



IMPACT REPORT 2021

BRINGING HOPE TO COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHERN INDIA



Reg. Charity 1100868
www.hopegardensindia.org
Hope Gardens India, PO BOX 404, Cobham, KT11 9FJ



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

When we started on this journey 21 years ago we always anticipated obstacles and challenges, however, the last twelve months have been incredibly testing.

In these uncertain times two things have remained stable: Archbishop Samuel and his team's faithful service to those most in need and your unwavering support. We are so proud of what our Indian Partners have done under exceptional circumstances. Their swift response has not only transformed lives but saved lives.

We are so grateful for your generosity which has enabled us to bring hope to so many families in the darkest of times.



AT A GLANCE: DELIVERING HOPE IN 2020/21

HOPE FOR CHILDREN: TRANSFORMING LIVES



Hope for Children: Bringing education, hope and opportunities to those who would otherwise be overlooked.

28

Pupils at our School for Children with Disabilities

94

Sponsored Children with enhanced life prospects



Fees paid & devices provided to enable online learning



Food parcels for sponsored children & families at our school

HOPE FOR COMMUNITIES: ENRICHING LIVES



Hope for Communities: Providing affordable healthcare, training schemes and sustainable initiatives to empower all.

3.5K

Patients treated by our medical centre

9.5

Tonnes of food have been distributed



10.5 tonnes of rice harvested with 440 jobs created



50 women graduated from our sewing institutes in 20/21

HOPE FOR CHURCHES: SERVING OTHERS



Hope for Churches: Creating church plants, supporting pastors and training leaders of the future.



20 churches serving communities in Tamil Nadu & Kerala

4.5K

Relief packages given



15 students at ATA accredited bible college



4 church building projects

OUR SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

Hope Gardens only supports projects that are the initiatives of local people in our communities who focus on enhancing the lives of others. We only support projects that are aligned with our values and purpose and review them all annually.

A RELENTLESS PANDEMIC

Archbishop Samuel shares an update on the situation in India. "In India since March 2020 we have experienced 4 phases of lockdown and 6 phases of extreme restrictions. Due to the severity of the second wave we are still restricted with most institutions remaining closed. Millions of people have been impacted by Covid 19 and so many are now grieving. Kerala is the 2nd most impacted state with Tamil Nadu 4th based on cases/death per head. This uncertainty is never-ending."



Gold Milan reports "During the first wave our communities were all fearing hunger and living with the impact of unemployment. The second wave is so different. This time everyone is worried about losing loved ones, their health and also their children falling behind at school. There is a general fear of the virus across our nation."

HOW HAS THIS IMPACTED FAMILIES?

- Ill health, loss of loved ones, unimaginable grief and loneliness
- Complex mental health issues
- Unemployment leading to acute poverty levels
- Significant disruption to education with school closures
- Detrimental impact on academic attainment. Lack of routines for children with additional educational needs
- Hope Gardens social welfare projects suspended
- Discrimination for minority groups



HOPE GARDENS' RESPONSE

Pastoral care from our 20 churches and Hope Gardens Team

Medical services and partnership with specialist mental health team

Food banks & food parcel distribution to the vulnerable irrespective of faith or caste

Enabling remote learning by paying school fees, providing connectivity and devices

Specialist tutoring services in communities to support those who have fallen behind and not at school.

All staff have been paid throughout the pandemic & their families have received food parcels continuously.

We do not discriminate and welcome all regardless of faith, gender or background to benefit from our care and relief parcels.

A SHINING LIGHT IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Our staff team at Hope Gardens and ministry teams in our churches have been so swift in their response to meeting the pressing needs of their communities. So many live in poverty and the pandemic has exacerbated this situation. With weeks of no income, daily wage workers, with no savings, fear starvation as well as the virus. We are so grateful for our network of pastors and leadership team who are coordinating our continuing relief efforts.



PRIYA'S STORY





Priya has been sponsored since she was three, when she lost her Mum. Having graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Nursing she spent lockdown voluntarily caring for and treating Covid patients at a hospital in Coimbatore. She continues to work in that hospital now on an official placement.

