



RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6

ENABLING ACCESS TO SAFE AND CLEAN DRINKING WATER



Seb's Projects India Annual Report 2020 - 2021

A note from Trustees of the Sebastian Hunter Memorial Trust UK



The Sebastian
Hunter
MEMORIAL TRUST
Creativity, education & leadership.

We'd like to send a huge thanks to all our supporters who have generously donated funds in this very difficult year. Their support has enabled the dedicated teams in India to keep providing food, education and care to the most vulnerable at a time of global crisis, and has made a difference to many lives. We are enormously grateful to you all for enabling our little charity in memory of our beloved Seb to reach its 20 year anniversary this year and that we are still able to help make such a difference in his memory.

Laura, Anna and all the team at The Sebastian Hunter Memorial Trust



From the Director's desk



This past year had been an extraordinary year with a raging pandemic which brought everything to a standstill. Faced with unexpected challenges, that it forced us to device new strategies to address the crises. Work in our schools was halted for several months resulting in learning setbacks. This loss of learning is not simply the curricular learning that children would have acquired if schools remained open. It includes the abilities that children have forgotten due to lack of usage and practice particularly with reading, writing and maths in the Primary level. This regression further compromises new learning since these abilities are foundational to all further learning. To address this, we worked on multiple strategies to compensate for this overall loss of learning. Another issue that compounded this crises was addressing the nutritional needs of our students. For most of our children the school is the main source of nutrition and also serves as a safety net.

Difficult as it seemed we at Seb's tried to be relevant on the ground by reaching out to the communities we are working with and remaining connected with them throughout this period. We would like to share with you through this report the tireless work and the strategies adopted by our committed Seb's team. It also threw up new opportunities for partnership and working in collaboration with other NGOs and institutions. One of our most notable achievements and a silver lining at this time where health took the biggest hit everywhere, was our dream coming to fruition of finding an affordable and sustainable solution for clean and safe drinking water to our communities, thereby ushering in an era of better health. This was made possible through our partnership with Tata Swatch, Ncourage Foundation and Corporater. This facility will benefit a population of 20,000 people.

Of course, transformative work at this scale and at this pace and time is not possible without the blessings from above and a multitude of people at the helm – our staff, our volunteers, our partners and our donors.

To all of you, my deepest gratitude. Thank you for sharing so generously - your time, energy, expertise and resources. In retrospect every challenge has taught us to press forward with hope and be prepared to walk the extra mile.

Emma Koshi
Director



Education



Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on school education

As the first wave of Covid 19 entered India in early 2020, schools were closed in mid March, just weeks before the end of the 2019-20 academic years. Children have not set foot in a school since then, depending instead on various forms of distance education. With the pandemic making digital teaching the norm, children in rural India - who have little access to gadgets and networks, have been pushed into deeper marginalization. Children are completely cut away from schools, teachers and fellow students depriving them of essential learning and development. The denial of education resulted in learning losses and increasing number of school dropouts and child labour. Since the communities struggled to take care of their vulnerable children and youth, Seb's projects devised new strategies for delivering educational services.

Remote learning the new normal

Though online classes are highly impossible in the hills our teachers made it possible despite the challenges, by visiting the children at their homes with simple work sheets and interacting with children at an individual level. As the situation began to improve Seb's NRSTC teachers scheduled classes so that children could assemble in small groups in an open space. The children were quick to adjust to the new normal and were regular in their attendance.



Education



Activity based learning using the Pratham tools

Before the start of the regular learning, simple reading and writing practice were conducted on all the children to refresh their learning using the Pratham tools for reading, writing and Mathematics and to assess the student's ability. A bridge course was conducted for older students to address the gaps in learning and helping them to cope with their regular class appropriate syllabus.

Technology Assisted Learning

Kalvi tholaikatchi was one of the biggest supports for our teachers to help children learn. Though there is a lack of facilities and signal issues in the hill areas, our teachers downloaded the program which enabled the children, to watch the programs.



