

HILFE ZUR SELBSTHILFE IN RAJASTHAN E.V.
HELP FOR SELF-HELP IN RAJASTHAN (REG. SOC.)



Newsletter

No. 2. December 2014

Upcoming Training Centre for Women: Progress Report

In 2013, HSHR focused on two projects: the upcoming Training Centre for Women and the provision of basic health care (see p. 5).

Meanwhile Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS), our partner organisation, was able to purchase land thanks to the donations of our members and patrons. However, the land bought is different from the piece of land mentioned in our Newsletter of 2013, for as negotiations were proceeding, the price demanded for the land soared to make it unaffordable. Nonetheless, the plot finally acquired through our donations is located conveniently close to the branch office of GBS at Khawarani which lies to the east of Amber and can be reached by car within three quarters of an hour. It is on these premises that GBS runs its Women's Bank; it also constitutes the nodal point where the coordination of numerous self-help groups is organized.

Moreover, thanks to generous donations, basic requirements could be fulfilled, namely the cadastral registration of the land HSHR was paid for; hence, the demarcation, marking of the corners and making the foundation for corner pillars could be undertaken. The money earmarked

for the enclosure wall, however, had not yet been fully utilized, one of the reasons being that the winter crop was still to be harvested, the proceeds of which will be shared by the former landowner and GBS. The other reason for the delay is due to an extremely positive development: As the strip of land we could eventually afford to buy was relatively small, GBS motivated a socially engaged business man to assist them in acquiring the whole plot of land offered. Thus, a process was initiated which has facilitated a much bigger project than we could ever have dreamt of. The plot now assigned to the Women's Training Centre measures ca. 7,000 square metres.

The next steps to be taken are as follows:

Drilling a well, building the toilet and lavatory tract and the first room of the centre. At the same time, we will have to provide a rudimentary crèche for the women's children since otherwise they won't be able to avail

themselves of the centre's facilities. .



Board of the upcoming Women's Training Centre

Gram Bharati Samiti: Profiles

In line with its statutes, HSHR aims to support the Indian NGO Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS). It is, therefore, considered essential that the members and friends of HSHR should have a more complete picture of the people involved with GBS. Here we introduce to our readers three important personalities. Further introductions regarding GBS will be continued in the next Newsletter.

Bhawani Shanker Kusum (Founder and First Secretary GBS)



Bhawani Shanker Kusum

Bhawani Shanker Kusum (*1947) has a Master's degree in Social Science. Initially active in public service, he quit this and became closely involved with the movement launched by Jay Prakash Narayan, who in the years 1975-1977 vehemently opposed the emergency declared by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi. Kusum worked as a journalist for important newspapers. In 1984, he founded Gram Bharati Samiti as a registered society with the aim of supporting democratic institutions, the formation of a just and equitable society, and the preservation and protection of the environment. Notable achievements of GBS are the rehabilitation of more than a thousand leprosy patients who were previously beggars; the forestation of wasteland covering the area now called Gandhivan (see Newsletter 2013). Kusum was a NGO delegate for the Asian-Pacific region at the UNAIDS Program Coordinating Board, and for two years a NGO observer at the Clean Technology Fund Committee of the World Bank. Currently Kusum is the All-India Speaker of the Sarva Seva Sangh, an institution of Sarvodaya, a non-political organisation propagating Gandhian values.

Kusum (Lata) Jain (Second Secretary GBS)



Kusum Jain

Kusum Jain (* 1959) holds a Master's degree in Sociology (1981) and an MA in Public Administration (1984). Since 1983, she has been devoted to social work within GBS. From 1989 she started implementing vocational training for leprosy-stricken beggars. This resulted in the establishment of 240 small-scale cottage industry enterprises that are still functioning. Since 1993, she has focused on GBS combating HIV/AIDS. GBS has conducted the first regional HIV/AIDS survey. Consequently, Jain began to lay special emphasis on working with sex-workers, especially in the field of health care; her aim was to raise their awareness of their citizenship rights and to, help create a healthy future and better educational opportunities for their children.

At Cranfield University, England, Jain obtained additional post-graduate training in Entrepreneurial Development. This qualified her to organise self-help groups (SHG, see Newsletter 2013). Thanks to Kusum Jain and Sarita Yogi (see below) several hundred SHGs have become established over the last decade or so in Jamwa Ramgarh.

Jain is responsible for implementing projects and supervising the accounts balancing projects and for reporting on concluded projects.

