

Nishtha Rural Health, Education & Environment Centre



Nishtha Clinic

Considerable development is taking place both in the public and private sectors of health and education in Himachal Pradesh with government facilities being augmented and even taken over by private schools and hospitals. The rural poor are now working under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme which provides them with money in their pockets but very little time, so rather than visiting our clinic to consult a doctor, they prefer to buy basic medicines from the local shops and not miss work to see a doctor. The government provides a number of medicines, even pregnancy tests, through the baby crèches (Anganwaris) provided in each hamlet, which most poor mothers use in order to be able to work. As a result, working mothers do not need to visit the clinic unless they are seriously ill. In addition, the recently opened Government Teaching Hospital down the valley at Tanda provides free consultations and treatment to the very poor and so the medical facilities available in this area, have improved not only through the proliferation of private hospitals and clinics for the middle class but also for the rural poor.

As a result, for the last 3 years we have seen a drop in the number of patients attending our daily clinic from 7000+ to just under 6,000. However, increasing numbers of the patients who come to us are in more desperate need of help than those we had before and they are fewer from our immediate locality and more from further afield. They are increasingly those who have been unable to be helped by any other facility or have received confusing or ineffective treatments elsewhere. People come to us from an ever widening area and say 'you are my last hope'. It is therefore our responsibility to give them as much time and attention as we can to try to help them.

Having spent time analyzing the nature of a patients' problem we make sure that they access the medical help they need by providing transport and assistance to communicate with the hospital doctors. We provide services to those who are unable to be helped in hospital – to the terminally ill, the chronically sick and those who still do not get what they need either through lack of



Nishtha Clinic waiting room



Patients consulting our doctors



In-patients care



information or understanding of what can be done to help them. Therefore our in-patients facility is more regularly in use – and not primarily for patients with gastroenteritis as in the past. Our vehicle is regularly sent to pick up infirm and elderly patients from their houses to bring them to the clinic

Special Medical cases receive particular care and free medicines from our clinic: for example, we provide the very expensive medicines required by a 24 year old local girl from very poor family suffering from a thyroid problem. Patients with cancers or other serious illnesses such as gangrene are admit-

ted to the clinic for care and assisted to Tanda Medical College where they receive treatment. Those at home in terminal condition are attended daily by the clinic staff. Other chronic problems include diabetes which is expensive and difficult to manage, epilepsy, patients with heart problems and hypertension who all receive regular medicines from the clinic. 50-60 ladies with uterus prolapse have pesserie rings fitted and come every month for checking and cleaning.



Health Awareness Outreach Camps

In response to the felt need for village people to understand their medical needs and what are the medical options available to them, this year we have launched a programme of health education in the villages we are working in through the single women's outreach project. A great deal can be done through passing on a little understanding of how the body works, what people can do to avoid getting sick and when and when not to use antibiotics. Through visiting the villages we have located some remote areas in which women in particular continue to have very less access to medical care and therefore we are planning to visit these particular villages regularly in order to offer them continuing care.



Between October and March a total of 10 health awareness programmes were carried out in 10 different villages in which the single women's programme is active. These programmes were organised by the single women activists in their areas and were led by Dr Kusum and Dr Barbara with a support team of Nishtha staff and volunteers.

These half day programmes focused on providing information on a range of relevant topics through presenting a well made video on bacteria and infections. Ensuing discussions included talking about basic hygiene and what to do when you get diarrhoea and how to avoid it. They led to questions about the importance of breast feeding, the use of oral rehydration solution, the need to boil drinking water, how to avoid contracting other infections such as HIV/AIDS and how to eat healthily without spending too much money.

10-35 people of a mixed age range attended these sessions in the various villages. Generally there was a core group of single women in each locality but also many other women, youngsters and even men turned out. Usually the doctors were able to see a certain number of patients (4-16 per session), some of whom could be treated there and then and others who it was arranged should visit the Nishtha clinic for better investigation and treatment. Cases included leucorrhoea, epigastric pain and diarrhoea, uterus prolapse, persistent headache, skin problems/scabies, anaemia, joint pain and hypertension.



