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Hand in Hand Organisation for Humanitarian Aid Activity and Progress Report

From 1st April 2020 until 31st March 2021

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Hand in Hand is an [international non-profit organisation for humanitarian aid](#), founded in Vienna in March 2000. This was followed by Hand in Hand USA (2001), Hand in Hand Foundation Germany (2005), Hand in Hand Switzerland (2006), Hand in Hand Foundation Holland (2007) and Hand in Hand France.

The present activity and progress report describes the current developments of the Hand in Hand projects in India and summarises the specific activities of the Hand in Hand organisations in Austria, Germany, Holland and France.

The activity reports of Hand in Hand Switzerland and Hand in Hand USA are available at www.handinhand-schweiz.org and www.handinhandusa.org.

All of the organisations listed above work for the conception, planning, financing and implementation of the Hand in Hand aid projects in the areas of education, health and disaster relief in Odisha. Odisha is one of the poorest states in India with an exceptionally high degree of exposure to natural disasters.

The aid projects are implemented in cooperation with the partner organisation of Hand in Hand, the Prajnana Mission in Cuttack, Odisha, India. The structure of Hand in Hand together with an overwhelming voluntary commitment enables up to 95% of the donations to flow into the projects efficiently, and allows for almost all donations to reach those in need.

Hand in Hand pursues exclusively charitable goals. As a result of international cooperation, it is possible to break hopeless cycles of poverty by:

- Giving children living in extreme poverty a home, the chance to grow up healthy, and quality education - and thus a future.
- Providing medical care to people without access to health services and medicines.
- Providing rapid and sustainable aid in the event of natural disasters, to protect people, animals and the environment.

The Hand in Hand health projects - the [Hariharananda Charitable Health Centres](#) - are located in Balighai, Jagatpur, Arua, Athagarh and Bhisindpur. More than 30 doctors offer general and special medical treatments in the Health Centres.

The Hand in Hand [education projects](#) are currently:

- The Hariharananda Residential School
- The Chrysalis project, which emerged from the Balashram project
- The Hariharananda Shikshashrams (small village schools)

The Hand in Hand [disaster relief and civil protection](#) includes:

- Provision of immediate life-support assistance such as medical aid, provision of food, hygiene items and emergency kits;
- Helping to restore destroyed infrastructure, such as building storm- and flood-proof, one-room houses;
- Provision of agricultural land, seeds, massive planting and reforestation.

All Hand in Hand projects stand for an [ecologically-attentive and care for life](#), and aim at increasing autonomy. With green ideas for a healthy future the following was achieved:

- The expansion of the gardens and the construction of a well in the Balashram Residential School
- The construction of a farm building for the supply of dairy products and the preservation of The Indian humped cattle (Zebu)
- The construction of a biogas plant
- The instillation of solar panels

