



Spectrum



RI District 3291

March 30, 2019

Weekly bulletin of Rotary Club of Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata

VOL 12 NO 39

PRESIDENT DR ANKUSH BANSAL

SECRETARY SUMIT AGARWAL

EDITOR DR ARUNA TANTIA

CLUB NO 78956

CHARTERED ON APRIL 30, 2008

WEBSITE www.rcslmk.org

Leap into action on World Water Day

Posted on March 22, 2019 by the Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group (WASRAG)

At this moment, 900 million people in the world do not have access to a source of safe water within 1 km of their home and 2.5 billion lacks access to adequate sanitation. Women in developing countries walk an average of 6 km daily to get water, and carry as much as 20 kg back to their homes.



Without safe water and sanitation, life and livelihood are under threat. Today, "World Water Day", is about recommitting to addressing the water crisis that leaves so many people behind. Marginalized groups – women, children, refugees, indigenous people, disabled people and many others are often overlooked, and sometimes face discrimination as they try to access and manage the safe water they need.



River Clean Up event on the Ganges River

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, launched in 2015, include a target to ensure everyone has access to safe water by 2030, making water a key issue in the fight to eradicate extreme poverty. Rotary projects can help improve the quality of life for many communities in need. Below are some steps to get started on your water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) project:

- Start with the community to understand their needs. Prepare a community assessment and develop your project based on those needs.
- Bring together a community-level Water Users' or Management Committee that promotes water and hygiene.
- Engage local stakeholders and experts to identify WASH gaps in the region. Facilitate discussions on the need and appropriate solutions. Involve international partners and NGOs for a broader impact.
- Develop an implementation strategy. Estimate 10-year costs and calculate cost to sustain the services you'll be providing.
- Monitor and evaluate your project using your findings to improve the project as it grows. Record lessons learned for your reference as well as share them with other members who are taking on similar initiatives.

Not sure what types of projects you can implement? Here are some project ideas:

- Implement rainwater harvesting
- Build toilets and sanitation systems
- Dig wells, build dams or recharge an aquifer to help give communities access to a water source
- Build local capacity and change behaviors through trainings and workshops
- Set up factories to build slow-sand filters that help purify water
- Create opportunities for entrepreneurs in the WASH supply chain

Remember to supplement your project with hygiene management training that will build healthy practices, like proper hand-washing.



River Clean Up event on the Ganges River

How can WASRAG support your project? We can help you:

- Plan the right project for your club
- Conduct a community needs assessment
- Find Rotary partners, NGOs and corporate support
- Choose the appropriate technology for your project
- Leverage funds from The Rotary Foundation and other sources
- Access expertise for all phases of the project
- Promote your project around the world
- Facilitate collaboration between clubs and districts

In celebration of World Water Day 2019, we encourage Rotary members to implement a project that improves the quality of water and/or level of awareness in their community. Educate your community on the importance of protecting its water sources! Whenever possible, please consult with your local water or conservation authority to ensure that your efforts are compatible with conditions in your area.

We will be promoting select projects in our newsletter, website, and on social media. And, we are offering two \$500 USD prizes for the most impactful and innovative projects. Email a brief description of your project to: info@wasrag.org. Include what you are doing, the target audience, the impact of the project, and photos from the project. Take action and join our World Water Day Challenge! Deadline for submission: 1 May, 2019.

'Saved by a cell phone' – when people stranded on a rooftop don't have 50 meticais to pay for rescue

24 Mar 2019 on Club of Mozambique by Lusa



Until last week, Amina Murteira lived in Buzi, in central Mozambique, but Cyclone Idai destroyed her home.

Amina, her husband and two children are now staying at the Samora Machel school, turned into an emergency shelter for flood victims, in the city of Beira. Back in her village she has nothing, "really nothing". But she has a story to tell that she will never And she tells it in chronological order.

Cyclone Idai arrived on the 14th, around 7 p.m., in the dark of night.

"The zinc roofs of all the houses fell. All the trees fell".

Amina and her family spend the night waiting for the cyclone to end.

And on Friday morning they went looking for some zinc sheets and set up an improvised shack, where they stayed until Saturday.

