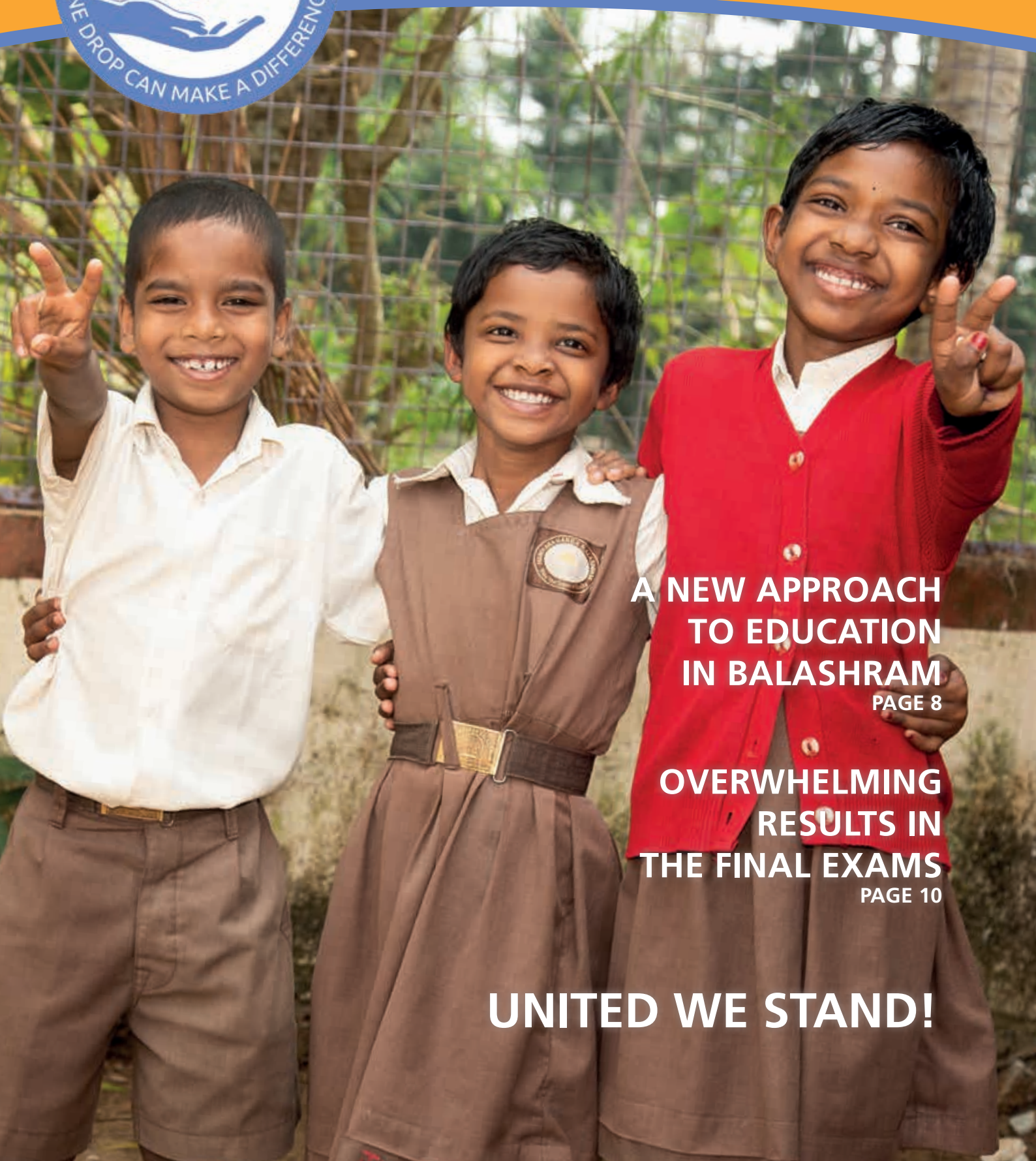




SPOTLIGHT

The HAND IN HAND magazine 2022/23 · www.handinhand.at · info@handinhand.at



**A NEW APPROACH
TO EDUCATION
IN BALASHRAM**
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RESULTS IN
THE FINAL EXAMS**
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UNITED WE STAND!



"One for all – All for one" – the ethics behind this phrase are universal and apparently, as old as humanity itself. We find it in the oldest scriptures of the East and West, often with the words, "United we stand, divided we fall".

United we stand!

