

Minutes of Annual General Meeting, BODHI Australia Inc, Sunday 17 June 2007, Sydney

Open. 2.30pm

Apologies. Graham Ranft, Angela Douglas, Kabita Chakma, Kim Lewis, Emilia Della Torre, Margaret Butler

Present. Susan Woldenberg Butler, Colin Butler, Kulottam Chakma, Shanti Raman; Denis Wright (by e-mail), Jane Hudspeth (by e-mail and phone)

First, to note that Jane's email has a problem, she can receive but not send; she phoned us twice.

Minutes of last meeting. Presented as read. Colin moved; Susan seconded

Business arising from minutes of last meeting was discussed.

1. **Privacy policy.** Should be on receipt/begging slip: permission to thank in newsletter. Mailing confidential. Susan to amend; Denis to put on website. Susan has now amended the receipt.

2. **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Gaden Relief Fund (GRF).** This partnership is perceived as a good chance for BODHI to grow and to support a health project in Tibet; it is also cost neutral for BODHI as it would attract its own funding from Zasep Tulku's supporters; BODHI has not been asked, and at this stage is not offering to provide its own funds. GRF supporters would receive tax-deductible status (TDS) as an incentive to donate. However GRF has requested that secure online donations be provided; this is a facility which BODHI does not yet have itself, and while desirable is not likely to be available in the near future. Denis was to correspond directly with GRF. It was decided that this is ongoing; other delays have occurred due to pressure of work at the GRF.

3. **Project strategy.** Build on what we've got; be wary of branching out too much. Good not to have unsolicited requests (this policy is now stated on our website). physical safety a problem for Bangladesh Chakma students; donation from Australian Chakmas; money spent on checking that funds are spent as promised is a problem but needs to be done. Shanti suggested that perhaps we could concentrate our resources in one particular area, like NE India, rather than

Reports: President, Medical Director, Treasurer, Director of Electronic Communications: see attached.

President's Report. General.

Basic maintenance much busier. Would expand to fill any time allotted. Kulottam offered to help.

President's Report. Current Projects.

Revolving Sheep Bank. Explanation and discussion of Trial and Phases 2 and 3. Susan feels that it will be well and truly launched after the completion of Phase 3 (i.e., in four more years), and we can move on to something else.

Sneha School, AP, India. Discussion of Susanta Chakma's Delhi office needs and those of the SNEHA school in AP. Hopefully problem between designated and actual use of BODHI funds will resolve now that SNEHA has necessary government permission to receive overseas donations. Kulottam to talk to Susanta.

Susanta receptive to idea of health education at Sneha school. Kulottam thinks it is very important, especially sanitation. Discussion of ways to include in curriculum. Shanti said the Indian government included basic health education. She said that Colin's idea of providing impregnated mosquito nets was the single best thing to do re malaria prevention.

Kulottam responded very positively to the suggestion of training a SNEHA teacher in health education.

Parbatya Bouddha Mission (PBM), Chittagong Hills, Bangladesh. Kulottam says this is well regarded in the Jumma community. We are waiting to make a donation until we have received a report from Uttamalankar. Kulottam suggested submission of reports from PBM, Sneha and SKS every six months and will follow up. Discussion of importance of mobile health clinics. We would like to fund more. Praggha Lankar Bhikku mentioned 16 June 07 that he thought the mobile health clinics had been discontinued. Kulottam to follow up.

Nepal. We hope that Sangeetha Basnet will go on to train other deaf children. However, we have no guarantee, and no way of enforcement. We will discuss our continuing support after reviewing next year's report, at which time we will have been supporting her education for two years. Discussion of whether this is sponsorship: if it isn't, it's uncomfortably close.

Dapodi Health Clinic, Pune, India. Discussion of cultural difficulties and embedded sexism. Dh Lokamitra to be intermediary. BODHI funds have not been used to supplement Dr Kalpna's wages, as we had hoped, but we were not informed of this (however they have not been misappropriated). Funds now are to be transferred from TBSMG for two 6-month slum projects in Pune.

President's Report. New Projects.

Shishu Koruna Sangha (SKS). Communication problems with Kulottam will address. Colin and Shanti will try to visit separately, each later this year

President's Report. Facilitating Funds.