Public Health and Environment

Environmental clean up programme

This year we have carried out an average of 2 local clean up programmes a month. These programmes involve the school children, the community centre staff and the bag project women, volunteers and youth club members. They generally take place in the afternoon and are followed by snacks: fruits and/or samosas. The waste is segregated: the burnable and dirty waste from the recyclable waste which is given to the rag pickets (kawaris). We adopted a new programme of landfill of plastic waste this year reserving the incinerator for medical waste



New garbage collection bins have been designed. A sample of our new design has been made and installed in the playground. This bin is smaller but can be emptied from the bottom and will discourage people from setting fire to it as they do the big bins. So far it is working well and we intend to make several more to be placed in front of the shops along the road as well as more in the playground.

Organic agriculture/tree planting

This year at the start of the monsoon we applied to the forest department and received for 100 medicinal tree plants with the help of youth club registration certificate. 10 trees were planted in the sports ground and in front of our clinic building. 25 trees were planted on a new plantation up the hill and the rest of the plants were distributed amongst 35 village families, each taking two to three plants. Regular checking of the trees has been done – one tree died but the others are doing fine.



Dogs Clinic

We have a big problem of rabies in this area with outbreaks occurring in the villages each year. Last year 4 rabid dogs bit 6 different people and the previous year 4 people died due to dog bites. Because of the mixed communities of local people, Napalese and Tibetans, all of whom are dog loving, practically every family has a dog but very few bother to get their dogs vaccinated and sterilised because of the lack of veterinary facilities for animals in the rural areas. Therefore any help we can give to contain the dog problem is very valuable for the safety of the local people. This September we started our vaccination programme with the help of Tibet Charity and since then we have vaccinated a total 62 dogs: 47 pet dogs and 15 stray dogs.



On 7th December 2010 Nishtha organised a one day dog's sterilisation camp with the help of Tibet Charity. A mobiliser was sent out the day before to inform the villagers to catch their local stray dogs. A total of 16 dogs were caught, 9 of them were sterilised (6 were female dogs) and the rest were vaccinated against rabies.



Water filter maintenance

The three filtration units installed by Nishtha in the area provide 5,000 litres of water in a day and are used by around 400 people who collect it from their nearest tapping point. People really value this provision and take care to turn the taps off so as not to waste it. Regular maintenance is done by our staff and the filters are checked and changed by Tuff Aquatech from Delhi twice a year. This year we also replaced the UV filters in 2 of the units.



Ecosan toilets

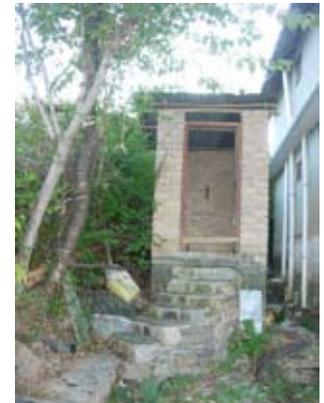
The 11 eco-san toilets established for the poor in the village and single women are now in use with varying degrees of success. Some people are having a hard time keeping up with their neighbors who have conventional water and septic type toilet and others are not using it correctly – avoiding putting water down the pit. The concept of DRY composting is hard to convey and maintain for people who are used to using water to wash away their waste. However, the concept is extremely important to promote because of the increasing scarcity of water. It could be argued that it is a mistaken concept to give them to the very poor and lowliest in society since they will be seen by others as a poor mans option instead of the way of the future.



