tamil Nadu and quickly recognised challenges in the rural society faced particularly by the marginalized. In 1994, together with Mohamed Sheik (Babu) and his wife Stella, both qualified in community health and development, they initially opened the clinic, but already had in mind improving education, vocational skills and community advocacy. As new trustees making our first visit in 2006, we



The Anuradha Clinic

hadn't expected to be part of a march and demonstration in support of women's rights!

In the intervening years we have been proud to participate in the vision; supporting running costs, but helping to purchase vehicles, to build a training centre and library and more lately to equip hostels for children and the elderly. And the clinic has required some further funds when it needed to be re-roofed. Somehow, visits to our partners have often paused for a day around the time with AHM. There has been the opportunity to admire the countryside underneath the Western Ghat mountains and absorb the wisdom of practitioners "reaching out to the world's poorest".

TIBETAN HOMES FOUNDATION – 60 YEARS ON

Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF) is a charitable institute dedicated to working for the care of orphans, semi orphan, and destitute Tibetan refugee children and Elders. It was founded in 1962 by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Our link to THF goes back to Miriam's visit in 1974. Many Tibetans, with the Dalai Lama, had been driven from their homeland by the Chinese invasion in 1959 and settled in the northernmost part of India under the snow-capped Himalayas. Miriam heard the Dalai Lama speak during his visit to England in 1973 and through a mutual contact heard that he wanted "to build a permanent home for the 50 very old civil servants who had accompanied him on the trek from Tibet". Miriam immediately sent a small sum for sacks of cement and sand for the foundations. The Dalai Lama was delighted and invited her to visit and see the plans for the proposed building; she did so and met him in April 1974.



Celebrations underway

During the visit, she met ~200 old people living in desperate poverty and her "heart was heavy". She appealed to supporters to raise £3,000 for building materials for a Home for 20 of these poor people and to consider adopting for 50p/week one of the twenty elderly people she had got to know, supplying a photo and history of each one. And so began the link we have with THF. There remain a few supporters (7) who have adopted an Elder (the term used by THF), and we send their donations annually. The supporters receive a Christmas card each year containing a photo of their Elder and a newsletter from THF.

Today THF has around 2,500 children and 250 elderly under its care. 30th October 2022 was a day full of celebration for what has been accomplished in 60 years.

Snippets

The Fund has a new telephone number: 0300 102 3064. This gives improved service: calls should be answered immediately with a message so you will know you are in touch with the Fund, and will then be forwarded to whichever trustee is able to take your call; if none of us can, you can leave a voicemail and we will get back to you. Calls to the number are free from any UK-based landline or mobile.



We were delighted to hear that Nicholas Mukala, who runs our partner CODI in Nairobi, has graduated with an Upper Second degree in Development Studies from Mount Kenya University. His perseverance through a course disrupted by COVID is to be admired; he certainly looked pleased in the traditional graduation photo equipped with mortar board, gown and scrolled certificate.



Now that the pandemic is over and international travel has been able to resume, we are planning to visit our partners in southern India next year. Sheila and Andy are working up the details for a trip of nearly two weeks in February. It will be seven years since they have been, and five since any of us were there. Almost like going for the first time after so long, and much to report in the next Newsletter.



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MiriamDeanFund



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About the Fund

We are a small charity, founded in the late 1940s, when it operated out of Miriam Dean's home.

We reach overseas to some of the world's poorest people in partnership with established local groups, providing financial resources to turn their ideas into a positive reality. Our Partners work in: physical & mental disability; education & training; health and the elderly. We are in touch with them regularly.

At home, we aim to maintain personal contact with our supporters, hoping to make the Fund feel like an extended family.

We do all this voluntarily. We have no staff or premises and minimal expenses (covered by income from funds awaiting allocation), so that we can send overseas every penny given to us in donations. At the moment we are sending around £140k each year.

Miriam wrote in the early days of her recognition that she could "lift only tiny corners of human suffering". We accept that today but still feel motivated to follow where she led.

Postscript

In our changing times, if there is one thing to be learned from our partners abroad, it is that they look on adversity with great positivity, in the expectation that a solution can be found. This is matched of course with the humility that All Good flows on its own timescale.

As we face our own challenges as a nation, we are grateful for their example, and in our turn we believe that a positive mental attitude will allow us to continue delivering for those who are afflicted by deep poverty, whilst accepting that our small charity is not immune to the larger challenging circumstances of so many of our supporters.

As we sign off this, our current newsletter, we send our best wishes to you all for the festive season and the coming New Year.