

# AMAR LATA GRAMIN SEVA FOUNDATION

Sustaining primary health care and education in Indian villages.



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**03/2007 – 04/2008**

*“If you have the belief or the dream...  
...anything is possible.”*

Dear friends and partners,

The year under review has been marked by wonderful achievements on many levels, which give us hope for the coming years. All health care and education initiatives have established their own structures and function relatively independently. Despite some natural and political challenges in the Nandigram area, AMAR LATA has succeeded in further spreading health awareness, extending its care for the disabled and supporting education in schools and vocational centers.

For the first time since AMAR LATA's foundation, we have been able to get doctors in modern medicine to come to Gadaibalbarh and Sunderban once a week for consultations, all fully financed by a grant from the Hilden Charitable Fund in London.

This generous grant has extended even further by supporting virtual learning at the AMAR LATA Primary School and generally improving the working conditions of staff at the Health Care Center.

Another important project has been the future establishment of a 30-bed Satellite Eye Hospital in partnership with Sight Savers International UK and Vivekananda Mission Ashram in Haldia. The preparations are already on their way and a final go-ahead is expected before the end of the year.

For our Disability Care Centers in both villages, we have been grateful to welcome a number of highly-experienced overseas experts to carry out patient examinations and give medical advice.

As a reflection of the nature of AMAR LATA's operation spreading across two continents, we were also granted the "Charities Working Internationally" status by the Charity Commission in the UK.

This will underlie our efforts for the three most vital projects for the coming year:

1. the construction of the Satellite Eye Hospital in Gadaibalbarh
2. the set up of a rehabilitation center for the disabled in Gadaibalbarh
3. the establishment of an infrastructure for the Baller Bazar clinics

We are extremely grateful and would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has been supporting us in the past year: the Hilden Charitable Fund, the South London Cultural Group, BT Community Champions, Mr William Bunting, Margaret Waterworth, Michael and Sarah and many many others.

With such generous help and support, we will be able to continue improving the health and education provision in some of the poorest and deprived rural areas of India.

**God bless you all.**

A K Ball, on behalf of AMAR LATA Gramin Seva Foundation.

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**Core Activities:** Family Welfare, Family Planning, Immunisation, Child Care, HIV/AIDS Advice

For the Primary Health Care Center, we have been training local women from Nandigram as health care professionals, thus promoting an open, familiar and understanding cultural relationship with patients from the community. For this training, the women study in Kolkata (150km from Nandigram) at a cost of approx. 500 GBP (36.000 INR) per year for two years.

Treatment has been offered three days a week and serious cases have been referred to doctors for further treatment and advice.

	<b>Total number of patients</b>	<b>2490</b>
of which	male patients	729
	female patients	1761
	new patients	1691
	repeat patients	799

A grave concern has been **women's health**. Due to their lack of education and unfair social status, women have long been deprived of even the most primary health care. These are three cases:

- *Sameda Bibi (22 yrs), married to Rajesh Khan (30 yrs), suffered extreme malnutrition after already having had three children of 6, 4 and 3 years old. The advice and health treatment offered at the center significantly improved her condition.*
- *Asimun Bibi (60 yrs), married to Lutfar (75 yrs) and mother of 9 has suffered from a prolapsed uterus for decades without any medical attention. She came to our center in desperation and was successfully transferred to a doctor and is receiving treatment.*
- *Taslima (20 yrs) and Akbar (23 yrs) couldn't conceive, which created tremendous social pressure from their families. Through the advice of our medical staff, she has since had her first baby.*

Each month, with the help of a local authority, an **immunisation** camp is being held at the center, targeting pregnant women and newborn children. Of the total number of people immunised, we saw an increase of 30% vis-à-vis the same period of the previous year.

	<b>Total number of people immunised</b>	<b>430</b>
of which	children immunised	275
	pregnant women immunised	95
	others immunised	60

Twice a week, our health workers are traveling by bicycle to visit villagers in their own home. This has proven to be a uniquely effective system of building confidence amongst the rural farming communities and promoting awareness of nutrition, sanitation and family welfare issues. It has also been an opportunity to conduct a **family survey**. We spoke to 541 eligible couples about the benefits of family planning and surveyed 1022 families. We learned that drinking water availability was good, but that only 55% had access to sanitation and that infant mortality was still high.



**Core activities:** Primary Eye Examinations, Post-operative Care, Treatment Referral

Our Primary Eye Care Center was first started by Sight Savers International UK in 2003 and run by the Vivekananda Mission Ashram Haldia. It now takes place three days a week, but demand is still going up day-by-day.