Both for her personal contributions as well as for her role as a representative of GBS, Kusum Jain has been awarded several Indian and international awards. In 2007, the Ladies' Wing of the prestigious Indian Merchants' Chamber, Mumbai, honoured her as one of eminent Female Management Gurus of Rural India.

Sarita Yogi (Secretary of the Women's Cooperative Bank and the SHG Coordinator) Sarita Yogi (*1979) holds a Master's degree in Sociology. She has been working for GBS for thirteen years. She is coordinator of self-help groups constituted with support of GBS which at present number about 650. She has received training in micro-financial systems under the auspices of the state government. She is Secretary of the Womens' Cooperative Bank founded by GBS. Apart from coordinating SHGs, she acts as a mediator in cases of domestic conflicts in rural households.



Sarita Yogi

Our Interns

In February 2014, the treasurer of HSHR, Ms Tabea-Johanna Kalb, spent a short spell as an intern at GBS. Here is a slightly abridged version of her report (for the full version see the website > Internships > Interns):

At the very beginning of my three-week internship, on 9 February, the health Camp for Women, organized by GBS and co-funded by HSHR took place in the region where GBS is active. Thanks to the support of two hospitals, five physicians, specialized in various fields, examined the patients. Although the camp was held for women, numerous men and children requested to be examined too, and were given free medicine. A nutritionist, who supplemented the team of experts, taught the clientele basic nutritional principles. All in all, 180 patients were examined, which both in numbers as well as the results achieved was considered to be satisfactory by the organizers.

After this interesting start, I spent the following days mainly on assignments related to one of the foci of GBS, namely, the empowerment of women. This took me every day to the villages where I went in the company of an officer of GBS. In those villages Self-Help Groups (SHG) have been established during the last decade or so.

I had been given the assignment to examine particularly two of the SHGs to learn about their achievements and problems and to find out what kind of changes the women had perceived since they had joined the SHGs. I was mainly struck by the fact that with the women the obvious changes, such as electricity, cleanliness of the village, jobs for women, ranged on par with the beneficial social changes they perceived. These, they said, consisted in becoming part of a group, having made friends and, in the process, having found people with whom to discuss their problems.

I could also take a glimpse of the two other foci of GBS, namely, protection of the environment and health care. I visited Gandhivan, a forest developed by GBS, and attended a camp for handicapped people in Karauli which had been co-organized by GBS.



As I was accommodated in a guest-room in the head-office of GBS, I had the opportunity to closely observe the NGO activities and also had close contact with the four-member staff.

I was deeply impressed with the work conducted by GBS, especially because the staff pursues the aim of the NGO with immense enthusiasm and passion. Despite the brevity of my stay, my internship provided me with lasting insights into the work of the NGO and aspects of the rural life of Rajasthan.

In the beginning of 2014, HSHR entered a partnership with DIZ (Deutsch-indische Zusammenarbeit/Indo-German Cooperation), an agency with its own focus actually on Nagpur (Maharashtra), but for several years it has also been coordinating the volunteers service

programme known as *weltwärts* (*worldwide*) a Volunteer Service promoted by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). DIZ also conducts workshops to prepare volunteers for their stay in India. For HSHR this partnership involved sharing in the long-standing expertise of DIZ, bonding with other charitable societies working in related fields and facilitating materially and logistically the placing of interns with GBS.

Our first *weltwärts*-volunteer, David Michel, started his voluntary internship on 15 August 2014, and will stay for eleven months. Here is his slightly abridged report from the beginning of December 2014:

I have arranged my room, got a wardrobe and fixed images on the wall so that my room has become cosier.

I spent a few days working in Gandhivan which I enjoyed a lot. This place, which is an hour's car drive from Jaipur, is completely different from what I have so far seen in India. It is quiet, there is no traffic, no pollution, and it abounds in animals. You fall asleep to the sound of nature, watch the stars in a clear sky and wake up again to the sound of nature.

At Gandhivan, I collected data for a physical map of the place. This required my first becoming familiar with the area. For this job I could rely on a draft map showing roads and buildings but which had to be revised somewhat. Apart from this, I have become acquainted with further projects of GBS, such as the micro-finance programme, of which women cooperating in SHGs can avail themselves at either of the two branches of the Women's Cooperative Bank.

I also saw a couple of villages where GBS is active, and watched women weaving carpets and embroidering sarees. As I toured the rural area, I passed endless fields cultivated mostly by manual labour. I saw goats and water-buffaloes, and watched women in their colourful sarees collecting fuel. I feel that I will never get tired of watching the picturesque landscape with its mountain ridges. Last year, GBS restored five step-wells. These



wells, typical of Rajasthan, have flights of steps leading to the well's deep and cool water-table. Some of these buildings, of which several originated a thousand years ago, have pavilioned ramps that were used to conduct rites and are therefore of cultural and religious importance.