With united forces, many things have become possible since HAND IN HAND was founded 22 years ago, therefore, we believe more than ever: together, hand in hand, is the way. And also, the goal. The "dream or wish" of Paramahansa Prajnanananda – the founder of Prajnana Mission, our partner organisation in India – is,

"that HAND IN HAND should not be confined to Odisha, but that we can work all over India, and in other countries".

From his point of view, much more can be achieved:

"The people of HAND IN HAND, with their noble, generous attitude, have already done a lot.

And they can do even much more. I pray to God to give them more strength and courage to come forward to wipe out tears from the eyes of the suffering, to remove the fear of those in need."

It is the vision of a world full of compassion and solidarity, in which he who loves is successful. It is in our hands to fill this dream of a better future with life. There is no doubt that your contribution, however small, can make a difference: "One drop can make a difference" – for the children of Balashram, for the people in need in Odisha/India, for you, for all of us together – freely following the motto: "One for all – All for one", because: "United we stand."

EDITORIAL



The Balashram Trek in the UK, and many other initiatives, brought into being a sense of solidarity (p. 17): a very special product especially for HAND IN HAND created in Switzerland (p. 20), "From Ashram Garden for HAND IN HAND" in Austria (p. 21), and the many concerts in favour of HAND IN HAND. The latter went online in December two years ago, when Covid turned our world upside down, and hung like a sword of Damocles over Balashram (p. 23).

It had become so depressingly quiet in the school during the long lockdowns, but now it is lively and cheerful again in the schoolyard. More than 120 children between the ages of four and six were warmly welcomed to our Balashram Residential School this spring (p. 4).

A new educational concept, further raises the level of the school (p. 8) and thus also the children's opportunities. We are all happy about the particularly good results in this year's final exams (p. 10). And it is thanks to the commitment and dedication of the staff – and to your donations! – that these children have a real chance to make their dream of a life without poverty come true.

The small village schools that were opened in 2018/19, had to be closed due to Covid. But the idea behind the Hariharananda Shikshashrams (p. 11) – that also poor village children should have access to good education – remains unchanged, and we have started anew to establish small village schools. This spring, we were delighted to receive permission to reopen a school in Cuttack (p. 12). And, the tutoring centre in Arua was also able to open its doors which was well received by the villagers (p. 13). The Hariharananda Charitable Health Centres (HCHC), have also regained momentum (p. 14).

All this, dear friends of HAND IN HAND, is not possible without your contribution and commitment. Please stay on the ball with us ! Support HAND IN HAND with your donations, your creativity and your good wishes.

From the bottom of our hearts, THANK YOU !

Yours
Peter van Breukelen

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KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN HAVE FINALLY ARRIVED AT BALASHRAM

By Subhashree Pagal
Head of Nursery Hostel at Balashram

As every year, the procedure for the admission of 40 new, destitute children to the Hariharananda Balashram Residential School started in autumn 2019. The school is held in high esteem in Odisha. Through the Prajnana Mission's initiative, many people who are in need of help, now know that they can apply for their children's admission to the Balashram Residential School.

The admission process often begins with an application from the parent or guardian. The commission in charge then contacts them to see the health condition of the children in question, and makes sure that they are no younger than three and a half and no older than four and a half when they are admitted to the Kindergarten. Preference

is normally given to children who have lost both or one parent and/or live in extreme poverty.

Since the school was founded in the spring of 2004, it was customary for children to join Balashram in April, when the Indian school year begins. However, the children who were selected in autumn 2019 did not come. Like a dark cloud, Corona hung over Balashram and kept its doors firmly shut. With the hope that the Corona crisis would end soon, another 40 children were selected for admission to Balashram in autumn 2020. We prepared for a cohort of 80 new Kindergarten children. But another year passed without a Kindergarten class, and during that time we received more and more requests from parents or relatives who could



no longer care for their children. For this reason, in autumn 2021, the commission set out to select the children for the 2022 school year.

We knew that it would be a great challenge to accommodate three grades at the same time, and we prepared well for it. A tender for additional staff was organised and the renovation of the Kindergarten took place. Dormitories, dining room, living room and staircase were adapted, the hygienic facilities in the building were improved and the number of toilets was increased. We were prepared.

And in February 2022 the time had come: finally, the government allowed us to accept the children registered for 2020 and 2021 at Balashram. From the middle of June, we were able to welcome the youngest children as well. This year, nearly 130 small children joined us at Balashram.

