



SAHAYA INTERNATIONAL, Inc. Davis California, USA

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT - January-December 2008

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Dear Friends,

It is with pleasure that I present to you this annual report highlighting our activities of the past fiscal year. The support from our growing network of friends and supporters allows us to continue our journey so we can make a difference in the lives of many people in developing countries. My sincere thanks to many of you for being part of this effort! It is my hope that in 2009 we can count on you and mobilize the resources to reach out to those in need.

Sincerely,
Koen Van Rompay (Secretary, Sahaya International)

Sahaya International overview of activities

READ (Rural Education & Action Development)- Tamil Nadu, India



READ is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), active in rural areas of Tamil Nadu (India). READ has been our primary partner since the inception of Sahaya International. For a more detailed description of the many activities of READ, including copies of their latest annual reports, please visit www.sahaya.org.

General support of READ's programs.

Through its general fundraising activities (including the sale of embroidered cards and solicitation of contributions), Sahaya International continues to provide general assistance (salaries, supplies, etc.) to many of READ's programs, including:

- Three kindergarten/elementary schools: the Mother Teresa School in Periyakrishnapuram (131 students, 6 teachers), the Mother Teresa School in Thirukalapur (22 students, 2 teachers) and the Jawahar Matriculation school in Andimadam (60 students, 6 teachers).



On February 9, 2008, when supporters from Belgium were visiting READ, we took many of the sponsored children to Silver Beach in Cuddalore.



Some of the children at the Mother Teresa School of Periyakrishnapuram.

- Two schools for mentally disabled children: in Perambalur (41 children, 4 teachers) and Andimadam (26 children, 3 teachers).
- Skill-training programs for girls (including card-making, sewing, type-writing, computer training) that take place at the READ Community Resource Center.
- Women and men self-help groups; READ has currently organized 996 women self-help groups and 78 men self-help groups, and assists them via a micro-finance program with loans for income-generating activities.

Child sponsorship program.

Sahaya International and READ have an orphan sponsorship program. For a monthly contribution of \$30, the children receive basic necessities such as nutrition, clothing, and school expenses. During this fiscal year, the number of sponsored children increased from 96 to 130. Three of them, being HIV-infected, also have a second sponsor who pays for additional medical expenses and travel expenses to receive anti-HIV medications, which has resulted in improved health. The sponsors receive regular letters and photographs.

The children meet monthly at READ. In addition, several additional activities were organized:

During the summer, READ also organized a summer camp where the children participated in fun activities and games.

On February 9, 2008, all sponsored children were

taken on a fun trip to Silver Beach in Cuddalore. For most of the kids and their guardians, it was their first visit to the sea.

On December 28, the children were taken to Pitchavaram where they enjoyed a boat tour through the mangrove forest. On the way back home, we paid a short visit to the Chidambaram Natarajar temple.

Construction of Mother Teresa School.

From 1998 to 2008, the Mother Theresa School in Periyakrishnapuram village has grown from 9 to 131 students, ranging from kindergarten through 5th standard. The children received their education in a small rented hut with thatched-leaf roof, which leaks during the rainy season and is a fire hazard in the dry season. It was clear to everyone that a real school building was urgently needed; unfortunately, no available facilities existed in the area. Since 2005, we have been raising the funds necessary to construct a school building. In 2007, a 28,000 sq ft piece of land was purchased, and construction began. The construction of the school was finished in 2008, and the classes were shifted in June at the start of the new school year. This new school also has a toilet facility to teach kids good hygiene habits.

Additional funds will be raised to further improve the infrastructure, such as desks, benches, a fence (to allow the start of a vegetable garden), and a bridge (to span a ditch at the road entrance to the school, that is filled with water during the rainy season).



The ***Mother Teresa Standard English School*** (Periyakrishnapuram village), of which construction was completed in 2008, currently provides basic education to 131 children, most of them from low-literacy and poor farming families.





On December 28, 2008, we took many of the sponsored children and Hope Walks children to Pichavaram for a boat tour through the mangrove forest. The kids (and adults) also enjoyed the play garden.

Construction of Jawahar Matriculation School.

