

Dear readers,

With the Lent season approaching, HCDI devotes its energies toward reflection and concerted action and we seek your support and prayers in reinventing ourselves for becoming more childlike in our faith in God.

## Light at the end of the Tunnel

The Navjeevan project in Mumbai and Murbad is a light house for a number of women and children struggling to retain their dignity in the face of violations and stigmatization.

The Mar Thoma Church over the years has diligently worked toward protecting children from the sleaze and indignity of flesh trade. The project is an example of the triumph of goodness over violence, injustice and discrimination.

A step in the direction of empowering mothers in prostitution was taken up in Sep. 2010, when 19 women in prostitution were encouraged by the social workers of Navjeevan to enroll for the health care workers course at the Sophia Centre for Women's Studies, Sophia College, Mumbai. The women undertook the challenge of attending regular classes, watching CDs on health, learning yoga, learning English and doing an internship at various hospitals.

Their certificates are well earned. Three Cheers to the new health workers and to Navjeevan.

### Their testimonials say:

**Meenakshi Mahato** – I never knew what it was like to be in college and this course gave me the opportunity to experience this. I got the opportunity to interact with such nice teachers who helped us at every step. The course helped me gain a lot of confidence as it increased my knowledge about how to assist a patient which I was not aware of before. During the course I began to feel a new sense of purpose as I was constantly

busy doing something so productive with no time to even think of anything else. I was self-motivated to get up every day and go for the classes as it genuinely interested me. The teacher's there tried very hard to help some of us learn the basics of English however since we very unfamiliar with the language we could not master the same. I would want to request the team to continue the English and Hindi training as I am really keen on learning these languages.

**Aruna Kamble** – I want to share with you how our life has transformed after doing the Health Worker's Course from Sophia Centre of Women's Studies. Before joining the course I was a very shy person. I was very scared to talk to people. I came to Mumbai from Karnataka after my husband's death. I have to look after my daughter and earn for my survival. My sister gave me shelter. We came to know about this course through Navjeevan Centre. We decided to join as we wanted to learn and improve our life.

Today not only me but everyone feels very confident of ourselves. We are sure that we will get a good job and earn more income. I have already got a job offer of Rs. 5,000 and I am very happy. It is our request to the Centre to continue this course as our friends want to join. Our demand as a group to Sophia College is to please continue English and Hindi Classes for us.

We wish to thank Navjeevan Members, all the staff and teachers of Sophia College. My special thanks to Lata Madam who encouraged us always.

The women have since January 2011 registered in nurses aide employment bureau's and are receiving assignments in various parts of Mumbai.

## TESTIMONY

The Buxar district of Bihar is notorious for its criminals and anti-social activities. It is the efforts of well meaning civil society and NGOs that has helped a number of children survive the criminal onslaught and yet emerge victorious as noble citizens. The testimony of Sushil Kumar who is, today a Petroleum Geoscientist in India's leading Oil & Natural Gas Company, is one such shining example.

I am Sushil Kumar. I am 25 years old. I have 3 younger sisters and no brother. I was born at small village Bawan Bandh of Buxar district in Bihar. My parents are illiterate. I belong to Methodist Church in India. I did my primary education (up to class 3) in my village school. After that, my uncle made my admission in Simri Centre Mission School Nagpura, Buxar in January 1993. I got sponsorship by KNH in July 1993. I was a good student. I always stood first in my class and hence, got meritorious award in my school.

A storm came in my life when I stepped in class 9. I was victim of acute headache and eye pain. Sometimes, my pain was beyond my tolerance. I consulted so many doctors but they were unable to diagnose. My heart was broken and I thought that it was better to die than to live. This hampered my studies a lot. I passed high school (10th) and intermediate (12th) with first division. I was only student who passed both exams with first division in my batch in my school. I cleared engineering entrance exam and got opportunity to get admission in engineering college but I could not get admission because I had no money for admission. So, my nightmare got dispersed. Simultaneously, I cracked the entrance exam of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Varanasi and enrolled in B.Sc. (Hons.) Maths. Meanwhile, I consulted a doctor of the Institute of Medical Sciences, BHU and was cured after suffering for 5 years from chronic headache. I worked hard during my B.Sc. course. I was guardian for my sisters and I wanted to educate them also. I was teaching in a private coaching along with my study to support my sisters' education. I am happy to say that my eldest sister completed her B.Sc. (Hons) and she is working as a science teacher in a Govt. School and another sister is pursuing medical course from Patna Medical college, Patna.