Therefore a great deal of continuing work needs to be done to educate and facilitate the use of the toilets, and for this we are very dependent on the model toilet built in the nearby Tara centre which has not been utilised because of lack of access due to construction work going on all year. We hope this will be rectified soon and we can establish it as a working model

Stabilised Mud Brick Making

In March everything came together for the production of our stabilized mud bricks and we are able to produce 150 bricks a day with 3 people working. We have a team of 7 young men who come in the mornings and evenings to work on the project, learning a useful trade and at the same time earning for the bricks they produce. (Rs. 2.60 per brick) The construction of the toilet sheds began in May and we completed all but one before the monsoon broke. Recipients prepared the stone, the mud for the mortar and the bamboo for roofing themselves. In July we inspected all the toilets, talked to the recipients and ensured that they were functioning correctly. At that point some had to have minor finishing details and all were provided with signs in Hindi to make it clear how to use them.



Women's Programmes:

Nishtha Stitching Training for young women in the village consisted this year of a mixed group of unmarried and recently married girls. However, we started with 10 girls and ended with 4 because 3 got married, two had babies and 3 found it difficult to manage their work at home and care for their young children and coming to the stitching training classes regularly. Whilst the 4 who completed the course were all unmarried girls and benefitted, clearly there is a problem. Many girls in the village now go to college along with the boys and so have no interest in learning how to sew. Some prefer to learn machine embroidery and produce 'boutique' items or even train as beauticians because these trades give them a better chance to start



their own business in the town.



However our bags project with a core group of 8 women is doing very well and from April have launched out on their own as the Rakkar Womens Stitching Co-operative. They will still function out of the Nishtha Community Centre and our visitors will be the first to give them business but they will manage their own accounts as a self help co-operative.

March 8th – Women’s Day Programme

The women’s day programme this year was held in the Community Centre garden and was attended by around 100 women and girls. We started with a presentation about the environment, clean water and the concreting of the khuls in the workshop room upstairs which turned into an interactive discussion on environmental issues particularly involving our newly elected woman Pradan and Panchayat members . We then went down to the garden where we enjoyed several plays and ended with folk songs and dancing. Prominent local women including Kusum, Dr.Kishwar and Nirmal from Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan all spoke. Newly elected Smitti member Neelam also came and addressed the crowd. Everyone had a very interesting and enjoyable day.

Nishtha Single Women’s Outreach Project.

In April 2010 it was decided that we should take on up to 6 assistant single women activists to enable our 3 present activists to work more effectively and to cover a wider area and more villages, thus extending our reach to more single women.

We therefore held a workshop on 28th/29th April, inviting 18 single women who are interested in working from the 3 areas we cover and who our activists nominated as potential candidates. During the workshop the women were set various tasks and exercises in order to assess their abilities and potential. Some dropped out because they themselves felt they could not take on the commitment though it is only half time work. In the end we agreed to take on 5 women on a trial basis for 3 months. All the women were required to join Wenlido trainings and to go to Sutra trainings during this three month period. A one day training was organised during the first week of May to introduce them to the single women’s project aims and objectives and to train them in form filling, making out receipts, keeping a daily diary and petty cash accounts. Thereafter they took full responsibility for training and activating the new ASWAs in their areas for the coming 6 months.

Since November the new activists have been working independently, each in five new Panchyats. This year was very busy because of the selection and training of new activists and extending our reach.



Block	Panchyats	No. of Women contacted	Paid membership	Widows
Nagrota	20	512	390	474
Kangra	26	624	485	597
Rait	24	711	368	674
Total	70	1847	1243	1750

In every block we hold a monthly meeting with each Panchayat and a Block level meeting every six months This year we have organised health awareness programmes in the Panchyats (10 meetings total) and we have sent single women local leaders for leadership training to Sutra. We enrolled 245 new paid up members; 15 women got their pensions through our intervention, 8 women got money for house repairing, 10 single women were beneficiaries of the Mother Theresa scheme, 16 sewing machines were obtained from the Red Cross and 8 single women got funds for the marriage of their daughters under chief minister Kanya Daan Yojna Rs.11,000 scheme. We particularly offer legal and medical help to the women. We celebrated Widows Day on 23rd June by organising a rally which marched to the District Commissioners office and shared their problems with him. Around 200 single women participated in this rally. The women particularly need legal rights and pensions.

