

SPOTLIGHT



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10 years of Hand in Hand Retrospect and outlook



BALASHRAM
The President's visit

HEALTH CENTERS
The new Dental Clinic

YOUR DONATION COUNTS!

10 years of Hand in Hand With cyclones and turtles

In 2000 a devastating cyclone in India contributed to the creation of **Hand in Hand**. Initially, other countries besides India, were receiving **Hand in Hand** support.

by Heiko Müller



HAND IN HAND AT THE
PERUVIAN AMAZON

The elderly lady was standing at the railing of the steamboat, which was chugging leisurely along in the darkness. Evening had come but the heat was not yielding. The river was very narrow at this point and mosquitoes were buzzing and darting above the water. Unpleasant smells were coming out from the ship's kitchen so that the woman had to hold a handkerchief to her nose. But what did the dark skinned young man want from her? He had been observing her during the whole trip.

The mysterious bag

Next to the women was a large, dark bag and something was moving inside of it. She opened the bag from time to time to have a quick glance inside, and a smile crossed her face as she carefully closed it again.

The steamboat's floodlight flashed ever so often and because of the danger of coming too close to the river bank, a sailor was directing the beam of a torch onto the water. The directed light touched the glowing and hungry eyes of the alligators hiding in the reeds, and they seemed to be looking straight at the woman as a potential evening meal.

After two endless days the ship finally reached the harbor.

in Hand was Eva Zingerle. At that time she was Honorary Consul in Peru and she was actively distributing aid – which came from Austria – to the destitute. She herself personally distributed the medicines (which were sponsored by Hand in Hand) among the medically undersupplied villages situated along the Amazon in the Peruvian tropical rainforest.

In one of the villages its chief was so overjoyed that he wanted to celebrate and serve turtle soup to his guest. The compassionate Honorary Consul refused the soup and thereby “saved” the turtles, which were then put into a bag and taken on board the ship. The young man mentioned earlier who seemed to be following the lady, had been asked by the village chief to keep an eye on her and the turtles.

And what happened to the turtles? They became the first honorary members of Hand in Hand and are likely to be still living in the Honorary Consul's pond ... <



An honorary member of Hand in Hand



Animal members of honor

The above story is not taken from an adventure fiction book, but it really happened.

One of the first members of the newly founded Hand



The first Executive
Secretary of Hand in Hand:
Alessandra Nicola Rupar-Weber

Dear Friends!

We have received many congratulations on the 10th anniversary of the Aid organization Hand in Hand. When we pause to look back at the time when we started we are amazed at what has been created since its beginnings, and what is still happening - thanks to your help!

While you are reading this issue of Spotlight the Balashram Residential School in India has to date 280 boys and girls. Our Health Projects in Orissa and West Bengal are growing at the same pace as its popularity.

Our first administrator Alessandra has sent us an email where she describes the exciting start of **Hand in Hand** in Austria:

„I received a call early in the morning on a Sunday to come right away as they were all wanting to arrange a meeting in 20 minutes. 'Hand in Hand' was born on that morning (although we did not have a name yet), due to some compassionate souls who wanted to help immediately after a devastating Cyclone had hit Orissa. We spend countless days, evenings and nights working on the name, the logo, the first brochure, mailings, paperwork, legal work and of course: meetings. A board of directors is also a board of egos, sometimes. But what an exquisite opportunity to open our hearts, humble ourselves and try very hard to grow with service and devotion! So much was achieved in so little time.

Thank you for letting me share and dive into those beautiful memories, with love and gratitude,

Alessandra Nicola Rupar-Weber, Hawaii"

Dear friends, please continue supporting us in the next ten years to alleviate suffering and to create positive prospects for those, who under different circumstances would not have the chance of any prospect at all. Thank you!

In the name of Hand in Hand

Peter van Breukelen (President)

NEWS

Montessori School meets Balashram

Olivia Walker and her friend Sandra, two pupils of the Lutheran School "Integration with Montessori" in Austria, presented during a seminar on India the Residential School Balashram. One of the teachers was really enthusiastic and realized that some principles of the Montessori pedagogy had been applied at Balashram. A heartfelt 'thank you' to Olivia and Sandra!



Olivia at the Hand in Hand stand at her school



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NEWS FROM BALASHRAM



Hand in Hand visits Balashram

A couple of months ago Peter van Breukelen, President of Hand in Hand, visited the Balashram Residential School. This is his report:
by Peter van Breukelen

After the Balashram Trek in October 2009, I had the opportunity to go and visit Balashram again. I couldn't believe my eyes when I entered the school premises. Only one year after my last visit, most of the buildings were completed. New building sites had emerged such as the new pre-school and kindergarten buildings, which will accommodate a large dining hall allowing all 280 children to share their meals together. Big progress had also been made on the works at the boy's quarters and the personnel quarters. Members of staff told me that all building works should be completed by the end of the year.

Glowing faces

It was a great joy to see the happy children and their glowing faces!