"On Sunday, the water started rising. When we saw the water coming at 7:00 p.m., we began to go away, but we had barely taken two steps and we already had the water up to our waist. All we did was go to the school and, just by going from the house to the school, we had the water up to our shoulders, we could hardly walk."

Amina tells every step of her story serenely, even when she speaks of the difficulty in carrying the children, even when she speaks of reaching the school, where some of her neighbors already were, going up on top of the windowsills and staying there all night, as she could feel the waters rising.

By Monday morning not even windows were safe and people had to use capulanas (sarongs) to improvise ropes for men to climb up to the school's roof and from there help women and children do the same.

But the water kept rising and people were terrified of slipping down the inclined rooftop so they asked to be rescued by canoes sailing past and they were asked for money in return.

Still serenely, without any resentment, as if it were natural, Amina says that "people who passed by on canoes were asking for 50 meticais (less than one Euro)."

"But people [on the roof] had no money to offer them," she explained. While Amina had no money, she had her mobile phone, which she offered someone in exchange for saving her family on a canoe. Other people stayed behind, and she has no idea if they managed to escape. "I gave my cell phone to be rescued, the other people stayed there, I do not know how they left, I do not know if they left."



The owners of the canoe left her family in the centre of Buzi, where they sat on the football field benches at the highest points.

They stayed there, without any shelter and surrounded by water. "We didn't have anything to eat or drink," she explains. "People were drinking that water," she added, referring to the water from the flooding. But Amina hanged on there.

On Tuesday, helicopters finally arrived to rescue people but Amina and her family did not manage to be rescued and it was only on Thursday that a boat took her to Beira, free of charge.

Amina feels relieved now. "At least I have a dry floor to sleep on, I no longer have water on me," she explains.

And now? Amina doesn't know what will happen. She gets emotional when he says that when she returns to Buzi she will not have nothing." No home, no clothes. "We will just sit on the floor."

Amina says that if it is to go back, she would like to build a home somewhere high up, explaining that water was "always" entering Buzi. She was left without a home in 2000 and in 2007 water also entered her home.

But Amina doesn't know when she will be able to return "home" and her husband, a teacher, has no idea either.

She is only sure about one thing: Her mobile phone saved her life.

India sends 4th Navy ship to cyclone-hit Mozambique

24 Mar 2019 on Club of Mozambique



India has sent another Indian Navy ship INS MAGAR as part of its operation "Sahayata 2019" to help the people of Mozambique who are reeling under the impact of *cyclone IDAI*, the category 4 cyclone to hit southern Africa on March 15.

The ship contains medicines, dry provisions, ready-to-eat meals, daily essentials and clothing items and would cater to approximately 1000 persons for seven days.

"This would cater for approximately 1,000 persons for seven days. In addition, 500 kg of epidemic-related medicines and 400 tonnes of rice has also been loaded on the ship," a press statement issued on Saturday from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) read.

In the aftermath of the cyclone, New Delhi had sent three Indian naval ships to the country: INS Sujata, ICGS Sarathi and INS Shardul which are currently undertaking Disaster Relief operations in coordination with local authorities and Indian High Commission.

The three Indian Navy ships so far have rescued 192 people and provide medical assistance to 1381 persons in medical camps.

Meanwhile, Indian helicopters are helping in the evacuation of people by facilitating aerial survey and are also dropping of food & water packets in areas inaccessible to reach on foot.

The Indian Navy was the first responder in the evolving humanitarian crises in the aftermath of Cyclone IDAI. Assistance is also being sent to neighboring Zimbabwe and Malawi which were hit by the cyclone

10 Years, 25000 Trees: Kolkata Man Grows Lush Forest through Guerilla Gardening!

Posted in the Better India (TBI) by Gopi Karelia, March 23, 2019

Concerned by the declining green cover in Kolkata, Mantu Hait took it upon himself and developed one kilometer stretch of forest

When was the last time you spent a few minutes amidst vast expanses of foliage, inhaling the fresh air and feeling relaxed?

Finding lush greenery in a world where concretization is increasing rapidly may seem like a distant dream. But if you happen to be in Kolkata, all you need to do is to head to Alipore.