When they arrive, the children are first examined by a team of doctors (to test for HIV, AIDS, TB). Afterwards, the legal guardians bring the children to us in the Kindergarten. Initially, the children's condition is often not too good. They cry a lot and hardly get any rest. During the first nights especially, many of them can't sleep, so they get up and walk around. It is a difficult time for the children and also for us. We are there for them around the clock, trying to keep them calm, playing with them, reading them stories, eating chocolate and cookies together. We do everything we can to help the children adapt so that they can feel at ease, safe, and at home.



And every year we are surprised how quickly they succeed thanks to the support given by the love and care of the caregivers (the "Mothers").

We teach the children to go to the toilet, to wash themselves in the bathroom and to brush their teeth. This is not an easy task. But after a few days the children look clean and healthy, and we notice great changes in them.

This always fills our hearts with joy and extreme gratitude for all those who make Balashram possible – THANK YOU !



A DAY IN KINDERGARTEN

By Shuvasini Jena
Hostel Mother at Balashram

The children wake up every day between 4.00 and 5.00 am, go to the toilet and then to the bathroom to wash themselves. At 5.00 am they do some physical and simple yoga exercises, and then eat some sprouted chickpeas between 5:30 and 6.00 am.

At 6.00 am it is time for morning prayers and at 6.45 am we set off with the children to the classes in the Kindergarten. Breakfast is from 8:30 to 9.00 am and at 11.50 am there is a longer break with maybe a television programme. During the morning, we usually stay with the children in the Kindergarten rooms, then have lunch at 1.00 pm.

After lunch the children rest. At 3.30 pm. we go outside to the playground and at 4.30 pm they eat a snack and then go back to the Kindergarten classes. At 7.00 pm, they come back to the Kindergarten living quarters and have dinner at 7.30pm. At the end of the day, everyone chants the Hanuman Chalisa and at 9.00 pm it is bedtime.





THE NEW LIBRARY

By Swami Anirvanananda Giri
Director of Balashram



At the new central library, we currently have about 8,400 books, as well as some active subscriptions to pertinent magazines and journals. In addition, the students' and teachers' reference books and textbooks are available in the library as well. In the children's area, a special room for pre-schoolers and children up to second grade, one can find educational and learning games, as well as children's books and comics. A LED television has also been installed there. This year, we are again planning various activities to promote the use of the library: creative writing and reading contests, storytelling contests, and many more. In the main room of the library, we have put a "Reflection Board" where everyone at Balashram (students and staff) can share their own personal thoughts on a specific topic. Our new "Knowledge Hunt Board" is also active now, where students and teachers can post new information, events, inventions and insights. Thus, way, our new central library has become a lively and inspiring place and is used by everyone at Balashram.



A NEW APPROACH TO EDUCATION

IN RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES
POSED BY CORONA

By Dr. Malaya Nanda
Principal of Balashram



After the two long lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, the students of the Hariharananda Balashram Residential School were not brought back to the school at once, but they returned in small groups. This happened for two reasons, firstly to comply with the strict quarantine and security regulations but also, in order to guarantee sufficient time and support staff available to care for the emotional needs of the children and young people.

Subsequently, the children re-entered the classroom at different times. Some had been out of school for up to two years. The children's willingness to participate in class had to literally unfold anew after such a long time – this was especially true for the younger and youngest among them.

In their homes, no activities related to school learning are ever taking place. The children's parents or guardians cannot read and write themselves and are unable to provide the children with an environment conducive to learning, which is primarily due to their poor economic conditions. As a result, we noticed a great loss in terms of learning among the students when they returned to school after the lockdown. Also, due to the pandemic, no new kindergarten classes could be added in the 2020 and 2021 school years, therefore, 3 new grades started in 2022 with children of different ages.

The overall situation, consequently posed an enormous educational, as well as an economic challenge for us. We were all too aware of the need for more teaching staff, but also for new teaching solutions to help the students re-integrate into the classroom after their long periods of absence, and to bring them back to the level of performance required by the curriculum.

Rounds of interviews were held for the recruitment of new teachers In February/March this year. We currently employ about 30 teachers and are still looking for more qualified teachers/educators. In addition, we contacted a renowned educational institution in India, as well as in the USA: we are working together with their experts at developing and implementing a new educational concept.