An opportunity arose to interview six children who had been living at Balashram from the start. I asked them about their family back-

ground and I discovered that most of them have sisters and brothers, and some of them still have their parents, while others are half orphans. Nearly all children come from remote villages and, initially, grew up in very poor conditions.

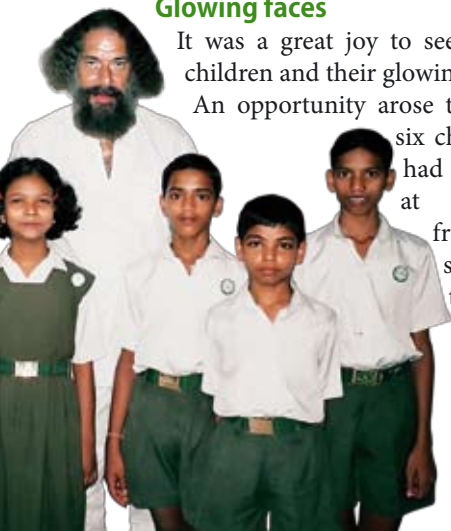
Many children visit their homes a couple of times a year because they miss their relatives although they also told me that they didn't want their old lives back because Balashram was offering them the chance to lead a better life and to meet many new friends.

Great dreams

All children I interviewed had big plans for their future. Thirteen-year-old **Sara** told me that he would like to become a doctor. **Dipak** and **Omprakash**, two 11-year-old boys, would like to be an architect and an engineer. Thirteen-year-old **Ranjita's** biggest desire is to one day become a professional tennis player while 11-year-old **Annapurna** would like to become a singer and 9-year-old **Sumitra** dreams of being a pilot.

We parted from the children, the teachers and the volunteers who all live together like a big family, wishing them all the best. I'm already looking forward to the surprises that our next visit will hold for us ... <

Hand in Hand President Peter van Breukelen and six of the Balashram children he was interviewing





Health is Wealth

The opening of the Balashram Health Center represents a medical challenge - to look after 280 boys and girls, as well as a dozen co-workers and teachers
by Heiko Müller

Finally, in March a small Health Center was opened on the Balashram School Campus. Previously, medical checks were done provisionally in classrooms or other non-suitable rooms. It will take a little longer until a doctor and a nurse are able to work on a daily basis at the Center, but the weekly visits of a pediatrician and the two hours distant Jagatpur Health Center were not sufficient to meet the increasing demand of the children and employees.

The new HCHC Health Care Unit Balashram could move into four rooms in one of the personnel quarters on the campus. The doctor's consulting room has an examination table and various equipment for check ups. In the small ward nearby a saline drip, three children's beds and one adult bed are available for the patients. That same room could also be used as an isolation ward should one of the children contract an infectious disease. The third room is the sterilization department with a steam sterilizer and other devices for disinfections. A small pharmacy dispensing all sorts of medicines including life saving ones is also available. At the beginning



1 In the consulting room more than one patient can be treated at the same time.
2 The ward with four beds 3 A view of the sterilisation room

the Health Center will only be available for the children, teachers and members of Balashram but at a later stage it shall open its doors to the surrounding villages, where people cannot afford medical support and treatment. <

CONSTRUCTION WORK UPDATE



Construction work at the new **pre-school building** (picture 1) is making good progress. The ground floor is almost completed; only electrical work needs to be done (earthing system, lightning arrester, etc.). The roof casting on the first floor is finished and the brick works have started.

In the near future a **new dining hall** and a **new kitchen** (picture 2) will be attached to the right corner of the pre-school building. Brick works on the ground floor are almost completed and windows and doors will next be installed.

The first boys were already able to enter and live on the ground floor of the **boys' quarters**. In the remaining part sanitary works are still underway, while on the first floor all brick works have

been completed as well as roof casting on the second floor. The ground floor and part of the first floor in the **girls' quarters** (picture 3) are already occupied. In that building only painting and electrical works still need to be done.

In the **school building** the first floor is available for teaching, and the second floor is where the laboratories will be located for which the school management plans to get expert advice prior to starting works there.

! Construction material costs are still increasing in India and it is therefore very important that construction works at the school campus are completed as soon as possible!

HEALTHPROJECTS



1 A substantial amount of people during registration for the eye camp
2 Eyes were properly checked with adequate equipment 3 Patient during the acuteness of a vision check 4 Appropriate time was allocated and dedicated to each patient

At the Eye Camp

For the second time an Eye Camp was held at the HCHC Health Center in Balighai. Silvia van Breukelen, wife of **Hand in Hand** President Peter van Breukelen, took part at the eye camp and this is her report.

by Silvia van Breukelen

Eye diseases are a major problem in India. Due to a lack of hygiene as well as inexistent or poor medical prevention and medical assistance in the poorest regions, people contract eye diseases more easily. Poor diet is also a main cause for many diseases, while few people know that the use of pesticides in agriculture is very harmful for the eyes as well. The rapidly increasing number of people suffering from diabetes worries many doctors and with it comes eye disease like retinopathy.