Supporting Middle and High school students in learning

Since the schools and hostels were closed due to the pandemic, children who were mainstreamed into middle and high schools stayed in their own villages. Our teachers supported a total of 54 students with their learning.



Education



Sports and yoga

As part of the COVID awareness education breathing exercises were taught to the children and was practiced regularly in the open.



Library in a bag

An innovative solution designed by Pratham books to help children in underserved communities get increased access to reading resources. Each bag has 100 beautifully illustrated story books which are graded and enables the young reader to move up and improve his or her reading skills. We have set up this facility in each of our 8 Sebs NRSTC schools. Adding a new dimension of learning to the class room.

Arts and Crafts



Education



Mainstreaming students into Middle School

During the lockdown Seb's teachers took the initiative to mainstream the primary students to middle school and ensured admission with boarding facilities for 64 of Seb's school children. It was heartening to see the interest of the parents of our children who took time to be present at the time of admission into new schools and their involvement in securing the necessary community certificate and documentation for opening of a bank account which was mandatory for admission which was a new experience for them.

Students enrolment 100%

Seb's school team visited Tribal hamlets in person, to ensure every child above the age of four is enrolled in class I in Seb's NRSTC schools and also identified dropout children up to the age of 14 who were also temporarily enrolled in Seb's schools and main streamed when schools reopened. This academic year we achieved 100% student's enrolment in all of the villages where we work and their profiles were uploaded on the government education website.



Village Education Committee meeting

Meetings were conducted with the village committee members to explain the current situation and challenges in Education. Teachers explained about the importance of individual training to children and access to remote learning. This group took the lead to create COVID awareness in the community.





Education



Inauguration of the First Seb's NRSTC Primary School Building in Periyapannaparai

The schools built under the State Balanced Growth Fund initiative was a momentous moment for Seb's Projects. An acknowledgement of our hard work in establishing a school for children of this village and surrounding villages. Special Thanks to the District Education Department and SSA for making it a reality.

This initiative provided government funding for building 5 Primary Schools. Sadly only one school has been completed. The remaining 4 more primary schools unfortunately due to the pandemic and other impediments have delayed the construction. The school buildings in Chinnaettipattu and Thanimarathur should be ready in another few months but the construction in Palamarthukollai and Kupsoor are yet to begin work.



Special Programme



Seb's NRSTC Teacher training.

Capacity building training programs for our NRSTC teachers were conducted every month to help our teachers to adopt new teaching methods with the current challenges in mind.

Education



Noon meals and nutrition

In spite of all the uncertainties, children were provided with a nutritious meal with vegetables and eggs every day as this is often the only wholesome meal for most children.



Addressing the nutritional needs of Tribal communities in the Jawadhi Hills

In order to protect our tribal communities from going down to the villages in the plains to procure provisions and risk infection, we were able to provide dry ration food bags for 370 families in all of our Seb's school villages.



Loss of a student life in Seb's Palamarathukolai NRSTC school

We mourn the loss of a young student in Sebs Palamarathukolai school who tragically died due to a rock falling while playing in the forest during the height of the pandemic.

The importance of school as a safety net for children cannot be underestimated with this unfortunate incident.





Scholarships



Providing an opportunity for higher education to our first generation learner's has been a priority over the years. We have several of our students who have excelled in the profession they had chosen. We are proud of their determination and ability to overcome challenges and achieve their dreams. Today they are working in various industries as engineers, mechanics and many of them are working in the health sector as nurses and technicians. Their lives and the lives of their families have changed for the better.