Our goal is to work together with the children to overcome this difficult situation in a sustainable way without further increasing the pressure on the children themselves, or on the teaching staff. On the contrary, by means of new teaching and learning strategies, we aim to become even more effective in increasing the enjoyment of both teaching and learning.

We increasingly work in small learning and performance groups, which enable us to support the children wherever they find themselves at that moment. We achieve this with the help of tutors and by consistently combining theoretical lessons with practical exercises. We practise a lot of playful learning and experiential learning in training camps.

All of our teachers have been taking part in appropriate training courses to make the implementation of the new educational concepts successful. The effort was well worth it: the children's performance and the exam results exceed our expectations, and the lessons are back in full swing.

**From the bottom of my heart,
I thank all the supporters
and the staff of Balashram.**





OVERWHELMING RESULTS IN THE FINAL EXAMS

A letter from Swami Achalananda Giri
Managing Director of Prajnana Mission

Dear Friends of HAND IN HAND !

During the last academic year 2021-22 at Hariharananda Balashram Residential School, we are happy to announce good results in the final examinations of Standard X (High School Level) and Standard XII (Senior Secondary Level) classes, which are external examinations conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education every year. This year the students showed good results: All but one of the students scored over 60 %, the best students scored 93 % and even 96 %.

We are very proud of the children and the teaching staff. In the early years, we were happy if the children achieved pass, or moderate results. We tried to inspire the students to take simple and not too intensive academic courses after graduating from Balashram, to increase their chances of entering a successful working life. Knowing their level and not wanting to put them under pressure, we helped them to successfully complete these courses such as ITI, BA etc.

It is all the more surprising to us how this situation is now beginning to change in the higher classes. Many of the students are asking by themselves what they need to do to study medicine or engineering, for example. This was not the case before. The majority, if not all, of the students were satisfied with completing the compulsory school years and then pursuing an ITI or BA to make themselves employable.

Nowadays, the rise in academic standards has spurred their interest to pursue academic intensive courses like medicine and engineering, after passing out of Balashram. These courses are not meant for all students, but only for a few bright students. The rise in academic performance of some of the children is prompting them to find ways to secure an admission in medicine and engineering after higher secondary education.

This is the beginning of a big change – changes that would not have been possible without the hard work of all the staff and teachers who work directly with the students, and the HAND IN HAND team that always encourages them. The academic results of today are the result of the efforts of so many people working in and for Balashram. The tireless efforts of our Principal Brahmachari Bodhananda (Dr. Malaya Nanda) in improving the school and academic opportunities, is remarkable. He is constantly striving to raise the standard of the school by encouraging and motivating the teachers and the students with much flair, skill and above all, dedication.

I cannot thank you all enough for your dedication, loving efforts and all your support without which Balashram would not exist.

From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU !
Yours Achalananda

THE IDEA BEHIND THE SHIKSHASHRAMS – QUALITY EDUCATION IN VILLAGE SCHOOLS

By Swami Anandananda Giri

Director of the village school in Betakholi



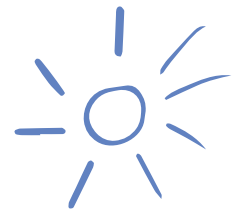
Education is an essential element in the life of every human being. Through education, we not only acquire skills to earn a living, but also expand our knowledge about our lives and the world around us. Education is a right of all children in India and schools have been established in almost all major villages. Books, clothes and even a midday meal are provided to primary students. Despite enormous funds spent on improving school infrastructure, the quality of education in schools in smaller villages and low-income areas is extremely poor, so that secondary school students are barely able to understand primary school subjects.

The poor educational level of parents, family conditions and social environment, in addition to the lack of resources, are

factors that hinder children's education. However, the most important factor is the lack of personal attention for the children. The teachers in the schools do not pay attention to individual instruction. Tutoring is not available in the villages because the villagers cannot afford to pay for it. The gap between rich and poor is thus widening, depriving countless people of any chance to improve their situation or that of their children.

Against this backdrop, we conceptualized the Hariharananda Shikshashrams project in 2018 – small village schools in rural and tribal regions of Odisha. In these schools, children receive quality education in Odia language, with a special focus on English. Students are charged a nominal tuition fee which their parents can afford to pay. Each school would have a respective trust (with competent people) to manage the school. Prajnana Mission, in cooperation with HAND IN HAND accompanies the development of the schools as well as the design of the lessons in an advisory capacity.

