Unwelcome wanderers stride these hills, this now-unquiet mountain paradise. They’re taking root in ancestral lands as weeds that strangle life. Their names are human rights atrocities, population transfer and environmental opportunism. Who cares? Is the world listening? Why not?

With your help, BODHI is trying to help the indigenous residents of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh with the garden spade and shovel of health and education—ultimately more powerful than the gun. The mobile medical team we fund in inaccessible areas of the CHT have identified that many female community members are uncomfortable discussing medical problems with a male doctor; therefore, we’re providing an extra $2600 annually (Australian and U.S. dollars roughly at parity) to Moanoghar’s Mobile Medical Clinics for the salary and related costs to employ a full-time nurse/educator. She will also facilitate community mobilisation and participation in public health awareness, including to reduce cigarette smoking.

Local community leaders, elders and women will work closely with our health team to ensure the widest possible dissemination of awareness raising of basic health care and hygiene. At least 10,000 people are expected to benefit. This will be a step toward empowering people to take control of their lives.

Dr Bhagadatta Chakma, a medical doctor from Bangladesh now resident and practising as a GP in Australia, returns annually to the CHT and will evaluate this project, free of cost to BODHI.

BODHI has begun a 3-year project with Global Health Group International in Chiang Rai, Thailand, to help promising girls complete a secondary education and develop the understanding and skills necessary to make positive life choices, including those involving reproductive health—a critical need in most rural communities of Thailand. Cost: $10,000 p/year.

This project will support community-based student-led, peer-education programs with the goal of empowering girls by encouraging academic achievement and providing reproductive health education.

One objective is to provide training and other services to several hundred girls between the ages of 12-15, that will positively impact a significant number of families in the villages and contribute measurably to community health and well-being.
Billions on defence, peanuts on public health

Hemenway’s 4 reasons to neglect public health

* Humans are hardwired to favour private over public health
* People prefer public funds to benefit known individuals versus unknown populations
* Public health faces vested interest-opposition to social changes
* There is little recognition of the largely anonymous public health professionals who perform this comparatively low-status work.

What’s new

Remote and hyperbaric institutions for scholarships in Bangladesh

BODHI is instituting two annual scholarships in the name of Dr Denis Wright, our talented director who is gravely ill. He requested that Dr TalibnahAhmed help to choose potential recipients. She suggested — and the BODHI—Moongar Mountain Home (http://www.moongargroup.org) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Underprivileged Children’s Educational Programs (UCPEP) (http://www.ucpep.org). One scholarship will go to the girl who excels academically in Grade V at Moongar Mountain Home. The second, to be called ‘The Denis Wright Scholarship for Underprivileged Female Working Children in Bangladesh’, will be awarded to an urban girl to learn a trade through UCPEP UCPEP works with the country’s most marginalised children: street children, those from minority groups, children with disabilities and those who have left formal education to work in hazardous conditions. Watch our website for developments.

SNEHA students eating lunch and studying in Arcanachal Pradesh (AP). India. Photo courtesy SNEHA

We need your help

Within days of the latest BODHI Times’ release, two doonos generously offered to fund Years 1 & 2 of the Thai border girl projects. Thank you so much, Brian West and Christine! We also thank Sen Bob Brown, Tasmania, Australia Dr William Castleden, WA, Australia Dr Malee West, North Terrace Melbourne, Australia Michelle Engelman, UK Fred Groenier, Tasmania, Australia A/Prof Peter Evans, WA, Australia Simon Lloyd, Spain Charlotte Meyers, California, US Ibrahim Rani, ACT, Australia Biddy Seel & Dept Community Social Services, Tasmania, Australia Prof David Shearman, SA, Australia Prof Colin Sokoloff, Alberta, Canada Dr Alwyn Swainson, NT, Australia Dr Yoland Wadsworth, Victoria, Australia * Luiz Ribeiro & Joanne Chapman, ACT, Australia, for remembering us in their wills.
* Ric & Jo Easton of Bio-Distributors, Sheffield, Tasmania, Australia for continuing support.

We greatly value your support and keep our mailing list. See our website for further information.

SNEHA, India. BODHI is increasing support of SNEHA by providing more funds for teachers’ salaries and Delhi office expenses. We will continue to provide funds for health education and are exploring carpentry classes at Diyan, Arunachal Pradesh, and using volunteer teachers from the community (such as retired and elderly, and university students on vacation).