General discussion, then individual. **Bodh Gaya Development Fund.** Need to consider making TDS available to donations between \$500 and \$5,000 to save Susan drowning in paperwork, and to minimise any chance of money laundering. Ditto **Jamseng Health Care Centre, Tibet** and **Udana Special Children's Centre, Sri Lanka.** Re the latter, Shanti raised the issue of anti-Tamil discrimination in Sri Lanka, and requested if anyone within Udana's organisation who is sensitive to the Tamil cause. She wonders if Udana has a Tamil non-discrimination policy. Upon discussion, we agreed that it this is probably unlikely, as Udana is just too small; being basically a few parents combining to help their kids. Shanti, Kulottam and Susan support this project, as they do the following potential project (Gaywa).

President's Report. Potential Project.

Gaywa Health and sanitation education to people in Zadoh, Eastern Tibet. Includes regular workshops for the public by specially trained health-care staff of hospice. Colin is concerned about remoteness of contact, both in Canada (where Didi Zasep started project) and Tibet. Shanti raises difficulty of evaluation in remote areas of Tibet; all agree. Discussion: do they really need our support? Our funds are so small that they may not be very helpful, and might be better used elsewhere. We would need an annual report, nothing elaborate, and would need to deepen contact with Didi Zasep. Is she planning to come to Australia?

President's Report. Fundraising, including umbrella strategy.

Tax deductible donations, provided under the "umbrella" strategy, apart from those provided by the Australian Jumma community, should be more than \$500 and under \$5,000. To be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Administrative burden needs to be minimised.

President's Report. Miscellaneous. Letter of reference for visa application for Ven Praggha Lankar Bhikku and letter of support to Australian High Commission, Bangladesh.

The latter helped to facilitate a substantial donation to PBM from the Australian High Commission. The reference letter was written with the understanding that Ven Praggha Lankar Bhikku would stay only temporarily in Australia.

Discussion of Ven Praggha Lankar Bhikkhu's visit to Australia; he now wishes to apply for refugee status, contrary to the promises which we were given when BODHI was asked (and agreed) to write a letter in support, to help him get a visitor's visa. Ven Praggha Lankar Bhikkhu's decision is understandable from his position but it makes it very difficult for BODHI to support similar future requests. We resolved that we would write no more letters of support for such individuals

Medical Director's Report.

Pune, India. Discussed in President's Report.

Bangladesh. Discussion of malaria and helminths. Useful strategies: insecticide-impregnated bednets, continuation or revival of mobile health clinics, periodic deworming of children and establishment of clinic similar to Medicine san Frontier's. Dr Heerak Dhiman, now in the US, has expressed interest in returning to CHT to improve public health. BODHI should deepen its contact Dr Bruce Currey, a Western doctor resident in Bangladesh. AusAID could provide part or matching funds for a BODHI health proposal to be undertaken in Bangladesh. Shanti mentions that Bangladesh is making good progress towards its Millennium Development Goals, and some data relevant to the CHT may be available

Meghalaya. Contact re-established with Garmes Lanong. Discussion of health and politics in NE India, including Mizoram. Kulottam to find answers to Shanti's question about health statistics in the area..

Arunachal Pradesh. Susanta Chakma was receptive to the idea of health education at Sneha (see President's Report above). Colin suggests that Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) may be able to help.

Treasurer's Report.

Director of Electronic Communications Report. Presented.

All four reports (previously circulated to AGM attendees) were read and discussed

Shanti nominated all 4 reports be accepted

Kulottam seconded all 4 reports be accepted
Shanti nominates all office bearers stay the same
Kulottam seconded this.

Presentations.

Mr Kulottam Chakma discussed the situation of Chakmas in Bangladesh and NE India, with emphasis on Mizoram and its health problems, particularly malaria. Mizoram is the only state in India to have a Chakma district council, as the lands originally belonged to the Chakma king; the first Indian government (also motivated by the opinion of Indira Gandhi felt the Chakma people should be represented. Kulottam has some contacts with Mizoram Chakmas; but in general it is thought that the position of the Chakma people in Mizoram is very poor.

Discussion of the Memorandum of Understanding with Bodh Gaya Development Fund was postponed as no representative of BGDF was able to not attend the meeting.

Election of office bearers. Shanti nominated, Kulottam seconded

President Susan Woldenberg Butler

Vice President Jane Hudspeth

Secretary Denis Wright

Treasurer Colin Butler

Kulottam agreed to be added to the committee.

Appointment of committee members. Luiz Ribeiro, Dr Shanti Raman, Kabita Chakma, Dr Casey Quinn, Kulottam Chakma. Susan nominated; Colin seconded.

Appointment of auditor. Greg Harper of Cameron's. Colin nominated. Susan seconded.

Date and venue of next AGM. To be determined, possibly Sydney

Close. 4.10 pm