Our graduates this year:

Vaideeswari B.Sc Nursing from Thandayankottai Tribal village

Rajapathi B.Sc Nursing from Chinnur Tribal village

The following are pursuing Higher Education

Meera B.Com at Auxiliam College

Divya Bharathi Diploma in Nursing at Scudder Memorial Hospital

Vasanthakumar B.Sc Dialysis at Narayani Medical center

Vasuki B.Sc Nursing at M.A.Chithambaram College of Nursing

Dilip Kumar Diploma in Mechanical Engineering at Don Bosco

Jemica B.Sc Cardio Technology at MGR University

Thirumagal B.Sc Nursing at M.A.Chithambaram College of Nursing

Health

The deadly second wave of the COVID-19

The second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak had thrown India, like many other countries, into an unprecedented and massive health and humanitarian crisis. We realised at the very start that it called for a collaborative effort to meet the challenges of this second wave of the pandemic. We were part of the CMC exploratory discussion group whose main focus was to see how community groups can partner with CMC's COVID helpline, UDHAVI, to help the public in Vellore and neighbouring districts in the time of the worsening COVID pandemic. This initiative resulted in providing access to home care to over 500 patients on a daily basis managing over 500 patients on a daily basis .

This was a valuable service when all the hospital beds were full and patients could still access medical help and support through this collaborative effort of medical professionals and community organisations. Sebs projects partnered with the logistics of food distribution to patients and their families. It was very heartwarming to interact with some of the family members of the patients who benefited from this service through UDHAVI. They were so appreciative of the timely help and support they received at the time of their own crisis with several of them falling sick at the same time in the family.



COVID Medication and Treatment

Seb's Projects also provided support to under privileged patients for COVID medication and treatment. This wave witnessed the ravaging effect of the virus on many families who were struggling having gone through the trauma of loss and the after affects of the illness ,with families losing their sole bread winner and unemployment leaving deep scars.

Health

Vaccination drive

Seb's Projects is on a massive drive to get as many members in our Jawadhi tribal communities to get vaccinated. We are faced with vaccine hesitancy in these communities and over the past few months we have been creating awareness and trying to alleviate the fears and misconceptions they have about the vaccines.

All Seb's school tribal teachers and cooks have been vaccinated. We sincerely hope they will serve as role models. We are partnering with the District Health Department and the CMC Chad hospital to administer the vaccination.



Food assistance at COVID times

Chatram

Seb's Projects continued with the ongoing breakfast programme in Chatram, a home for the poor patients who have come from other states in our country for treatment to CMC.



Feeding Physically Challenged in our community



Feeding the Vulnerable and homeless



The Sebastian Hunter Trust and Seb's Projects are overwhelmed by the response, we have received from our friends and supporters all over the world, who joined hands in our endeavour to reach out at this time of the pandemic to make a difference. Seb's as an organization is committed to addressing social issues and will continue to see how we could deal with the pain and trauma in the aftermath of this pandemic.

Health



CLEAN AND SAFE DRINKING WATER

Need for safe and clean drinking water in the Jawadhi hills

The right to water entitles everyone to have access to sufficient, safe, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use. In the Jawadhi hills the water available from different sources in the village when tested at the CMC Hospital laboratory was found to be contaminated with faecal matter and the Ecoli levels were very high and worrying, pointing to serious health hazards.

Sebs Projects since 2016 were in discussion with various water solution companies to explore the possibility of providing sustainable clean drinking water which will benefit the communities in the long run.

“Water is the source of our life. It nurtures and sustains all life forms and is among nature’s most precious gift to mankind”



Challenges to bring safe drinking water:

It was difficult to chlorinate the open wells and the over-head tanks. Another challenge was the poor supply of electricity and the high cost of the purification technology.





Health

Signing an agreement with TATA



Making our dream of clean drinking water a reality

Our Partners

Ncourage Social Enterprise Foundation:

A wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Chemicals Ltd. Understands the importance of drinking water and thus has a vision to provide clean, affordable and safe drinking water. Tata Swach Jal and Ncourage Foundation as part of their CSR endeavor offered Seb's Projects the Technology for purifying the water at a subsidised rate. Seb's Projects signed an agreement for 8 of our tribal School communities benefitting a population of 20,000.



