



# Annual Report 2018

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**The Friends of H.O.P.E  
Charity directory**

**REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER** 3647389  
(incorporated: 9 October 1998)

**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER** 1083028  
(registered: 25 October 2000)

**COMPANY SECRETARY**  
David Pople

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## Executive Summary

The Friends of H.O.P.E (FoH) has inspired many villages and rural communities of the Nilgiris to apply traditional self-help practical and sustainable knowledge that embraces traditional local foods, medicinal plants and their uses, organic and biodynamic methods of agriculture, animal husbandry, water conservation and environmental protection. We have also led the organic movement in The Nilgiris over the last 20 years with our support for biodynamic farming and supported the HIV community for 15 years.

FoH was formed in 1999 to support Vanya Orr's holistic vision for sustainable communities and which in economic parlance can be called the economics of permanence in restoring and protecting local traditions and cultures. FoH provides financial support, strategic guidance and practical advice where needed to our implementing partner agencies. All of our Trustees have Indian connections and experience in dealing with both tribal and non-tribal communities. - Mrs Rosaleen Mulji, David Pople and Prof Sheila Hillier are also trustees of The Nilgiris Adivasi Trust (NAT). Nicholas Grey (with his wife Mary) were the founder trustees of Wells for India which works in Rajasthan, Dr Mahesh Mathpati is a well-known and highly respected Ayurvedic doctor, and Michael Moore worked, and lived in India for some years. All money raised by FoH, except for a very small amount needed to cover its administrative expenses, is remitted to the partnering NGO's. **The Trustees of both FoH and NAT give their time and services entirely on a voluntary basis.**

FoH and NAT are now working ever more closely together – joint meetings are held, and joint consideration is given to funding the education and community based programmes described in the following pages.

The Nilgiri Hills are approximately 7000-8000 feet above sea level. Stunningly beautiful, with abundant wildlife, dramatic waterfalls and mountainside covered with shola forest. This important biosphere is at the very heart of our work. The

region is principally agricultural. In the Nilgiris, however, the landscape is populated by degraded and polluted watersheds and farms. Soil erosion is very noticeable. In looking at the rural economy of the region we see that most of the land holdings are very small and this makes it very difficult for Growers and Farmers to eke out a sustainable living. Statistically in rural areas such as the Nilgiris over 31% of the scheduled castes and c20% of the backward classes come into the poverty category (source: socialjustice.nic.in). But we actually think these statistics are on the low side of reality. The rural poor in the Nilgiris include an indigenous tribal population of almost 30,000 – The Irullas, The Kotas, The Todas, The Paniya's (ex-bonded labourers) and The Kurumba's (forest dwellers) are the principal groups. The Badagas are also often referred to as indigenous peoples, and the Badagas population is c150,000 (agriculturalists).

Below is a typical home of the rural poor in the area



Our community based traditional health programmes help to deliver a sustainable health service to tribal villages, and around 3000 people are helped each year by our health organisers and who in turn are supported by traditional healers. Education support is provided to tribal schools and students. Bursaries and sponsorship is available for students shifting to higher education. We also help single parent families and a young lad with Duchene who comes from a poor family.

## **Highlights, challenges and achievements over the past 12 months**

- FoH celebrates 21years but quietly gets on with the job of fundraising!
- Tradition healthcare project – Rejuvenation of Traditional Tribal Medical Practices project (RTTMP). This self-help village health service run by 10 women who we have been empowered and supported with training and capacity building; the project helps 60 villages with a total population of 7300. The women deal with over 3000 cases a year
- The RTTMP takes on a new challenge (The Dr. Hari Challenge) of treating 160 severely anaemic patients.
- 25 traditional healers now have agreed that their knowledge can be documented. This is a first.
- Links strengthened with FRLHT and the Trans Disciplinary University (TDU), both in Bangalore.
- Demand for supporting the HIV community has risen six-fold in last 12 months – some 70 people attend monthly HIV support group where they are given nutrition supplements.
- 60 farmer/growers are receiving regular hand-holding advice and technical support related to biodynamic organic systems of production and The Garden of HOPE Trust displayed organic produce at 10 exhibitions and conferences and which was attended by many hundreds of people
- Farmers and Growers being supported through the organic certification process, with support from local joint director of Horticulture and his staff and the Local Collector who has just signalled that the growers should form themselves into an Organic Society, which she would support.
- Some 1000 growers, farmers including tribal women's groups expected to receive training via our model nurseries in 2019.
- The HIV support programme with ASHWINI in Gudalor valley continued to screen 1800 people for HIV and TB in the past year.

