

The two projects we support in the Bodhgaya area have been thriving in the last year. For those who aren't familiar with what we do, we support an independent school (the Prajna Vihar School) for lower caste children, now with 584 students this last year, and a regional support and education program for low caste women and girls, called Nari Jagran Manch.

The school started in 1990 and we've been involved in its growth and development since 1992. We've known about Nari Jagran Manch for many years but 2010 was the first year we started with funding.

Last year we reported that we (the PV School using our funds and funds from elsewhere) had bought land next to the school for expansion. The kids previously had quite a small playground. The school area has been subject to flooding in the rainy season and in the last year there's been a big new boundary wall built (see photo page 2) and around 150 truck loads of fill have been brought in to raise the ground level to the level of the new school land to avoid flood problems. The plan is to use some of the new land to build three classrooms, one for Lower Kindergarten, one for Upper Kindergarten and the third for Class 1. The two rooms that will become vacant from this will be used for a science lab and for a library.

This year the school employed for the first time a part-time Kathak classical dance teacher. About thirty students are studying Kathak and some will go for external exams. Dance is an important part of the culture in Bodhgaya and there are dance competitions between schools.

On page 4 we have a detailed report from Sister Mary Lobo on what Nari Jagran Manch (Program for Women's Awakening) has been doing with the funding we provided. We increased our funding to this program in 2011.

On the home front we have a new treasurer. Pamela Grayson, who has been our treasurer for 13 years now has a very full plate and she has handed over to Linda Crawford (Meades). Linda is Eoin Meades' sister, for those who know Eoin. Linda recently moved to Brisbane and has a long and successful background in small business.



PV students in winter clothes

We're very thankful to Pamela for well over a decade of careful volunteer book-keeping and treasurer work and we wish her the best.

We have also renewed our efforts to get Deductible Gift Recipient Status, meaning that donations to the BDA would become tax-deductible. Hopefully these efforts will bear fruit soon, although we're not holding our breath.

You might have heard that after a review of foreign aid, the Australian Government has decided to phase out direct aid to India. While it's true that the Indian Economy is doing well and the middle classes are growing, there's still a huge need for support. There's a peak body called the Australian Council for International Development and its Executive Director, Mark Purcell says "In India you still have 600 million people living in extreme poverty and no matter the pace of growth in the Indian economy, it's still going to be a very long time before you lift those people out of that

extreme poverty". What we're doing is absolutely minuscule but at least it's something.

Thank you to everyone who has generously supported the various projects over the past year, and the various sanghas: Bluegum, Tallowwood,

Beaches and DharmaCloud. Some of you have given very big donations, they go a long way and we're very appreciative.

Victor von der Heyde

Prajna Vihar School Finances 2010

	Rupees - 2009	Rupees - 2010	Australian \$ - 2010
Books, periodicals, educational expenses	91,795	95,314	2,002
Salary and bonuses	788,790	903,200	18,967
Phone	2,091	1,950	41
Water	372	0	0
Electricity	2,696	3,553	75
Stationery, functions and meetings	73,622	54,047	1,135
Travel and study tour	49,392	50,946	1,070
Milk, snacks and fuel	10,279	10,154	213
Maintenance: building and furniture*	8,746	0	0
Audit and legal expenses	48,000	19,050	400
Total	1,075,783	1,138,194	23,902



New boundary wall for the expanded school grounds and new gate with vehicle access

Prajna Vihar School

In last year's newsletter we reported on the Teachers' Day. To give an idea of what happens at the PV School, this year we report on the farewell party for Class Ten. This comes from Rick Peterson, the school founder.