After finishing my B.Sc., once again I got opportunity for admission in a government engineering institute. This time I did not want to lose this opportunity. Again I had not sufficient money for admission. This time I decided to take admission anyhow. So, I went to Janta Darbar held at Chief Minister's residence at Patna. I wrote a letter and gave it to the CM Shri Nitish Kumar. I was assured to be supported by CM. I borrowed money from my relatives and got admission in Indian School of Mines Dhanbad, Jharkhand. Later on I got full scholarship from chief minister relief fund. Last year, I

completed M.Tech. with specialization in petroleum exploration. Right now, I am serving in ONGC as a petroleum geoscientist. I have got research opportunity also from Saskatchewan University Canada.

Most of the credits of my success go to KNH organization which laid the foundation of my career. Once again I would like to thank to KNH and hence HCDI. I am very indebted to my foster parents for their kind support and affections towards me.



With sincere regards  
Sushil Kumar  
Petroleum Geoscientist  
ONGC, Assam

## CFCD Projects: New Initiatives

Child labour plagues the nation in an era that is promoting human and animal and ecological rights so vociferously. Day after day we see a drain of valuable human resources in the form of child labour. The issue is addressed in the new initiatives of the CFCD projects as also forest restoration and safe migration. The project areas covered witnesses an inclusion of children who may end up picking BT cotton or going to the hazardous coal mines to work.

The recent times have also seen a hike in the number of cases of trafficking for domestic work and sexual exploitation which will be addressed through the work of the new projects.

### 1. RAJASTHAN:

A new entrant in the HCDI/KNH umbrella, the Rajasthan Bhil Project (22302), coordinated by the Congregation of Missionary Sisters, Servants of the Holy Spirit. This new project with its comprehensive coverage, in so far an uncharted area will provide hope to a number of children trapped in child labour and trafficking. The project will cover 300 children.

### 2. ORISSA:

The states ridden by poverty pose many challenges but adding to the already grave situation is communal unrest which leaves people very insecure and helpless. A CFCD in the state of Orissa, the Lok Biradari Child Focused Com Dev Project (22706) coordinated by the Christian Agency for Rural Development, which has, of late witnessed many upheavals, is a beacon for many families. The project which is located in an industries rich area will address issues related to exploitation of natural resources and its subsequent exploitation of human beings.

### 3. JHARKHAND:

The tribals are a national asset and in the times of ecological degradations tribal sensibilities and their closeness to nature gives us hope for a balanced ecological future. The Santhal Community Development Project (22676), coordinated by the the Methodist Church's Theodori Rural Development Project will serve 300 children through various community development programs. The high point of the project is that the communities are working with the government for the joint forest program which is a welcome step toward eco advocacy.

### Hand Holding: Workshops and Trainings

1. The Project Directors of the Children At High Risk (CAHR) Projects met at HCDI Pune on 7th and 8th October 2010. The workshop was organized to sensitize participants to the newly passed Right to Education Act and the role of NGOs in ensuring its implementation.

The UNCRC was revisited and several resource allocation issues were also discussed. Mr. Nakul Kate, Coordinator of the Childrights Network, Pune. Mrs. Bhamikar, Senior Faculty, Karve Institute of Social Work, Pune and Ms. Archana More, Activist Lawyer from the NGO Masum conducted the sessions.

2. SHGs play a vital role in empowering women and these empowered women raise the confidence and well being of the entire family and community. A workshop was held to address various issues confronting SHGs, their enhancement and to understand outcome of the SHG process that has been in place for over four years in the CFCD projects.

Participants from ongoing and new CFCD attended the workshop which was facilitated by LEEDS a pioneering institute in Ranchi. Mr Balaram, District Commissioner discussed the Right to Education, Right to Information and the Right to Food Act with the participants. Gradation of the SHGs was recommended during the workshop. The workshop was held at Social Centre, Ranchi.

3. Life skills are a set of skills that empower children to face the challenges of life with confidence and dignity.

The 5 days training from 19-23 Oct. 2010 conducted by us at HCDI, Pune equipped 4 trainers in areas such as leadership, gender, secular values, self esteem, sexuality, child rights, poverty, media communication, governance and emotional management.