There are few steps which the trust has to follow in establishing the schools. First, the trust has to obtain the government recognition for the school. Further it has to apply and obtain permissions from the government to receive funds from India and abroad. This poses a certain hurdle in establishing them. The first two of a total of 30 planned schools were successfully launched in 2018 and 2019. But in the spring of 2020, both facilities had to be closed again due to the pandemic. The village schools need to be re-established. We are all the more excited about the opening of the Shikshashram in Betakholi in the spring of 2022.



RE-OPENING OF SHIKSHASHRAM BETAKHOLI

Shikshashram in Betakholi was re-opened in spring 2022. This school has received recognition as a public educational institution for 5 years (2022/23 to 2027/28). Currently, the school is run in a rented house with three rooms and a dormitory with 62 students from classes Kindergarten to Grade 3. The school has five full-time teachers, one part-time teacher (Art), as well as a caretaker and a field worker. The Trust of Hariharananda Shikshashram, Betakholi is currently working to obtain the necessary permissions from the government to allow funds from outside India and to be used for the construction of an appropriate school building and the further development of the school.



NEW TUTORING CENTRE IN ARUA

By Swami Sugitananda Giri
Head of Operations at Balashram



The same concern as with the Shikshashrams, underlies the newly founded Tutoring Centre in Arua. The village has an elementary school and a secondary school for about 500 students, and the Balashram Residential School is also located there. There are also elementary schools in Hatapatana and Kadaliban which lie within a radius of two kilometres.

The new Tutoring Centre offers tutoring classes for the children of the villages of Arua, Kadliban, Hatapatana, Keshpur and Nuapatana, with the aim of raising the children's educational levels. About 237 students are already attending the Tutoring Centre which offers two shifts, one in the morning and in the evening: Classes I to VI come for tutoring in the morning while students from classes VII to X come in the evening. Graduates of Hariharananda Balashram, who live on the Balashram campus and study in nearby educational institutions under the Chrysalis Project, teach in their free time as tutors in the new Tutoring Centre.

Parents of students who come for tutoring, pay a small fee which covers the electricity costs and the examination fees. Retired government teachers who live in the villages, visit the Centre frequently and offer suggestions on how to improve teaching for the children. Parents' meetings are organised at regular intervals with the aim of promoting parents' understanding of their children's educational journey. Moreover, an ethics lesson is held every Sunday and is attended by about 60 to 70 children.

The main goal of the Tutoring Centre is to compensate for the poor quality of education in the regular village schools. It wants to help students, who find regular school classes difficult, to understand the basic courses of the lower grades. The tutors try to meet the individual needs of the students and also advise the parents accordingly. The response of the villagers to the Tutoring Centre has been very positive.





HCHC Balighai 2000

HARIHARANANDA CHARITABLE HEALTH CENTRES

The Hariharananda Charitable Health Centres (HCHC), started even before HAND IN HAND was founded. Like all our projects, they are the continuation of what Paramahansa Hariharananda began out of compassion and love. His goal was

"To give food to the hungry, a good education to poor children, and medical care to the sick."

Paramahansa Hariharananda lived his whole life for his dream of a world free from poverty, fear and suffering. Thus, he laid the foundation for those projects in the field of humanitarian aid, which his successor Paramahansa Prajnanananda, in cooperation with HAND IN HAND, has been continuing since 1999.

Prajnana Mission was founded by him in February 1999, and only a few months later the first Health Centre was opened in Cuttack (Odisha) to provide free medical care for poverty-stricken people. At the same time, HAND IN HAND

was founded in Europe as a partner of Prajnana Mission. The HCHC are filled with life by all the doctors and volunteers who have given their time and knowledge for the patients from the very beginning until today.

In one of the first articles of Spotlight (2005), Dr. Bhanja Kishore Sarangi who had been involved from the beginning, gave us an insight into the time when Health Centres were being set up. At that time, only two Centres were in operation: one in Jagatpur, in the Cuttack district, and another one in Balighai, in the Puri district. You might be wondering what motivated the doctor's selfless service – his answer was:

"The smiles on the faces of the patients whom I was able to help, and their amazement at being healed."

To publicise the new Centres, he discussed with Paramahansa Prajnanananda the possibility of having leaflets printed, or having HCHC advertised through newspapers

and other media. But the latter only replied to him,

"Words travel a thousand miles, but serious and dedicated work is the best advertisement. Let us always remember that service to humanity is service to God."

