

Friends of India

November 2005

Dear Friends of 'Friends of India'

What a wonderful turnout and atmosphere at our October 7th "First Five Years, Already" celebrations and information evening!

Yes, 5 years have passed under the bridge since a couple of us were motivated through our contributions to the work with the late Peter Ustinov to take up the flag ourselves, launch Friends of India (FOI), and address issues faced by women and children in the south east of India, in the state of Tamil Nadu.



In that time we have been able to make a difference to the lives of about 14'000 women and 4'000 children. All thanks to the efforts of a faithful band of volunteers, and to the generosity of a whole family of benefactors. You. But if 18'000 sounds impressive, it is but a drop in a human ocean of needy. By highlighting a sample of FOI's projects and some of our future plans, this newsletter serves the 'Grand Plan' of keeping alive your motivation for helping FOI by showing what can be and is being achieved. And having done that we hope that you will in turn be ambassadors for FOI and go out and gather new support. In money, 'in kind', in moral support, and in actions. No matter how good at words or committed in thought we, the 'organisers' of FOI are, ultimately what moves and shakes and makes the difference is the resource that you and yours put at our disposal. I hope that you will find this newsletter interesting and useful and worth sharing. At the end you'll find information about various events, and some other useful info. Read on! Share! Enjoy! And please remember to keep on giving.

Thank you. 18'000 times. So far!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pam".

Pam Walsh, Geneva, November 2005

Our mission (with a focus on children, particularly girls) is to ...

- improve infrastructure and the learning environment
- motivate children and their parents to continue learning
- empower women through social development programmes and vocational training

Supporting education at the grass roots

FOI's 'Comité d'Honneur' welcomes Paddy Ashdown



Lord Paddy Ashdown, since November 2005, FOI's most distinguished member

British politician, ex-leader of the Liberal Democrats and since 2002 the international community's High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lord Paddy Ashdown has agreed to be associated with the work of FOI as a member of its 'Comité d'Honneur'. Lord Paddy was born in India, in New Delhi, and comes from a family of soldiers and colonial administrators who spent their lives in India. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration, and to making him as proud as we are to be associated with the work of FOI.

Working with the Chaîne du Bonheur to offset the tragedy of the tsunami

Nobody missed the news that broke on the world on Boxing Day 2004, when the tsunami slammed first into Indonesia and then the Indian subcontinent. Of the over 228'000 deaths, 11'000 were on the eastern coast of India, including losses amongst communities we support.

"Bounty", one of the FOI boats on the coast of TN, named after a theatre character, and paid for by a group of benefactors running in Escalade 2004, Geneva



FOI was quick to identify a need for new boats for fishermen, and is now proud to announce that it will be working with the Swiss organisation 'Chaîne du Bonheur', and thanks to their approval of a request for CHF 200'000 will be able to provide fishing boats for 65 families who had lost all hope of regaining their livelihood. What a difference this will make!

Donations (or how giving a little brings a lot)

2006 is looming on the horizon, preceded by Christmas 2005 (already!) and with it comes our next annual goal, this time to raise at least CHF 100'000 in donations. In these pages you'll find some information on how much (or how little) it takes to bring hope and opportunity to the communities and initiatives that FOI supports. There are all sorts of things you could do to raise donations for FOI. For example, how about ...

- a "From Booze to Bricks Dinner Party" where, instead of bringing you a bottle of wine, guests contribute to buying 'Bricks & Mortar'?
- If you and your friends and family are particularly full of Christmas spirit, how about collecting for a complete classroom? We know of some benefactors who have done such a thing in the name of younger family members as a sort of legacy, so giving the younger generation a sense of participating in helping the less fortunate.
- Ever thought of offering a cow as a present? Maybe some school uniforms? A dividing wall to split up a classroom? We can arrange it for you (although gift wrapping a cow might be a challenge!).
- Feeling sporty? How about running the 2005 Escalade race in Geneva (www.escalade.ch) (or any race for that matter) on behalf of the KK4K (Klean Kitchens For Kids) programme of FOI?
- Why not clear out your garage or loft or basement or spare room, sell it all off from your garage or car boot, and 'Turn Junk into Desks'?
- Organise a sponsored 'something or other'. Or a tombola. Or, or ... well, you get the idea — everything goes!

No matter how much is offered we remain resolute that **100% of what is offered as donations goes directly to projects.**



It is an interesting phenomenon that putting desks and chairs in a school not only makes it a more attractive and comfortable learning environment for the children, but also leads to adults – the children's parents – also regaining a desire to learn

In India a 'little' goes an amazingly long way. An example; for the price of your mid-day sandwich and packaged drink we can typically provide at least 90 — *no that is not a misprint* — nutritional snacks.



*"I name this ship ... " -
- Oops, no it's another
FOI project come to
fruition and being
handed-over to the
community*

Members - We need more people like you!

"That's great" I hear you say "Now we know that donations go directly to supporting projects in India, but what about the costs of running FOI here in Geneva? You don't pay for it out of your own pockets, after all".