Wenlido Programme

This year a total of 6 workshops were held in Nishtha Community Centre and 3 outside: one at Dongyu Gyatseling Nunnery and two in Dhera Doon with Asthita. All the workshops were organised and run by our two Wenlido trainers, Deepa Gurung and Ravindra.

Some of our workshops held at Nishtha were for young girls and women aged 15 to 25 years. Some were still school students and were very active and enthusiastically took part in all the discussions and techniques we showed. The young girls usually turned out to be very good at the Wenlido techniques. At the beginning they were shy to talk openly

in front of the others, but after 1 or 2 hours it became clear that they all are familiar with harassment and abuse at home or in society. They leave us feeling less vulnerable and able to defend themselves.

Discussions with the young girls also turn out to be very lively and interesting. We are able to lead them through the subject of violence and rape. At first many of the girls had a very conservative opinion of a woman who has been raped, but during the discussion many changed their minds and realized that rape is not the end of one's chance to lead a good life. So this discussion changes their way of thinking and responding to others who suffer abuse. This way women can support each other and form a pressure group in society to prevent such abuse occurring without repercussions.

They particularly enjoy the small tips we offer on how to react when being harassed, how to get out of difficult situations without violence and how to avoid harassment. They liked the exercise how to say NO and how to create a boundary to prevent their being harassed in public. After the training they felt stronger and more self-confident. The girls said they would also encourage others to take part in the Wenlido training.

Single women were another focus group this year. Their age ranges from 21 to 74 years and so their ability and response to the methods employed in the workshop also varies a lot. These groups can be much harder to handle but because single women are so vulnerable in society it is all the more important for them to receive this training. With older women it is more difficult to get the women to talk about their problems and experiences with harassment. First they deny having experienced harassment, but when one woman starts to share her experiences then other women join in talking about the sexual and social harassment they had endured. It is also more difficult to teach the self defense techniques to older women because some were not fit enough and had pains in their knees and some had some problems with coordination. In the end they said they were glad to have learned the techniques and tips about how to defend themselves and that this knowledge would be very useful to them.

The workshops held in the winter were specifically for single women with a view to finding out whether any of them would like to be trained as single women trainers. Unfortunately it is very difficult to find women who are ready to dedicate themselves to undergoing the hours of workshops and trainings it takes to become a trainer

We held one workshop for the nuns at Dongyu Gyatseling Nunnery for the young nuns there who, though they are sanyasins need to be aware so as to defend themselves. Two workshops were held in Dehra Dun for Asthita as we did last year. We find that the women in Dehra Doon experience a lot more serious violence than we do here and it takes time for them to relax to be able to talk about it and understand they can do something about it. When they do they realize how useful the release techniques are and very much appreciate learning how to create boundaries and to say NO. Our trainers find the workshops in other places very stimulating and interesting.



Youth social and Environment club

The Rakkar Social and environment club was registered in July 2009 and holds regular meetings in the Nishtha cc. Their activities over the last year have included:



- * Planning, organising and preparing for sports programmes including engaging with the sports department district Kangra and the local Panchayat to gain permission to extend our work on the sports ground and to get earth to improve the cricket pitch. .

- * Practically engaging in environmental and disaster mitigation activities; tree planting, ground and river bed management, clean up days, fighting forest fires and saving fish which had been flooded into the rice paddies. They have also been very effective assistants in the dog vaccination programme.

- * Highlighting issues, attending local panchayat meetings (Amm Jelas) and engaging in local environmental issues such as encouraging the work of the recently formed sanitation committee and campaigning against cementing the village waterways – a practice which is highly detrimental to the natural ecology.

- * Involvement in Nishtha events: posting posters, spreading information and assisting during the actual programmes:

Sports Programmes

Sports are very important to the youth in the area and we have great support from them for our sports club. Around 35 youths play every evening in the ground. In the rainy season we cannot play cricket because of wet ground so we have formed a football team in the village. Football is also a popular alternative for those who do not like cricket.