Dr. Ashok Kumar Mohanty was also present from the start. From him we learn that it had been relatively easy to open the first Health Centre in Jagatpur (Cuttack) because there were so many doctors willing to offer their services free of charge to poverty-stricken, destitute people. In Balighai (Puri) on the other hand, the work of the doctors was particularly arduous, as Dr. Mohanty reports:

"All doctors would leave Puri for Balighai early in the morning and return only late at night. In just two weeks, we had treated 500 to 600 patients. Many of my friends who were doctors in Cuttack helped out, and we devoted our hearts and souls to the work in the HCHCs."

In essence, even without leaflets, the number of patients treated has increased many times over. And two became five HCHCs: three government-approved Health Centres, one of which has become a Day Clinic, and two Village Health Projects. Together, all the HCHCs provide a wide range of health services to the deprived population of Odisha and West Bengal.

- The Health Centre in Jagatpur, which was founded in 1999, is now a respected Day Clinic with a modern, demand-oriented allopathic care service, as well as mobile medical and dental care services. Alongside conventional medical treatment of symptoms, preventive services such as yoga are increasingly being established to provide poverty-stricken people with a way of life that will help maintain their health in the long term.
- In the Health Centre in Balighai, which opened just one year later, in the early summer of 2000, we now offer allopathic, homeopathic and ayurvedic



HCHC Jagatpur 1999



HCHC Bhisindipur 2004



VHP Arua 2010



VHP Athagarh 2012

HEALTH CENTRE	FOUNDATION	GENERAL MEDICINE	HOMEOPATHY	AYURVEDA	YOGA	OPENING TIMES/WEEK
HCHC Jagatpur	1999	✓			✓	7 DAYS
HCHC Balighai	2000	✓	✓	✓	✓	7 DAYS
HCHC Bhisindipur	2004		✓			2 DAYS
VHP* Arua	2010	✓	✓			4 DAYS
VHP* Athagarh	2012		✓			7 DAYS

* Village Health Project



HCHC Jagatpur 2014 (day clinic)

services. In addition to general medical treatments, specialist skin treatments are offered at regular intervals, and dental and physiotherapy services are offered twice a month. Preventive services are also being developed at HCHC Balighai; currently yoga is being offered.

- The Health Centre in Bishindipur, in the state of West Bengal, offers homeopathic treatment twice a week. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, outpatient eye treatment was carried out every two months using a mobile ophthalmometer and an eye drum. Work is currently underway to be able to offer this again.
- A small hospital with a focus on allopathy and homeopathy is located in Arua, within the Balashram Residential School, which was opened in the summer 2004. The hospital is affiliated with Balashram, but since 2010 is also open four days a week to the residents of the surrounding villages as a Village Health Project. Dental camps are also held twice a month.
- The HCHC in Athagarh, also a Village Health Project, is our smallest health project with a focus on homeopathy. It is open seven days a week, and dental treatments are also provided fortnightly.

From July 1999 to March 2022, about 1.6 million treatments were carried out at the HCHCs. People who do not have access to appropriate health services due to poverty, receive professional medical care there. Today, 25 to 30 doctors together with about 20 paramedics, and many other individuals offer their services to the HCHCs. Prajnana Mission is increasingly working with the district authorities with the aim of providing effective help to more people, especially in the event of disasters and exceptional situations such as a pandemic.

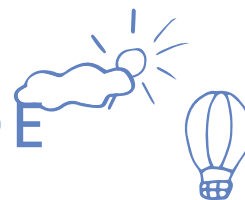
Thanks to your donations and the tireless efforts of so many people in India, the Health Centres are able to resume normal operations after the lockdowns and are flourishing anew with the next generation of local doctors and supporters all over the world.

Dr. Ashok Kumar Mohanty said 20 years ago,

"My sincere belief is that in the future, with the blessings of God and the charitable work of the HAND IN HAND organisation, the charity work of Prajnana Mission will spread like wildfire. The mission will be a light in the world shining upon the suffering population of Odisha (India) and on the whole world."



HAND IN HAND – WORLDWIDE



THE 7TH BALASHRAM TREK

HELD 6 TO 12 JUNE 2022 IN SCOTLAND, UK

By Hagen Rampes

The 7th Balashram Trek was announced on 24 July 2021. The Scotland event proved popular and was fully booked within 4 hours of announcing the event and a long waiting list created. Initially 45 persons booked a place but the final number gradually reduced to 28.