The Jawahar Matriculation School of Andimadam is a kindergarten and elementary school, which is run by READ and provides basic education to 60 children from underprivileged families in the area. The building that is currently rented is in bad condition, and the owner will demolish it in 2009 to sell the land. Thanks to fundraising since 2007, construction of new school was started in the Spring of 2008. The new school is expected to be finished by June 2009, and is in close vicinity to the Sahaya Illam (guesthouse) and READ’s Community Resource Center.

The fundraising efforts were spearheaded by the Koninklijk Atheneum school in Ekeren (Belgium), and were followed by fundraising activities and contributions from many other friends of our Sahaya

network. For more information on the Jawahar Matriculation School and the fundraising, visit www.sahaya.org/read/jawahar_school.html.

HIV awareness program.

In 2005, READ implemented the Perambalur Education and Prevention Program thanks to a grant awarded by the Elton John AIDS Foundation (UK) to Sahaya International. For more details on this HIV peer education program, please see our previous annual reports and Sahaya’s website. During 2008, with financial support by Sahaya International, some activities still continued, including distribution of educational materials, condoms, and the HIV street theater program. A manuscript describing the program has been published in Human Resources for Health (<http://www.human-resources-health.com/content/6/1/6>).

The READ Community Resource Center



HIV/AIDS care and support services and HIV positive network.

READ had previously started a HIV-positive network named “Malarum Mottukal” (meaning “blossoming flower”) to assist persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV). The network meets monthly and provides counseling, medical assistance and referrals. Already more than 100 PLHIV have joined the network. Due to distance and/or health issues, approximately 60% of the members are usually able to come to the monthly meetings. Ninety-five members of the network visit Government Hospitals in other districts for medical treatment (management of opportunistic infections via antibiotics); travel time is usually more than 2 hours. While a year ago only 12 were receiving specific anti-HIV drugs (antiretrovirals; ARV), this number has currently increased to 23, with many reporting clear improvement of their health. Travel time to the Government ARV centers is 4-6 hours one-way.

Thanks to a grant from Gilead Sciences, Inc., the network members were given financial support for their travel expenses to pick up medications. In addition, a total of 33 micro-loans (ranging from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 8000; for a total amount of Rs 80,000) were provided to PLHIV to start micro-enterprises (for example, the purchase of goats or a sewing machine). This loan program is managed as a revolving fund, so that additional loans will be given in coming years.

As part of the grant, network members will also be given training on home-based care.

Public Hygiene Project.

Most people in rural areas such as Perambalur district don't have access to toilets and therefore have to use fields and other common spaces for defecation and urination. This poses many health risks for the community. The absence of sanitation facilities is especially difficult for women and girls who have to wait until it gets dark to go into the fields, and then risk rape and violence. They also try to drink minimal water, which leads to other health problems.

To alleviate these problems, Sahaya International volunteers raised funds in 2005 for a public hygiene

project in which families are given loans of about \$120 to construct household toilets, and the repaid money is used to provide loans to new families. So far, more than 100 toilets have been constructed.

Community Resource Center for rural disabled people.

Disabled persons have access to very few services in READ's district. Previously READ and Sahaya successfully applied to the Japanese Embassy, Chennai for grant support to construct a Resource Center in Andimadam to educate, train and rehabilitate disabled people. Construction was completed in 2008. This center currently accommodates one of the schools for mentally disabled children and also provides vocational trainings to abled and disabled people (including book-binding, computer, typewriting, tailoring, basketry, and embroidered greeting card production). Ongoing plans include a mini-health center (with physical rehabilitation instruments) and counseling & career guidance facilities.

SEE Trust

SEE Trust (Socio-economic, Education and Empowerment) is an registered, non-governmental organization committed to the welfare of downtrodden and marginalized women in Cuddalore, India. It was started by in 2007 by 3 sisters (Sr. Daisy, Sr. Vincent Mary and Sr. Jesu Mary) to assist and empower underprivileged people. They offer evening tuition centers, skill-training to women and other women empowerment programs. They are a partner organization of READ. In 2008 they have received a Community Gift from the St. James Parish of Davis. See the separate section of this annual report for more information, or visit www.sahaya.org.

Pediatric HIV Ward (Tambaram, India)

Sahaya International continued to be the fiscal agent for the collection of donations to improve the pediatric HIV ward at the Government Hospital for Thoracic Medicine in Tambaram (near Chennai,



The Jawahar Matriculation School provides basic education to 60 children. During previous years, it has been operating in a rented building that is scheduled to be torn down soon. Construction of a new school was started in 2008 thanks to the fundraising efforts of volunteers in Belgium (particularly the Koninklijk Atheneum School of Ekeren) and the USA.