## **Relationship between The Friends of H.O.P.E and its partners**

The relationship between FoH and the partnering agencies is governed by Memoranda of Understanding (MoU's) or Project Agreement (the governing documents). These documents define the parameters as to how the charities work together, with FoH providing funding, advisory and practical help on an as-needed basis and with the Indian agencies being the implementing partners. The MoU's allow for FoH to be provided with reports on a regular basis, and also stipulate that each NGO will be fully accountable to FoH for the way in which funding from FoH is used. With written reports and other information supplied regularly those who give money can be assured that donations are used for the intended purpose and not wasted.

## **Poverty in the region**

From what we have seen in tribal villages over the years we feel that the poverty line amongst tribal communities is c50% or even higher. These indigenous peoples rely on agriculture and the forest for their livelihoods and farming as we know, is in crisis. Local traditional healers are also telling us that climate change has reduced the number of plant species available and which have a medicinal use. The base poverty line in India is assessed at Rs221 per day average for a 6 day working week, approx. Rs72,000 a year or Rs6,000/month But if family support is required for a family of 4 children or more and who need further education (college or university) the poverty line can be re-drawn quite easily. Probably the poorest members of society though are the HIV community, many being unable to work due to ill-health, socially isolated.

## **Sustainable Village Project – implementing partner The Garden of HOPE Trust**

The sustainable village project we fund seeks to help 3 villages (7500 people) about an hour's drive from Coimbatore, and where there had been severe drought conditions for the last 4-5 years. Despite the monsoons of last year which gave farmers some respite, water tables remain far below acceptable levels with many farmers losing their coconut and banana crops during the year - these trees take some time to recover, the dead ones (nearly 35% of coconut trees) need to be grubbed up and new saplings planted, so for poor marginal farmers and growers this is almost impossible, a herculean task indeed. Agriculture is the primary industry in the area and all related businesses and home incomes have been severely affected due to the continuous monsoon failure.

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) is the government body that implements water conservation schemes through the village administration offices.

Led by Mr Manisundar, Trustee of GoHT, 'we' met the director of the DRDA Mr Roopan Shankar (Sub-Collector) who readily agreed to work with 'us'. And so we found ourselves in the position of bringing together all of the stakeholders from these villages and the district, including the Sub-Collector (Rural) and the Director of Horticulture, Panchayatt officials and village elders, with a view to creating a sound water strategy which hopefully will define a plan for water harvesting, rain water collection and black water recycling.

The emerging possibilities:-

The Eswar Engineering College are we understand, surveying water tables and looking at the routing of an ancient watercourse between the Noyal River and an empty lake known as the 'Kothavady Pond'. This lake covers an area of about 293 acres. If this lake can be filled it increases the underground water table over a six kilometre radius benefitting farming in hundreds of villages.

An alternative being explored by the DRDA is how treated sewage water might be channelled along a 7 km long stretch from Vellalore to the Kothavady Lake,

utilising natural water courses. An interactive meeting of project officials, farmers and stakeholders from the villages was facilitated by 'our' sustainable team. If all the stakeholders are convinced about the benefits, this supplementary water source is likely to get implemented and our project office will play a vital role in facilitating this.

### **Water Conservation - Farm Level Initiatives**

Work has though started on farm level initiatives during the year under a plan where the DRDA provides labour (under a government guaranteed employment scheme) to help villagers and farmers:

1. Form 'Earthen Bunds' and 'Farm Ponds' to harvest rain water, prioritising the farms of marginal farmers with a land holding of less than 5 acres.
2. Plant and maintain native trees in roadside and in public areas.