Great was the joy that five yogacharyas accompanied us: Rajarshi Peter van Breukelen, Swami Karunananda, Yogacharya Claudia Cremers, Yogacharya John Williams and Yogacharya Histas Damania.

The majority of the participants flew to Edinburgh Airport and shuttle transport conveyed them to the Lendrick retreat centre in the Trossachs National Forest on Monday 6 June 2022. The retreat centre was indeed very comfortable and the staff were very friendly and helpful.

The catering was excellent and we were provided with wholesome delicious vegetarian food.

The event commenced with supper and then there was an introduction followed by meditation. The next morning we headed to Loch Lomond to climb the 361 meter high Conic Hill, which straddles the fault line that divides the Scottish highlands from the lowlands. We enjoyed unusual sunny weather during our first day, which afforded us sweeping views of the Loch and the highlands.

On the second day, the group embarked on a wet four-mile trek around Loch Ard. We enjoyed the view of the loch and the lush flora in the surrounding area. The weather, which was rainy and about 10°C (50°F), was a "lovely Scottish summer day" according to our guide !

On day three, the weather got "better" again and we set off down the Lime Craig trail, near Aberfoyle in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. The steep incline was soon an afterthought as the group settled for a yummy packed lunch, improving weather, and not too many midges. Forest Park has much natural beauty and wildlife. We kept a lookout but unfortunately we did not see any native red squirrels or pine martins.

Next day, at the summit of Ben A'an (1,512 feet /461m) we had a breath-taking view of both Loch Katrine and Loch Achray in the highlands. And our last excursion, after a one-hour drive north, took us to the Trossachs.

We took a seven-mile hike along the West Highland Way. It was rainy, windy and there was even some sleet. All the warmer our hearts became in the evening, when we were treated by a special musical guest, Eryn Strachan, who sang lovely popular songs.

Even though Paramahansa Prajnananda could not attend our seventh Balashram Trek as planned, his blessings were with us. The event went relatively smoothly, all had a wonderful and enriching experience and a significant sum of money was raised for the Balashram Hariharananda Residential School.





HAND IN HAND SWITZERLAND – CHANGE OF THE PRESIDENCY

By Regula and Beat Rudin

Probably, you too have asked yourself a few times before: "How can I contribute to improve the life situation of people in need, animals and the environment?" Our desire to help is often huge, but it is not always easy to find the "right" thing to do, or to understand what opportunities one has to successfully support where help is needed. And the number of available aid organisations is even greater, some of which being very influential and active all over the world. Thus, often the help we provide is limited to a financial donation, which one hopes will have a beneficial effect.

In their search for a fulfilling and active social engagement, they came across Prajnana Mission in India. What they learned about HAND IN HAND, was so convincing to them that they decided to found HAND IN HAND Switzerland in 2006.

Of course, it is not the decision alone that brings an association to life. No, the foundation of the Association required many measures, such as drafting the bylaws, setting up and handling the banking business side of it, providing all the necessary resources to handle the Association's activities, such as organising advertising, and much more.

Sabine and Rolf Aeppli founded the Association in 2006 with a great deal of commitment from their hearts and souls. They succeeded in inspiring many fellow campaigners for the project, who have been supporting HAND IN HAND Switzerland faithfully, and with love for many years.

Understandably, after almost 16 years of tireless work, Sabine and Rolf Aeppli were looking for a relief. After long consideration, they decided to hand over the management of the Association. Their project has now – like the first children who came to the Balashram – grown up and leaves its "parental home".

A big THANK YOU to all who have accompanied this "child" until today !

We, Beat and Regula Rudin, were able to take over the Presidency of HAND IN HAND Switzerland as of January 2022, and have since been actively supported by Susan Häner in the Secretariat and by Ursula Allemann for the finances.

We thank you for the trust that was placed in us with the handover of the management of the Association !



A SPECIAL IDEA FROM SWITZER- LAND FOR HAND IN HAND

Beatrice Dietrich asked herself the same question: "what can I do to help people?". She too was looking for an organisation that was transparent and which provided successfully help for people in need. After a long search, she found HAND IN HAND and she was determined to support this organisation. Her idea of how her support can be provided is remarkable – as is its implementation.

With the help of friends and family, she developed the wonderful Soulcape. It is the result of a fruitful collaboration, heartfelt commitment, life experience and skill. From the purchase of the fabric to the sewing of the cloth to the packaging and presentation on a specially created website – everything exclusively for HAND IN HAND. Through a chain of generously provided know-how, a great product has been created for HAND IN HAND, the price of which is made up of the production costs plus 20 Euors, the latter going entirely to HAND IN HAND Switzerland.

