

DELHI HOUSE

Delhi House Society | Newsletter January 2021



Dear friends and supporters of Delhi House,

the last year has been anything but normal! The dominant topic of the year has been the COVID 19 pandemic which has affected life throughout the world, but especially in Third World countries, like India.

Schools throughout India including our Learning Centre have been closed since March. In western countries, online classes and digital communication are already a challenge for the younger pupils; whereas, the children we teach from the slums are completely cut-off from their education.

What is remarkable in a less developed society, is the ingenuity and adaptability to a situation in order to live and survive. The children are certainly not sitting at home in front of the television but are active in many ways to support their family.

We hope 2021 will offer many new opportunities with the completion of our Learning and Community Centre. A new chapter of the Delhi House Society mission will emerge: to change lives through education and positive formation. Since July 2020, despite the pandemic, work on the construction site has been going on continuously. You can read more about this on page 6 of the newsletter.

We are grateful for your prayers, financial support, and mental support of our work during this challenging year. We are grateful that God is present in everything with his power and blessings, and that the future of our work does not depend on a vaccine.

With warm wishes for a blessed 2021,

Dirk Walliser

Delhi House and the Sewa Ashram in 2020

Skype interview with our team leader Keshav Pandey on 1 December 2020.



Christoph: Keshav, how did you and your family start 2020?

Keshav: It has been a good time. Both in the family as well as in the Sewa Ashram. Our daughter Jessica, who is studying medicine in the Philippines, visited us over Christmas 2019 and we were able to spend three lovely weeks with her. Our son Joshua was preparing for his 12th grade school exams, in which he achieved good results.

Christoph: When was the first impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how did the government respond?

Keshav: The first reported COVID-19 case in India occurred in the southern Indian state of Kerala, in late January. After the number grew rapidly across the country, Prime Minister Modi announced a 21-day extremely strict lockdown on 24th March, which came into effect at midnight the same day. People were no longer allowed to leave their homes easily; all traffic was restricted to vital transport. All educational institutions and most businesses were closed. Violations could be punished with up to one year in prison. As the number of cases continued to rise sharply, the lockdown was extended three times until 31st of May. From 1st June onwards, the measures were gradually relaxed at monthly intervals. However, the schools and educational institutions are still closed and are not expected to reopen until February 2021 at the earliest - perhaps not until April 2021!

Christoph: How did you react to the situation at Sewa Ashram and at our Learning Centre?

Keshav: The lockdown came as a surprise to the whole country and without prior notice, but we had taken the precaution of starting to

stock up on food – especially rice and dal. Any kind of transport was forbidden, but of course emergency transport was allowed. Since we have an ambulance, we were able to avoid the ban on driving. During this time, we were able to get important things like fresh vegetables and milk. However, we could not stay anywhere too long, because our ambulance caused unrest and fear wherever we went.

Since then, we have been observing strict hygiene measures at Sewa Ashram. As there was hardly any contact with outside people during this time, our patients and staff were quite safe. I only moved between my home and Sewa Ashram, which is just around the corner. I was there every day, always in the mornings and evenings, helping with the food distribution, talking to the patients and staff, and holding evening devotions.

We had to close our Learning Centre immediately with the lockdown. Ever since, we have not been able to teach the children from the slums as we used to.

Christoph: Did you accept new patients during this time?

Keshav: During the lockdown practically no new patients came to us. For one thing, we are relatively far from the city centre and all traffic was prohibited. Also, many of our patients are migrant workers. At the beginning of the lockdown, millions of migrant workers left the big cities and made their way home to their villages, or they stayed in shelters set up by the government. Of course, there was no trace of „social distancing“ and hygiene measures; this also applies to the slums. These people are struggling to survive day to day anyway, and the virus is just one deadly danger among many. Surprisingly, there were relatively few severe COVID-19 cases among them. Perhaps they have a stronger

immune system because of their way of life.

Since the end of the lockdown in June, we have been able to discharge 15 patients and since then we have admitted 12 new patients, all of whom initially tested negative for COVID-19. In total, we are currently caring for 37 patients, and have another 25 former patients in long-term care.