India). This project is led by Tom Furtwangler (I-TECH, Seattle). A social worker and better infrastructure (including toys and games) have been helping many children. For more information about this program, please visit www.tambaramkids.org.

Prerana Women's Health Initiative and Public Health Research Institute (Mysore, India)

The Prerana Women's Health Initiative and Public Health Research Institute are based on the belief that women have a right to voluntary, comprehensive, and culturally sensitive services for family planning, reproductive health, and HIV. "Prerana" means "inspiration" in Kannada, the local language of Karnataka. The project team hope to inspire women to advocate for improved reproductive health.

The project has been providing free reproductive health care services to more than 3,400 women, and has been investigating the relationship between reproductive tract infections and Herpes Simplex Type-2 virus infection. For more information on the many other programs that are implemented, please visit www.sahaya.org/prerana/index.htm.

Lemling Vista (Nagaland, India)

A new project is the construction of the Lemling Vista elementary school in Yongam, Nagaland. This village has a population of approximately 1500 people, consisting of 180 families. There are no proper roads and communication systems with the nearest small city of Lenglong, 12 km away. Because no facility was available to educate young children, a small school has being started to provide kindergarten and elementary education up to 5th standard, but more money is being raised to build more classrooms and develop better infrastructure. After 5th standard, children can go to the school in Longleng and stay at the hostel there.

HIV Awareness of the Deaf (Kenya)

This program, which is led in Kenya by our program coordinator Jacquilyn Odwesso, was originally

funded by a 2004 grant from the Development Marketplace program of the World Bank. In collaboration with GRACE (Grassroots Alliance for Community Education; www.graceusa.org), this program developed a peer education curriculum with Kenyan sign language vocabulary, and created a Peer Education Network to teach deaf youth and adults about sexual health & hygiene, puberty, relationships, and HIV/AIDS. In 2007, we published and distributed "The Deaf Peer's Education Manual - A training manual developed by the Kenyan Peer Education Network, with interactive-based activities for basic understanding of sexual health, HIV and AIDS" (to download, visit www.sahaya.org/deaf.html).

During 2008, Jacquilyn registered a new NGO, namely "Sahaya Deaf, Kenya" to bring more attention to deaf people and their issues in Kenya and other developing countries. Thanks to grant support from Gilead Sciences, additional training was given to 18 peer educators of Nygangoma during a 3-day workshop. In addition, the partnership of Sahaya-Deaf, Kenya with GRACE has recently secured USAID-PEPFAR funding which includes extending the programs with deaf youth in 2009.

Collaboration with SAWES (Sevapur)- Belgium

Although Sahaya International is only registered in the USA, we have been receiving growing support from volunteers and sponsors in Belgium. In 2007, we entered a fruitful collaboration with the Belgian non-profit organization SAWES and the Indian NGO Inba Seva Sangam (www.sevapur.be), which was founded by Lea Provo, and now also helps our programs at READ. This collaboration has already led to 46 sponsored orphans, and general donations for READ's programs (especially the construction of the Jawahar Matriculation School and the disability programs). We are very grateful to Sawes and Inba Seva Sangam for this collaboration.

Profile of a self-help group member: Kolanchiammal

Before Kolanchiammal got involved with a self-help group, her family suffered a lot from money lenders and it was very difficult for her to maintain her family. She learned about self-help groups and became a member of the Vanavil Self-help Group which was started by READ. Through a contribution donated by Sahaya supporters, she received a loan from READ, which she used to buy four goats. She is taking care of them well. One of the goats has already given birth to 2 offspring. Now Kolanchiammal is able to save amounts of money for the future which benefits her whole family. Whenever work is available locally, she also does daily labor, such as construction work at the Jawahar Matriculation School.



DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON HIV/AIDS:

In collaboration with The Teresa Group (Canada), READ (India), and the Hope Foundation (India), we developed “**Bye-bye, Secrets- A book about children living with HIV or AIDS in their family.**”

What is it like when HIV or AIDS takes over a child’s world? In Bye-bye Secrets, children, ranging in age from ten to twelve tell us about their experiences and about the secrets and stigmatization that have made them wise beyond their years.