Located between the Majerhat and New Alipore railway stations, a one-kilometer verdant patch of land will offer you a variety of trees including mango, guava, nut, tamarind, date palm, lemon, etc.

TBI spoke to Mantu Hait, a lawyer who planted approximately 25,000 trees in ten years and revived this previously barren dump yard.

Childhood Memories

As a child, Mantu would always look forward to summer vacations. He would spend hours climbing trees and pluck various fruits, or just relax under their shade after playing gully cricket with his friends.

As he entered his teens, he noticed a decline in the number of trees.

“The volume of green cover in Kolkata was high till a decade ago, but gradually the ratio of trees to buildings changed. In 1995, it saddened me to see that majority of the trees near Alipore were cleared to make way for construction projects”, says Mantu to TBI.

Like everyone else, Mantu too was confined by societal pressures of studying, making a career and settling. However, the issue of lack of green space bothered him for years.

Finally, in 2010 he decided to plant trees on the roadside. But he lacked legal rights to the roadside area of Alipore.



“Since the area belongs to Calcutta Port Trust, I had written a letter to them asking for permission to plant trees. I waited for their response for several weeks, but there was no answer,” says Mantu.

After speaking with a few of his friends and doing some internet-based research, he came across the concept of Guerrilla Gardening.

Guerrilla gardening is the act of gardening on land that the gardeners do not have the legal rights to cultivate, such as abandoned sites, areas that are not being cared for, or private property.

The Green Mission

Mantu purchased the seeds and embarked on his green mission with help from city-based environmental organizations like Nature Mate and Alipore Environment Society.

Unfortunately, a few weeks into the plantation, his worst nightmare came true. The plants were destroyed or were dead due to the absence of water and care. The incident shook him, but not enough to quit.

He researched and concluded that by sowing the seeds in summer, the plants would have a better chance at surviving and flourishing. So he hired a few laborers and sowed seeds between April to June in 2011.

As anticipated, the rains that came in the following months proved beneficial for the seeds.

“The results were overwhelming,” says Mantu. “By August the plants were giving fruits and flowers. Looking at them grow every day was a meditative experience.”

Since then, he has been following this practice every year.

When it comes to nurturing the plants that have now grown into healthy trees, Mantu says that most of the trees don't require maintenance. As for the plants that do, the residents of Alipore have been kind enough to water them regularly.



Today, there are over 250 varieties of plants and trees spread over a kilometer stretch that provide clean air and fresh oxygen to areas within a 10-km radius around it according to Mantu.

Another impact from the urban forest is the increasing presence of the birds and animals including mongoose and golden jackals.

“While the world uses monitoring devices to measure air pollution, for me the validation of clean air are the 50 types of birds that can be spotted chirping in the wee hours of the morning”, he says.



While there has been no problem from the authorities for using the abandoned land for growing trees, the cases of illegal tree felling in the night is proving to be a threat.

“In the last couple of months, we noticed that several trees were cut down. We filed a police complaint and even posted night guards, but the cases are still prevalent,” says the 43-year-old.

While Mantu is doing everything to save the forest he built over the years, he and his friends are also surveying areas that are abandoned around the city. They are doing this to ensure that ahead of the upcoming monsoon season, they can sow hundreds of seeds and increase the green cover.



This will be Mantu's 11th year of planting seeds and he wishes to continue his mission for as long as he can.

Planting trees is my blood and I will do so till I die. I don't want our future generations to question our actions of not saving the environment. This is me, doing my bit for them, he concludes.

Changing the world through the business of sanitation

Posted on March 25, 2019 by Ben Tidwell, The Rotary Foundation Global Grant Scholar on rotaryservice

Imagine that you are a mother or father, trying to support your young family in a time when the economic conditions in your region are challenging. You need a good job, but you are living in a small town where there just aren't enough jobs anymore. So, you set off for the city and are immediately struck by how expensive everything is – food, transportation, and rent.

Now imagine that you start to look at a few apartments—just barely in your price range—and there's one small problem, none of them come with a good toilet. Instead, they just have a little hole in the floor leading to a smelly pit filled with waste.