Christoph: Were you able to help needy families in the neighboring slums during the lockdown?

Keshav: During the lockdown, we supported about 100 families with food. These include families of children from our Learning Centre (which we have not yet been able to reopen), and some poor elderly widows in the neighborhood. This endeavor was financed completely from local donations and community-members in our long term care. No funds from our budget was used for this donation.

Christoph: Then in October there was the first COVID-19 case at Sewa Ashram. What happened then?

Keshav: We had a patient, his name was Kamal, who had been with us for over a year and had been having breathing problems all this time. He needed oxygen again and again. When there was an extreme smog situation in Delhi in October, his breathing problems increased. He insisted that we admit him to a hospital, although we strongly advised against it because of the COVID-19 situation. There, he was examined and of course a COVID-19 rapid test was done. This was positive! Now we had to admit him to Delhi's COVID





hospital (LNJP). That same night, we isolated the patients and staff who had contact with him and had a PCR test done in the following days. The test results were all negative. Kamal sadly passed away in the COVID 19 hospital. A week later, the health authorities offered us a free mass rapid test for the entire Sewa Ashram including the families of the staff. The result: 3 patients and 1 staff member were tested positive. However, all without symptoms. That same night, the health authorities decided to quarantine the entire ashram. In the ashram, the 3 patients and the 1 staff member were isolated from the rest. During the night, I evacuated all the important documents from the Sewa Ashram Office and obtained the necessary medicines. From the next day on, Sewa Ashram was sealed and guarded by the police around the clock for 17 days.

Christoph: How did the residents of Sewa Ashram deal with it?

Keshav: Everyone was under great psychic pressure. You are not allowed to go out, not allowed to meet anyone, everyone in the neighborhood thinks that you have the virus; people start saying strange things about you. Two Indian board members came to visit and encouraged everyone. We also generously provided good food; e.g., eggs and chicken meat.

Christoph: What happened after the quarantine ended?

Keshav: We now have an even stricter entry control at the Sewa Ashram. We don't let visitors in anymore, just to be on the safe side. Surprisingly, since the lockdown, we have received larger food donations than before, especially staple foods. We still have to purchase perishables: fresh milk, bread, meat, and vegetables.

Christoph: Let's now look a bit into the future. What is our strategy for the next time to help the needy?

Keshav: First, we need a strategy on how to take in new patients without putting our staff and patients at risk. The easiest way is for a new patient to directly present a negative COVID test. Either we give the patient money and they get the test themselves, or they are referred to us by another facility, in which case that facility takes care of the test. But we also want to take seriously ill people directly off the street again. For this, we are developing a hygiene concept with our Dr. Ashih.

The second challenge is the closed schools. Currently, the government wants education to be exclusively online from Grade 1 onwards. We expect this to continue up to and including March. This means that the teacher sends all teaching materials and assignments to the students via WhatsApp and expects the answers via WhatsApp. In addition, there are

Zoom meetings. Every student must have at least a smartphone and better still, a laptop. This may be feasible for an Indian middle-class family, but the children in the slums are completely cut off from their education. Even more difficult is the question of how we can help the slum children whom we had previously looked after in the Learning Centre. As a rule, only the parents have a smartphone. The teachers at our Learning Centre are already in contact with them. Of course, the Zoom sessions for all classes take place at the same time, so every child in the family needs their own device. The government is completely ignoring the problem. I am in discussion with the Learning Centre team how to make the best of this situation.

Christoph: Thank you very much Keshav for the interview. The year 2020 was a big challenge for you and your team. Thank you very much for your work. I wish you strength, good ideas, great success, and God's blessing for the next year!

Christoph Burkhardt

Lalita Vishwanathan: a staff portrait



Lalita is our nurse at Sewa Ashram. She is originally from South India (Kerala), and grew up in a Hindu family. However, on Sundays she went to Sunday School with friends as a little girl and thus learned about the Bible and the Christian faith. She came to Delhi in the mid-90s and worked as a nurse in a hospital, in the city centre. She is married and has two daughters.

