

SPOTLIGHT

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20
Anniversary
Years

A Heartfelt Thank You!



**Dreams come
true** p. 10

**Your donation makes
it possible** p. 10

„I think that friendliness and helpfulness towards fellow human beings (and in general towards fellow creatures) is the only possible basis for a peaceful existence“

freely adapted from Albert Einstein

In this unsettling year 2020, Hand in Hand celebrates its 20th birthday. On 26th March 2000, the organisation was founded, and 20 years later we have at least 1,499,839* very good reasons, 511* very touching reasons, and beyond that, infinitely more reasons to celebrate Hand in Hand. And yet we could not come together on this day of celebration because Covid-19 keeps the world in suspense.

On this 20th anniversary, we followed the news as shocked as we were during the founding year of the organisation when we were confronted with the devastating consequences of a cyclone. But today, after 20 years of working Hand in Hand, we have gained a crucial insight: We know now that from many helping hands a whole ‘sea’ of helpfulness can emerge, and that together we can become greater than all the difficulties we are facing.

With the help of your donations, Prajnana Mission, in co-operation with the respective district leaders, was able to provide food, hygiene products and protective masks to

numerous migrant workers and day labourers who were without income or accommodation during the lockdown. And, as a sign of appreciation and gratitude for the tireless efforts of the social workers and security forces, twice a day, up to 200 meals were cooked for the emergency services.

All of us together are Hand in Hand. Your contribution, all combined contributions, make the organisation what it is and what it can be over the next 20 years: An effective aid and relief initiative! You, dear friends of Hand in Hand, prove again and again: Friendliness, compassion and helpfulness are shown in both small and large gestures and are always possible.

This spotlight is as much a heartfelt thank you as it is a bold appeal: Stay on the ball with us! Let us work together for a better future, for a life full of hope and joy in this world!

*) see „20 Years of Hand in Hand“, p. 4/5



EDITORIAL

Congratulations on 20 years of Hand in Hand!

In this Spotlight we cordially invite you to look back with us on two decades of successful cooperation for a future without poverty.

On 26th March 2000, the Austrian Association Authority gave the green light for Hand in Hand. Since then, our desire to help has grown into an ever larger, international initiative that literally turns your donation into success stories. That of Mandui Soy is an extraordinary example. (p. 10)

Mandui Soy is one of over 500 children at Hariharananda Balashram Residential School. Thanks to your support, they all have the chance of a life full of opportunities and free from abject poverty. An impressive testimony to this is the travel report of the Metacenter Social Projects Foundation. (p. 8)

In the Hariharananda Charitable Health Centres (HCHC), around 1.5 million poor people have received free medical care so far, thus creating better conditions for a life of dignity for them. 20 years of HCHC Jagatpur (p. 11) and the statements of our volunteer doctors (p. 7), demonstrate the importance of health care in overcoming poverty.

After devastating natural disasters, effective assistance could be provided: following the cyclone in May 2019, 90 small houses were constructed and people who lost absolutely everything, had a home again. Your donation makes it possible. (p. 10)

Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Yours,



Peter von Breukelen
President from 'Hand in Hand'



Peter von Breukelen



Content

2	Helpfulness for a peaceful existence
3	Editorial
4	A heartfelt Thank You for 20 years of Hand in Hand
6	Statements from Europe and India
7	A visit to Balashram – a travel report
10	Dreams come true Your donation makes it possible
11	20 years HCHC Jagatpur
12	Bismruti Nayak

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During late autumn in 1999, we witnessed with dismay a hurricane, with flood waves of incredible dimensions, which struck the Eastern coast of the State of Orissa, today Odisha.

Ten thousand or more died and millions of people found themselves with nothing left. This news was all the more painful because it came from friends we felt deeply connected to. It touched our hearts. We wanted to help!

At the end of October 1999, Paramahansa Prajnanananda founded the charitable organisation, Prajnana Mission in Cuttak/Odisha. At the same time, here in Vienna, we set all available levers in motion to sustain and support, as much as possible, Prajnana Mission. What started with a collection of medicines, ended with the foundation of a partner organisation in Austria!

Thank you very much for 20 years of



The registration of Hand in Hand as an Organisation for Humanitarian Aid, occurred on 26th March 2000 in Vienna. With the first donations, already 20 flood-proof, one-room houses could be financed and, on 14th July, the first Hariharananda Charitable Health Center (HCHC) was opened. By the end of that year, 15,147 people had already received free medical care! We were overwhelmed.