On Wednesday, 9th February 2011, the students in Classes 8 and 9 gave a heartfelt farewell party for the Class 10 students as they leave the school for the traditional home study before the Government Matriculation exam at the end of this month. Fortunately I was also invited. The program was totally financed, planned out and executed, including budgets and menus, by the students of Class 8 and 9. It started with lovely singing and dancing by the students (with Sr. Shobha cautioning them to turn down the volume on the speakers as there was a meditation session going on next door at the new Korean monastery). Then there were some beautiful speeches of farewell, appreciation and encouragement by the students and the Class 10 teacher, Mr. Raj Kumar, Sr. Shobha and even I was forced to get up front and talk. Afterwards Sr. Shobha and I handed out gifts: English Hindi dictionaries to all the children, and awards to some of the most helpful and best performers in the class.

Then we went for snacks which included delicious giant samosas filled with spicy potato and other veggies, the Indian sweet rasgulla and coffee. Perhaps it was the warmth, friendship and mutual support and appreciation among all the children that touched me so deeply. I could see and feel that what we've been doing is really worthwhile.

After we ate, I went and asked some of the Class 10 students what they planned to do now. Three of the boys want to go to Patna campus of the famous IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) and study engineering. Our star dancer, Vikash, wanted to go to Delhi and study language like some of the previous students. One of the girls wants to become a doctor, she plans to study in Gaya. Overall, they are a very impressive group. I felt proud to be a part of it.



PV student in what looks like a toadstool inspired jacket

Report for BDA from Nari Jagran Manch: April 2010 to April 2011

Sister Mary Lobo

BDA's invaluable support for the work in Nari Jagran Manch has brought great hope and a feeling of gratitude in the dalit communities with whom we work. Our conviction is that change is most effective when it happens at the grass roots. This motivates us to animate these communities as they awaken to the possibilities of a better life.

Your generous support has been used with care in reaching out to poor communities in remote areas with few basic resources and where government services are ineffective. In the process we have kept in mind the simple project design and budget outline sent to BDA on 30 March 2010.

We'd like to report on how your funds were used in the last year.

1. Education and training for women at cluster levels

Nine such programs were held at nodal villages during the months of September and October 2010. The women are more free then, while they waited for the rice crop to ripen for harvest.

The aim is to strengthen capability of women in these communities and awaken them to new horizons beyond barriers of caste, class and gender. The programs are held in a suitable place: a big courtyard in a village home, a deserted "community centre" built by the government /or under a shady tree. Sixty or seventy women participate in these meetings / training sessions. The programs last for 4 -5 hours from 11.00 am to 3 or 4 in the afternoon. There is a clear impact in the village communities when these programs are held.

Themes cover recent government legislation on different rights (education, food security, the right to information), health awareness and accessing government programs for health and population control, environmental issues and the benefits, procedures and norms in micro credit. We invite women who have emerged as community leaders or

have been successful in micro businesses to share their experiences and inspire others. We talk and use charts, games, skits and songs.



Sister Mary (left) with cows which are part of the micro-credit program. Sister Mary writes: Bullocks given on hire to plough fields in Maunia Pain. Maunia is an extensive dalit village 4 km from Bodh Gaya. There are 8 densely populated hamlets in Maunia and the dalit families are landless labourers working on the fields of a few landlords living in Bodh Gaya or near the main road. Livestock is an important source of income as well as shared cropping. This family bought a pair of bullocks which are given out on hire to plow the fields.

2. Incentives for the formation of 4 new groups

This year we formed 11 new groups and BDA's support has helped us to give incentives of Rs 1200 (A\$25) to four of these groups.

The purpose of giving these incentives is to reward and encourage the newly formed groups and further motivate them to be regular with their fortnightly meetings and micro credit activities. This limited amount is a significant contribution for women who are really poor and it is much appreciated by the new groups as it enhances their capital base. It also

helps to build up the group ethos.

3. Support for micro credit

In a climate of global capitalism, micro credit is a striking contrast and a creative way of utilising money, especially among the most impoverished sectors of society. Micro loans (small amounts between Rs 2000 (A\$42) to Rs 6000 (A\$126)) are given to individual women on the recommendation of the group they belong to. Each group is composed of around 10 members. With the loan some small-scale enterprise is initiated or improved and the loan is returned within a year with a minimal “service fee” charged on a monthly basis. The profits are reinvested or go a long way in improving living conditions in the household. More specially the dalit families no longer need to go to exploitative money lenders to be enslaved for years on end.