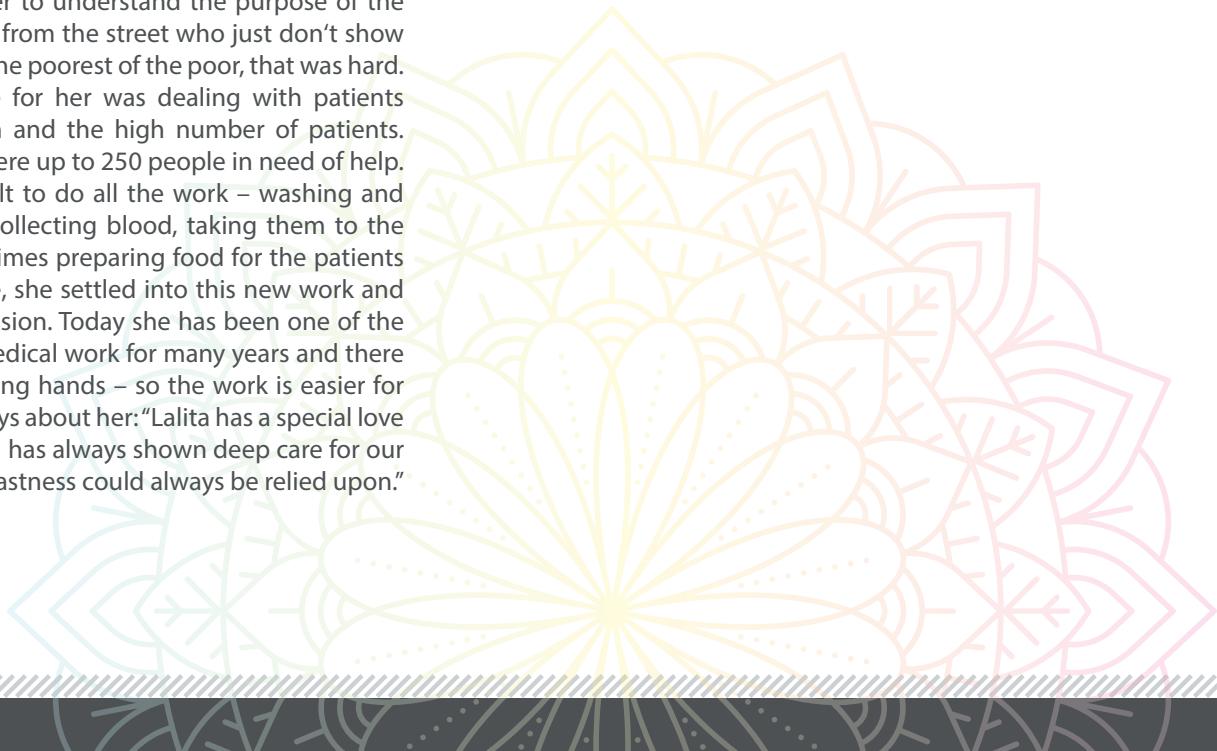
Her story with Sewa Ashram began in 1999. Lalita met the founder of Sewa Ashram, Antonius Snellaert, at a bus stop one day. He spoke to her, got to know her and the two were instantly in the middle of an unusual interview. This encounter led her to Sewa Ashram, where she started working as a nurse.

In the beginning, the work was very challenging for Lalita. Patient care was very different from what she was used to and was peppered with new challenges; plus, it was not easy for her to understand the purpose of the work. Treating men from the street who just don't show up in any hospital, the poorest of the poor, that was hard. The biggest hurdle for her was dealing with patients in critical condition and the high number of patients. Sometimes there were up to 250 people in need of help. She found it difficult to do all the work – washing and dressing patients, collecting blood, taking them to the hospital and sometimes preparing food for the patients and staff. Over time, she settled into this new work and understood the mission. Today she has been one of the mainstays of the medical work for many years and there are also many helping hands – so the work is easier for her. Ton Snellaert says about her: "Lalita has a special love for the outcasts and has always shown deep care for our patients. Her steadfastness could always be relied upon."