However, in face of the catastrophic situation for millions of people, we felt that it wasn't much more than a drop in the ocean. However, thanks to the tireless efforts of Prajnana Mission in India and the loving letters and actions of our donors, we came to the very realization that defines Hand in Hand still today: One drop can make a difference!





You, dear Friends of Hand in Hand, have organised flea markets, tombolas, charity dinners, lectures, presentations and charity races with school children as well as events with-in variety shows and much much more, thus enabling an amazing development of the Hand in Hand projects.

By 2004, four additional new Health Centres had been created. After the purchase of a Mobile Medical and Dental Unit in 2002, Prajnana Mission has been regularly organising Health Camps in rural areas and, since 2007, also in the city slums of Cuttack. Around 1,449,839 consultations had been performed at the HCHC by the end of 2019.

In 2002, we were able to create a Disaster Relief Fund, which enables a quick release of funds for us to respond and provide immediate relief in case of natural disasters. The construction of 90 one- room houses following the storm catastrophe in May 2019, was only possible because of the constant growth of Hand in Hand during the past 20 years: in 2001, an independent Hand in Hand Organisation was

created in USA; in Switzerland, as well as in Germany in 2005; 2007 in Holland, and 2008 in France.

The international cooperation made Hand in Hand's biggest project possible: the Hariharananda Balashram Residential School. Since its opening on 29th July 2004, the school has developed to become a recognised education project of exemplary nature. It is a space for learning and living, which also encompasses class XII since 2017. At present, it is home to 511 boys and girls who, otherwise, would have been left without a chance to break the circle of life-threatening poverty they were living in.

With gratitude, amazement and great respect, we are looking back to what we have achieved so far. Constantly, step by step towards a better future for us all, that is our dream. After 20 years we dare say: It is possible. Together. Hand in Hand.

Thank you very much!



Annemarie Ackerl


The fact that 20 years ago we succeeded in bringing Hand in Hand to life, means more to me than I could say in words. To give and receive help is of special value to me. Maybe because I myself experienced help as a child when we were sent to Denmark, after the war, for an „uplift“. Taking care of each other, love, life, trust, all this and more is Hand in Hand to me.

Gerti und Michael Rieser


During our stay in India, we could witness first-hand how successfully the donations had been utilized. The children at Balashram School seemed very happy. Poor people received appropriate medical treatment at the day clinic and at Health Centres.

New basic houses were constructed for families who had lost everything during the last hurricane in 2019. For these reasons, we support Hand in Hand as best as we can.

Statements Europe
Irma Botero

As I look back at the last 20 years of Hand in Hand, it is in complete gratitude to have been allowed to play a small role in a much larger scheme. Thanks to the inspiration we all received, we managed to grow in love and have begun to understand the meaning of service.


Christin Butschek

20 years Hand in Hand - for 15 years I have been able to experience the wonderful development first-hand through my diverse activities in the office. A delicate plant has grown into a young tree with nourishing fruits. It is a gift for me as I am not only involved in administration - it is more: I am dedicating a part of my life-energy to something meaningful, to humanity and children. Everything that I do to others, I do to myself. Hand in Hand, we want to go further into the future.


Dirk Denzer

20 years of Hand in Hand - 20 years of total engagement and readiness to help others, 20 years of cooperation, and 20 years of collective voluntary work, all of which produced many drops of improvement to the living conditions of people in need. We congratulate Hand in Hand to their fantastic success story as a very special aid organisation with lasting effects. It is our pleasure to continue supporting Hand in Hand in the future!





Ilse Nürnberg

Poverty is a great injustice. I want to support the work of people who, with great dedication, commit themselves to helping the poorest of the poor in Odisha. People, who with their engagement, make this a better, just, and fairer world. My contribution to the work of Hand in Hand is my „thank you“ for that.

Dr. Kamdev Sethi

MD O&G

I have been working for the HCHC for 3 years now. Already as an assistant doctor, I started to treat patients in the urban slums and in the countryside. I have dedicated my whole life to this selfless service for the people of Odisha. When a friend invited me to the Jagatpur HCHC, I agreed, happy about what I saw and experienced, to volunteer for this special institution. For me the Jagatpur HCHC is a holy place.



Dr. Bhagabat Bal

MD Surgery

I am very happy to be able to participate and be part of the Jagatpur HCHC, where poor and disadvantaged people receive free medical care.



That is way people can maintain their health, so that they can go to work and provide for their families. All the efforts undertaken by Prajnana Mission give us the opportunity to help the needy and the poor. For this, we are very grateful.