REV PRAKESH STORY

"In my community outside Cumbum the people are deprived and persecuted for their faiths and caste. Extremists make our lives hard. My church supports all these families with a food bank, providing education for children and sewing for women. Many have lost family members which makes life even more difficult. Families have been unable to buy food because most of the adults have no fixed income. Typically they try and get manual labour on building sites, work in tea and cardamom plantations or paddy fields. We have been a comfort to them."

YOUR SUPPORT HAS ENABLED:

- 10** Tonnes of groceries delivered in our relief parcels.
- 4.8K** Individuals benefitted from our relief packages
- £50K** Emergency funds raised to support Hope Gardens during the pandemic
- 3.6** Tonnes of Hope Gardens home grown rice distributed
-  PPE, hygiene equipment provided for all staff and buildings
-  All staff salaries have been paid throughout the pandemic

GREAT PARTNERSHIPS



Having links with the Red Cross meant that our School for Children with Disabilities and Dining Hall acted as a Red Cross Centre distributing relief materials to disabled people's homes.



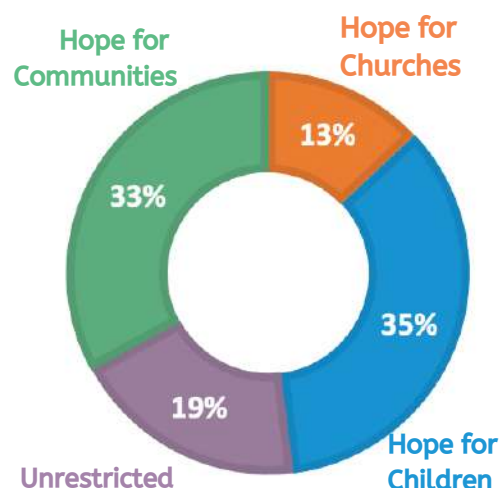
Shanti is a tutor in a village near Salem. She ran the after school club every day and so when the schools were closed children just started to knock on her door and wait for her to teach them. Shanti has been amazing throughout the pandemic supporting some of the most vulnerable children with their learning on a 1-2-1 basis or small groups, in line with restrictions.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2020/21: HOW YOUR FUNDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In the last 12 months we have raised £163k for Hope for Churches, Hope for Communities, Hope for Children, our capital investments and our unrestricted funds.

FUNDRAISING DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

- £163k has been invested in our three operational 'Hope for..' programmes and unrestricted funds distributed to the greatest need.
- We have focused much of our fundraising in responding to the impact of Covid-19, providing food parcels and support at this most critical time.
- We have also invested in capital projects, undertaking building works at four churches and raising funds for a new school bus
- For more information about how our funds are allocated please contact info@hopegardensindia.org to request our full accounts and formal report.



CAPITAL INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This year we have raised £45k for our capital projects.

- **Hope for Churches:** The focus of our capital investment has been church building and supporting church planting. We have been busy building churches for Rev Thomas, Rev Robin and Rev Barnabas.
- **Hope for Children:** The sensory room facility is now complete and we have made improvements to the girls hostel.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Trustees of Hope Gardens strive to provide excellent accountability and work closely with our Indian Partners running our two Indian based charities - RMS (Rachel Mercy Sugantha Trust) which funds Hope Garden's social welfare work and RRCT (Rhema Religious and Charitable Trust) which funds our Churches and the Bible College.
- Unfortunately we have not been able to visit the team in India in person this year but we have been in constant communication over zoom or the phone.
- Board Meetings and regular VTCs ensure the transparency and accountability of our operations.
- We are proud to be associated with the work of Archbishop Samuel and his team, which started 21 years ago.

MEET THE TEAM



Archbishop Samuel Gnanaprahasam and his wife **Saguntha** founded RRCT and RMS and have been working alongside Rev Richard Lloyd since 2000. **Rev Vasthi Milan** (daughter of Samuel and Saguntha) is responsible along with **Gold Milan** for the day to day operations and commercial direction of Hope Gardens India.

NEWS FROM OUR CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES

Saguntha and Vasthi have been in touch with so many families and have a real insight into their lives. Vasthi reports "Lockdown has had an impact on our children both educationally and emotionally. Many have found online learning to be difficult and they have struggled without regular interaction with friends and teachers. Some are relieved that there are not exams to pass this year, unless you are in 10th, 11th, 12th standard, but others would have liked to take an exam as normal and feel it is unfair on those who have studied hardest."