Micro credit: Tailoring, Sister Mary (right) Sarvari Khatun (centre). Sister Mary writes: this is a very poor Muslim household in Bhagalpur village. There is a great demand for low-cost tailoring in the village community. Sarvari also stitches garments for sale. She took a loan of Rs 3000 to buy cloth for this purpose. And repaid the loan within 3 months.

4. Leadership program for teenage girls

Four years ago we linked up to a program for distance education, organised by the Government of India, to help children of the poorest sections of the community get recognised qualifications at high

school and college levels. Six girls enrolled initially and four have passed. The program picked up beyond our expectations and right now we have around 60 teenage girls enrolled. We expect some will drop out as child marriage still prevails, even though there is resistance from the girls themselves.

Along with the coaching classes held in an informal style in 4 villages, we see how important it is to give the girls further training in leadership, self esteem and social issues. We periodically have intensive 3 or 4 day training programs for groups of these girls. On October 12–14 we had a camp for 12 of these girls which included sessions on the topics mentioned above. It was a very positive experience and we organised another such program on October 25–27 at Nevtapur village.

5. Staff Education

It is a prime concern that the community workers (staff) get up-dated and further motivated for the challenging work they are involved in. We have an annual exposure/study program for some days in a nearby centre. This year good opportunities came up in Gaya with a one day program organised by Deshkal (a Delhi-based organisation). It was a People’s Court (Jan Sunvayi) held in Gaya on 11 May 2011. Five of our community workers attended. There were panels and debates facilitated by government officers from Delhi to study the fate of the central government projects sanctioned for the rural poor. Women played an active role at this forum in exposing the poor implementation in Gaya district.

There were four other one-day programs at Jivan Sangham in Bodh Gaya organised by the Gaya Voluntary Forum interaction, debate and sessions on issues like “Food Security”, National Employment Guarantee Act for the rural poor, Right to Information Act, and leadership in NGOs. The staff has benefited much from these programs and use their expertise in their work with the women.

There was also a 2 day training program on 13-14 December which staff attended at Nevtapur on legal rights and human rights. It was led by a team of 3 lawyers / social activists.

6. One water pump in an interior village

We started women's groups in Rainpuri, a very interior village, 2 years ago. There is great poverty here and the land is very barren: there is need in every sense. One vital contribution which the village community always appreciates is clean potable water. A water pump is a great gift. After meetings with the village community – the spot which is most amenable was decided upon by the community worker in charge along with the women. Rainpuri village is deeply grateful. See photo below.

7. Support for one community worker

Nirmala one of our senior community workers has been receiving a monthly stipend from the BDA contribution. This gives her the freedom to dedicate her time and energy to the work of the Nari Jagran Manch. She is responsible for 30 womens' groups (294 women) in 9 villages / hamlets.

8. Administration and support for one office worker.

BDA's contribution has helped in our work of co-ordination. Phone bills, xerox and a little stationery, local transport and petrol for the office motor bike have been met from this amount. Gautam our office worker helps with a lot of going-around work and is paid Rs 800 (A\$16.80) per month for this work, which is only part time.

We are deeply grateful for BDA's outreach across borders, which symbolises a shared belief in a world built on solidarity and compassion.

Sr. Mary Lobo
Nari Jagran Manch Co-ordinator
Bodh Gaya – Bihar – India
30 May 2011



Sister Mary (centre) with new waterpump in Rainpuri



Donation Form

You can transfer funds directly to our bank account:

Bank: Bank of Queensland
Branch: Cannon Hill
Account name: Bodhgaya Development Association Inc.
BSB: 124-001
Account Number: 10142193

If you do transfer funds directly, please let us know who you are and how we can contact you.