Lalita is very happy with the changes at the ashram. She loves the new clinic and the fact that everything is so orderly and professional. Everyone is working well together as a team in an organized way. One might think that the biggest challenge for Lalita would be that she is the only woman working in the clinic area and only has male patients; but that is not the case at all. She has never had any problems with this, and always feels comfortable and safe in the ashram.

Now Lalita is 60 years old and for more than 21 years she has been traveling an incredible 2 hours a day by public transport across Delhi to pursue her work with joy and passion. She is an important and essential part of the team. From Diana – a visitor from Germany whose son worked in the ashram – comes the statement: "For me she is an angel who came to this world to illuminate the darkness with his light."

Kathleen Mast with Mohini Pandey





Rasheed: Patient and Specially Gifted Member of the Ashram Community

If you have ever tried to hold a spoon with your foot and then bring it to your mouth, you have probably pulled a muscle and spread the contents of the spoon all over your clothes. Not so with Rasheed -- his congenital deformity of his extremities has given him special abilities, as you can see in the picture.

Rasheed has been in the Ashram for so long that he counts as a veteran. No one knows exactly how old he is – we only know that we found him around the year 2000, abandoned in a bag, lying by a sewer. Since then, he has been living with us and has become part of the community. Those with physical limitations, poverty-stricken, and no family support, can only live as beggars on the side of the roads in India. Rasheed cannot speak properly, but he can communicate in his very own way. I still remember a trip to the airport where he sat next to me on the front seat and guided us the correct way, with his signs.

Despite his massive physical limitations, he can largely move and take care of himself. Sometimes he is grumpy because of his situation and can really grumble – which I find very understandable. Those who have to go through life with such challenges also struggle with it again and again. Rasheed is part of a life group at the ashram where community members and patients share their stories and support each other. For me, a special part of the beauty of our community is to “feel” the contribution of people

who cannot be “useful” through their work, but by just being there – whose dignity lies solely in the uniqueness of their being! In the photo, you can see him laying one of the stones at the Foundation Ceremony for the new Learning Centre. A beautiful symbol, that he is also an essential building block of our community.

Dirk Walliser





Sewa Ashram Construction Site

The new Learning and Community Centre is being built and we can still use all the financial support we can get.

One year after the foundation stone was laid our new building is growing, as you can see in the pictures. Fortunately, there was only a break of 4 months due to Corona. Prakash, our construction manager and his team have done an excellent job – in coordinating the external companies, workers, and in actively tackling the construction site. We have finished the foundation, the basement and the ground floor. We are currently in the middle of the interior construction.

However, our existing financial resources for the new building have been used up and we will leave the building at this point as a single story building for the time being. We still need about 35.000 € / 43.000 US\$ in donations for the planned upper floor with offices, community room, and workshops for practical training. We would be happy about any support for this endeavor!

Dirk Walliser



Left picture above: Site manager Prakash (left) with employee Sanju (right).



Numbers and Statistics

Dear friends and supporters:

Every year we would like to inform you about how our work is financed and how we use the funds. Delhi House Society is funded by donors from 6 countries: Germany, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, and India. The bank details for all six countries except Australia, as well as the contact details of the organizations that issue tax-deductible donation receipts for the donors from each country, can be found on the last page of this newsletter. We are looking for a new partner organization in Australia.

We make sure that the administrative costs are as low as possible and that all donations are used for their intended purpose. Our foreign organizations forward 95–100% of the donations received, to our work in India, directly.

The two tables show the total international origin and use of Delhi House funds. The Indian financial year always begins on 1 April, the figures shown therefore refer to the period 1.4. – 31.3. The tables document the origin of the donations by country, the amount of the investments, and the ratio of earmarked donations and expenditures for the respective projects.