	<b>Total number of patients</b>	<b>5260</b>
of which	male patients	2321
	female patients	2629
	children	310

Plans are now underway for a new purpose-built 30-bed **Satellite Eye Hospital**, which will consist of two Nandigram and two Khajuri blocks and serve 343 villages with a population of over 520,000. AMAR LATA is committed to provide the required land for free, has prepared the details for the project and will cover 10% of all running costs. Sight Savers International and Vivekananda Mission Ashram have been asked to run the clinic in partnership. A final decision for go-ahead is expected before the end of 2008.



**Core Activities:** Patient Treatment, Medicine Dispensation

Our Homeopathy clinic has proven to be very popular, because homeopathy is a low cost and stigma free method of treatment, especially for women. Twice a week, a physician is coming to the village for patient consultations.

	<b>Total number of patients</b>	<b>1986</b>
of which	male patients	238
	female patients	1483
	children	265

The number of patients rose by 20% compared to the previous year.



**Core Activities:** Disability Assessment, Treatment Referral, Mobility Equipment Provision

From our weekly family survey, it was clear that many people in the villages are disabled, through polio or cerebral palsy or a variety of birth defects. Hardly any specialist treatment has previously been available to these villagers and they were therefore destined to be disabled for life and a severe burden to their families.

AMAR LATA has established contacts with two leading groups in India who are treating such cases:

1. Narayan Sewa Sansthan Trust, Udaipur, Rajasthan  
treatment up to the age of 40 yrs
2. Rehabilitation Centre For Children (RCFC), Barisha, Kolkata  
treatment up to the age of 14 yrs

Both groups have agreed to organize **outreach disability camps** at our sites and advice people on treatment, for instance by prescribing exercises, special shoes or surgery. Three camps have so far been organized in Gadaibalbarh.

	<b>Total number of patients</b>	<b>79</b>
of which	surgeries	17
	special shoes	2
	exercises	28
	general treatment	32

These two cases illustrate the need for our help:

- *Fatima Khatun (11 yrs) from Daudpur was found on our routine survey. She was born with a deformed ankle and her parents accepted the disability as not curable. Our senior adviser, Bidisha Jana, visited Fatima several times and advised her parents that Fatima will be cured. This assessment was then confirmed by the RCFC during one of the camps. With her father an unskilled worker with 11 family members to feed, AMAR LATA provided the costs for her operation and Fatima is now cured and back to school. Her cure made the news headline in the locality and helped to convince others that disability is not a curse, but can be treated.*
- *Rokiya Khatun (10 yrs) from Dakhin Nandigram was also found through the survey and identified as having a nerve problem on her left leg. We persuaded her parents to take Rokiya to RCFC, where she was given a special corrective shoe.*



This Primary school was established by Smt Snehalata Ball in the late 1960s. The local government has since been paying teachers and granting some money for the building. However, the school has no electricity and still lacks proper infrastructure. Teachers are scarce – while 4 teachers would be required, only 2 are there.

There has been a slight drop in numbers of students this year compared to the previous year.

**Total number of students** **98**  
Class I – 5 boys and 19 girls  
Class II – 14 boys and 14 girls  
Class III – 10 boys and 12 girls  
Class IV – 18 boys and 6 girls



In line with AMAR LATA's aim to make the developments in the villages sustainable, we feel strongly that education has to play a major role. We therefore try as much as possible to assist poor and physically impaired, but meritorious and talented students to pursue their studies:

1 MBBS doctor was qualified  
4 blind boys and girls are studying in a blind school  
1 degree student completed his studies with distinction

## ACTIVITY REPORT I BALLER BAZAR – SUNDERBAN

**Core Activities:** Primary Health Care Center, Disability Care Center

Besides it's Gadaibalbarh location, AMAR LATA also owns 2.5 acres of land in the center of the Indian Gangetic Delta region, about 100 km south from Kolkata by road. There is currently no electricity, no infrastructure and very poor sanitation. Access to this remote area has been extremely difficult for anyone, so health care professionals have rarely found their way there. Without any medical facility, the already difficult living conditions of villagers have been compounded. People have little experience of the benefits of modern medicine and have relied on anyone who calls himself a doctor.

There is no doubt that the challenges to setting up a medical infrastructure similar to our operations in Gadaibalbarh, are far greater in Baller Bazar. But despite this, or because of it, we feel it is our obligation to help these people and attempt to provide primary health care and education. These steps have so far been taken:

**Legal:** although the market place is the legal property of AMAR LATA, the area has been occupied by unauthorized persons due to our long absence from the place. We are in the process of negotiating with the occupiers to clear the area and allow us to bring in the necessary infrastructure.