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

The pandemic has spotlighted the digital divide amongst families in the communities that we serve. Without technology and without paid school fees children are not able to access remote learning.



- Hope Gardens has ensured that all sponsored children are connected, have devices and are able to access their remote learning where available.
- Our Tutors have been paid throughout the pandemic and within the regulations run 1-2-1 and group sessions.
- Children attending our school for children with disabilities have had bespoke learning packs, home visits from their teachers and online learning.
- Food parcels and family support has been given to all children attending our after school programmes.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING JOURNEYS IN LOCKDOWN



Our day care centres have (sort of) been open! We opened as soon as we could in line with the local restrictions. However they have reopened only to help those children in Standards 10-12 to regain some of their lost education. For those in other years tutors like Shanti have been allowed to teach small group and some 1-2-1 sessions. Our wonderful tutors are helping children with their learning.



School for children with disabilities. It has been a challenging time over the last 12 months. The school has been closed since March 24th in line with the regulations. The teachers have been raising awareness of the government support programme to ensure our pupils have smart cards and receive the benefits available to them. They have provided home school material and given care packages. We have refurbished our school thanks to the Honeybee Trust.

APPEAL UPDATES : THANK YOU

School Bus: Thanks to our supporters, Goodnews Evangelical Mission and Souter Trust we are able to purchase our much needed new school bus.

Christmas Appeal success funded our after school programmes which meant our children had access to small groups and tutors and when restrictions allowed were able to meet for fun and games.



GRADUATING IN LOCKDOWN



"I am so excited to share the news that I have managed to graduate in Lockdown. It was really strange learning alone in Lockdown and things took much longer than normal but I am now a college graduate! With my BSc I can now apply to be an officer in the Indian Army. Thank you to all my friends at Hope Gardens for making this possible for me." Leslie, aged 21



I'VE BEEN HELPING OTHERS IN LOCKDOWN



"I am enjoying being at home in Lockdown. We still have school work and I have learnt many things like how to make crafts from recycled materials. I have been really good helping my parents deliver food parcels. It has been very difficult to get food but we are so lucky as kind people like you have helped us." Evangline, aged 11



I'VE MISSED PLAYING CRICKET



"I have had such a long holiday because of Covid!! But I have found it quite boring and miss playing cricket with my friends. At first online learning was exciting and fun but I missed being able to ask my teachers questions. I will study well and get good marks when school reopens. Thank you for helping me." Joel Jacob, aged 12



DAD'S MOBILE WAS MY CLASSROOM!



"Thank you all for helping me with my education. Lockdown has made us all safer but we have missed many things and we could not go to school or even church! My brother and I attended online school using our Dad's mobile but some of my friends didn't have a mobile so couldn't even do that and our connection was not always very good. But I have been promoted to 6th grade now and I didn't have to take any exams again because of Corona. That did feel a bit strange. Do you like the photo? I took it myself!" Esther, aged 10

LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN

94

Hope Gardens in 20/21 has sponsored 94 children and students. Each child has had access to remote learning.



All sponsored children have the opportunity to study at university to obtain a degree. Currently seven students are at university.



3 new bikes were generously donated for sponsored children Godwin, Augustin and Daniel.



Christmas was not cancelled - hot meals and gifts were provided for all the children who attend our after school clubs.

MEDICAL CENTRE: A LIFE SAVING FACILITY

Government regulations meant that our private medical centre and medical camps were suspended for many weeks. To manage the huge increase in demand for medical care we worked continuously alongside the Cumbum Government hospital transferring all our covid cases to Cumbum and treating non Covid patients. Significant work has been done within the communities running covid awareness and vaccination clinics.



Our team reported a huge rise in drug addiction, diabetes and depression. Depression and chronic anxiety is a direct result of joblessness during lockdown. Lockdown had a serious toll on daily wage workers. As a result we have increased the number of counselling service clinics.



"My son was a drug addict from 12, he struggled through lockdown, we found at Hope Gardens they didn't just give him medicine they gave him time and someone to speak to who cared". Mother from Cumbum

"I was obese and came for help with my breathing. Hope Gardens helped my pain and diagnosed my diabetes and high blood pressure. I am now under proper treatment" Local patient

3.5K

Patients treated at our medical centre.