It is their hope that this book will be used to help families living in areas where professional counseling support is limited; in health-care facilities to educate and support families; in classrooms to decrease the stigma and to sensitize children and educators to the impact of HIV and AIDS on families. Above all, they want all children with HIV or AIDS in their family to know that they are not alone.

While our financial resources don’t permit the distribution of hard-copies, this material is available for free downloading at www.sahaya.org/cartoons.html.



VASANTHI - nursing student



Vasanthi grew up in Vilandai, Andimadam, in a poor family. She was a very good student in high school, and dreamt of becoming a nurse. Because her family was not able to support higher studies, Sahaya International organized two “**Tea for Vasanthi**” fundraisers in 2007 and 2008. Vasanthi continues her studies at the Chidambaram College of Nursing in Chennai, is passing all her examinations, and recently wrote this letter:

Dear friends,

How are you and how are your friends? I am doing well, and at present I am posted in the institute of the Mental Hospital for one month. I learn a lot here, like giving wholistic care to mental retardation.

Now I am doing my third year of Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Thanks to your support, via READ I received everything I need for my studies. Convey my regards to your friends and relatives.

*With love,
Vasanthi*



SEE TRUST (Cuddalore, India)



SEE Trust (Socio-economic and Empowerment Trust) is a registered, non-governmental organization founded by 3 sisters (pictured above, left to right: Sister Jesu Mary, Sister Vincent Mary and Sister Daisy). SEE Trust is committed to the welfare of downtrodden and marginalized women in Cuddalore, India. During 2008, they performed many activities, including the formation of 27 women self-help groups (including 3 for widows) with micro-finance activities, skill-training to 114 women, and evening coaching classes for 72 children. They also organized celebrations of Women's Day (March 8, 2008), and Children's Day (November 14, 2008), in which 300 women and 69 students, respectively, participated.



Sahaya International fundraising events

Belgian Beer, Friet/Fries and Waffles.

On Saturday March 1, the Belgian Club of Northern California (www.bnc.com) hosted this annual fundraiser event in Hayward, California. The proceeds of this event were divided and 3 charities, including Sahaya International, received \$1,575 each. We thank the many volunteers who made this such a big success.

Peace of Art.

On Saturday April 5, Namuyaba Temanju organized in partnership with Sahaya International and International House-Davis a cultural evening and art sale to raise awareness and funds about displaced and needy children in Kenya. All proceeds of this event were sent to Sahaya's partner organization in the Korogocho slums of Nairobi, the Rehema Daycare and Orphan Center.



UCD Dance Marathon.

On May 30-31, UC Davis students organized a 12-hour dance marathon to raise awareness about pediatric HIV and AIDS. 15% of the proceeds were donated to Sahaya International.

Mount Shasta Climb.

In June, a team of friends led by Ramin Yazdani, spent several days at Mount Shasta in Northern California, and attempted a climb to the top. Although they had to abandon the climb very close to the summit due to declining weather, the sponsorship that was raised for this event made a big difference towards the construction of the Jawahar Matriculation School.

Tea for Vasanthi.

On Sunday, June 22, a tea & fingerfood gathering was organized by Elisabeth Sherwin and friends to raise money to help Vasanthi, a young woman who lives in the villages of READ, to fulfill her dreams of becoming a nurse. She started nursing school in September 2006 and is currently in the 3rd year.

Hope Walks -Davis.

Hope Walks (www.hopewalks.org) is an initiative by Global Strategies for HIV Prevention (San Rafael, California). It is an educational and fun(d)-raising walk that provides an opportunity for children, along with family members and friends to make a difference in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children by providing health-care, education, shelter and food.

In close partnership the St. James Parish of Davis and the Cal Aggie Christian Association (CA-House), we organized on Sunday October 19, 2008 the second Hope Walks Davis event in Arroyo Park (www.hopewalks.org/davis). The event educated many adults and children and raised approximately \$5000 to provide for the basic needs



of orphans and vulnerable children in READ's rural area in India - food, clothing, shelter, school fees, uniforms, and support of basic health care including HIV testing, treatment and care. We thank the many partners in this effort, including the many participants and dedicated volunteers who made this possible.

Community Gift Awards.