5 days for the eyes

The eye camp at the **Balighai Health Center** has the aim of providing free eye check ups, treatment and care for destitute people from near and far. As in the previous year the partner organization **Prajnana Mission** and the Balighai Health Centre team worked together with the international organization **VOSH**, an alliance of opticians, who travel the world providing their free services to humanity (www.vosh.org). The eye camp was again lead by VOSH member Harry Patanaik from Michigan.

This time he brought with him a team of 10 young optometrists. Not only

that, his luggage consisted of 10,000 eyeglasses suitable for any eyesight.

Surgical interventions for free

Every day 150 children and adults could be treated, and in 5 days 750 sick people suffering from various eye diseases and diabetics affected from retinopathy came to the surgery. Some could not be treated at the camp, for example 87 were suffering from cataracts and were referred to the Prasada eye clinic in Bhubaneswar where they were treated for free!

157 patients received free medications, such as eye drops, in order to continue their treatment once back home.

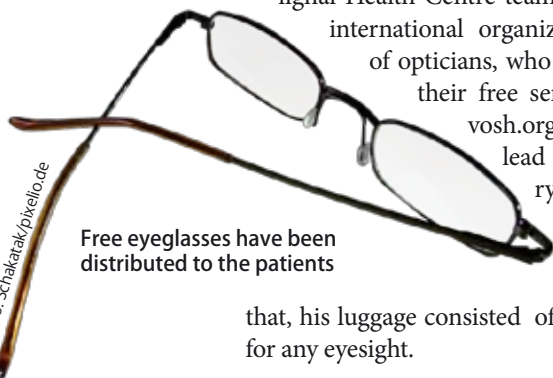
For the first time with eyeglasses

507 patients received free eyeglasses during the eye camps. It touched my heart to see the surprise on their faces when they were again able to see clearly the world around them once they started wearing their glasses!

After the eye camp all doctors, opticians and helpers who had worked really hard and with enthusiasm, were handed a certificate by **Hand in Hand** President Peter van Breukelen.

In the future a clinic for patients with eye problems will be available along with the new dental clinic at the Balighai Health Center.

I was aware how cleverly the **Hand in Hand** donations had always been spent in India. However, it was different to see it with my own eyes! May many more people in this country benefit from our help! <



Free eyeglasses have been distributed to the patients

© Photo: Schatatak/pixello.de



1

HEALTHPROJECTS



4



5



2



3



6

1 The team of our partner organization Prajnana Mission 2-6 Doctors, pharmacists and helpers of Prajnana Mission during recent medical camps

We at Prajnana Mission

Without Prajnana Mission the work of Hand in Hand would be unthinkable.

Now it's time for a little self-portrait about our friends in India.

A contribution from Prajnana Mission

The vast majority of people in India suffer from inadequate medical assistance despite the economic growth of the country. There are first class doctors and hospitals in most of our cities which, however, are unreachable and unpayable by most patients. The medical establishment is unable to meet the medical challenges and most health institution are not efficient enough, have insufficient personnel and are often in terrible conditions with old medical equipment. This is why aid organizations like **Prajnana Mission** and **Hand in Hand** are so important.

The Health Centers they have created, and are supporting, are essential and indispensable in providing health care in underdeveloped rural areas. The centers are run by medically trained personnel, able to face the high challenges of such an establishment.

Help for all and everybody

We at **Prajnana Mission** together with the **HCHC Health Centers** have the aim of providing medical assistance to anybody who requires it. Our motto is „good health for the body and the spirit“ and we follow it not only by providing medical assistance but also by informing people, through brochures and films, on health and hygiene standards. For that we go into schools and

villages because we believe that we can create an awareness which could prevent illnesses.

Our Health Centers are well organized and treat people for free as well as provide them with free medication. Since the beginning, 10 years ago, several hundred thousand people have received help in our centers

and during medical camps in remote areas. By now the centers have a good reputation and the number of patients is growing. <

We congratulate our friends of Hand in Hand to their 10 year anniversary and we thank them and all their generous and selfless supporters in name of all those seeking help!

HEALTH CENTER BALIGHAI

Inauguration of new Dental Clinic at the HCHC Balighai

With the aid of **Hand in Hand** donations a new dental clinic has been inaugurated, on 3rd December 2009, at our Health Center in Balighai/Puri! The inauguration was undertaken by members of our partner organization **Prajnana Mission**, and doctors, pharmacists and helpers of the Health Center also attended. On that same day 12 patients were treated immediately after the ceremony.

Our mobile dental clinic **MMDU** is to continue its work, while the new dental clinic will be able to offer destitute patients a more in depth dental examination and care. A dentist, a dental assistant and a pharmacist will be available during clinic hours.

The plan is to, initially, open the clinic once a month and then in a few months time to extend the clinic hours. The regular HCHC will continue to operate 5 days a week.



The new dental clinic is modern with up-to-date equipment.



10



IMPRESSIONS
FROM 10 YEARS
OF HAND IN HAND



Thank you!

Since 2003 HAND IN HAND carries the Austrian Donation Certificate, which approves the lawful, legitimate and appropriate use of donations.

NOW DONATIONS ARE ALSO TAX DEDUCTIBLE IN AUSTRIA!

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