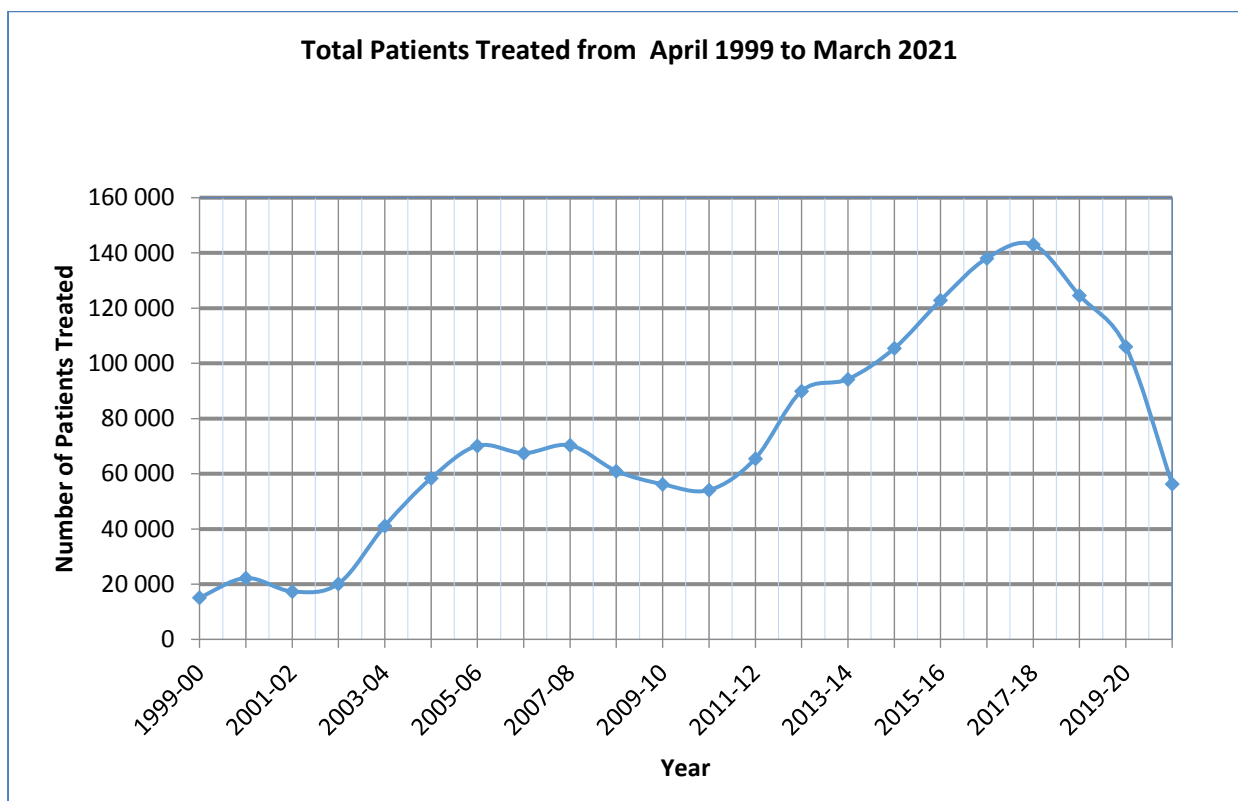
In the year 2020 / 2021, with the donations for Hand in Hand and in cooperation with Prajnana Mission, its partner organisation in Odisha (India) the education and health projects, as well as the projects in the field of disaster relief and civil protection, were successfully continued - despite the enormous challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

HEALTH PROJECTS

The Hariharananda Charitable Health Centres (HCHC) provide professional medical treatment to people without access to adequate medical and dental care. Since the year 2000, the founding year of Hand in Hand, five Health Centres have been established in the districts of Puri, West Mednipur and in Cuttack. One of the HCHC has been developed into the HCHC Jagatpur Day Clinic.

In addition, Mobile Health Camps are offered in urban slums and in remote rural areas. Via the Village Health Camps, medical care is consistently and continuously offered in regions with insufficient or no access to health facilities.

From July 1999 to March 2020, over 1.5 million patients were cared for in all of the HCHC. Despite the COVID pandemic, around 57,288 people were able to use the medical services in the period 2020 / 2021. The decline in patient numbers since 2018 / 2019 is partly due to the opening of a state municipal health centre in Jagatpur in 2018, but more due to the pandemic. In our health centres, only patients without COVID symptoms were allowed to be treated because state hospitals were in charge for the treatment of Covid related patients.



HCHC JAGATPUR (Day Clinic)

HCHC Jagatpur day clinic celebrated its opening in February 2014 in the new industrial area of Jagatpur. The clinic provides for the poor and offers general medical and therapeutic treatments, as well as health services in centralized medical fields such as paediatrics, gynaecology and surgery. More than 100 patients receive medical help every day in the day clinic.

The day clinic offers outpatient services 6 days a week. They include EKG examinations, laboratory tests (daily), outpatient eye care (once a month), and other specialist medical care such as cardiology (twice a month), urology (twice a week), neurology (twice a month), obstetrics and gynaecology (three times a week), paediatrics (three times a month), orthopaedics (twice a week), dermatology etc.