"With the purchase of a Soulcape scarf, you personally contribute to a child in India receiving a place in a safe and loving institution. From each scarf sold – priced at 79 CHF – HIH Switzerland receives 20 CHF. This corresponds to the cost of one month of schooling, for one child. It is a matter of the heart for me to share hope, confidence, warmth and compassion with all those people who urgently need it."
(Beatrice Dietrich)

A big THANK YOU to all involved with Soulcape !



AN IDEA BECOMES REALITY

FROM THE ASHRAM GARDEN IN AUSTRIA FOR HAND IN HAND

By Mette Koivusalo

Swami Sankalpananda is a monk of the Giri lineage and lives at the Kriya Yoga Centre Vienna in Austria. Supporting HAND IN HAND has always been close to her heart. For many years she has been making handmade products from the flowers and herbs she has been planting herself in the ashram garden.

The idea for her current business developed as a result of the enthusiastic feedback she received on an herbal oil she initially made for herself. The positive reactions to the oil inspired her to develop the idea further with more products.

With the help of friends, books, YouTube videos and through her own creativity, Sankalpananda first experimented by

making calendula oil and various soaps. Many people were enthusiastic about the homemade items and were happy to purchase them knowing that the proceeds are devolved to HAND IN HAND.

Sankalpananda's product range today, consists of: Lavender and Calendula Oil, Aloe Vera Creams, Deodorant Creams, Lip Balm as well as a range of herbal soaps such as Nettle Hair Soap and soaps with Calendula, Lavender, Yarrow, Rose, Chamomile and Lemon Balm.

Christa Bauer, a long-time Kriya Yoga disciple, takes care of the lovely packaging of the products; to her it is another way to actively support HAND IN HAND, besides her financial donations.

100 % of the donations for the self-made cosmetic products go to HAND IN HAND.

Everyone at HAND IN HAND is very grateful to Swami Sankalpananda and Christa Bauer, and their creative, devoted commitment to HAND IN HAND.

They give us a wonderful example of how every contribution can make a difference, no matter how small or big.

It shows us, once again, that HAND IN HAND keeps its promise: One drop can make a difference !

THANK YOU !



UNITED WE STAND!

By Swami D. Giri

Nothing is permanent in this world; life is always in a flux. The times of crisis remind us of this. Difficult situations come; such as we are currently experiencing in this world. At these times, it is all too understandable if we first think of ourselves. However, there are also organisations where people work around the clock, especially in such times, to help those who are hit hard by the crisis: poor and disadvantaged people in those countries where governments are unable to provide basic living conditions for large parts of the population during a sudden crisis.

One such humanitarian aid organisation is HAND IN HAND. The founders of HAND IN HAND in Europe and the USA, as well as all the people who are involved in HAND IN HAND

all over the world, belong to different nationalities, faiths and religions, living in different continents and having different skin colour, education, and diverse life experiences. Yet, they all work cohesively and effectively for a better world. These people in HAND IN HAND are bringing smiles to so many people in need; especially to the children in Balashram.

As part of their services during the COVID times, HAND IN HAND, EUROPE organised online music 'Joy Concerts' with the sole aim of bringing peace and love to all.

Musicians Shanti Omkara gracefully performed in the first ever concert of HAND IN HAND on January 2, 2021, thus heralding a series of concerts later on by other musicians.



All these concerts were helped by volunteers from Austria and Germany to India, the Netherlands, Oman, Switzerland and the UK.

As they say time flies. In no time, we finished our fourth live stream charity concert on July 30 of this year. For the first time, HAND IN HAND, USA joined hands with HAND IN HAND, EUROPE. The Australian-Israeli poet and musician Amir Paiss played an inspiring live concert live from Costa Rica, named as "Connectedness". And we believe that is what HAND IN HAND is all about: cohesion and growing together according to the motto: "One for all – All for one".

HAND IN HAND, EUROPE and HAND IN HAND, USA with PRAJNANA MISSION in India are united by a common goal,

a common vision and, above all, a common commitment: humanitarian aid. The fact that people around the globe join hands to work together for a better world is success for us, because: United we stand !

United we stand!



One drop can make a difference!

Please make that difference with just 1 Euro a day for the Balashram children!
Give children from the poorest backgrounds a new chance in life.

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