Cheques or money orders can be made out to "Bodhgaya Development Association Inc" and sent to 147 Richmond Road Morningside Qld 4170

Name:

Address:

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Email:

Phone:

Amount:

Donation form on reverse

Nari Jagran Manch: Funds provided by BDA, April 2010 - April 2011		
Program	Cost in Rupees	In Australian dollars
1. Education / training at cluster levels (payments made for transport , snacks and resource persons Rs 700 (\$A 14.70) on average x 9 programs	6300	132.30
2. Incentives for the formation of 4 new groups (Rs 1200 (A\$25.20) for each group)	4800	100.80
3. Support for micro credit	18000	378.00
4. Leadership Program for 12 girls twice (3 days x 2 x 12 x Rs 75)	5400	113.40
5. Staff education/ allowance	2860	60.06
6. One water pump in Rainpuri	14300	300.30
7. Support for 1 community worker (Nirmala at Rs 2200 (A\$46.20) per month)	26400	554.40
8. Administration / support for 1 office worker (Gautam Rs 1000 pm / Office Rs 700 pm)	20400	428.40
Total	98460	2067.66



Micro credit: pig farm in Mothiachak with Maina the owner. Mothiachak is 7 km to the west of Bodhgaya, across 2 rivers. Sister Mary writes: Pigs multiply a good bit, they graze around the village wasteland, eat garbage from neighbourhood homes and are given water strained from cooked rice. They are a great attraction at the weekly village market, cooked pigling or pork for instance. The dalits prize this animal and it is a must during their wedding celebrations when pigs really fetch a fortune. Only this dalit caste (the manjis or musahars) engages in pig farming. It's considered an unclean occupation. A pigling can be bought

from a neighbour for Rs 600 - 700 (AUD 12.66 - 14.77) and can fetch Rs 4000 (AUD 84.40), 3 or 4 months later.

BDA Finance Report 2010 - 2011

First of all I would like to thank Pam Grayson our former treasurer and friend for her fantastic and tireless work over the years.

Donations for the past year, March 2010 to February 2011, were \$24,308.20, and Interest \$4112.15 giving a total revenue of \$28,420.35. The previous financial year 2009 to 2010 was \$12,212.22. As you can see this is a substantial increase in revenue.

This is due to the many generous donations received from BDA supporters. All donations of any amount are greatly appreciated, and we are also fortunate to have received a total of 17 donations of \$500 or more. Thank you.

Running costs of \$160.20 for transfer fees and bank charges has been paid for by committee members. As yet the audit fees for the last financial year have yet to be received, but we thank them in advance for their reduced charges. Postage, newsletter costs and other administration costs are gifted by committee members.

	Funds received	Funds allocated
Unknown source	610.00	
Cloudroom use (talks, meetings, meditations)	1768.20	
General donations	21,930.00	
Interest	4,112.15	
Prajna Vihar School		9,500.00*
Nari Jargran Manch		2,586.24
Totals	28,420.35	12,086.24

*\$3,000 of the funds allocated will be sent in the current financial year but as part of the 2010/11 allocation.

Donations received for this 2010/11 year are much higher than the norm for us. This means we can increase our support somewhat and have funds in reserve for those years where donations are not so good. It's our intention to provide consistent funding for the PV School so that the school can make plans with confidence.

Thank you all.
Linda Crawford
Treasurer

Premchand in Maunia with a hired cycle cart (Sister Mary on right). Maunia is about 2 km from Bodhgaya past the Burmese Vihar. His wife Bina took a loan and paid partly for the cycle cart (It cost Rs 5000, AUD 105.50). Premchand carries grain, vegetable, bricks and cement and is paid according to the load he carries and the distance. Sometimes he rents the cycle cart out to a neighbour and earns money on this. On a one day basis it is Rs 75 (AUD 1.58).

