

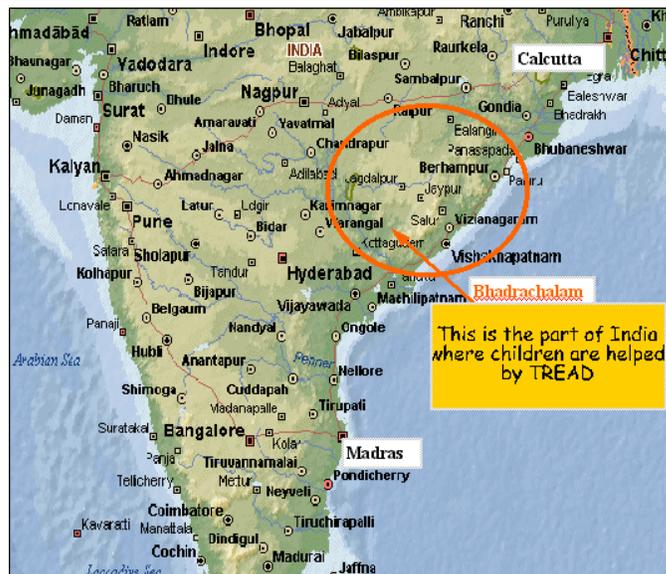


Friends of TREAD

in partnership with TREAD India Trust
Trinity Rural Educational Association for Development

....giving hope and a new future to needy Indian children

Annual Report 2016/17



Charity Registration Number: 1081400 **Inland Revenue Number:** XR 41597

Trustees: Amanda Burling, Colin Burling, Janet Crawford, Clive Daniels, Jerry Dart, Timothy Overton, David Owen (Chair), Patricia Owen, Doug Robertson

Hon. Treasurer: Janet Crawford

Examiner of Accounts: Martin Fletcher

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Friends of TREAD (*Trinity Rural Educational Association for Development*) was registered as a trust in July 2000 with five trustees who have since appointed a further four trustees. Charity overheads are minimal as all work is carried out by the trustees and other supporters on a voluntary basis. Expenses incurred are costs of governance and generating funds including administration of the charity and the basic expenses for two trustees to visit TREAD India Trust each year.

OBJECTS AND AIMS

Friends of TREAD exists to further the work of TREAD India Trust by supporting various projects and has the following objects and aims:

- To relieve need, hardship and distress for people of Telengana (formerly part of ANDHRA PRADESH) and Odisha (formerly ORISSA), S India
- To further the education of children and young people and to found new establishments for that purpose
- To found and maintain technical training and vocational institutes
- To provide financial assistance for children and young people upon leaving their place of study to prepare them for the workplace so that they are able to live independent lives
- To preserve and safeguard the health of persons of any age in these regions providing necessary medical aid and to found and maintain medical institutions.

PARTNER ORGANISATION AND PROJECTS

TREAD India Trust is a charity whose headquarters is based in Bhadrachalam, Telangana (formerly ANDHRA PRADESH) in South India. Although TREAD is based firmly on Christian foundations it seeks to help children of any religion, caste or creed and indeed two of its trustees are Hindu and Jain.; the charity's work is targeted at children, young people and their families. The charity was founded in 1999 by the late Dr M Sounder Raj and its current Director is his younger son Vasanth who had worked with his father for some years.

Projects supported are:

CHILD DEVELOPMENT/ DAY CARE CENTRES

(to further education of children and young people)

These centres provide care before and after school for children with meals, activities and homework supervision. The children are given clothes and school uniform and are taught self-discipline, personal hygiene and a work ethic which they pass on to family and peers. The children have vaccinations against common diseases and receive additional medical care when necessary. The local primary schools have been transformed with improved attendance rates and extra teachers provided by government.