Every organisation has costs, however hard they try to minimise them (and we really do do our best to 'administer help' rather than to 'help administrators!'). For example, we want you feel involved, so you have to be kept informed. That's a function of newsletters and the FOI web site, not to mention information evenings and other events. There is a cost to doing that [*Regarding which, enormous thanks to M. Jean-Pierre Cuoni the sponsor of the 'First Five Years ... ' evening*]. FOI 'staff' members are all unpaid volunteers, but we do need office space, secretarial help and office equipment. We are very grateful to **M. Georges Muller** who now provides us office space and some administration help. Alongside such generous support from individual members your FOI membership fee is a primary source of the funding going towards the costs of running FOI. That's why ...

We need members, members, and more members — their fees help with running costs!

*CHF 100 per individual
CHF 160 per couple*



“Dear Pam, we want to help ...”

“... My school friends and I want to contribute. How?”

“... I made 4 kg of cakes and 5 litres of jam, and I sold it all. Now I have lots of Swiss Francs. What can I do with the money?”

“... I want to raise funds, and I'd like to have a goal. What does FOI need? Can I decide what I'd like to make a donation towards?”

There is always a project or projects, large or small, short- or long-term, where your donation will make a difference! We will happily advise you on the options. And ANY amount is welcome.



For its proud new owner this is not 'just a cow' but a regular source of income (not to mention cow pats to dry for fuel!) for years to come. All thanks to a micro-finance loan from FOI, and often the result of an 'earmarked' donation

You have two ways of donating.:

1. make your donation with no specific request attached as to how it is spent. FOI will allocate it according to need, for example to the support of an on-going project needing regular injections of funds. For FOI this the simplest, and most flexible solution;
2. identify a purpose for your donation (e.g. to buy a boat or to build a structure). This approach is known as 'ear-marking'. While it is less flexible for FOI, it is nevertheless a good way for a donor to take 'ownership' of a project, which can be very motivating.

Funding — themes and opportunities

Many of FOI's projects are described on our website (www.friends-of-india.net), but new ones appear all the time. On this page is a short list of typical activities — 'cow buying' has become



CHF 100 bought these 20 kids a school uniform (perhaps their first and only brand new clothes)

particularly popular recently! It is tempting to think that the bigger projects are out of your reach. But what if you were to make a community building a project for your own community to adopt? If CHF 35'000 still seems out of range, what about sponsoring toilet facilities? It is a sad fact that where there are no girls toilets associated with a school there will most probably be no girl students. Or lady teachers. It seems boys can manage better where facilities are missing or limited.

<i>To provide this</i>	<i>... it costs this</i>
Structures	
• School toilets	CHF 220
• School kitchen (including pressure cooker)	CHF 400
• New classroom	CHF 10'000
• Multipurpose training centre	CHF 35'000
Environment	
• School blackboard	CHF 10
• Teacher's salary for a month	CHF 40
• Playground equipment	CHF 600
Motivation	
• 1 School Uniform	CHF 5
• 1 meal a day for 1 child for 1 year	CHF 30
• Equipping a technical library	CHF 300
Empowerment	
• Sewing machine for a Self Help Group	CHF 80
• Micro-finance loan to buy a Milch Cow	CHF 120
• 2 week visit to train English Language trainers	CHF 2'500

Helping Individuals

FOI's projects tend to focus on community needs. However if you would like to make a personal commitment to support a child throughout their education, FOI can put you in direct contact with orphanages we personally know in Tamil Nadu, such as the Eden Home, Gracious Homes, CMS or others.

FOI's Partners

FOI is developing a range of working relationships with partners in Switzerland and in Tamil Nadu.

Example of joint activity/ies



Chaine du Bonheur (www.bonheur.ch)

- Needs of coastal fishing communities



Society For The Upliftment Of The Economically Backward (SUEB) (www.suebmf.org)

- Technical schools
- Micro-finance loans
- Women's health and women's rights



Tamil Nadu Foundation (www.tnf-usa.org)

- Water harvesting
- Digging wells
- Installation of water tanks



BEFORE

AFTER

A kitchen project under the KK4K initiative

"Smoke gets in your eyes".

A kitchen at Anganwadi, brought up-to-date and equipped by FOI

Now it's a "No Smoking" zone!



FOI 'Goodies'

We'd like to take the opportunity of reminding you that we have various FOI goodies, many of them made in SUEB workshops and similar environments. Things such as pashminas, jewellery, personal bags, bottle bags and other good things. They are available either to buy directly, or alternatively for you to sell on behalf of FOI. Visit our website or contact **Dana Sokopp**. FOI goodies may also be seen at the following events in or around Geneva ...

Events

5 November — AIWC Bazaar, Salle Communale, Chêne-Bougerie

26/27 November — Le Courtil, Rolle (10-16h00)

11 December — Marché de Noel, Nyon (9-17h00)

Donations (in Switzerland)

Bank Account : UBS – 240-210.098.01A
 Post Office Account: 17-753012 – 7
 (more information on the FOI website)

Contacts

General Information:

Pam Walsh - +41 22 776 45 87
pam@pr-walsh.ch

Product Sales:

Dana Sokopp - +41 22 774 40 11
sokopp@worldcom.ch

Finance:

Ted Talbot - +41 22 361 04 01
tedtal@vtx.ch

Communications:

Andy Williams - +41 22 750 00 37
andy@thingumybob.com

Addresses

Postal: P.O. Box 88, 1297 Founex, Switzerland
 Web: www.friends-of-india.net