'Earthen bunds' prevent soil erosion, and rain water run-off, allowing water structures to be protected which in turn reduces the need for irrigation. Bunds have been completed on 23 farms with work on-going on another 15 farms. It is important also for farmers to adopt biodynamic- organics as this is proven to improve water retention, more on this later. Forming percolation or soak pits of 8-10 feet depth and 4 feet in diameter are also recommended to be dug in locations where there are known rainwater paths. These pits are filled with gravel and a concrete ring placed on top to prevent silting. These pits help to restore underground water tables and aquifers. If soak pits are formed in the part of the storage area of a check dam, we can harvest the water underground rather than the water getting stored above the ground and where the evaporation loss would be high.

We have identified 10 such check dams where soak pits can be formed. 2 were completed last year and 8 will be completed in 2019-20.

### **Tree planting and organic farming initiatives**

The arrival of the monsoon rains last summer encouraged the FoH sustainable project team to re-start tree planting. Trees have been planted by/with labour

provided by the DRDA, the green brigade and local villagers. It is good to see trees planted in roadside locations to mitigate road radiation and to create much needed shade for horticultural smallholdings, public places are also seeing benefits. Some farmer training in organics has occurred recently and an organic marketing group (Yyir) is encouraging growers to get together to supply organic produce. The farmer producer company scenario is a good vehicle for achieving this and is being encouraged and with possible 'Yyir' franchises available, is definitely worth exploring.

The director of horticulture for the region seems to be very supportive of joining with Mani and the GoHT team to provide organic farmer training in the area.

### **Farming**

Farming in India, despite accounting for 14% of India's GDP, continues in crisis. Helping farmers and growers is mission critical for us. We believe that organic/biodynamic farming can improve yield by 3 times, enrich the soil and enhance the environment.

### **Our food – our environment, our future: a 3 year organic farming outreach initiative to help small and marginalised growers and farmers.**

Slowly (and we like to think we have influenced the farming community over the years), growers are changing to organic production and now the Indian government is providing incentives to growers to accelerate this change. The majority of farmers and growers in the Nilgiris try to make a living on less than half an acre of land and so it is important that we continuously show them how to improve both quality and yield and to demonstrate and teach them the various techniques of mulching, BD composting, vermicomposting and the value of BD inputs to improve soil conditions, reduce pests etc.. Our team follows the BD calendar which shows growers when to sow and plant, how and when to apply biodynamic inputs. By restoring goodness to the land moisture is retained for much longer, so necessary in drought situations.

### **Progress**

The Collector (Ms Innocent Divya) is very keen to see Nilgiris being declared an organic district and has encouraged the farmers and growers to form themselves into an Organic Society, which she would support with government funding and it

is this momentum that has been reflected on the ground, and taken up much time. Sivakumar (GoHT project coordinator) was voted in as the first elected president of the Society - further testament to his knowledge. The Nilgiris Organic Horticulture Farmers' Association – TOHFA was finally registered in April 2019. Discussions thereafter are expected to surround the formation of farmer/producer companies for which we understand Government grants may be available. The Organic Association is likely to have some 3000 members. We are further led to believe that The Collector has decided that all stocks of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in the region should be run-down as of April 2019. We know she subsidized a farmer visit to SIKKIM Province (February 2019). Suddenly we see a lot of enthusiasm at high level for organics which has to be good news! FoH has been encouraging biodynamic/organic horticulture and farming for 21 years now and we are delighted that this perseverance and belief is now being embraced by The Dept of Horticulture and The Collector.



A draft organic policy document was submitted to the department of horticulture in April, 2019.

We have received a small grant for a new greenhouse/poly-house which will be erected in 2019 at our Thambatty model nursery. Donations were also received from within India for a new training hall (built in year) and, which hopefully, will be fully fitted out and functional soon. During the year sales of vegetables from the Thambatty nursery contributed some Rs65,500 in revenue to GoHT but the main purpose of the model nursery is to provide a base for training and to

produce vegetables and medicinal herbs to show at exhibitions and promote organic farming.