- **Trinity Day Care Centre (TDCC), Kudunure, TELENGANA**
Opened in 2000, around 100 children attend this day care centre that is supported solely by funds raised by Friends of TREAD. It provides 6-day week care throughout the school year, 2 sets of new clothes a year and 2 nutritional meals a day. After children leave TDCC there is ongoing supervision of them. Coaching is given to help children with their exams and there are also holiday Bible schools. A special medical fund is in place for appropriate medical care when needed. Funds are largely provided by regular monthly/annual donations from supporters of Friends of TREAD and are topped up by one-off donations or fundraising events.
- **Sarah Child Development Centre, Podia, ODISHA** is based on a 3.5 acre site purchased and developed through donations from Friends of TREAD. This centre which opened in 2002 and its two satellite centres were run in partnership with Compassion International's East India branch that paid

for the running costs of the projects, whilst Friends of TREAD took responsibility for the trust management costs and for infrastructure. **Sadly during this year Compassion International have had to withdraw from India (see below) so this centre and its two satellite centres* in nearby villages with a total of 675 children closed down their full projects in June 2016 and since then have been running reduced programmes.**

***Hannah CDC**, Dubathota in an isolated, poverty-stricken forestry tribal village opened in 2004

***David CDC**, Girkinpalli opened in November 2005.

GRACE TAILORING CENTRE, Podia, ODISHA

(To found and maintain technical training and vocational institutes)

Opened in 2002, this project is mainly funded by Friends of TREAD although it does now generate a little income itself. It operates in a purpose built workshop on the Sarah site and runs 12-month courses for up to 20 needy tribal girls a year to give them a skill for life and independence. At the end of the course each girl receives the gift of a sewing machine. Friends of TREAD raises some of the costs through individuals sponsoring girls and the remainder from its general funds.

ORPHANED ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

(To relieve need, hardship and distress and to further education)

This project provides care for orphans and semi-orphans and includes an educational assistance programme for education of promising students from poor families. It is funded exclusively by Friends of TREAD on a sponsorship basis. The youngsters live with a carer (who could be a relative or neighbour) or sometimes one surviving parent. If there is nobody to care for the child, one of the TREAD trustees will take responsibility for him/her, whilst the child attends weekly boarding school/hostel nearby. There are currently 30 youngsters benefiting from this project, two of whom are severely disabled.

FRIENDS OF TREAD ACTIVITIES

Friends of TREAD is now in its seventeenth year. Five of its trustees are based in Hastings and Bristol so many regular donors come from these areas. One trustee lives in Nottingham, one has just relocated to Devon and two trustees are based in France but keep in touch regularly through phone and email and attend the trustee meetings. The number of supporters continues to increase steadily; often people are attracted by word of mouth or through the website or Facebook page and get in touch with the trustees. Without the regular standing orders given so faithfully by many of its supporters, Friends of TREAD would be hard-pressed to continue its work. One-off donations are regularly received and are invaluable to "top-up" the projects or pay for some of the regular management and infrastructure costs incurred in India. These donations come from both individuals and organisations such as churches or schools. Many of these donations are eligible for Gift Aid to be reclaimed and this additional income has been very beneficial. We also receive donations from such website schemes as e-bay and easyfundraising and sometimes donations through Charity Aid Foundation and Virgin Money. The trustees and many supporters are regularly involved in giving presentations to clubs or groups, holding fundraising events or taking part in sponsored activities. Some people prefer donations to be made to Friends of TREAD rather than receive gifts to mark special occasions, or to replace tributes of flowers at funerals of loved ones.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEWS

COMPASSION AIDED PROJECTS

Every NGO and charity in India has to register with its Ministry of Home Affairs to receive a Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) number enabling Indian charities to receive funds from overseas.

This Act was updated in 2010 and in the last year all charities have had to re-apply. Many charities have not had their FCRA number reinstated but TREAD India's application earlier last year was granted for a further five years, enabling FOT to continue its partnership. However, TREAD India's other partner, Compassion East India, part of US based Compassion International, did not have its FCRA number renewed and has been forced to withdraw its work from India.