“Oh, you can't find a proper toilet in your price range,” says the realtor. “You might be able to find a building with a shared toilet at the end of the hall. Or maybe you can just go across the street and sneak into the one at the café.”

“They'd just dirty the thing up if I provided it,” you overhear the landlord saying on the phone.

Can you imagine what that would feel like? You don't have the money to afford a more expensive place so how can you find an apartment with a nice toilet? It's hard to comprehend, but for almost 900 million people around the world living in urban slums of lower-income countries, this is the situation they face every day and they feel powerless to do anything about it.

I recently completed a PhD at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine supported by the Rotary Foundation and the British Government, where we set out to make a dent in this complex problem. The problem is that landlords in urban slums don't think tenants value good sanitation, and they certainly don't want to risk building a toilet for which no tenant will pay more in rent.

So, we set out to do some market research to understand tenant demands, and then communicated our findings to landlords. We also formed landlords into groups so they could discuss whether our findings were true, and usually someone would know of at least one landlord who had tried to invest in good toilets. These group discussions led to an understanding of how important sanitation was to tenants, and we saw increases in many aspects of toilet quality.

I share this example because though many Rotarians are not toilet engineering experts, but they come from backgrounds in business,

We meet 2nd and 4th Saturdays at the Auditorium at 9th floor, JC 25, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700098 at 5.00 PM

Printed by Dr Ankush Bansal, President, the Rotary Club of Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata - Editor: Dr Aruna Tantia

For private circulation only - Web site: www.rcslmk.org

marketing, sales, or finance, and there are opportunities to use your skills to bring sanitation to the masses!

Around the world, new sanitation businesses are springing up: Clean Team in Ghana is bringing portable toilets that tenants can put in their own homes requiring no infrastructure to be put in place; SaTo, a product of the LIXIL Group, is creating affordable toilet products, costing only \$3-5 USD for an improved toilet pan that stops smells and is easy to clean.

WHAT YOU GET

Our price of **GHS 38 per month** (including VAT) provides for use by up to five householders and up to two collections a week. You pay one month in advance, then weekly payments via Mobile Money after that. You get:

- Your own Clean Team toilet at home for an affordable weekly service fee
- Regular waste collection service
- Flexible payment plans
- The toilet installed for you. It does not require water, electricity or digging



A portable toilet from Clean Team Ghana



How the SaTo ("Safe Toilet") Pan works

Young entrepreneurs are everywhere, only needing connections to advance their businesses. Providing your professional expertise and guidance is a great way to start making a difference and multiply your impact around the world!

To help with this, and to be a part of the many other amazing water and sanitation projects Rotarians support and carry out around the world, I joined the Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group (WASRAG) after completing my studies. Please reach out to me and the many others with far more expertise than me in WASRAG if you would like to know more about how to use your own skills and talents to do even more good in the world!

Rotaract Club of Salt Lake Metropolitan leads a seminar



Rotaract Club of Salt Lake Metropolitan organized **TECHNOLOGIA**, a 2.5 hour long Seminar and Workshop on Data Science (DS) and Machine Learning (ML) on March 9, 2019 at the open house, Theatre Road AC Market, 7th floor from 11.00 am onward.



Introduction to Data Sciences & Machine Learning was the subject of this seminar. Ms Chandrabali Karmakar, BTech (CSE), MS (Forest Information Technology, HNEE Germany), PhD Scholar (on ML at German Aerospace Centre DLR) was the guest speaker.



The seminar was well attended mostly by engineering students and young professionals. Editorial team of Spectrum congratulates the Rotaract Club for organizing such a program of prime importance for young brain and community successfully.

Birthdays of Rotary members in April, 2019

- Uttam Ganguli, past Governor on April 2, 2019
- Debashis Mitra, past Governor on April 21, 2019
- Vijay S Bhandari, past Governor on April 27, 2019

April is Maternal and Child Health Month

UNWIND

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other. ~Oscar Ameringer, "the Mark Twain of American Socialism."

TAILPIECE

Cages aren't made of iron, they're made of thoughts.

| TheMindsJournal