Most of the time I work in the office where my main task is to search for agencies that might support GBS for specific projects, or I work on the map of Gandhivan.

A couple of times I have been to a school in Khawaraniji where I will have the opportunity to help with teaching (English) as soon as my Hindi has improved.

As I have been the first *weltwärts*-volunteer at GBS, I am also supposed to help with identifying assignments for future volunteers,

By now three months have passed since my arrival in India, but it feels as though it was just last week. I have had amazingly rich impressions that have deepened my understanding immensely.

In March 2015, a female *weltwärts*-volunteer will join GBS.

A Bank Run by Women for Women

In Newsletter 2013 we provided a report on the Women's Cooperative Bank which is located in Khawaraniji. Since July 2014 it runs a branch office in Bhanpur (to the north of Amber, see website > home > map of Rajasthan). In this area there are numerous SHGs, coordinated by GBS. These can conveniently avail themselves of the micro-finance system of the bank, and in the near future the two branch offices will be electronically linked to synchronize the intra-bank communication and account keeping.

Here are a few details on the GBS bank: After it had existed as a cooperative society for six years, it was recognized by the government as a cooperative bank in August 2012. The bank is managed by a board of eleven women, headed by Serta Yogi as its Secretary. The board meets once a month. Only women are entitled to take credits, while both women and men can open savings accounts. The annual interest on savings accounts is 8 percent, but on a fixed deposit account for four years, 12.5

percent. At the end of November 2014, the total savings deposited at the bank was 1,772,567 rupees. The total number of savings and credit accounts is 1231.

A condition for being entitled to a credit is that the female applicant also has a savings account during the period of credit. The savings account must have existed at least a couple of months before she applies for a credit. A woman taking a credit has to produce two women for surety. In case a SHG applies for a credit, the DHG's speaker is the debtor, and two members of the SHG stand surety. Credits up to 50,000 rupees must be paid back in 10 instalments within 10 months. The interest per month is 1 percent. The terms of higher credits are negotiable.

No cash transactions are conducted by the GBS bank. These are effected by the Jaipur Centre Cooperative Bank.

The repayment morale is astonishing: With only 17 of the debtors did a slight delay of repayment occur. Only a single debtor was

reported to have eventually failed to pay back the credit.

The idea of the bank is also to educate its clients to save for investment. As the bank has

become so popular, its management hopes to be able to reduce interest rates slightly in the near future..

A Mobile Nurse for GBS from 2015

The public health service in Jamwa Ramgarh Block of Jaipur district, where GBS is active, exists largely in theory rather than in practice. What is required is a basic health service, focusing especially on women's health.

The Hety und Benno Runnebaum Stiftung, Heidelberg, has put its confidence in us and has generously donated to HSHR the annual expenses for hiring a mobile nurse. For the time being, this donation is for one year (2015). The nurse is supposed to start working for GBS in January 2015. We have hired Sister Sisly R., who just retired from Bhanpur Hospital. She comes from Kerala, but was trained by and has worked in the public health service



Schwester Sisly

of Rajasthan. She is a member of GBS and in Bhanpur, where she lives, she is probably the only Christian. HSHR has bought a scooty (mo-

tor scooter) to be used by Sarita Yogi and Sister Sisly. The vehicle is essential to be able to visit the extensively dispersed villages.

Apart from looking into health issues, Sr. Sisly is also expected to give instruction in

hygiene. As a senior person, Sr. Sisly wields the authority to intervene on behalf of protecting women and girls (see p. 6, column 2). Due to the local social conditions, many men are addicted to alcohol and prone to violence. Therefore it is mandatory that in those parts of villages where SHGs coordinated by GBS are operative a ban on alcohol is upheld, not to pander to any puritanical whim, but due to an existential requirement. This does not prevent men from drinking, but only outside the operative radius of GBS which entails a long walk. Upon their return they have usually become sobered and are less prone to violence.

We hope that the nurse's presence will enable patients who require medical treatment to be identified more speedily and that Sarita Yogi will be relieved of the responsible of attending to some tasks. Coinciding with the HSHR president's visit to GBS in November/December 2014, GBS was informed of the decision taken by the Global Fund for Children that they would release funds for a lady doctor to visit the villages once a week as well as for a chauffeur driven van. However, since a van's maintenance is costly, the option of the two-wheeler supplied by HSHR serves as an ideal low-cost supplement. The van can be used for the doctor's weekly visits, as scheduled by the nurse.