Compassion East India was alerted to the problem last summer and informed TREAD India that their contract with TREAD could not be renewed from June 2016. The local officials worked with TREAD and other partner NGOs in the same district, making suggestions as to how to eke out the funds until October by reducing the services offered. When it became clear in October 2016 that Compassion was still unable to negotiate with the Indian government, Friends of TREAD stepped in and sent emergency funds to TREAD India to keep the three Compassion aided child development centres running for all 675 children and staff, albeit with only basic services provision, in the hope that Compassion would be granted a reprieve by the Indian MHA. By this time, TREAD was the only surviving NGO in the local area of Compassion aided projects. By March 2017 it was clear that Compassion could no longer work in India and its offices were shut down. The New York Times explained "*Compassion International, one of India's biggest donors - closed its operations in India on March 15th after 48 years, informing tens of thousands of children that they will no longer receive meals, medical care or tuition payments. The shutdown of the charity, on suspicion of engaging in religious conversion, comes as India, a rising economic power with a swelling spirit of nationalism, curtails the flow of foreign money to activities it deems "detrimental to the national interest."* More than 11,000 nongovernmental organizations have lost their licenses to accept foreign funds since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014. Many major Western funders have been barred from transferring funds without permission from Indian security officials. "

During their annual visit in February Friends of TREAD trustees had discussions with TREAD India and were convinced that the three centres - Sarah, David and Hannah- should continue to offer minimal programmes of relief to just 200 of the most needy children who would otherwise go hungry. These children were selected across the three centres and staff volunteered to continue to work sacrificially at lower salaries. However it was heart-breaking to say goodbye to the other 475 children and some of the staff.

Since March 2017 Friends of TREAD has highlighted the problem and supporters have generously donated funds to keep these three centres open. By the end of March 2017 enough funds are in place to pay for the 200 Plus Project until the end of June 2017 and more regular monthly donations are in place. Friends of TREAD will continue to support these children for as long as we are able. Meantime, TREAD India is actively seeking partnerships with other major NGOs to enable these three centres to once again run at maximum capacity.

TRINITY DAY CARE CENTRE (TDCC) Kudunure, Telengana

This project has always been solely supported by Friends of TREAD and continues to operate normally. During this year mosquito nets were given to each child at TDCC and will be given to any child who joins the centre in the future - this will significantly reduce the risk of malaria to the children. During their recent visit, FOT trustees visited the centre and reported:

"It was very evident that this project was running well. The children we met were healthy and happy. We made 3 visits to the Centre and all were joyous and uplifting occasions. We were very encouraged by the hands-on role of (manager) who works long hours. He is totally committed to the project"

However TDCC has been affected considerably by exchange rate movements - the pound is currently only worth R80000. Additionally there has been a sharp rise in commodity prices. Jayaraj (centre

manager) runs a very efficient and tight ship and is managing the financial situation as best he can. Friends of TREAD would like to increase the level of support for TDCC in the future but priority must first be given to children who would otherwise go hungry in the Project 200 Plus.

ORPHANED ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

FOT trustees reported that they were thrilled to see nearly all the orphans in February, some of whom had travelled very long distances. All were very happy and grateful for Friends of TREAD's support. Some of these meetings were emotionally draining and one highlight of the visit was a meeting between Ravi who is severely disabled and his UK sponsor Jane who accompanied the trustees on their visit. His grandmother is devoted to him and he to her and thanks to FOT support, they have been able to live together. Naturally the abilities at school of the orphans vary but there are some notable successes to celebrate that would not have been possible without FOT support.

One problem is that some orphans drop out due to early marriage, particularly the girls who are still seen as a burden by their families.