**Drinking water:** already in 2005, we have sunk a deep tube well to provide the general public with good quality drinking water. This well is in heavy demand and very successful.

**Training locals:** we have recruited a local girl to be trained as health worker in Kolkata during a 2 year training course. She completed her training in January 2008 and is now active in the area.

**Health camps:** we have organized a health awareness and medical camp in 2006, which was attended by a large number of people, indicating the immense demand for medical care, particularly amongst women and children. This was followed in 2007 by a disability assessment camp, which was funded by AMAR LATA and run by the Rehabilitation Centre For Children from Kolkata. This camp was attended by 41 patients, 9 of which were referred to the RCFC for operations or mobility aids. Some were given exercise and others were treated for nutritional and other ailments.

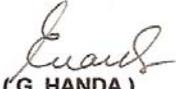
**Doctors:** since July 2008, we have been able to get the services of a qualified and experienced doctor, who comes to the village once a week and examines patients in an outdoor treatment facility. All the costs for this immensely important doctor's visit have so far been provided by the grant from the Hilden Charitable Fund in London.

**Local management:** we are very fortunate to have received help from a highly motivated young man from Kolkata, who supports AMAR LATA with some of the daily management on the ground.

We are extremely grateful for all the help that has so far gone into developing this remote region. People there are crying out for help, but in order to sustain the current activities and begin to ease access through infrastructure, we sincerely ask for your kind donations.



**FINANCE REPORT | INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

<b>AMAR-LATA GRAMIN SEVA FOUNDATION</b> 8/1B, Ibrahimpur Road, Kolkata 700 032, West Bengal, India Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March, 2008			
Expenditure	Amount (Rs. P.)	Income	Amount (Rs. P.)
To <u>Expenses for Nandigram Unit :</u>		By Donation	255,175.00
Expenses for Homeopathic Clinic	14,800.70	" Income from Homeopathic Clinic	12,655.00
<u>Education Assistance :</u>		" Bank Interest	1,517.15
Given to 2 Blind Students and 1 Graduate Students	55,008.00	" Interest on F. D.	11,340.00
Expenses for Health Worker Training	3,400.00		
Disabled Screening Camp	4,212.00		
Stores Purchases	5,325.00		
To <u>Expenses for Sunderban Unit :</u>			
Disabled Screening Camp	1,447.00		
To <u>Establishment Expenses :</u>			
Telephone Charges	3,207.00		
Staff Salary	79,550.00		
Electricity Charges	1,372.00		
Printing & Stationery	503.00		
Postage & Stamps	249.00		
Tea & Tiffin	3,200.00		
Audit Fees	5,000.00		
Repair & Renewals	19,023.59		
Car Running Expenses	28,083.41		
Motor Vehicle Tax	2,920.00		
Driver Salary	11,150.00		
Travelling Expenses	2,976.00		
Bank Charges	785.00		
" Excess of Income over Expenditure	38,475.45		
	<b>280,687.15</b>		<b>280,687.15</b>
Subject to our separate report of even date under Form 10B of Income Tax Rules.		<b>For RAJESH KHANNA &amp; ASSOCIATES</b> Chartered Accountants	
Place : Kolkata.		 (G. HANDA) Partner	
Dated : 18th July, 2007.			

For Amar-Lata Gramin Seva Foundation

*anball*  
Trustee

For Amar-Lata Gramin Seva Foundation

*Sukla Ba*  
Trustee



We are often asked to provide an indication of the costs involved in helping. Here is a small overview of some items. What is certain is that even small donations can make a big difference.

A blind child one year in a residential school.	5.400 INR	<b>72,00 GBP</b>
A cataract operation	2.000 INR	<b>25,00 GBP</b>
A pair of glasses	600 INR	<b>7,50 GBP</b>
A wheelchair	6.000 INR	<b>75,00 GBP</b>
Treatment and operation of a disabled individual in a specialist charitable hospital.	2.250 INR	<b>30,00 GBP</b>
Training a health worker, including transport.	75.000 INR	<b>1.000,00 GBP</b>

## CONTACT

## I WHERE WE WORK

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### GADAIBALBARH

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### BALLER BAZAR - SUNDERBAN

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Dist- 24-Parganas (South)  
West Bengal  
INDIA



### CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER

UK 1121505

INDIA 1640/2006

**AMAR LATA**  
**GRAMIN SEVA FOUNDATION**



*“To help others in need with humility  
is to serve the Lord Almighty...”*

Swami Vivekananda

[www.amarlata.org](http://www.amarlata.org)