



GEN, a Grassroots Empowerment Network working with local NGOs and the most disadvantaged villagers to contribute to the elimination of poverty in the Alwar District of Rajasthan State, India. To find out more about the GEN's work go to www.gen-initiative.org

'While poverty persists, there is no freedom' Nelson Mandela 2006

GEN News - November 2010

GEN Diwali Party Goes with a Swing

On Saturday 20th November the first ever GEN Diwali Party took place at Shelford Rugby Club in Cambridge, and what an occasion it turned out to be! It was a first for Cambridge too, but definitely not a last. We are already thinking about next years event!



Over 350 people attended. There was a fantastic firework display, fire spinning and dancing, music from Deep Blue, a classic soul and blues band of Cambridge academics, a healthy vegetarian meal, Cobra beer, spiced apple juice, and an auction which included two quilts made by the girls education project sponsored by GEN and run by End Poverty, its ngo partner in India. The party was organised by GEN trustee, Professor Shai Vyakarnam and his family, supported by the GEN trustee team, to raise funds for GENs work with End Poverty which works with villagers in the Tijara District of Rajasthan. Over £4500 was raised to provide more secure funding for the projects that GEN supports (see below). This will enable us to expand our work to cover more villages and to build on and diversify the projects that are currently in place.

Girls of Tijara show the way

After 6 months of intensive literacy and numeracy education around 100 girls in the villages supported by the GEN and End Poverty have acquired basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. Each girl was also given some fruit tree saplings with full instructions on planting and caring for the plants and how to make best nutritional use of the fruits. And they were taught basic sewing skills.



Young reader demonstrates newly acquired skills



One of the saplings the girls planted

To support the sewing classes GEN provided End Poverty with a small grant to buy additional sewing machines and good quality fabric which the girls could use as part of an experimental income generation venture. The products of the sewing classes were good enough to sell at the Diwali party in Cambridge. More experienced seamstresses in the villages also produced two beautiful quilts in traditional designs that were included in the Diwali Party auction. An educational ngo in Delhi, Katha, has agreed to take products of the girls work for sale in its new craftwork shop. This means the girls have a potential source of income as a result of their own hard work.



Popular bag



Part of traditional quilt design



First quilt being delivered for auction

More Good News for Girls

After the success of the first literacy and numeracy classes in the five villages where End Poverty started to work in the Tijara District in 2010, GEN has learned from iPartner India which provided the initial funding, that a grant will be available to continue the work through 2011. Girls from several more villages will now get basic classes, and girls from the original villages will receive further education to consolidate their reading skills, learn more about health and nutrition and improve their sewing skills and income earning possibilities. Classes have already begun in two more villages and at least three more villages have been asking if they can be included in future.



One of the 'new girls' who was pleased to have this opportunity

End Poverty sets up an office in Tijara

Eighteen months since it began work with the Tijara villages in Rajasthan (near the border with Haryana) End Poverty, GEN's Indian partner ngo, has established an office in the nearest small town of Tapukara which is on the Alwar road off the main Delhi – Jaipur highway. The office consists of a training foyer and two rooms, one of which may become a resource centre for the education programmes. This move has been seen by the villagers as a sign of a long term commitment to the area by End Poverty and has helped to increase levels of trust in EP and GEN.

The five teachers of the girls classes each produced unsolicited decorations for the office, including a moving poem about the role of women in society (translation in next issue). They also held a puja

to bless the opening of the office and the work they hope will happen there. The office means that any visitors who would like to see what is happening in the villages under the auspices of GEN and EP have somewhere to 'freshen up' before and after their visit which will inevitably be very dusty. And they may need a loo which they will find at the office!