Following meetings with the JD Horticulture, some 22 training programmes will be held over the course of the next twelve months. We think as many as 1000 people – growers, farmers, and women’s groups will come for training including technical help. Training includes slope management, raised bed techniques, mulching and composting, how to prepare BD inputs and how and what to apply and when, alternative waste management, recycling, soil restoration and community based alternative income streams such as growing medicinal herbs.

Sivakumar, GoHT project co-ordinator, was recognised at the recent Republic Day parade in Ooty for his services to organic farming , being presented with a certificate by The Collector.



During 2018 GoHT met with The Agricultural Production Commissioner (APC) with a view to discuss/ explore ways in which government support for strawberry growers may be forthcoming. The APC is responsible for agricultural production throughout Tamil Nadu state. There was a useful exchange and the APC was very supportive. GoHT were asked to submit a proposal for subsidy support to the Horticulture Dept. to cover trickle irrigation, mulching and plant materials.



Above: BD compost making at the Thambatty resource nursery.

Below: demonstrating how to make CPP (cow pat pit manure) at a Paniya tribal village



## One Health

During the year The Friends of H.O.P.E and FRLHT -TDU ([www.frlht.org](http://www.frlht.org) and [www.tdu.edu.in](http://www.tdu.edu.in)) in Bangalore agreed to be the initial co-sponsors of a PhD action research fellowship to inspire the design and delivery of new, multi-dimensional, integrative and sustainable community health models for rural areas in India and

other parts of the world. The PhD study is looking at these practices, reviews international literature on policy and governance frameworks to come up with a compelling case for a recommended framework that incorporates local ecosystem specific traditions in healthcare, agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, water management and sanitation..

The programme commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2018. Members of the doctorate advisory committee include Prof John Porter from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Dr Unnikrishnan from the United Nations University.

We are very excited about this as we think the recommendations will help us strengthen and promote our community based models.

## Health and hope

This programme is very much now a jointly supported initiative between FoH and NAT (The Nilgiris Adivasi Trust).

### HIV/Aids

According to TANSACS there are 250,000 PLWHIV in Tamil Nadu.

Where we are working stigma, malnutrition and mental health are the main issues facing the HIV community. The demands for a structured intervention for nutrition support and help for 125 children affected by HIV are such that we are faced with trying to fund a much bigger budget for 2019 onwards.

Attendance at our monthly HIV support group meetings has increased seven- fold in the last year, with people willing travel long distances and up to 3 hours in time, to attend. Current attendance levels are more a testament to the calibre of counselling service provided than an increase in the incidence of HIV. We believe that the HIV community is amongst the poorest of society in India – most are out of work, socially isolated and severely malnourished. Someone told us a few years ago now, but it applies today as much as then...'it is good to know that someone really cares'.

Time	Topic	Facilitator
10.30-10.45	Welcome	Sathya
10.45-11.00	Self-introduction	Sathya/ Shama
11.00-11.15	Programme feedback beneficiary groups	Sathya / Shama, Shama and Sathya beneficiary groups
11.15-11.30	Tea break	
11.30-12.00	ART Medication important	ART Medical Officer Dr. Suresh
12.00-12.30	Why is important ICTE counselling services	Sathya
12.30-1.30	How to overcome depression	Sathya
1.30-2.30	Group discussion	Sathya
	Self-stigma, Family stigma and social stigma	
After 2.30	Nutrition supplements distribution	

If we can improve the health and well-being of the HIV community they can at least get back into work to support their families.

Indications are that there is a massive void when it comes to the HIV community being accepted in society, little empathy is shown only blame, whether the innocent party or not, and obviously this includes children.



Photo above: Over 60 PWHIV attended this monthly meeting in Ooty

The stigma label associated with having a member of the family who is HIV or lost a member knowingly with HIV is huge... many family members will not be informed or aware of an HIV positive sibling or parent. Schools are reluctant to

discuss sex education or consider health or HIV awareness as an essential to family and community well-being alike. This needs to change and we propose a new stigma and awareness initiative for 2019-20 subject to funding.

Distribution of nutrition supplements is organised after our monthly support group meetings with approximately 80 beneficiaries. Screening for HIV takes place automatically when village people are screened for TB. During the year 1800 people were screened by the outreach team from the ASHWINI Adivasi hospital.