This is our 6th year of developing the sports ground which is in full use and is a major centre for our village. During the day time the ground is occupied by the school children for play and is used for school sports and activities. The youth mainly use of the ground in the evening time: from October till June for cricket and from July till September for football because of rainy season. The play centre continues to be a popular focus for the children of the area.

The football team is proving very popular with the local boys and Andreas and Mohinder held regular practices sessions every day during the monsoon with a view to holding a football tournament. Several volunteers have been involved in training our local boys in the rules of the game and we have developed quite a good team. During the football world cup 2010 the interest and enthusiasm of the local youth went up and football has become a regular local game.

The football tournament which we had hoped would take place in September was delayed until the end of October because of the excessively heavy monsoon. 10 local teams participated in the tournament from different communities such local, Tibetan and Nepali. The event took two days to finish. The Tibetan team won the final of the tournament. It was a great opportunity for the different communities to get to gather and share their culture and build friendship.

The cricket tournament was held in December and was a hugely popular event in the village.



Nishtha annual sports event

The annual sports event started this year in the month of November because it is getting popular and last year we were not able to give every body an opportunity of participation. This year 26 cricket teams, 8 football teams, 10 badminton teams ,6 volleyball teams participated in the event as well as and about 150 people who joined in the athletics. The number of girls who participated also increased this year. We had 6 girls badminton teams, 6 cricket teams and 40 girls participated in various athletic games. The participants got refreshments each day during the event and prizes at the end.

Sports Equipment donation

We were donated a whole set of cricket equipment, volley ball and a football from a Charitable trust called SARTHI who are trying to encourage village talent in sports and present themselves on national and International platforms. We are very thankful for this valuable contribution to our programme. Sarthi also donated a number of interesting biographies and self help books in Hindi for the library.



Cultural Awareness Programme

The cultural training programme this year included members of the stitching programme but also drew in more mature married women from the area. This group of young married woman of the village who are all trained girls are able to perform at any time. They put on very good performances on 8th march (women's day) and for the Single Women's Rally in Delhi as well as performing at the Nishtha Cultural event on 31st December.

The further development of the cultural programme as planned in September to include more musical training has been delayed because Vijay was elected a panchayat mem-

ber this year and Bhandana has been raising her second child.. We are planning to start again at the beginning of the rainy season when there is less work. In preparation for this development we agreed to improve our musical instruments in order to encourage young people to play and so far a new dholak and chimta have been bought.

As soon as the male dresses are complete we will encourage the young men of the village to form a group. These dresses have taken much longer than anticipated to prepare but are now finally being stitched and embroidered.



First Aid training

Des Kitto heading the St John's Ambulance team once again visited us in summer last year and gave a full first aid training to our staff and members of the Nishtha Youth Club. We are very grateful to the St John's ambulance team for their visits and feel we are very well equipped now to help the community in times of emergency.

Childrens Programmes

School Nutrition Programme:

During 2010, 120 children at the local government school in Rakkar received daily fresh fruits and supplements of dal, ghee, haldi, masala, onions and tomatoes as well as seasonal vegetables to make the food supplied as a daily meal more nutritious and interesting. This year the number of children in the school has decreased so there are now only 92 children, 38 in primary and 52 in the secondary school. Therefore we have decided to take on the nearby Samlokarnag school which has 23 children from very poor families who work in the slate mines. We are presently delivering fruits and meal supplements to the school twice a week.

We continue to monitor the nutrition programmes carefully in the schools and to ensure that the school toilets are kept clean and the water filter in good condition. All the children in the Rakkar school received new shoes and socks in April 2010 when their sponsors from Germany visited and hosted a special feast for the children. In return the children entertained the guests with their dancing and happily showed them around their school.



Library/Literacy Project

This year we have carried out a radical overhaul of the Library facility and books organised by Nicola, our expert and invaluable consultant along with Ravinder, Nishtha librarian and Tamara, a volunteer from Austria. Books which were inappropriate and probably off-putting for the main users of the library who are generally the children were discarded and we had a drive to replace them with more appropriate Hindia language children's story and information books. In August/September we bought around 200 new children's books in Hindi and set them on stands so they are easily accessible to the children. In February we received a donation of a further 450 books in Hindi through our incredible supporter Radhika Sharma, as well as buying more books through the Nishtha UK trust fund. Various other people have donated good books for the library so the shelves are now well stocked with books which are interesting and appropriate for the local readers.