7 members of staff employed & paid throughout the pandemic

0

Cases of Covid amongst our team due to our stringent hygiene measures

OUR SMALL HOLDING HAS BEEN A HUGE BLESING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Our small holding and paddyfield have been a huge blessing throughout this pandemic. Daily we are grateful for this long term sustainable asset that not only has been a major food source for our staff and so many vulnerable families it's a vital source of employment and income. We have four full time farm workers who have not only farmed throughout the pandemic but also navigated cyclone Tauktae which resulted in the loss of one acre of crops.



COMMUNITY IMPACT OF OUR SMALL HOLDING

10.5

Tonnes of rice produced from our paddyfield in 3 harvests.



459 jobs have been created this year as a direct result of our paddyfield, coconut plantation and small holding



The adjacent paddyfield purchase is near completion, which increases our site to 5 acres.



Regular income earned from our 7 goats and 4 dairy cows through the sale of milk and goats.



Root and salad vegetables all grown from our kitchens and corn grass grown for the cattle



4 coconut harvests in 20/21 generating revenue employing 15 people for each harvest

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SKILLS

Hope Gardens has 20 churches that work in communities where women are faced with many challenges. Many women are destitute, abandoned and face uncertain futures. Our **six sewing and handicraft institutes** enable women of any faith to come to learn a vocational skill, share their worries with others and have the training to earn their own money.



WHY ARE OUR PROGRAMMES SO IMPORTANT?

Saguntha explains why these programmes are so important.

"Typically women leave school at 16 for marriage, then they find that their husbands go away perhaps for a job or perhaps they just leave. We find that many women are left with no income and their only option is seasonal agricultural work for just 6 months. Home life is very difficult. Our ladies tell us about the pressures they face and how life is draining"



VOCATIONAL SKILLS = A VITAL SOURCE OF INCOME

- **Megala** was destitute and alone in Devakottai. The last 12 months have been a turning point. She has a small retail stall and now her sewing income as well. This has enabled her to support her children with her own income.
- **Mutheeshwari** after leaving school was sponsored throughout her training in lockdown and is now independently stitching and making income on her own.
- **Handicrafts** are now on the syllabus particularly for young girls - they learn many techniques including basket weaving.



93

Sewing graduates from our 6 centres since its launch- 50 women trained in 20/21



26 machines in our centres enable us to welcome women and girls from all faiths

60%

Graduates from sewing institutes now earning an income.



A new loo for Kudakovil sewing centre means we can expand the centre and have more students!

SUPPORT THROUGH THE TOUGHEST TIMES

Our classrooms are a sanctuary, a supportive environment. During lockdown there were so many disruptions to our students. Many of our students and graduates were unable to generate their own income and take care of their basic needs such as buying rice and groceries but we were there for them. Your generosity meant that all students also received food parcels.

ACTS OF LOVE & KINDNESS HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT

Our churches have been vital in supporting communities and congregations spiritually and practically. Ministry hasn't stopped in lockdown. It has been ever present at hospitals, via mobiles and in the streets. In many communities Christians are a minority and pastors have seen faiths tested daily as the pandemic spread ferociously. **Never before has our ministry been so important.**



Beacons of hope as our churches turn into food banks and open their doors to those most in need from any faith or caste.



Resilient Pastors who have adapted to run services remotely via voice messages, whatsapp groups, video calls and texts.



New rickshaws and scooters for Rev Ruby and Rev Ramesh has enabled them to visit their congregations.



Churches reopened after 24 weeks. Hope Gardens imposed strict regulations and temperature checks.



Diverse communities served by 20 Church plants across some of the poorest areas in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.



Capital investment in 4 churches; new buildings, roofs, toilets, retaining walls and bore holes!

- Communities have been overwhelmed with shock, sorrow and grief. Our 20 faithful pastors have been instrumental in delivering the food packages so generously provided by our supporters.
- All of our churches were in Lockdown for 24 weeks from 22nd March 2020 but each of our pastors, their families and staff teams received support through the crisis.
- Over Christmas when the Lockdown was eased we were finally able to gather all our pastors and their families together for fellowship, support and festivities.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS: OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS

Rev Doss and his wife Regi's church in Kerala serves the tea plantation workers and the building struggles in the annual monsoons. After storm damage this year he now has a new and improved roof to help prevent similar damage happening again this year.