Koushik Ghoshal-Ncourage Foundation



Neema Varghese - Corporater



We could not have done this without the support we received from a corporate partner- Corporater who is committed to bringing about positive impact in communities through their CSR, generously came forward to support the cost of the down payment of the machinery and the maintenance for 3 years which was paid to Tata Swach Jal while signing the agreement.



Health

Implementation of the project

The Tata Tech Jal team visited all the eight villages and conducted a pilot study. The TDS of all the water samples were tested. Discussions were conducted with the community to learn more about the availability and usage of water, the efficiency of the electric power and the use of overhead tanks available in the villages.

Tata Swach Tech Jal purifiers which are based on innovative and sustainable water purification technology, thereby addresses one of the key social problems related to health, livelihood, gender equity and improving the quality of life of the disadvantaged communities living at the margins.

The unit operates with three stages of purification process – Sediment Filter Cartridge, Activated Carbon Cartridge (Silver impregnated) and Ultra filtration Cartridge. It not only removes dust, dirt and turbidity, but also removes viruses (like Hepatitis A & E, Polio virus along with bacteria (like E-coli) from the raw water and parasitic protozoan cysts.



Health

Installation and Inauguration of the first water purifier at Periyapanaparai

The community has been involved over the years to improve the quality of water. It was an open perennial spring so both human and cattle found their way to the spring. 2 years ago the community built a wall around it to prevent cattle walking into the water and provided water to the cattle through an outlet but keeping the community out was a challenge as they bathed and washed beside the spring.

21st March, 2021 was a historic day for all involved in making clear drinking water a reality for the Periyapanaparai tribal community. The entire community along with Seb's team was in a celebratory mood. The children of Seb's school with their water bottles and the women with their shiny colorful pots ready to fill clean drinking water.

Mrs. Neema - representative of Corporater and Mr. Koushik and Mr. Srinivas - representatives of TATA NCOURAGE Foundation inaugurated the clean drinking water project. The community was excited to witness this great event. We hope this facility will usher in good health for all of the people living in Periyapanaparai and also the neighbouring communities from where children attend Seb's school. Subsequently the TATA purifiers were installed in seven other villages.



Health

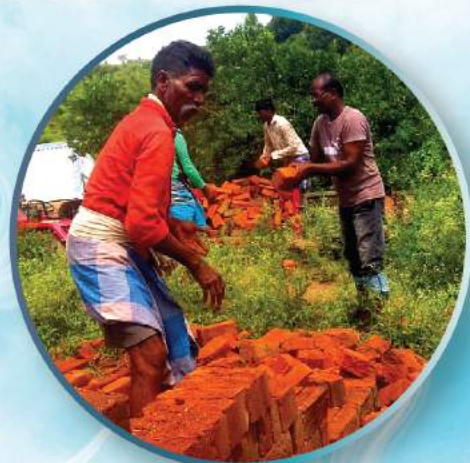
Second phase of installation in 7 more communities

The pandemic delayed the progress of the water project after the first installation in March, but it gave us time to create awareness in the seven other communities on the importance of clean drinking water and its impact on health. As a result there was a greater community involvement, participation and support through contributions in the form of supplying materials and manual labour. The community made a representation to the District Administration for assistance in procuring pipes, motor pumps and tanks.

The eight water purifier installations were completed by the TATA Swach Ncourage Foundation technical team in each of our Seb's school villages. This is a big milestone for Seb's Projects and the communities where we work to have a facility for clean and safe drinking water for the first time in the Jawadhi Hills of Vellore district.

A perspective from our partner at Ncourage Social Enterprise Foundation "We are always ready to work with you. I have seen some photos shared by our Team. We are more than happy as we have achieved in providing safe drinking water to the remote villages of Tamil Nadu. Without Seb's team support it was impossible to reach such needy communities"

Rakesh Verma
Manager



Installation in progress



Installation in 7 Communities

Drinking water at last!