Moongar, Bangladesh. BODHI is also increasing funding for Moongar Mountain Home in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. In addition to the two annual education programs mentioned on p 1, we are funding more programs in year 2 of the mobile Medical Clinic.

Thailand

Bodhi is increasing support of SNEHA in the BODHI – Thai border girl project. We are funding more programs for the children and young adults who have been orphaned or are under threat, including health, education, and vocational training. We are also increasing support for the community health workers who are providing care and support to these children.

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Tribal child health

Nagauri (Dr Carolyn Ralston) writes: On Wednesday 17th March 2010 JEEVAK’s Karunadipa and I visited the BODHI-funded nutrition project for 27 tribal children (ages 1½-4½ years) in a slum area of Pune, India. I’d visited this project just over a year ago when it had only been running a few months. The improvement in the children’s health, weight and general well-being was marked and a delight to witness. All children were clean, neatly dressed in clean clothes, bright eyed and there was no sign of ill health among them: no snotty noses.

One little girl still looked rather thin and hollow-eyed but Karunadipa told me she had joined the programme more recently and looked very much better than when she first arrived. The room was clean and neat and there was a heap of sandals in good condition at the door. There is running water in the room, electricity and a fan, which is much needed at this time of year. Attenuance is marked off in a roll, which I saw. The rates of attendance are very good. The programme runs six days a week, 10am-2pm. On my visit the previous year, the rate of attendance was very good. The programme runs six days a week, 10:00am-2:00pm. Overall the project is working very well. The children’s health, weight and well-being are markedly improved and they are engaged, happy participants in all that is offered to them, especially their daily meal.

I felt BODHI’s funding is being excellently used. It is providing all the essentials: a clean, well-ventilated room, good food, running water, electricity and a fan and what is probably the most important: the support of a qualified professional such as Karunadipa who visits the children every week and checks their daily activities diary and makes suggestions for new activities. There were teaching aids, such as posters on the wall, colouring books and craft materials. The older children were able to say their ABC’s in both English and Marathi and did so with enthusiasm. These children should make the transition to school successfully and certainly very much better than if this programme were not available.

For Australian cheques to be tax-deductible, they must be made out to BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund. U.S. checks are tax-deductible.

May we use your name, state and country only in the Thank You section of our newsletter?  ___ Yes  ___ No

Health education & deworming

Mr. Susanta Chakma writes from Delhi about the first year of health education at the SNEHA school in Diyun, Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India.

With the support of BODHI, we started a health education programme and provided deworming medicines to the students. Health education and sanitation — for instance washing of hands after defecation, causes and prevention of waterborne diseases, malaria and nutrition — is provided to the children regularly during assembly, in classrooms in the moral science period and during school weeks. Students prepare different charts and diagrams on different health issues during the school week. One teacher attended a malaria eradication programme conducted by the Action North East Trust at Bongpuragun, Assam, on 19-24 May, 2010.

Special classes for health education are part of the curriculum in Environmental Studies at the primary level and Science at the upper primary and secondary levels. Also, students prepare charts and deliver lectures on health issues during Annual School Week. From the year 2010-11, we will organise special classes every Saturday for all children. We have already prepared the syllabus and curriculum. We have also decided to hold health awareness programmes in the villages. Children are fully aware of hygiene and cleanliness. They wash their hands with Detol soap after defecation, coming in touch with dirt, etc. Students clean accumulated water at home as it causes mosquitoes to breed, and leads to malaria and other waterborne diseases.

After giving deworming tablets to the children at school, people have understood and realised the need and value of periodic deworming medication. This was previously unknown to us.

Making a donation

Please fill out and return

Name ____________________________

Address __________________________

City ____________________________ State ____________________________

Postal Code ____________________________ Email ____________________________

Telephone ____________________________

Enclosed is __$30 __$50 __$100 __$500 __$1000 __$2000 __$5000 __Other

Please inquire about automatic deductions from your bank account

Visa and MasterCard

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AMEX

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AMEX Security Code:

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AMEX users: We pay only a non-profit merchant fee and we absorb it: you don’t pay anything.

Type of credit card Name on credit card (please print) Signature

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See www.bodhi.net.au for details & updates/ Become a BODHI friend on Facebook