Rev Robin's completed church looks truly beautiful with its finished arch and cross and new PA system! In lockdown Rev Robin has been able to put up railings, plaster walls, build a retaining wall and finish the toilet - essential for full use of the church. Rev. Robin's wife's sewing programme can now move from her kitchen into the church to help empower more local women.



"We extend our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to our supporters."
Rev Robin

Rev Barnabas' church building project in Thiruvannamalai is underway! The project is about 50% complete and he now has secure walls and a roof and a separate electricity supply. Rev. Barnabas was able to hold some services in his temporary shed when lockdown regulations were eased. Rev Barnabas' wife also plans to start a sewing programme as soon as possible.

BIBLE COLLEGE: EQUIPPING FUTURE MINISTERS

The last academic year has been unquestionably one of the most difficult for our students and staff team at our Rhema Revival Bible College (RRBC) in Cumbum. We have been so proud of our students in the way that they have risen above the disruptions caused by the pandemic to find ways to continue to study. Our academic years did manage to run in their entirety and in line with the Asian Theological Associations (ATA) regulations. We held virtual graduations and resumed the 2020/21 academic year in August 2020

80%

Alumni serving in our communities and church staff teams

15

Students enrolled

7

Locals employed by the bible college.

OBSTACLES



Vasthi explains some of the challenges that the bible college students have faced this year

"Due to the impact of lockdown so many families found their financial situations became very precarious. Lockdown meant that students returned to their home towns and our students Gideon, Albert and Honest Immanuel had to find paid work to support their families. They did then juggle work with learning and we adapted to their circumstance by enabling them to attend classes more flexibly through their mobiles. "

STUDENT WELLBEING

- During the lockdowns, where possible, students returned to their home towns to be with their families. However, for some students this was not safe or feasible and they remained at Hope Gardens. Each state has its own movement restrictions and all students from New Delhi couldn't return home.
- Students and their families have received support packages to ensure they are healthy and able to continue with their studies. Saguntha oversees the welfare of our students remotely.
- RRBC alumni in North India who are suffering with Covid 19 have also been supported with parcels.

LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN

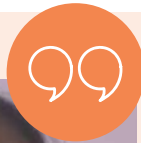


Getting connected! Since March 16, 2020 our RRBC students returned to their home towns and continued their studies through online & mobile audio classes. Some of our students are from remote areas, villages and hilly areas, where they can't get a proper network even for normal phone calls. They have to come to a main area in order to attend classes daily.

Exams: Semester exams were delayed but took place in accordance with ATA guidelines. Once the online classes' credit hours were fulfilled we conducted their exams in the last week of July, 2020 in students homes with one of their family members acting as the invigilator.

HEMA'S JOURNEY

"I come from a village in Tamil Nadu which is famous for female infanticide. I escaped the ritual being a first born but I was seen as a curse on my family. To worsen my state both my parents died and I was left with no one to look after me and was put in a boarding school. When I was in Delhi, doing jobs to support my brother I started reading the Bible and I accepted the Lord as my saviour. I'm now 33 and so happy to have been accepted to study here for my career. My passion is to serve the Lord wherever he places me to help the poor".



A LIGHT IN DARK TIMES

NAVIGATING A TURBULENT YEAR: REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

This has been a year like no other and I could not be more proud of our faithful team in India for all that they have achieved in the most difficult of circumstances. I hope that by reading this report you will feel uplifted by the work that has been done during the most turbulent times through your support.



It is so wonderful to be able to say that we have had no cases of Covid-19 amongst our India team, thanks to the stringent measures that are in place. The welfare of our staff is a huge priority. During these uncertain times it has been so reassuring that we have been able to pay all of our staff.



thank you

This year has been one of sadness and loss for many but our work has carried on and there has been much to reflect on with positivity and gratitude. The selflessness and compassion of our team has truly transformed the lives of others during this pandemic. By harvesting 10.5 tonnes of rice, by giving access to online school lessons, to seeing Nurse Margaret's smile we have delivered hope.

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of our supporters and we are so grateful to you for your faithfulness, kindness and constant support. Thank you

Richard Lloyd



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