GRACE TAILORING CENTRE, PODIA, ODISHA

FOT trustees were able to visit this centre for the first time in several years as rebel activity made Orissa a no-go area for westerners but this year the local police commissioner gave permission for a one-day trip to Podia (Sarah site) which also houses Grace TC. (On previous visits, the Grace students were driven to TREAD HQ to meet FOT trustees.) They reported "*All the girls were very appreciative of their training. The girls are of varying educational standards and some have had their education cut short because, being tribal girls and of lower caste, the government does not allow them to go to hostels. This effectively prevents any further education. One young lady spoke emotionally of the opportunity that the project had given to her and she moved us all to tears with her gratitude and humility. She was probably speaking for the majority if not all of the girls. This is a valuable project and there continues to be demand for places*"

FUTURE PLANS/REQUESTS

- During this year, Friends of TREAD put out a plea for help from younger volunteers with publicity using media such as FaceBook/Twitter. A young couple who previously visited TREAD India, have kindly offered to help and we look forward to the benefits of extra publicity using their expertise.
- Clearly our thoughts are dominated by events that have overtaken TREAD in Odisha now that their major partner has been forced to withdraw. Whilst the outcome of this is still uncertain, we have been encouraged by the huge level of support offered us and look forward to the challenges that the coming months will bring. We shall be fundraising with passion for the new 200 Plus Project and working with TREAD India to once again find sustainable, long-term funding for these centres; we hope too that new partnerships can be made with other organisations who can tap into the resources that TREAD India has to offer and jointly offer hope and a new future to some of the most needy children and their families in South India.

FRIENDS OF TREAD FINANCIAL REPORT 2016/17

This has been a particularly challenging year but as ever our supporters have risen to that challenge. As a result of this it is difficult to compare this year to last year in some areas.

1. Voluntary Income

Individual giving has increased dramatically as people have responded to our appeal for extra funding. This has resulted in an increase in the gift aid recovery. It is not possible to thank everyone individually in this report but we are so grateful for everyone's generosity. We have had 30 extra sponsorships (either new sponsors or existing sponsors increasing their giving) in February/March and so a gift aid claim was submitted to 31/3/17 which shows in the accounts as 'Accounts receivable'. There has also been an amazing response from churches for which we are so grateful:- Bishopston and St Andrews PCC, Bristol; St Leonards and St Ethelburga's, St Leonards on Sea and Sandhurst Baptist Church, Sandhurst.

2. Fundraising

The annual afternoon tea at the Burlings' was as successful as ever and the weather was kind! We raised £718 in cash and a further £1,502 in individual donations and gift aid. Colin again organised the Hastings Half Marathon Park and Walk and Hastings Lions donated £350 (Because of the timing of the donation the accounts show two payments - one for 2016 and one for 2017). Jeremy and Suzanne Cross celebrated their Golden Wedding and very kindly donated their gifts to FOT totalling £1,395 including individual donations and gift aid - many congratulations to them and our grateful thanks. Easyfundraising and Paypal Giving brought in another £108. Our thanks go to Alpha State Website Services for hosting the FOT website.

3. Grants to TREAD India

The number of girls at the Grace Tailoring Centre is 15. We had 103 children at TDCC at the beginning of the year which increased to 105 during the year. The orphans increased to 30 in December 2016.

With the complication of the Compassion situation we only paid the maintenance costs of the projects for the first three months of the year. We then provided support for all the children on a reduced programme until February 2017 at which point we reduced to 200 children. From April 2017 the support from these children will be designated 'Project 200 Plus'.

4. Governance Costs.

The trustees of FOT aim to keep the costs of running the charity as low as possible by donating their services free of charge wherever possible. The only governance costs are bank charges (slightly increased as two additional drafts were sent to India); postage and stationery; printing of two newsletters; website maintenance costs and the annual trustees' visit to the projects. Jerry and Clive went out to India in February this year at a total cost of £1,632. We are grateful to Martin Fletcher for completing the necessary Independent Examination of the accounts.

5. Reserved Funds and Bank Accounts

There are two reserve funds - TDCC where money has been given in advance for use in future years and an orphans' fund where some sponsors donate extra each month but TIT would prefer we keep it in the UK and send it when a need arises. We have funds deposited in the Scottish Widows Bank, the NatWest Bank and in Virgin Money.