- HCHC Jagatpur has been providing laboratory services since August 2014. The laboratory is equipped with a semi-automatic analyzer, centrifuge machine, incubator, water bath, microscope, ESR stand, hemocytometer, refrigerator, DC counter and all necessary reagents. In February 2016, because of increasing pressure due to the arrival of more patients, another semi-automatic analyzer and a CBC machine were purchased.
- Radiography services were added in December 2019. On an average day, a total of 10 X-rays are carried out. A 300mA Xray was also installed on February 14, 2020.
- Outpatient eye care has been offered since October 2014. On average, around 60 patients are treated each Wednesday. The ophthalmic clinic is equipped with an eye examination chair, keratometer and I-Chart (LCD), auto refractometer and vision drum. Due to the corona pandemic, the services were suspended until February 2021, but resumed in March 2021.
- The department of pathology acquired, in 2016, a second semi-automatic analyser and a CBC machine (Complete Blood Count), and in August 2019 a fully automatic analyser and a Na/K analyser as well as a coagulant machine were put into operation. On average, around 60 patients are treated every day.
- Physiotherapy has become an alternative to medicinal, pain therapy. Since 2016 / 2017 the physiotherapy department is equipped with all common devices for the therapy required for an average of 30 patients a day.
- In spring 2020, a first aid room was set up on the ground floor.
- The day clinic is specialising now in smaller surgical interventions and has become famous, for example, in treating diabetic foot ulcers and burns.
- In the integrated full-fledged dentist's room, around 60 patients are currently treated daily. The dental services were initially limited to extraction, filling and scaling. After hydraulically operated treatment, e.g., chairs and all other necessary devices became available, root canal treatments could also be carried out.

In India, since spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on the healthcare system and the delivery of essential healthcare services. In order to maintain preventive and care services for children, the elderly, or people with chronic illnesses and disabilities, even during the pandemic, the HCHC Jagatpur Day Hospital continued to provide uninterrupted, essential health care while observing extreme precautions and strict hygiene rules - even though the government had declared a national lockdown from 24 March 2020 until the end of May 2020.

The vast majority of doctors at the clinic are retired and work on a volunteer basis. However, because of their age, doctors were considered part of the Corona risk group and were prevented of coming to the clinic. The search for new doctors proved to be difficult. A few younger doctors managed the operation of the Day Hospital and contributed to the relief of the state hospitals in Odisha, which were tied to the COVID cases.

HCHC BALIGHAI and HCHC BHISHINDIPUR

Conventional general medical treatments and specialist health services are offered in the two Hariharananda Charitable Health Centres HCHC Balighai, Puri in the state of Odisha, and HCHC Bhisindipur in the state of West Bengal.

HCHC in Balighai is open 6 days a week. Alongside conventional general treatments, the centre also offers specialist eye and skin consultations, as well as dental treatments twice a month. Ayurvedic treatments have been carried out since February 2018 and homeopathic treatments since February 2021. Physiotherapy services are usually offered twice a month.

In addition, special Mobile Health Camps for ENT, gastroenterology and cardiovascular diseases are organised in HCHC Balighai, while those offering free general and specialised treatments, as well as dental ones, are organised in city slums and in remote rural areas. These camps can reach areas where people normally have limited or no access at all to medical facilities.

HCHC Bhisindipur offers homeopathic treatments on two days every week. Outpatient eye treatments are carried out in both health centres - usually on alternating months - with the auxiliary of a mobile keratometer and a vision drum.

The doctors who work voluntarily for the HCHC health centers are 60 to 70 years old and thus, have not been able to work since the outbreak of the corona pandemic. As a result, the services cannot currently be provided. The search for doctors for the HCHC Balighai and the HCHC Bhisindipur is in full swing.

VILLAGE HEALTH PROJECTS

The Village Health Project Athagarh (Upavanam), offers homeopathic treatments 6 days a week and dental care twice a month.

The Village Health Project Arua, situated on the premises of the Hariharananda Balashram Residential School, offers four days a week allopathic treatment and twice a month dental care. Regular homeopathic treatment has also been carried out since 2019/20.