In order to improve the facility, we removed the big meeting table, put in PVC floor covering and grass mats to make the floor comfortable and added several low and higher stools and a small round table. Various improvements were made to the shelving and boxes for the smaller children books provided for easy access. The library is thereby transformed into a genuinely children's space and the result is overwhelming. Every afternoon after school the courtyard is filled with kids who rush into the library and enjoy pulling out books, reading, drawing, playing games and engaging in creative activities such as they are never able to do either at school or in their homes.

Once the books have been entered into the accession register, they are classified by a new colour co-ordinated system subject wise. Picto-charts will enable the children to learn this system and access the books easily. We have also introduced new borrowing cards which the children are able to manage themselves. We are particularly grateful to our supporters for their invaluable help with getting the library to this stage.



Kids club programme

Six days a week after school the kids club makes use of the library, the computer centre and engages in games and sports. The children love to come to play and enjoy watching the Tata Sky children's package when appropriate. Several jigsaws, board games and painting materials have been purchased for the kids programme as well as skipping ropes and badminton rackets and balls. The children also have great fun on the play centre on the lower ground. In December we held a day long festival of games and activities for the children which everyone enjoyed.

Special Event!

Well known children's author Paro Anand at the invitation of her sister-in-law Radhika Anand who is a member of the Nishtha supporters group, very kindly agreed to give a story telling session to the children on 25th February. The Community Centre workshop room was packed with 125 children for the locality who were absorbed and delighted for the full two hour programme. Mrs Anand is a superb story teller and we were very honoured and grateful that she agreed to offer us her time. The children will remember her brilliant stories for years!



School children's tuition

We started the classes from November and continued up to mid March just before the exams. 2 tutors were engaged: Vijay BSc and Anjana BA who taught maths, English and science as well as other subjects if children brought questions 6 days a week from 3-5pm. 35 kids from 4th to 10th classes from our 5 local villages signed up and 25 completed the sessions. All the children who took part in the tuition programmes passed their exams. The tutors were paid Rs.1500 each per month as an honorarium. Required stationary and refreshments were also provided.



Computer training:

Nishtha started a computer course for members of the Nishtha Youth-Club in April 2010. 16 local teenagers (4 girls and 12 boys) between the age of 14 and 20 years signed up for the course, which lasted for three months and was taught by our social servant Andreas along with Ravinder. The classes were held in two groups, each of them having three afternoon-sessions (from 3pm to 5pm) per week. The aim of the course was to familiarize the children with the most important computer functionalities required in today's daily life. Andreas continued to run youth courses between October and January when he left.

School children's introductory trainings have been held with Ravinder and Andreas (our Austrian civil servant) as tutors. A young man from the village, Sahil, spent 6 weeks this spring working with the children in the afternoons. The children who come to our computer trainings are mostly from the local government school though some come from the nearby private Bhagsu School. However, all the children are from village families who otherwise would not have any access to computers.



Fun Learning in Hindi

Fun learning is a manual of practical creative ideas for teachers of young children. It has been used extensively throughout the Tibetan schools. Some time ago we had the text translated into Hindi with a view to producing it to be used in the local Indian schools to encourage young teachers to explore fun and interesting ways of working with young children. Even now most schools use very few teaching aids, play materials, offer few creative activities and the books they have are generally locked in the school cupboard. Most teachers will say that the biggest problem they have with their class of 4-5 year olds is that they won't sit still and copy from the blackboard. This book offers the teacher an alternative view of how to cover the same learning ground but in a fun and interesting way.