Sathiya, who leads on HIV support programmes, is also providing much needed capacity building for the staff at the government ART centre in Ooty.

We have many stories about the plight of PLWHIV and here is just one:-

“Last week I joined a meeting of about fifty men and women affected by the condition. Sathiya, a gently spoken and very kind young man who works as a mental health counsellor alongside David, led the session. It was harrowing. Each person was asked to say a few words about their background, which was translated for our benefit. There were more women than men, and many were widows, the hapless innocent party in a terrible drama. One woman sobbed as she told of her husband, desperate to discover he was affected by Aids, resorted to alcohol and one evening returned home in a drunken rage, picked a fight and murdered their child.... With her husband in prison, her son dead, and the profound stigma of HIV here in India, her life is irreparably broken. I cried”

During the year we received an offer from a group of dentists to provide dentistry to the HIV community, and which needs to be followed up in 2019.

### **Traditional Healthcare**

Locally, Ayurveda and Siddha (in The Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu), have guided Indian communities in their healthcare practices. The meaning of Swasthya: swa – self +sthya – rooted within form the foundation for the self-help health projects that FoH have funded over the years. The term means being in equilibrium with oneself and can be achieved at several levels viz physiological, tissues, metabolism, excretion, sensory, mental and spiritual, and influenced by

relationships with biological rhythms of nature, the sun, moon, seasons, quality of water, air food, stress, social relationship, work environment and so on.

Ayurveda’s and Yoga’s approach to health, together with Siddha can thus guide homes to live a life that is in tune with nature.

### **Rejuvenation of Traditional Tribal Medical Practices project (RTTMP)**

This essential programme delivers front line healthcare in tribal villages (60 villages feature in the RTTMP project, some 1400 families and over 7200 very poor people). This is a joint initiative facilitated by our implementing agencies NAWA, and The Garden of HOPE Trust. These village people rely on traditional health remedies for their health – they cannot afford to take a day off work to go to their nearest township hospital.

This is a story of one of the cases of hardship identified in a recent visit to Kundapatti village:-

“A few days later David and I joined several members of the charity’s health team who were visiting another village – this one being home to the Irulla tribal people. Again, very much off the beaten track, we had to leave the Land Rover some distance away, and complete our journey on foot. Sitting with some of the locals, the very real need for medical education and assistance is emphasised as a tragic tale unfurls, as told by an elderly woman.

Ponni was obviously still grieving as she told us why she was solely responsible for looking after her four year old granddaughter, a wide-eyed child who stared hard, almost mesmerised by the sight of the white interlopers, the first, it seems, she has seen.

The girl’s mother had died without appropriate medical care as a result of tetanus complications following childbirth. A month later Ponni’s husband had died following an undiagnosed stomach ulcer which had perforated. Ponni’s elder granddaughter, having watched her mother die and thinking perhaps that she did not want to be a burden, took a can of kerosene and a box of matches, went off into the forest and set fire to herself. She was just nine years old....

The following day her father committed suicide.

With appropriate basic health care, including psychiatric support, both of which the charity is now providing, all these deaths within this one tragic family could have been prevented”.



During the past 3 years 10 women from tribal communities and who we currently describe as village health organisers [VHO's] have been trained in traditional health systems. What is traditional health you may ask? Well, The Nilgiris biosphere contains many valuable medicinal plants which have been used for thousands of years in treating people and this is the basis of the traditional Indian health system. So whereas today in the West, we would turn to our GP or hospital for some antibiotic or allopathic remedy, we are empowering these ladies to harvest this traditional knowledge, to train them also in massage and yoga and provide them with a holistic solution to community health problems. Indeed, some of the women have also formed a self-help group to make and sell basic Ayurvedic and Siddha medicines and oils (The Mullai Group).

The VHO's and Interns are now well established in their villages. The principle is that they work alongside the long established local healers and indeed they are encouraged to interact closely with them. One senior member of the VHO team is regarded very much as a healer in her own right (Kalliammal). Over 3,000 villagers have been treated by the VHO's in the past year, the VHO's successfully treating for example, post stroke recovery, colds and coughs, joint pain, snake bite,

ulcerated/gangrenous leg conditions, diabetes and anaemia to name but a few conditions.