Christoph Burkhardt

Revenues and expenses of the Delhi House Society India by projects			
April 19 – March 20	Revenues	Expenses	Shortfall/overlap
Project	INR	INR	INR
Non-earmarked (*)	6.562.262	(*)	6.562.262
Sewa Ashram	1.993.493	6.333.882	-4.340.388
CP-1	1.041.484	1.071.112	-29.628
CP-2	623.473	372.713	250.760
LC (*) Narela	292.404	1.101.796	-809.392
LC (*) Bawana	635.388	658.004	-22.616
Total	11.148.504	9.537.506	1.610.998

LC = Learning Center.
Non-earmarked = Donations without allocation to a project and interest income. Expenditure unallocated to a project was allocated to the projects in proportion to the project expenses.
Contact for questions: christoph@delhihouse.de

Delhi House Society India	1.4.2019 – 31.3.2020	1.4.2018 – 31.3.2019
Annual Financial Statement	INR	INR
Donations from Germany	7.084.923	6.318.260
Donations from Switzerland	2.598.990	2.108.996
Donations from Australia	214.470	1.444.912
Donations from New Zealand	945.129	869.705
Donations from USA	109.046	–
Donations from India	163.118	240.368
Interest on fixed-term deposits	–	118.997
Interest on bank accounts	32.828	25.725
Total Income	11.148.504	11.126.963
Total Expenditure	9.524.706	10.328.744
Operating result	1.623.798	798.219
Liquidity at fiscal year start (1.4.)	1.191.147	2.491.159
+ Cash Flow from Operations	1.324.784	+753.631
– Cash Flow from Investments	-1.233.616	-2.053.642
Liquidity at fiscal year end (31.3.)	1.282.315	1.191.147

Statistics (April 2019 - March 2020)

- **138** admitted patients at the Sewa Ashram
- **62** former patients are cared for in Life Groups
- **122** slum children are cared for in 2 learning centres
25 of which with target school entry (non-formal education)
46 of which in remedial education
- **15** adults in sewing, English and read/write courses
- **3** young adults in vocational training

AUSTRALIAN DONORS:

Unfortunately, we are currently unable to provide tax receipts for Australian donors. We are looking for a new partner organization in Australia.

Delhi House Society exists to see the lives of the poor transformed: physically, socially, economically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. We thank you for your ongoing support as we continue to care for our brothers and sisters in India. For more details on how you can partner with us please visit our website www.delhihouse.org

US DONORS: Checks payable to: 'Sunnyside Fellowship' c/o Dr. Mark Grussendorf 5505 Heritage Hills Cir Fredericksburg, VA 22407-0104. Please note your check: 'Sewa Ashram'.
Please contact markgrussendorf@hotmail.com regarding receipt for income tax deduction.

NEW ZEALAND DONORS: Cheques payable to: Cry for the World Foundation, 29 Kahira Crescent Papamoa, Tauranga 3118 NZ, Bank account details for direct deposits at ANZ: Account Name: Cry for the World Foundation, Account Number: 01 0819 0374190 30 Branch: 37 Rotherham St, Riccarton, Christchurch.
Please contact vickiathol@gmail.com regarding receipt for income tax deduction.

AUSTRALIAN DONORS: Unfortunately we are currently unable to provide tax receipts for Australian donors. We are looking for a new partner organisation in Australia. Please contact Raymond Jourdan, raymond.jordan@yourcorner.com.au

EUROPEAN DONORS: Please use the following information for wire transfer: Recipient: Delhi House e.V., Waldsaum 33, D-45134 Essen, Germany IBAN: DE97 6601007506145097 50 BIC: PBNKDEFF (Postbank Karlsruhe). Please contact office@delhihouse.de regarding receipt for income tax deduction.

SWISS DONORS: Recipient: Verein JayaHo, 3000 Bern. Account: PC 30-515590-9. Please note the donation usage „Delhi House“. To receive a receipt in German language for income tax deduction, send an email to office@delhihouse.de with your address details.

INDIAN DONORS: Recipient: Delhi House Society. Bank Account No: 380902010006469. Name of the Bank: UNION BANK OF INDIA (Address : I-2/16, Ram Saraswati House, ANSARI ROAD DARYAGANJ, NEW DELHI-110 002, Phone: 011 – 23269690 / 23275391, email: ansari@unionbankofindia.com). MICR Code: 110026024. IFSC Code: UBIN0538094. SWIFT CODE: UBININBB. BRANCH CODE: 538094. Income Tax 80 G rebate -NQ.DIT (E) I/DEL-DE22513-22032011 2763 dated 22/03/2011