



LOTUS FLOWER TRUST

3rd Anniversary Newsletter - August 2008-August 2011

1,000 + children's lives changed!

August 2011 is a milestone date for Lotus Flower Trust. Over the past three years we have changed the lives of over 1,000 children, a remarkable success for a small charity, and we are very grateful indeed to all those who have funded the projects and those who have given freely of their time, expertise and unfailing commitment to the work of the Trust.

Due to the current economic climate it looks as if raising funds over the next three years will be much harder, but the charity is looking to build on its impressive involvement with schools, offering them projects for which they must raise the funds and the opportunity to work on site during the building processes.

We continue to pursue Trusts, Companies, especially those with India connections, and individuals. But we still seek our benevolent millionaire to invest in our work.

Our projects follow the theme of changing children's lives in remote rural areas that are environmentally challenging and neglected by other larger charities. In all areas we have been very lucky to find other agencies with whom we can work and are supported by the Government of Uttarakhand, The Ladakh Hill Council and local Indian Charities in Gujerat and Assam.

Our aim is always to deliver life-changing projects in a cost-effective manner, using local resources and skills, and harnessing the passion and commitment of the communities in which we work.

We shall have completed the following projects by the end of 2011:

LADAKH

In Ladakh, at high altitude in the Himalayas where the natural environment is harsh with long and bitterly cold winters which prevent many children from receiving education outside the short growing season where mobility becomes manageable – albeit mainly on foot – Lotus Flower Trust has 7 projects benefiting nearly 400 children) :

Shushakul Home and Primary School for Young Monks



Shushakul is on the Chang Tang plain, 20 miles from India's border with Tibet and accessed by crossing Chang La, the third highest navigable pass in the world at approx. 17,500ft. The Home and Primary School for young monks (a child from nearly every family trains as a young Buddhist monk) was sponsored by Rod Pashley and People Positive. Completed in 2009, 40 children live and study there.

Nalanda Home and Primary School



Built near Ladakh's capital, the town of Leh, (altitude 12,500ft this school is being built for 100 children who live in remote communities over the high passes and get no education where they live. Sponsored by Tax Free World Association, it will be completed by the autumn, before heavy snow again renders all building work impossible.

The Ladakh English College



The people of Ladakh have few natural resources – they sell willow for building – and it is very much a subsistence economy, supplemented by as yet limited tourism. In a quest to equip the young people for the future, a very senior Buddhist Monk, Togdan Rinpoche, asked Lotus Flower Trust to build a school to teach English to teachers, and to young people to equip them to grow tourism or to seek employment in the wider world. This project, again sponsored by Tax Free World Association, will cater for over 100 students per year and will open by the end of this year.

Phulung Primary School



Ladakh hardly saw media mention but the cloud burst disaster of 2010 which sent water down the Indus and brought such tragedy to millions in Pakistan first wrought havoc in Ladakh, completely destroying this school which has been rebuilt for its 60 pupils through the generosity of many Trusts, Businesses and individuals who responded to our appeal for funds in the wake of this disaster.

The £30,000 raised through the Ladakh Disaster Appeal also allowed us to fund the following projects:

Photoksa Primary School



In partnership with the Ladakh Education Authority we have rebuilt this school for 80 pupils, which was badly damaged by the floods.

Stakmo Village Irrigation

The floods not only damaged houses but swept away trees – including the valuable willows, topsoil, and crops and filled the village well with mud. Through donors' generosity we are funding a fresh water pump which will serve the whole village as well as funding the clean-up of the fields and their irrigation system.

Saboo Ayu Nunnery



This home and school for young nuns which clings to the side of a steep riverbank was also badly damaged by the flood and left without drinking water. Unlike the monks, the nuns have to generate their own funding. The Charity has paid for the repairs and the installation of a water pump. Winchester College have just confirmed £60,000 funding to extend Saboo Ayu, allowing a further 50 young women to live and study there. Students in the final two years at Winchester College will raise the funds and go to Ladakh to work on the building site.

All the above disaster projects will be completed this year.

UTTARAKHAND (6 projects, Approx 340 Children):

In this State which embraces the foothills of the Himalayas, Lotus Flower Trust is supporting 6 projects benefiting 350 children in the Kumaon Hills and the area around Corbett National Park, famed for its tiger population and conservation work.

Tarsaal Primary School



Funded by the students and parents of Winchester College over two years this little school high in the Mountains has been a very successful project indeed. Completed in 2011, 100 children now go to school in a sturdy well-equipped building with kitchen and sanitary facilities.

Saraswati Shishu Mandir



The cloudburst in Ladakh also affected Uttarakhand and 18 little children were drowned in the floods of August 2010 and their school completely destroyed. The Uttarakhand Government asked if Lotus Flower Trust could find sponsors to match fund the school which is being built on a safer site and will accommodate over 100 children. Funded by Mhairi Rodrigues and friends, it will be completed by the end of 2011.