In order to protect the children from the pandemic, the campus Health Centre is not currently open to the public. Health care for Balashram children and staff is provided as follows due to COVID-19:

- Appropriate COVID-19 measures, including disinfection, mask wearing, and social distancing, are strictly followed at the school campus with the girls' dormitory and at the boys' dormitory. School and dormitories are disinfected daily.
- Outsiders are not allowed on the school campus or in the dormitories.
- Those living on campus (including the teachers) do not leave the school campus during this time. The school administration arranges for everything needed by the students and staff to be delivered directly from the market to the school.
- Every day, students are offered Ayurvedic Kadha - a hot drink made from various herbs known to improve immunity. It is a preventive measure to protect against COVID-19 infection.
- Students regularly practice yoga and asanas early in the morning to maintain good physical condition.
- Medicines to treat the Corona virus are stocked for emergencies.

Amidst the turmoil of COVID-19, strict hygiene measures at the school campus and surrounding areas have succeeded in keeping Balashram COVID-free, except for a few isolated cases.

EDUCATION PROJECTS

HARIHARANANDA BALASHRAM RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Since July 2004, the Hariharananda Balashram Residential School project has been offering children of extreme poverty - without primary care and educational opportunities - a safe home, health care and high-quality education. The children living in urban slums or in severely underserved, hard-to-reach rural areas are selected by a specially qualified commission. Each year, 40 children aged between 4 and 5 years can be enrolled in the school for 14 years.

The school has its own Hariharananda Health Centre to check the children's health and dental health and ensure their well-being; a nurse is always available. As part of a Village Health Project, health camps are organized four times a week. Thus, the Health Centre is also open to the inhabitants of Arua, the village in the district of Kendrapara where the school is located.

The school has a nursery (Nursery 1 and Nursery 2) and offers children, starting at the age of 6, quality-certified schooling up to grade 10 (secondary level 1) and, since July 2017, up to grade 12 (secondary level 2) by the Central Board of Education (CBSE). The final exams for secondary level 1 and secondary level 2 are public and are conducted by CBSE.

The lessons are mainly held in English. The school follows the CBSE curriculum, which integrates a Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) according to the guidelines of the CBSE. In the school curriculum, English is the first language, Odia is the second language and Hindi is the third language. It covers the areas of mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences and environmental sciences. The lessons follow concepts of activity-based learning.

In addition to the regular education, extracurricular courses in IT, general knowledge, as well as ethics and values education are offered. Since the academic year 2013/2014 the children also receive vocational training as part of a competence-oriented programme, where they acquire skills in subjects such as bicycle repair, PC assembly, desktop publishing, sewing, textile design and crafts, installation, electrical installation, and the like. The extracurricular subjects aim, on the one hand, to promote the specific talents and interests of the children, and on the other hand, to enable practical, competence development which is parallel to school education. Depending on their interests, students can voluntarily enroll in the various courses. Only some of the basic life skills courses are mandatory. These courses take place once a week on Sundays for 2 hours. During the 2020/2021 academic year, due to the lockdown, they could only be carried out to a very limited extent or not at all.

In order to provide the best possible space and support for the development of each child's individual talents and potential, extracurricular offerings in the areas of art & culture, nature & environment, and sports & games are available to the children. The children and adolescents are encouraged to dream of a life that they freely choose for themselves, and to realize their dreams actively and through their own efforts. This is reflected in the school's logo which bears the inscription "Make Your Dream a Reality" and in the Balashram's pedagogical approach, and ultimately in the organisation of care in the residential school, as well as in the actual teaching.

- The residential school has 26 dormitories for girls and 23 dormitories for boys. There are currently 24 teachers and 36 non-teaching staff employed at Balashram.
- The school is well equipped with a computer lab with 45 computers and a projector for teaching computer science. An audio-visual learning system has been in use at Balashram since 2013 / 2014, encouraging teachers and students to integrate information and communication technology into their teaching-learning process.
- The biogas plant, commissioned in 2018, currently covers 80% of fuel requirements. LPG is used for the remaining requirements. Wood is no longer used to run the kitchen.
- In December 2019, the school started the solar power project. This currently saves 50% of the school's electricity costs. Due to the great success of the solar power project, the solar power system will be further expanded. The completion date is March 2022.
- In December 2019, construction work began on the mini auditorium, and was completed in August 2020. The ceremonial opening of the auditorium was on 16 February 2021.
- In April 2020, the improvements to the staff quarters and painting work on the buildings were completed.