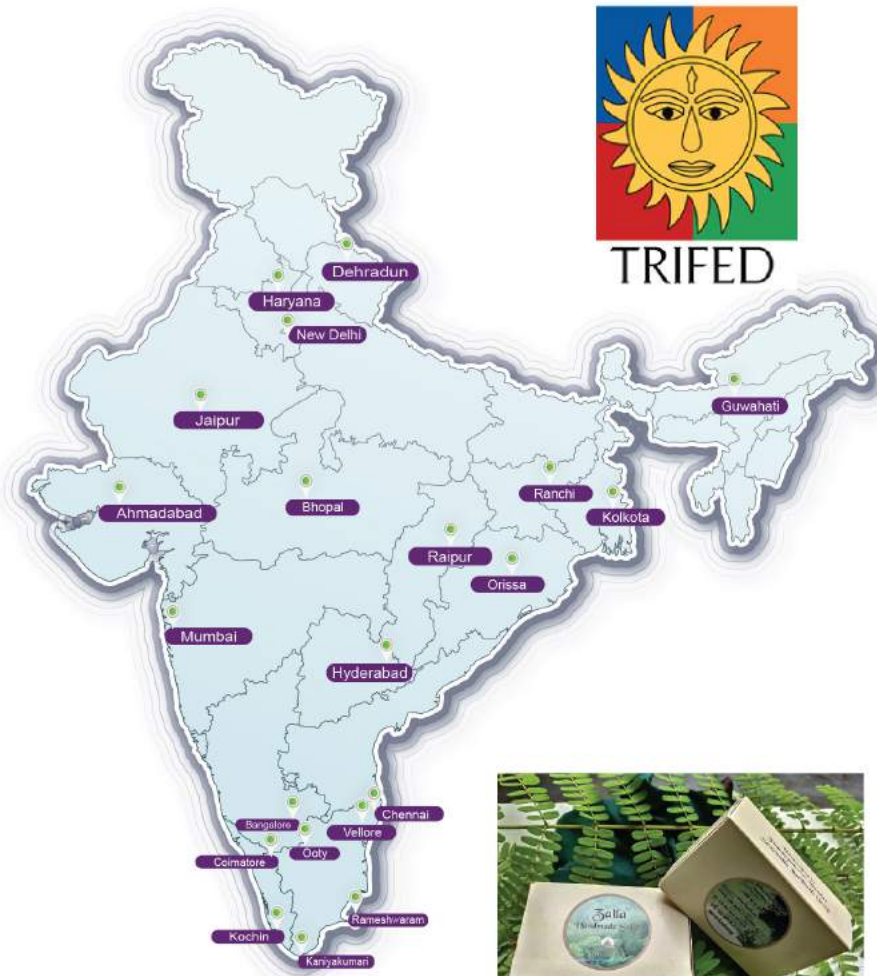
Livelihoods

Zaila soaps

The Thandayan kottai women have been in the business of making handmade soaps using local ingredients over the years. Today a large quantity of soaps are sold in Trifed Shops all across our country from Delhi to Trivandrum. Few months ago they had a special order from a bride in the UK who heard of Zaila soaps and decided to order a quantity as give away present at her wedding.

She not only gave the women an order for soaps she made us a part of her wedding by requesting her friends and family to donate to Seb's projects instead of giving her a wedding gift.

We are grateful to her for her generous and thoughtful contribution.



The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED, seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products. Aggregation of produce would be done by SHGs having about 30 members. The scheme provides skill upgradation and capacity building training and setting up of primary processing and value addition facility to market tribal produce. They are provided with working capital to add value to the products, which they collect from the forest.

Seb's projects working with a large population is in the process of initiating the scheme in Jawadhi hills. Data collection of forest produce, SHG formation and registration, Skill training will be the next process of implementation.