HSHR will bear the expenses for the nurse's equipment.

Winter 2014/15: Once again Donations from Kobe

Newsletter 2013 contained a report on school education, in particular concerning the government elementary school at Shivpura whose headmaster, Mr. Raj Kumar Sharma, and teacher, Mr. Godha Ram Raigar, are responsible for a hundred students studying in five classes. With only two teachers, classes have to be combined or students have to study on their own. Both teachers try their very best,

with the result that secondary schools in the neighbourhood consider the school of Shivpura to be a glowing example.

Mr. Raj Kumar Sharma has rendered several years of voluntary service at the GBS bank. Every day after school at 4 p.m. he goes to the bank to attend to the computer-based account work.

In the winter of 2013/2014, the Protestant Church of Kobe-Osaka (Japan) made a donation of warm clothes, books and didactic toys to Shivpura School. Given the considerable shipping costs, the financial aspect was certainly not negligible. (www.evkoobe.org/deutsch/hilfe-für-Indien). Again in the winter of 2014/2015 donations were sent to Amer, but this time two more donors joined in the venture, namely the International and the German School of Kobe. The donations were collected and sent to India by Mrs. Dinah Imanari. GBS and HSHR gratefully acknowledge the help given by their friends in Kobe. In October 2014, the president of HSHR visited Kobe and had the opportunity to personally express HSHR's gratitude to the International and German Schools' principal, Mr. G. Leberz.

How were the donations distributed? Most of the clothes and all of the other material went to Shivpura School. At the end of November 2014, the president of HSHR was herself present when the donations were distributed.

A few items were given to orphans fending for themselves and to an orphanage for deaf-



Writing a thank-you letter to Kobe

... children to which a school is attached. Both institutions were founded and are run by a local philanthropist and are partly supported by GBS.

Here is an example of one of the recipients who did not belong to Shivpura School: In the village of Indargarh, the 17-year-old Mira, an orphan girl, fend for herself and her three brothers and cousins, respectively. She is being protected by Sarita Yogi due to the fact that she has been notoriously exploited by being forced to do menial jobs for other villagers. Mira attended school up to standard seven, and she craves to go to school again. Now a young teenager, she has become sexually vulnerable. GBS gave her a simple mobile phone so that she could call for help in an emergency. This in fact did occur when one night some youths tried to force their way into her house. Mira alarmed Sarita Yogi who asked the police to intervene. The officers fortunately arrived in time. We hope that routine visits to Indargarh, too by a mobile nurse recently hired by GBS will further contribute towards protecting this girl.

Music for a While: Charity Concert for HSHR

Founded in 2012, HSHR is just beginning to build up a network of benefactors. It has been fortunate to receive unexpected help from various parties, such as from the borough of Gaiberg, where the president of HSHR lives. The borough council voted that a fourth part of the proceeds of the Gaiberg Christmas Fair, the share donated to support charities by the exhibitors participating in the fair, should in 2014 be given to HSHR. This is an expression of great trust in our work, and HSHR gratefully acknowledges this support.

An especially delightful treat culminated out of an initiative of musicians mobilized to support HSHR by Gaiberg's organist Karin Neimanns. Two charity concerts were held for HSHR in the beautiful ancient Protestant church of Gaiberg. At the first one, on 26 June 2014, Wolfgang Himmelmann, a specialist of

historical architecture, and the president of HSHR made brief presentations with a focus on medieval and early modern water management, both in Gaiberg and in Rajasthan. Karin Neimanns (organ, piano), Stephanie Ernesti-Grünewald (soprano) und Matthias Grünewald (oboe) provided the event with a sumptuous musical frame. This was concluded by a reception in the church itself where more information on HSHR was provided. The parish also generously invited HSHR to organize a photo and poster exhibition at the church (June to November 2014) to project its aims and projects.

The second charity concert took place on 19 October 2014. Karin Neimanns, Stefanie Ernesti-Grünewald, and Gudrun Plasberg (recorders) performed for a big audience. The title of this article is taken from the concert's title,

itself inspired by an aria by Purcell in which the power of music annihilates futility. This was understood to symbolise the essence of

HSHR's work (see the website > archive > charity events).

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Annual membership fee: € 30,-. School and college students and trainees pay an annual membership fee of € 15,-.

Membership can be applied for via the website of HSHR, by letter, or email.

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