- The renovation of the old main school gate was completed in January 2021.
- The new central library was completed in February 2021.
- The renovation of the kindergarten building to improve natural lighting and ventilation and to add more toilet facilities, is expected to be completed by June 2021.

Although 520 children were registered for the 2020/2021 school year, only 479 students were in Balashram. The newly selected children who were to be admitted to Balashram in March 2020 have not been allowed to go to school due to the nationwide COVID-19 measures. The students in class Std. X also had to leave school after their final exams and have not yet been able to advance to class Std. XI.

The board examinations took place on 26th February 2020 for Std. X and on 27th February 2020 for Std. XII. The board exams of classes Std. X and Std. XII were completed on 18 March 2020. The majority of the students had to leave Balashram on 23rd March 2020 and the lockdown began on 24th March 2020. The school was therefore officially closed due to COVID-19 from 24th March 2020.

Students in Std. X and Std. XII returned to school on 19 June 2020 and were in quarantine for 15 days before classes could resume. Separate classes for boys and girls in Std. X and Std. XII started on 4th July 2020 until 8th January 2021. The reason for this separation being, that the boys' dormitory was not attached to the school building and the boys had to cross the street to go to class. Many of the residents in the village feared that the children might spread the virus. We therefore have to proceed with extra caution so that at least those children who were still with us, were allowed to stay. This means that boys and girls are temporarily receiving classes separately, which doubles the teaching effort.

In February 2021, 447 children returned to the Residential School and classes resumed. That was until, just a few weeks later, a second Corona wave hit the country unexpectedly and with particular severity. In the first week of April 2021, the government issued again an order to suspend classes. As a result, children of nursery 1 and 2 (2020 and 2021 academic years) are not yet back on campus.

In March 2021, the final exams of the Std. X classes of the 7th year were scheduled. They had, however, to be cancelled due to the pandemic and the consequent measures taken by the government. Subsequently, CBSE developed a nationwide format to enable students to graduate and progress to the next higher class.

The CBSE external supervisors came to the school and, together with the Balashram management and examination board, assessed each student's performance and results to date. The internal grades (from the school tests) were combined based on a performance scale and evaluated to determine a final score. The internal scores were then uploaded on the CBSE's platform, and results published by 20 June 2021.

CHRYSALIS

The school received the Composite Provisional Affiliation for Secondary School from the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi, in 2017. The approval for education up to secondary level 2 is a result of the Chrysalis project, which emerged from the Balashram project in 2016.

Chrysalis supports graduates of the Balashram Residential School on their flight into life after school. This special project of Hand in Hand, guided by Prajnana Mission, has the scope to give graduates, with their different pre-requisites, the best possible support.

In the 2020/21 academic year, students from grades five and six graduated from various colleges, while others from that cohort found jobs in the government and private sectors.

The Std. XII exams for the 2020-21 academic year, which would have been held in March 2021, did not take place due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The students in classes Std. XII were to take exams in March 2021. These exams had been postponed until further notice. By 1st June 2021, the CBSE was to announce how to proceed.

HARIHARANANDA SHIKSHASHRAMS: New small village schools

The Hariharananda Shikshashrams project started as a further educational project in 2018/2019. Independent village schools have been created in several districts of Odisha, where children receive, at a minimum cost, basic and good quality education with special focus on the English language.

School fees are calculated based on parents' means and ability to pay so to ensure that all children in the area can attend school. Two of the 30 planned schools have already opened. They are all called Hariharananda Shikshashram, followed by the name of the village the school is located in.

The first school was built in 2018/2019 in Rajanagar, in the district of Athagarh and a second one in Mayurbhani. A total of 22 students are currently attending Preschool-1 and 34 are attending Preschool-2. Classes for Standard 2 will start in the academic year 2020/2021. An application for state recognition has already been submitted. Currently, a school principal, four teachers and one caretaker are employed at the schools.