Akaash Ganga Home for Girls, Kapkot



A home has been built for 69 girls between the age of 4 and 18 found living in the most dreadful conditions. They were from the Dalit (previously known as Untouchables) classes. A local charity had offered them some respite in a large concrete room with some rags to sleep under. A new home with 10 dormitories, large kitchen, dining room, sanitary facilities and skills centre has changed their lives and offered them hope for the future. With a capacity to house 80, this project was funded by Mel Morris and her family and friends.

Kalu Siddi Primary School



A four classroom school now replaces the wood and corrugated iron shack which made lessons in the hot summer sunshine intolerable and provided little or no protection from the monsoon rains. The children are from families of labourers who work on farms or road-building projects for a pittance. The teachers, provided by the Indian government, report that the children are making good progress now that they have proper facilities. Funds to build the school were raised through a charity Ball organised by DFNI and the duty-free industry, and the equipment was provided by World Duty Free.

Lalitpur Primary School



Not far from Kalu Siddi, this village community faced the same challenges. Working with the Uttarakhand Government this dilapidated school is being rebuilt and extended using the remaining funds from the DFNI Charity Ball and will accommodate 100 children.

GUJERAT

Gujerat lies in north west India, close to the border with Pakistan. A mere two hours away from the main city, Ahmadabad, the rural communities farm cotton, cumin and subsistence crops. Out on the marshes the poorest endure unbelievable temperatures to mine salt. Life expectancy is around 35 years; education is vital if this cycle of poverty is to be broken. Here Lotus Flower Trust has 2 projects benefiting over 150 children.

Bakshi Panch / Ashram Shala Savada



This school and home for 120 children has dedicated teaching staff but operates under a rickety construction of metal sheets and tarpaulin. Some of the children are orphans, others live here while their parents endure the harsh conditions on the salt marshes. Working with a local charity, Shramik Vikas Sansthan, the foundations for this home and school have been laid, funded by the Tax Free World Association, with an estimated completion date of November 2011.

Akaash Ganga, Zainibad



Responsibility for this home, built to accommodate 80 children, has now been passed on to the incountry management team.

As ever we have a long list of projects for which we are seeking funding:

LADAKH:

Chishul Home and School



Situated on the Chang Tang Plain at approx 13,500ft, this small town is on the border of India and Tibet/China. Many of the children there are from the Champa nomadic tribes who roam the plains with their yaks and goats. It is a harsh place with very cold winters and scorching temperatures in the summer. Very few Westerners have ever been there. The local Buddhist monks provide some education for the children but with very poor facilities. They have approached Lotus Flower Trust to build a home and school for 60 children. Estimated cost to build £25,000.

UTTARAKHAND:

Handicapped Home and School, Ramnagar



The handicapped in India are often ostracised from the community and live in squalor. They receive little or no education and have little hope of any meaningful future. In Ramnagar nearly 600 children have been identified as handicapped. They are deaf, blind, have speech impediments, physical handicaps, mental handicaps and some have leprosy. It is a huge stigma for a woman to have borne a disabled child and the handicapped are often shut away from the world. A local charity, USR Indu Samiti, has a team of individuals who are trained and experienced in caring for and teaching these children. The state has developed its own system

of education for the handicapped but does not provide the physical buildings. Lotus Flower Trust has been approached to build the home and school which will be the first purpose built facility to enable implementation.

50 seriously disabled children---two phased project with an estimated total cost to build of £70,000.

ASSAM:

The region is known for its natural grandeur and scenic beauty. Its immense agricultural and industrial potential have yet to be tapped. It has one of the highest rainfalls in the world and is known as the "Tea Basket" of India. Politically unstable makes it a no-go area for many charities.

The Brahmaputra Home and School, Guwahati



Guwahati being the largest city in Assam receives an exodus population from other north-eastern states who see a ray of hope in the urban city for survival. An estimated number of 2,500 destitute children live on the streets, underneath the flyovers and in the slums adjacent to the railway track. Between Gates no. 2 and 5, over 200 children live with their mothers and sometimes fathers in most dangerous conditions. Their shacks are less than 6 feet away from the railway line itself. They live in plastic and cardboard huts amongst the detritus of the city. There are no modern facilities such as electricity, plumbing or even the most basic sanitation. They receive no education and have no medical facilities. They exist from day to day by rummaging through the rubbish of the filthy streets collecting plastic bottles, metal and rags which they can sell for a pittance. 5 bottles = 1 rupee (70 rupees to the pound).

A local charity sStep, has asked Lotus Flower Trust to build a new home and school for the children and skills centre for the Mothers. The building will accommodate 200 children on a piece of land which has been donated to them. It is in beautiful countryside away from the railway tracks. Sustainability is guaranteed by sStep.

Estimated cost to build £40,000

Total Children benefiting from our work: 1180.

On behalf of the children who we support we offer our grateful thanks to all our donors and to the very many other individuals, businesses, and trusts who have made our work possible. A particular mention must be made of Ashok Tripathi of Amazing Treks and Tours without whose specialist knowledge of India and its “workings” and commitment to our cause we could not have made it this far.

Thank you all for helping Lotus Flower Trust “Change Children’s Lives, Forever”.

Sarah Branquinho, Chair of Trustees



John Hunt, Chief Executive



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