

MINUTES
BODHI AUSTRALIA AGM, CANBERRA, ACT
13TH JUNE 2010

Present: Susan Woldenberg Butler, Associate Professor Colin Butler, Dr Tony Edwards, Dr Sabina Obermeder, Kulottam Chakma (via Skype), Jane Hudspeth (via email), Dr Gilles Rohan, Tuli Chakma, Nitol Dewan

Apologies: Dr Caroline Ralston/Nagasuri, Emilia Della Torre, Graham Ranft, Dr Denis Wright

Minutes of last meeting: Presented as read. Moved: S Butler; seconded: G Rohan

Business arising from minutes of last meeting:

1. Kulottam commented that he would circulate within the Australian Jumma community for feedback about the SNEHA school in Diyun, AP, India.
ACTION: There has not yet been any feedback but he will try again.
2. Colin suggested a rise for Susan from \$250 a month as part of a growth strategy.
ACTION: Susan declined a salary rise; will let BODHI know when she needs it.
3. Project strategy. Build on what we've got and be wary of branching out too much.
ACTION: The meeting supported the view that BODHI should not take on new projects at this time
4. More funds to spell out (CMS): they have not been responsive by email. Need to talk about medical camps and possibility of training a health worker; it's been a while since we heard from them.
ACTION: Kulottam will contact CMS by landline phone via a contact with Internet access in Delhi.

Presentation of reports: T Edwards moved that all reports be accepted. Seconded by S Obermeder and G Rohan.

1. Electronic Communications.
2. President's Report.
3. Colin presented the Medical Director's Report and discussed.
4. Colin presented the Treasurer's Report and discussed.

General business arising from reports.

- I. Possible projects were discussed.
 1. Education of poor hill tribe and border Thai children through Bruce Wilcox and the new NGO started by himself and his partner. Details appended to President's Report.
ACTION: Susan to contact Prof Wilcox. Two donors have already offered to fund this project for at least the first year, at A\$10,000 p/annum.

2. Teacher training for the Youth Buddhist Society teachers was discussed. Much research has been done to find an organization to do the training; currently we are negotiating with Digankar in Rajasthan India.

ACTION: Colin and Susan to continue developing teacher training through correspondence with Ms Reena Das, Digankar director.

3. Last week [early June, 2010] Susan submitted two grant proposals to the Morawetz Social Justice Fund, one for a library and reading room at the SNEHA school in Bijoypur, AP, India and the other for a nurse/educator for the mobile medical clinics through Moanoghar Mountain Home, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. The total is around A\$7500.

ACTION: Susan proposed that BODHI fund these projects even if the grant proposals are rejected. All agreed.

II. Other

- A. Susan discussed conditions in project areas of India including the difficulty of Internet access and alcohol related problems in the Chittagong Hills Tracts, Bangladesh.
- B. The Treasurer noted that the Sri Lanka Udana project did receive \$300 funding early in 2009.
- C. Susan noted the difficulties now of keeping track of all the projects in her head, eg. when funds and reports and reminders were due.
ACTION: Susan will finish the spreadsheet she has begun containing all relevant information.

III. Volunteers

- A. Susan noted the continuing participation of Michelle Engelsmann, who has moved from Australia to the UK. Michelle is working on an article for *Diva* magazine about the Mitini Nepal project.
- B. Susan noted the increasing demands upon her time and stated the need for a medical researcher, for instance looking into malaria dipsticks.
ACTION: Sabina volunteered to help and Susan emailed her a zipped folder with all previous research.
- C. Gilles offered limited help as the need arises. He and Virginia hope to volunteer Asia after Virginia retires at the end of the year. She is a midwife; he is a medical doctor.

IV. Fundraising and publicity

- A. Sabina and Tony supported the idea of fund-raising dinner(s) with 'slide shows' of BODHI projects.
ACTION: Sabina to plan and hold a fundraising event in Canberra, with Colin as speaker
- B. Ian Phillips, proprietor of a shop called Loom in Canberra is interested in donating a percentage of the shop's profits to BODHI. It was decided to put him in touch with the dalits shop in King St, Newtown, Sydney.
ACTION: Susan to contact Ian upon his return in 2 weeks from Vietnam.
- C. ACFID: should BODHI join? Too expensive; mixed experiences with past volunteers. It was felt that joining was not worthwhile, at this stage, not least as BODHI has no prospective volunteers at present (possibly apart from Dr Rohan and Virginia).

ACTION: It was decided not to join.

- D. Gilles suggested contacting Animals Asia re helping the efforts to conserve the Gobi bear.

ACTION: Susan to do so. [She already has, and has had a positive response.]

IV. In the Medical Director's Report, Colin discussed:

- A. The double-edged sword of the success of BODHI but the increasing amount of time necessary to administer it properly.
- B. The difficulties of trying to scale up projects with the extra recent funds available. It is not practical to visit all projects. Some field assessments may be inadequate or inaccurate.
- C. Colin discussed the visit to the Youth Buddhist Society in Mainpuri with Dr Sari Kovats and Mr Susanta Chakma, as per the report and wished to thank Susanta for translating on this trip.
- D. His several meetings with significant and relevant people and proposed meetings. One was a proposed South Asia trip to visit several of the projects. It was felt that not all could be visited due to expenses and time.

V. Treasurers Report

- A. It was noted that there were errors in the tabled copy of the expenditures on some projects.

ACTION: Correct these before posting

- B. The Chakma scholarship was discussed; Kulottam emphasized the need to concentrate on education.

VI. Electronic Communications

- A. Susan thanked Denis, who is gravely ill, deeply for all his unstintingly generous help over the last fifteen years.
- B. BODHI needs a very experienced person to help with the website.

Election of office bearers. All office bearers remain the same, i.e.:

President. Susan Woldenberg Butler

Vice-President. Jane Hudspeth

Secretary. Denis Wright

Treasurer. Colin Butler

Selection of General Committee members. All committee members remain the same: Luiz Ribeiro, Dr Shanti Raman, Kabita Chakma, Kulottam Chakma and Emilia Della Torre

We appointed the same **auditor** as we've had for many years: Greg Harper, Camerons, Launceston

The date of **next AGM** is to be determined, but will likely be in June 2011.