DISASTER RELIEF AND ONGOING DISASTER CONTROL

In India, many migrant workers and day labourers were prevented from returning to their villages due to the Corona-Pandemic related pandemic. Numerous people became homeless overnight and found themselves unable to feed their families. The government provided food for 2 meals a day, which was far from enough.

With the help of Hand in Hand and in consultation and cooperation with the respective district leaders, Prajnana Mission was able to provide food and hygiene products to about 400 affected people in the district of Kendrapara. At the request of the district administration in Kendrapara, 300 beds were made available on loan for use in the Kendrapara COVID centres.

In addition, Prajnana Mission delivered food twice a day to social workers and security forces in Puri who were on duty around the clock, also as a token of appreciation for their work. For over three weeks, medical staff (almost 100 people) who helped in COVID hospitals and quarantine centres were provided with food. In Pattamundai, the police were provided with food as well.

In September 2020, relief operations were organised after the Brahmani River overflowed its banks in the Kendrapara district of Odisha and flooded the surrounding villages. Relief items such as mustard oil, pulses, cereal powder, blankets, etc. were distributed to around 300 people in the affected villages. Cow feed for nearly 3,000 cows was also distributed in the surrounding villages.

During the pandemic, between September 2020 and March 2021, in the nearby villages of Jagatpur, Banipada, Kochila, Kujibara, and Chaatia, 797 poor people aged 60 years and over received protein powder, vitamin D3, and multivitamin syrup to boost their immunity systems.

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

- During the financial year 2019/2020, Hand in Hand issued two Newsletters, as well as one edition of the Spotlight magazine. They were released, in German, English and French, and were sent to the donors and published on the following websites: www.handinhand.at and/or www.handinhand.fr.
- Due to the worrying consequences of the Indian government's measures to curb the spread of the corona virus, an extraordinary donation mailing was sent out in July 2020.
- The Hand in Hand Joy Concerts took place for the first time in January 2021 and May 2021. The Live stream charity concerts were carried out in cooperation with Prajnana Mission and Hand in Hand supporters in Europe and India. The artists in 2020 / 2021 were Shanti Omkara and Dana Devi.
- In February 2021, Hand in Hand Europe called for a common fast for the benefit of the children of the Balashram.
- In spring 2021, new information material about Hand in Hand was created (folder, business presentation etc.)
- In the same year, Paramahansa Prajnanananda the founder of our partner organisation in India, Prajnana Mission, visited the Hand in Hand organisation in Austria. He participated at a fruitful exchange on the continuation of our joint projects, especially against the backdrop of the alarming situation caused by COVID-19 in Odisha and worldwide.

- Members of Hand in Hand, members of Prajnana Mission, as well as supporters and donors from Europe, regularly exchange ideas during Zoom meetings on the implementation of the projects and the further development of the international organisation Hand in Hand. Important questions for further cooperation are discussed.
- Throughout the financial year 2019/2020, the President, the Vice President and the Secretary of Hand in Hand participated at several European fundraising events to support the projects in India. Fundraising programmes were planned, organised and carried out cooperatively in several European cities.
- Besides the yearly General Assembly, the Board Meetings and several workshops were held via Zoom during the last financial year. In addition to these meetings, the members have been keeping in touch through a regular exchange of emails and telephone calls.
- Thanks to Web-Conferencing, voice over IP, emails and reciprocal visits, the exchange of information between Prajnana Mission in India and Hand in Hand Headquarters in Vienna, has been both continuous and highly positive.

Thanks to the international collaboration of Hand in Hand Organisations in Europe, “Stiftung Hand in Hand Deutschland”, “Hand in Hand Schweiz”, “Stichting Hand in Hand Netherlands”, “Hand in Hand France” and “Support Group Poland” and non-European Hand in Hand supporters, we can look back to a successful business year, despite the extraordinary difficulties we had to face worldwide. Also, Hand in Hand USA makes a significant contribution to the planning, coordination and financing of the projects. In India, Europe and in the USA many voluntary helpers and coordinators are participating in the different projects.

Vienna, May 2021