There are 7 healers working with 'the team'. Knowledge sharing and capacity building between healer and VHO has begun and there are a further 18 healers who have come forward to allow their knowledge to be documented (out of a total of 64 healers, so 25/64 in total). The project seeks to work with these practitioners so that not only is their knowledge documented but available to hand down to future generations. It is essential that traditional knowledge is not lost.



Above: Five traditional healers meet at Kadosolai village where they have converted a building into a health clinic

Knowledgeable parents are also informing children attending the Garikyur School about the medicinal plants found in the forest surrounding their village and the children attending Pudur and Kesalada schools have established school medicinal and vegetable gardens and proudly identify plants and their medicinal uses.

During the year The Foundation for the Revitalisation of Local health Traditions (FRLHT) and The Trans-Disciplinary University (TDU) provided capacity building on two occasions and this will continue next year. This includes 'knowledge harvesting' exercises which seeks to fully understand existing VHO knowledge levels and build upon it.



Above: Dr Unni (FRLHT/TDU) "knowledge harvesting"

Blood tests taken by NAWA last year revealed very low haemoglobin levels amongst 6 tribal villages. Out of 289 people coming forward 160 of them were found to be severely anaemic, one with hg levels of 3.5, but all under 8, and of which 42 were children under the age of 15yrs. The VHO's were challenged and have accepted the challenge to produce a diet and treatment plan using traditional medicines and foods. This programme is now known as the "Dr. Hari challenge" and results will be monitored regularly and assessed after 6 months.

Plans for making sure the RTTMP project sustainable will also be introduced in 2019. FoH and FRLHT/TDU visits are planned for 2019 to help the VHO's manage this process.

We hope also, subject to funding, that FRLHT/TDU will carry out a full botanical survey in and around each of the 60 villages in the RTTMP project, as neither we

nor NAWA, have the relevant expertise to effectively complete an extensive study. The idea proposed is that over a 12 month period the FRLHT team would meet both healers and VHO's, photograph, identify and document plants that are currently used for medicinal purposes, creating audio visual records, a herbarium, and a reference book. From what we are told by trekking to some of these villages we know there has been a reduction in the quantity and availability of traditional used plants, and which the healers say is down to the effect of climate change. Some of the plants are endangered. Subject to funding FoH and NAT hope the full botanical survey can be started in 2019 or in the following year.

### Mullai

Mullai is a self-help group of women who we have encouraged to develop an enterprise for making and selling traditional medicines and oils. Started during Vanya's time the group have a new name and is a properly registered as a social enterprise and are now part of the RTTMP project. As we look to help the RTTMP achieve sustainable by 2020, we must also look to help the Mullai ladies develop their business. Dr Unnikrishnan from TDU/FRLHT has offered to explore licensing and royalties.

### Kitchen gardens

33 village nutritional gardens have been established under the RTTMP programme.



Above: Our VHO's are showing these women in Sundapatty how to prepare traditional essential oils

## Documenting local health traditions

A grant of Rs150,000 was made to ACCORD in Gudalor for the work involved in putting together a reference book (in English and Tamil) on local health traditions in the Gudalor valley tribal area. Publication is expected in 2019.

### Sanjay

Sanjay has Duchene Muscular Dystrophy disease (DMD). This is an incurable, muscle wasting disease. Sanjay, funded by FoH, completed 2 sessions of hot essential oil treatment at the Ayurveda Pharmacy Hospital in Coimbatore, each were of two weeks duration. The GoHT team suggested that Sanjay should go. Based on suggestions from GoHT Sanjay has also attended the SMYRNA HOME day centre in Ooty where he received physiotherapy and his mum received much needed daily respite as well as social interaction with the staff there and other parents. We are grateful for the help and encouragement that SMYRNA has provided.

Full details of the Sanjay appeal can be found on our website.