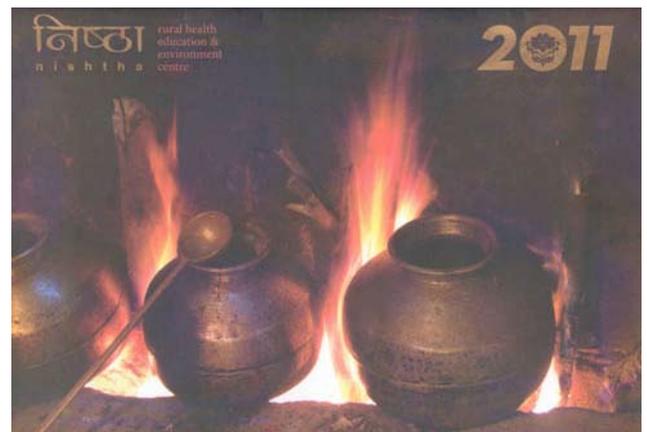
However, the illustrations, done by Swedish children's illustrator Veronica Leo were intended for the Tibetan diaspora and so depict not only Tibetan faces but also Tibetan cultural images which are not immediately comfortable for our local people to relate to. Our first step was therefore to get the book re-illustrated. Veronica agreed to do this and came and spent 6 weeks with us in March/April and re-did the illustrations using Indian faces, clothing etc. We now have to scan the pictures and getting them page set with the Hindi text. Then we can see if we can get a publisher to print it for us or whether we are going to print it ourselves.

Nishtha Calendars

1000 Nishtha 2011 calendars were sent out to Nishtha donors or potential donors and distributed locally. This calendar focused on local ways of life, depicting traditional farming methods as well as crafts and local houses. The calendar is a very effective means of advertising our work and generating interest in it.

Nishtha Flyer Production

A new Nishtha flyer has been prepared and 1000 copies are to be printed in May. This will be given to potential donors and those interested in our projects.



Community Centre Meeting room

As part of the overhaul of the library, turning it into a children's space, we lost the function of the library as a meeting room and study cum reading room for older people. We therefore decided to extend the kitchen which used to be used for preparing school meals back into the verandha by knocking down a wall, adding a girder beam and building the wall again. The room has a lovely long window which looks out onto the garden and an inbuilt cupboard to house the books used during women's workshops and trainings that are not suitable in the children's library. The walls have been mud plastered and the long table which used to occupy the library fits very nicely. We were able to complete the work with very little disruption to the community centre. We are very pleased with the result and find the extra space very useful.



Administration:

Nishtha is governed by a board of Trustees which meets two to three times a year. On May 4th 2010 we held a Nishtha Trust Board meeting during which it was decided that, following the passing of Mrs Monica Ghosh, we only had 2 functioning Trustees, we needed to look for further trustees to join our group. Consequent to this, Sonia Sebastian, a local woman who has been one of our sturdiest supporters was unanimously voted in as Trustee. Our Trustees are now Abha Bhaiya, Kamla Bhasin and Sonia Sebastian.



Support

We welcome visitors and supporters for all over the world. We were especially pleased to host Jaquie Kilty, a trustee of the Nishtha UK Trust, and members of Indian Kinderhilfe Bad Wurzach, Germany, who sponsors of the children's nutrition programme.



Our local supporters group has been meeting regularly to keep in touch with the various projects underway. It has been extremely helpful to have more assistance particularly during functions such as the Women's day and Rakka Mela where we hold a stall. Particular thanks go to Radhika Sharma for her help with the library and wonderful donations of books, to Nicola Tansley who is an invaluable resource, as well as to Sweta Sood and Radhika Anand for their help with the library. Special thanks to Kishwar Shirali who helps constantly by guiding our Single Women as well as helping with the literacy program. The development of our library in particular this year could not have happened without the essential input from our wonderful supporters. We have also



been very happy to have had a number of excellent helpful volunteers this year including Yusha and Andreas who have worked alongside our staff through the year.

We are sincerely grateful for the ongoing help of Aktion Regen and Nishtha UK Trust along with all the many groups and individuals who enable our work to continue



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