Statements India



Dr. Ramesh Routray

MD Surgery

I feel a great need to work for the Jagatpur HCHC. I used to do the same work before I retired, but with my head, while now, I work with my heart. The selfless work with the patients gives me immense peace and fulfillment, and I am grateful for it with all my heart.

Dr. Dhruba Charan Mohapatra

MBBS

I came up close to overwhelming, human suffering when I was professionally active in the medical service of the Indian government. I worked as a doctor treating people in tribal areas that were difficult to access, and later, with leprosy patients. It meant a lot to me to help these patients, for whom nobody cared. After my retirement I had the desire to work for a charitable health institution. It is a grace for me to have found such a good place.





A visit to the Hariharananda Balashram Residential School in Odisha

The account of this journey by the Metacenter Social Projects Foundation
by Christine Ramirez



At the Metacenter Social Projects Foundation, we have set ourselves the goal of promoting non-commercial, sustainable, environmentally-friendly, and humanitarian projects. When the foundation was set up in 2015, we looked for a professionally organised aid project that could guarantee that our support would be well received. The work of Hand in Hand convinced us to support a class at the Residential School with a yearly 30,000 SFR donation. Last year, the foundation board came up with the idea to visit the school in India. In the autumn of 2019, four of us set off for India.

1st Day – 19th October: We started our journey on 18th October in Zurich. A day later we arrived in Cuttack. There, we were warmly welcomed by Pratap Kumar Sahoo and our bus driver and were taken to our hotel, on a journey filled with an overwhelming variety of first impressions. After we moved into our rooms, Sahoo Baba invited us to visit Prajnana Mission, where we met Swami Samarpanananda Giri. Over a delicious chai tea, he told us in detail about Prajnana Mission and invited us to visit the Hariharananda Charitable Health Centre (HCHC) in Jagatpur. There, we were able to have a look at the different treatment rooms as well as at the bus, which is a mobile ambulance providing medical care for people in remote rural areas. We were very impressed by the way people in need are being helped.



2nd Day – 20th October: The next day began with a surprising invitation for a wonderful breakfast at the ashram. Right after this joyful start into the day, we set off for Balashram. On our arrival we were warmly welcomed by the principal of the school, Dr. Malayananda. It was Sunday and therefore no school activities. With a lot of passion, Dr. Malayananda led us through the whole school building and showed us the adjacent Medical Centre, where villagers also receive free medical care. The visit to the girls' quarters particularly impressed us, and the children met us very warmly and spontaneously sang songs for us. After a wonderful lunch, the first day of our visit came to an end.

3rd Day – 21st October: The following morning, there was a lot of activity in the classrooms. The students introduced themselves to us in English and ,our‘ class presented us with beautiful drawings. We were very impressed by the organisation of the school and also by the plans for its future development. We left the Balashram with the good feeling that the children here are very grateful, happy and really well looked after. With many beautiful impressions we drove back to Cuttack and the desire in us grew, to find out where the children lived before coming to Balashram.



4th Day – 22nd October: We set off at 5:00 a.m. We drove about 6 hours to a remote village in Tiring, Mayurbahnj. Already the journey there, which led us through smaller towns, villages and wide landscapes, moved us deeply. In the village, which gave an impression of an untouched world, we met the widowed mother of one of the Balashram children. With the help of a translator we could talk to her, and she proudly showed us her self-built shelter. The humility of this woman was extremely touching. She accompanied us to two other women whose children were admitted to the Balashram, and we were allowed to take many photos.



5th Day – 23rd October: Thanks to our great bus driver, we always arrived safely back at the hotel after our trips which were full of friendly encounters and interesting, as well as moving impressions. At the end of our trip we reached the airport in Bhubaneswar on time.



We would like to thank all at Hand in Hand and the Prajnana Mission for this unforgettable journey!



Athlete Mandui Soy conquered the way from Odisha to Japan

At the Hariharananda Balashram Residential School dreams come true. Here is an extraordinary example:

Mandui Soy has what it takes to be a top athlete. With a passion for sports, her diligence and her great talent, the student of the 7th grade managed to be accepted as a state player by the „Odisha Athletics Association“, and has already received prizes and awards at district as well as national level.

Her exceptional speed, endurance and athletic tactics are particularly impressive in the rugby sports discipline. This was also the reason why, in July 2019, she was chosen by the „Indian Rugby Federation“ to participate in the great „Youth Rugby Spirit Festival“ in Japan. Not only Balashram celebrated her participation but the whole district! How great was the joy when Mandui won a gold medal in the friendly match between the Indian and Japanese junior rugby teams!