Sanjay after 18 months treatment

### Eco-Clubs

Educators have long recognized that outdoor experiences encourage a child's social, physical, emotional as well as intellectual development. Gardening is an inspiring subject in the learning process because it is effortless, and requires involuntary attention from the children. By learning the techniques of food

production and how to grow organic vegetables they learn life skills that are particular to their communities – the vegetables grown and harvested and either sold for the benefit of the students or the school, or as is usually the case, are included in their school meals thus helping to provide a balanced diet. Last year we began introducing community medicinal plant nurseries to a few of the tribal village schools. In this way we can bring studies to life as they can more readily relate to the value of their immediate environment. It also helps ensure existing knowledge is handed down to future generations. In Pudur, which is a small tribal school, the head teacher and his staff have established a newly planted vegetable garden and when we visited the kids were irrigating a newly sown vegetable patch, having great fun with buckets of water!



Above students at Pudur school



Above: students at Garikyur village school telling us about the medicinal plants to be found around their village.

The school garden acts as a realistic laboratory of learning for biology and environmental studies, where facts learned in the classroom can be applied practically. Gardening also enhances cooperation among peer groups and the students acquire social skills. Not only do the children learn the names of plants, but they also learn about pests and predators in the ecosystem, thus gaining a holistic sense of biological thinking. In today's educational system at village level parental involvement is of utmost importance.

At the Kesalada School clearly both the school and the students benefit from a supportive and committed parent association and subjects that come under the eco club umbrella can be successfully integrated into the school syllabus as an optional subject. The school is a great example of community engagement and the primary school children have been learning about medicinal herbs and the head teacher plans to extend the garden so that it is maintained for the benefit of the entire village community.



Kesalada school medicinal plant garden



Above: the classroom environment at Kesalada school.

## Our Education Fund

FoH together with NAT are supporting young people from tribal community and/or backward class family backgrounds. Students currently attending the Victoria Armstrong School in Kothagiri, the Tribal school and drop-out school in Gudalor, and the NWTWS school hostel all receive grants from NAT. Based on information provided by NAWA's director of education, bursaries are also provided to students from tribal communities progressing to higher secondary and college education. The FoH fund provided support to Emima, Kowsalya, Nisha and her sister, Elsheeba and Edwin.

Emima is now in her second year at the Atreya Ayurvedic College in Bangalore. Starting in November 2017 she is studying for her BAMS over 5 years. Nisha and her sister are still at Glenmorgan Toda village school. Kowsalya lives with her aunt in Thenali village: her dad died some years ago and her mum has severe mental health issues. Kowsalya is doing well at the higher sec school in Ooty and is only 6 marks away from being top of her class. Elsheeba obtained a Bachelor's degree in Commerce. Edwin is in his first year of study doing the same course. All students being supported are from orphaned and very poor single parent backgrounds.

## Fundraising

Fundraising events continue which raise a small amount of money each year. We hope to arrange more events in 2019; details will be available on our website.

## Income and finance report

The FoH accounts are published separately and available upon request. They are also found via our web site or on the Charity Commission's web site. Grants and donations over £500 were received from the following organizations and individuals:- The Hadley Trust; The Onaway Trust; Nilgiris Adivasi Trust; The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust; Audrey's fund; The Souter Charitable Trust; The Rainford Trust; The Oakdale Trust, The W. Southall Trust, The CB and HH Taylor Charitable Trust; The Sir Adrian Swire Charitable Trust; Ahmad Tea Ltd

We are also grateful to other charities and individuals who have contributed to our income by way of grants, donations and gift aid. Your support is so very much appreciated. We are also grateful to British Airways for baggage waiver and their past support. We are also indebted to our local Barclays bank staff who generously match funded our events.

## Financial review

Income in the year received and committed, including grants processed on behalf of NAT, amounted to £68,546 (*previous year £66,314*). *The Trustees policy is that all funds (except for nominal administrative costs) should be sent to India, and particularly at times when we can take advantage of preferential exchange rates.* In this way we can optimize our funding to the project. Funds expended on project support amounted to £68,125.



Irulla mother and child



The Collector visiting the GoHT stand at an Organic conference in Ooty