Reach of
our Soaps

Livelihoods

Goodbye to paper

A journey with a group of vulnerable women and their families living on the fringes on the pavements of our city was started about 12 years ago. Addressing their housing needs, to giving them a skill to earn a living with dignity and to help them chase their dreams was our aim at the start of the program. It has been an amazing walk learning the challenges of life that each of them were facing. Today we look back with great joy to witness the change in their lives starting from a change of perception of themselves and greater self esteem and a sense of achievement. Sharing the story of Baby. From a rag picker on the streets to an entrepreneur successfully running her own ironing business, with a great desire to educate all her 5 children. Today her eldest son is doing a Masters Degree in Micro biology at a prestigious college. The younger children are also in school and being educated. We celebrate her resilience, spirit and hard work. There is no looking back and she has moved on in life with even bigger dreams for her family.





Our Thanks



Seb's Projects India and Sebastian Hunter Memorial Trust express our sincere thanks to our partners and donors whose involvement and support have immensely contributed to our success.

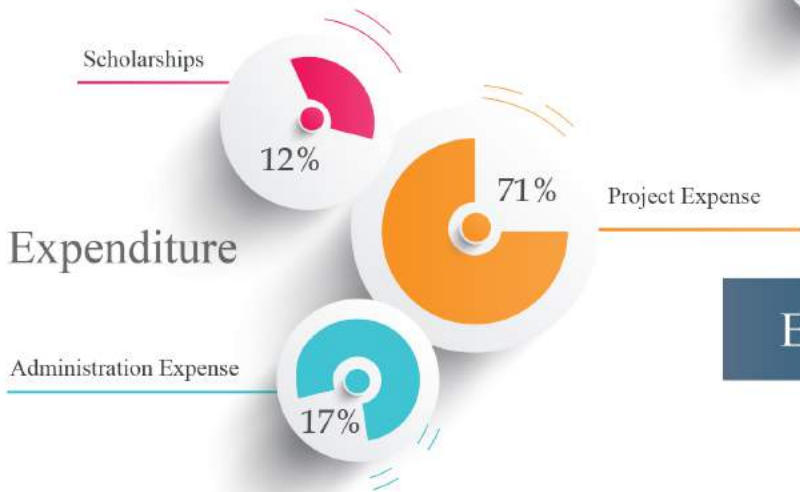
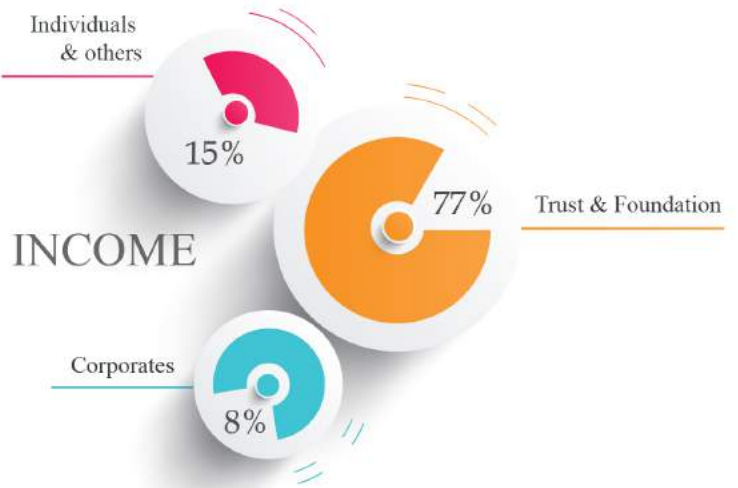
The District Education Department
The District Health Department
The District Forest Department
ICDS
TRIFED
CORPORATER
TATA SWACH
Ncourage Social Enterprise Foundation
ECCMA
Tess Data Solutions
Christian Medical College and hospital
Sam's Grants
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Giridharan
Namratha Mathai
Pushpa Mariam Jacob
Usha Abraham
Golugiri Sandeep Reddy
Palakunnath Jacob Rohan George
Rita Schabel
Paul Singh
Dhaya and Selvakumar
Anney and Nesa Kumar Joseph
Sarah and Jesse



Our Finance

Income : ₹ 52,08,219



Expenditure : ₹ 50,34,686

Our Seb's Team





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