The success story of this girl is an inspiration for all the children of Balashram and it fills the school staff with pride and gratitude. All school personnel pay great attention to foster and encourage the diverse talents of the pupils and they take the children's dreams seriously. And what does Mandui dream of? She would like to become an International rugby player for India. Her dream is beginning to come true!



Your donation makes it possible:

90 houses for the victims of the devastation caused by the storm in May 2019

Looking back on 20 years of Hand in Hand, we notice a sad coincidence – but at the same time also a hopeful development: The aid organisation Hand in Hand started with the construction of small, storm and flood-proof houses.

Exactly 20 years later, Prajnana Mission is planning the same project for a second time after the strongest hurricane since 1999 hit the East coast of India on 3 May

2019. The extent of both disasters was similar. However, the combined initiative and efforts of Hand in Hand and Prajnana Mission allowed them to reach much further than 20 years ago: at that time 20 houses could be handed over to people in need - this year, 90! With your donation much more could be accomplished than we dared to hope for!

20 years of HCHC Jagatpur: with joined forces from a provisional treatment room to a day clinic

by Swami Achalananda Giri

On July 2, 20 years ago, only a few months before the terrible flood disaster of 1999, Paramahansa Prajnanananda, together with the two doctors Prof. Dr. Bhanja Sarangi and Prof. Dr. Satyabhama, inaugurated a small room in Jagatpur Ashram, near Cuttack. From that day on, poor people were to receive free general medical care there. However, due to the flood, the already enormous need for medical help suddenly became immeasurable and we tried to cope with the need by founding the Prajnana Mission and Hand in Hand. By working together with Hand in Hand, an International network of humanitarian aid was created and, the provisional treatment room developed into a major relief initiative.



On 10th August 2003, we acquired the first mobile medical and dental practice, which enabled us to conduct health camps in more distant areas. In 2004/05 we built two additional treatment rooms and the team of doctors could be significantly increased. In addition to general and dental treatments, we were then able to offer also surgical, dermatological, pediatric and ENT services. However, with the expanded treatment options, the hardly manageable number of people seeking help became increasingly apparent. We were painfully aware that, despite all that had already been achieved, far more was needed.



Hand in Hand grew and with it our possibilities. In the meantime, Hand in Hand organisations had been established in several European countries, as well as in the USA, and we dared to think bigger. In December 2012, we purchased a small plot of land near Cuttack, where an outpatient hospital was to be built. Construction proceeded quickly, although we largely dispensed with mechanical appliances in order to give as many people as possible a job and thus an income. The facility was inaugurated on 15th February 2014 in the presence of important spiritual and political personalities, and our range of free health services was raised to a whole new level.

Today we have a fully-fledged dentist's room, a pathology department with high quality analysis equipment and, recently, an emergency care unit on the ground floor. Since 2016 we have been able to offer high quality physiotherapy and since 2019 we have also been able to provide radiological services. Setting up the outpatient clinic 5 years ago, currently allows us to perform cardiological and neurological treatments every 14 days, to provide urological, gynaecological and orthopaedic services several times a week and to perform minor operations and surgical procedures every day. Meanwhile 23 doctors work at Jagatpur HCHC. For us, as well as for all employees, what has happened since the inauguration of the small room in Jagatpur Ashram is a miracle - a tiny seed became a stately tree (see photo on p. 5).



Bismruti Nayak



„I have been at Balashram since my early childhood and, I cannot imagine my life without this school. God gave me a mouth and Balashram gave me the speech. I was not only provided with bread to satisfy my hunger, but my spirit was also nourished and I was given love and trust which expanded my heart. Balashram is like a banyantree: we are all connected to each other and feel up to the challenges in life. Whatever I am today, I am because of this school.

Life is a test for me, and I was allowed to learn to understand its true meaning. What I was given, I

can't give back in this life. With the help of my beautiful Balashram, I can now study at university.

The school is the foundation of my life and it inspires me to be myself. Balashram means everything to me and I want to forever remain part of it. All my abilities should benefit the school and I want to work to spread the message of Balashram.”




One drop can make a difference


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Please make that difference with just **1 Euro a day** for the Balashram children! Give the children, from the poorest of circumstances, a new chance for their life.

More details can be found at www.handinhand.at (sponsor a child) or secretary@handinhand.at



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