Some of the decorations given to mark the opening of the new EP office Ganesh blesses office

NB Personally tailored visits to the GEN / EP projects from Delhi or Gurgaon can be arranged for a reasonable fee as part of EPs fund raising programme. Why not add this to your next visit to India? Contact Vinod Kausik for details. yakaushik@endpovertyindia.org

Eye camps come to Tijara villagers

GEN has raised funds from iPartner India, a UK based funding agency, to enable End Poverty to organise eye camps for up to 750 villagers from 10 villages in the Tijara District. The first eye camp will be on 11th December 2010 and will check the eyes of old and young. Those with cataracts will attend an ophthalmology clinic in Gurgaon for an operation to sort out their problems. Those with other sight problems, particularly children, will be given appropriate corrective treatment. This lady from Bhalesar, the most cut off of the Tijara villages, has been looking forward to getting her cataracts sorted out since she was first told about the plan a year ago.



Someone made very happy when she heard the eye camp was coming soon

GEN walks boost empowerment and income generation in 'our' Tijara villages

The latest 10 for GEN walk took place on Sunday 28th November on a cold but sparkling day in the beautiful area around Dorchester on Thames. Fourteen brave souls wrapped themselves up well and marched briskly from Wittenham Clumps to Dorchester town where lunch was taken at a local coaching inn, a visit was made to Dorchester Abbey, followed by a brisk walk back along the Thames river bank, then over the Clumps to Castle Hill to be met by a spectacular sunset, then coffee and ginger cake in the car park. This year the 10 for GEN walks have raised around £1500 to support GEN's work with End Poverty in India. Some of this was used to buy sewing machines and fabrics that have resulted in income generation for the girls (see above), and some has contributed to a forthcoming series of exposure visits to show villagers from Tijara what other ngo projects have been able to achieve by taking charge of developments in their own villages. The 3 day visit will end at the renowned Barefoot College in Tilonia, near Ajmer in Western Rajasthan. The first visit is planned for February and will be reported in the next issue. Other visits will take in well established craft work outlets in and around Delhi and Gurgaon.

GEN Christmas Shopping List

Feeling stuck about what to give family and friends for Christmas this year? Wondering what to give to people who seem to have everything? Why not consider 'a gift in kind' from the GEN Christmas shopping list? You can be assured your contribution will be well used in our projects with minimal administrative overheads and regular follow up news via the GEN Newsletter.



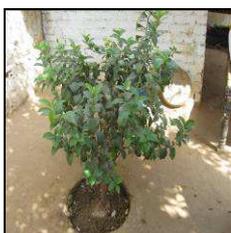
Help a child's future

£10 will buy 1 set of text books for 1 year for 1 child

£40 sponsors 1 child's education for one year

£70 provides 7 children with basic literacy & numeracy skills

£100 will provide reproductive health care information for a group of 20 adolescent girls



Help the environment

£15 will buy 30 forest trees to help retain pond water and provide shade for animals. It will also buy 30 fruit tree saplings for food and for teaching girls about tree care & nutrition.

£100 will help 10 farmers purchase organic fertilizer & seeds to support healthier crops



Help family nutrition & health

£20 will buy 10 chickens to supplement family nutrition as well as generate a little income

£40 can buy a she-goat and provide 2-litres of milk each day to help nourish a family

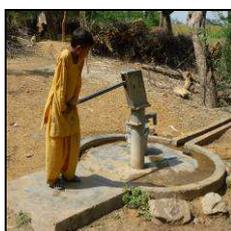
£150 will allow 5 elderly villagers to see again as a result of a cataract operation



Help women and girls save and generate income

£25 for a sewing machine will enable women to clothe their families & sell clothes, craft work and quilts locally and in Delhi and Gurgaon.

£200 will help train & provide 10 young women with the resources to produce clothing for themselves, their families & generate income through producing items for sale



Help provide clean drinking water & Increase energy efficiency

£150 for a new hand pump will provide safe water for household use & for kitchen gardens for up to 300 villagers

£150 will allow families to use a bio-gas cooker which reduces the burning of wood or dung for fuel

Payment Details

Please donate via www.justgiving.com or send a cheque payable to the GEN Initiative to GENs postal address
Registered Address: The GEN Initiative, 3 Howitt Close, Howitt Road, London, NW3 4LX

Interested in finding out more about the GEN or in getting more actively involved? We need more trustees and well informed associates to join our small team. You will have the opportunity to connect with grassroots India. Get in touch with Sue Burke, Chair of the GEN, to find out more. SPBurke@aol.com