Trainers prepared their own modules and also trained from other modules prepared by the government of India and other agencies. The trainers have since begun educating

children prime ministers, teachers and other stakeholders in four regions of India namely Orissa, Satna, Nagpur and Ahmadabad.

4. Disasters, manmade or natural render survivors helpless and distraught leaving much to be done. HCDI with its partner agencies have swiftly provided relief around India. For a long time however, HCDI felt the need to train grass root workers and volunteers to assist HCDI in times of disasters.

At the HCDI office in Pune, participants got hands on training in disaster mitigation and management. Adhering strictly to the Sphere (est 1997) norms, the international organization RedR facilitated the participants in their learning of concepts and skills for disaster management. The social workers worked on an action plan to disseminate the DM education to their fellow staff and stakeholders.

Participants were encouraged to train children, teachers and other community members for Dm and also contact all local government and non-government agencies working for DM in their respective areas.

5. A five days refresher workshop on skills for counseling HIV/AIDS infected and affected people was held in Pune from 8-12 Nov. 2010. 24 participants from the CAHR projects participated in the workshop. The highlight of the workshop was the emphasis on new cognitive techniques that help swifter understanding, healing and behavioral change.

### Leadership Camps: Career Guidance & Leadership

A seven days leadership and career guidance development camp was held at St. Mary's Pune.

The children from various hostels participated in fun activities which honed their leadership skills and were

given extensive information about various career options after high school and college.

The event was completely managed by the children and as always many friendships were forged in these seven wonderful days.



### Corrective Surgeries: The Days after.....

In Sept. 2010, 12 children from Sangli and Kolhapur were identified for corrective surgery in the age group of 4 to 16 at St. Thomas Hospital, Bangalore and were successfully operated in Nov. 2010. The children have since returned

home after the surgeries and we share two happy stories:

1. Vikram Vital Bodke's parents were reluctant to get him operated for bow legs because they believed he had been chosen by God to be special. The social workers counseled and convinced the parents that corrective surgery would give the child healthy and wholesome childhood. Today the 3 year old is without a disability and is walking, running and jumping with ease. His feet which were otherwise covered with holy ash is healthy and full of life.



2. Sujal Hambire's mother is bereft of the burden of carrying her son everywhere. Sujal who underwent a corrective surgery is able to walk like his other friends. His mother goes to work in the fields knowing that Sujal can now stand on his own feet.

## Children's Parliament

The sacred space called the Children's Parliament has its set of challenges. In a large group of 20-30, it was found that the smaller children who were mere members did not get an opportunity to speak. To overcome the challenge forced by the quiet members (who are usually smaller children), it was recommended that all children get a portfolio either as ministers or deputy ministers. The new ministries suggested are: peace keeping, conflict resolution, stray animals, welfare ministry etc., The children are moving on with greater zeal awareness and hope.

10 ministers of the Children's Parliament from the rag picking community and 80 children of Ashaniketan Home for children ADF, Delhi met with the Hon. Chief Minister – Mrs Sheila Dixit. The children presented their charter of demands especially highlighting the plight of the children in rag picking. This meeting was a follow up of the meeting held last year. Mrs. Dixit gave the children a patient



# UTKARSH

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hearing and distributed chocolates to them and assured them of her assistance.

(Basudev Munda – aged 12 from Fatatnager Orissa proudly goes to Std. 3 after dropping out of school in 2005 in order to help his father in the fields). Basudev Munda got a good spanking from his father for attending the tuition center. His parliamentary friends took serious note of this incident and talked to his father about the importance of education. Some days after this “pep” talk, the once angry father brought Basudev to the tuition center. The CP children went a step further and had him enrolled in Std. 3 of the local school.



In Dansanadihi village, Orissa the CP children make door to door visits to locate school dropouts and during one of their search operation, they found 13 year old Dilip Bhainsa who had dropped out of school (in order to migrate and work in Sambalpur). The family had returned but Dilip did not go to school. After the CP intervention through the Village Education Committee, Dilip was enrolled with a local school, which he attends with great enthusiasm.

## Tree Count

Our tree plantation drive has touched .65 million.



**HOLISTIC CHILD  
DEVELOPMENT INDIA**

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