During this past year, the St. James Parish of Davis, California, awarded Sahaya International two Community Gift awards, one for the completion of the construction of the Mother Teresa School, one for SEE Trust. In addition, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis held a special collection for Sahaya International on September 21, 2009 towards our

programs that provide direct support to orphans and needy children in India. We are extremely thankful to both churches and their parishioners for their generosity.



The Mount Shasta fundraising team for the construction of the Jawahar Matriculation School.

We thank the many volunteers who helped us in all the fundraising efforts!

“Peace of Art - fundraiser for Kenya”

On April 5, 2008, Namuyaba Temanju organized in collaboration with Sahaya International and International House the “Peace of Art” event to raise awareness and funds for children in Kenya who have been displaced or lost their parents due to the post-election violence. All proceeds of this event were donated to the Rehema Orphan and Daycare Center in Nairobi, Kenya, which has been our partner organization since 2001.



hopewalks

A PROMISE TO CHILDREN OF THE EPIDEMIC

give everyone, particularly children, the opportunity to do something concrete in the face of the worldwide AIDS epidemic. We walked, ate energy bars, drank lemonade, played games, and listened to people talk about their hopes for an AIDS-free future. On the day of the event, we were delighted that Davis Mayor Ruth Asmundson and Fr. Bong were able to attend. We also benefited from the singing of Mary Suparek and the Mommy & Daddy” band, and Frank Starsnik’s magic. And thanks to everyone who helped blow up hundreds of blue and orange balloons! Please -- seniors, boomers, teens and children -- join us again on October 18 2009, so we can continue to spread the word that AIDS is a treatable disease that can be challenged by education and caring.

We want to thank all participants and the amazing team of volunteers that made the 2nd Hope Walks in Davis on October 19 a success, including our partners, St. James Parish and the CA-House. The event was held to





The children in our orphan sponsorship and Hope Walks programs display the banner that children in Davis had painted during the Hope Walks 2008 event.

Maheshwari is 10 years old. Her mother died of AIDS and now her father, who only earns \$1.25 per day as a day laborer, is having it very difficult to feed his children even one complete meal per day. Maheshwari has very high marks in school. Thanks to **Hope Walks**, we have been supporting Maheshwari for the past year. In November 2008, she wrote this letter:



Dear Friends,

This is Maheshwari writing this letter with loving greetings to you all loving people. I am fine and wish to hear the same from you.

I am studying well and in the first mid term test I scored 359 marks and in the quarterly examination 470 marks. I am in 1st rank in the class. I am very thankful to you all for your help and support to my education.

Thank you for the new dress for Deepavali festival and other schooling materials like a dictionary, pen, uniform dress, notebooks, geometry box and so on. I am so happy to have them all and so are my family members.

I am studying in 6th standard now. I am studying in Government Girls Higher Secondary School. Because of your help I am studying well without any worries and secured first place in the quarterly examination. Thanks... Thanks... Thanks...

Wish you a merry Xmas and a Happy New year.

*Yours lovingly,
M. Maheshwari*

Sahaya International

in the news

A partial list of articles mentioning Sahaya's activities.

- Making a difference. Local residents' support helps improve life for dozens in southern India. Special to the Enterprise. Davis Enterprise, Sunday March 16, 2008. Page C5
- Vriendinnen stappen voor school in India. By Andre Oomen. Gazet van Antwerpen. March 27, 2008. Page 17.
- Straight from the art. Conflict resolution, a lifelong interest, turned into a vocation. By Regina Wang. The Davis Enterprise, Thursday March 27, 2008. Page A7.
- UC Davis to host first dance marathon tonight. By Danai Sakutukwa. The California Aggie, Friday May 30, 2008. Page 1.
- Reaching new heights. Davis trio climb Mount Shasta to educate children. Special to the Enterprise. Davis Enterprise, Monday June 16, 2008. Page A3.
- Hope Walks benefits AIDS orphans. Families invited to join walk in Arroyo Park. Davis Enterprise, Sunday Sept. 21, 2008. Page A4.



SAHAYA ILLAM



Please remember that visitors are welcome to visit READ and stay at the Sahaya-sponsored guesthouse Sahaya Illam. The house has 4 bedrooms (each with western toilet and shower) and a cook to prepare delicious south-Indian meals. Transportation can be arranged to visit READ's programs or to visit the famous temples in the area. For more information, please see www.sahaya.org/guesthouse.html.