



The newsletter of **Kamla Foundation**

वेदान



WINTER 2019 – ISSUE 07

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www.kamlafoundation.org



Welcome

I hope that 2019 finds you well so far. I want to take a moment to thank you for reading the latest edition of 'daan'. Again my aim is to provide a broad overview of what we do, outlining your support with a collection of stories we hope gives you a glimpse into the window of change we make to the lives of the poorest in India.

Through my work with the Foundation, what has become tremendously clear, is that the spirit and practice of philanthropy is something that collectively improves the human condition. It is not merely the giving of financial resources, but giving of one's expertise, passion, talent and experience.

So in other words, anyone can be a philanthropist. We all come from varying walks of life, which contributes to the uniqueness of how we view the world and how and why we choose to make an impact. I firmly believe that deep down, we all want to make the world a little better than the condition it was in when we entered it. Indeed, this has been the ethos behind the work of the Foundation.

I hope that you enjoy reading about our activities over the past few months. Once again, I thank you for your continued support which enables us to expand and move forward in new and creative ways.

I hope that 2019 is a year fully loaded with happiness and endeavour for all of you.

Please feel free to contact me. I would love to hear from you.

Bhupendra Mistry

KAMLA FOUNDATION
January 2019

CYCLONE GAJA HITS TAMIL NADU

In late November last year, cyclone Gaja (a Sanskrit word for elephant) slammed into the coastal region of Tamil Nadu, India with wind speeds in excess of 165 km recorded.

170,000 trees were uprooted, many elephants and cattle died, over 100,000 houses damaged and 88,102 hectare of agricultural land was affected. Six districts were in total darkness and most of the roads were damaged. Some of the poorest communities across the region experienced heavy losses and are now struggling to recover and rebuild.

Cyclone Gaja made its impact near Vedaranyam in the district of Nagapattinam. This is very close to many of our life changing Projects in Southern India. After savaging the coastal regions, the cyclone moved inland, where it caused extensive damage to crops, property and cut off electrical, telecommunication and related infrastructure to neighbouring districts. The official death toll stands at 63 and more than 300,000 people were displaced from their homes, amidst a trail of devastation. Many of the victims of the cyclone face scarcity of drinking water and experienced huge trauma, bringing back memories of the devastating 2004 tsunami.

Cyclone Relief

With our partner the FORD Trust, we mobilised a relief program supporting some of the families experiencing the worst of the ordeal, aiming to provide immediate assistance and to the eventual rehabilitation of those devastated by their losses.

We developed a series of strategic collection points to distribute to families and individuals with the most pressing needs.

Relief Materials distributed were:

- Clean drinking water
- Dry rations: Rice, sugar, salt, oil and pulses
- Milk, milk powder and biscuits
- Medicine
- Clothes for men, women and children
- Tarpaulin sheets - to drape over damaged roofs
- Toiletries
- Towels, blankets and sheets
- Mats and mosquito coils
- Solar torches and torches with batteries
- Emergency lamps
- Candles and matches
- Notebooks and school supplies

Background picture: A NASA satellite image shows Cyclone Gaja reaching the South East of India



The coastline battered by strong winds



Cyclone Raja destroyed Parimala Devi's home in the district of Nagapattinam



The aftermath

NRI OF THE YEAR FOR PHILANTHROPY 2018 *awarded to* *Bhupendra Mistry*

Held annually, the NRI (Non Resident Indian) of the Year Awards – India’s only distinctive awards for Global Indians, recognises and honours exceptional achievements of Indians who leave the comforts of home for unknown challenges across the globe, going beyond the ordinary to make a huge difference.

The NRI of the Year Award for Philanthropy

This award is given to those who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to the wider community through various means such as, support of charitable programs, engineering & leading public awareness campaigns, empowering minorities, supporting the most vulnerable in society and through demonstrating leadership in philanthropy.

The Times of India says..... Recognising & honouring unsung heroes

“These Business Leaders, Scientists, Doctors and Philanthropists, are heroes of the contemporary world. They have overcome hurdles, inspired and awed people native of the land they now reside in. With nearly 30 million Indians now living across the world, the NRI of the Year Awards are a testimony to the significant contribution of the Indian Expats, to the immense success of their host nation”.



“The Award celebrates the success of remarkable Indians”.

**TIMES
NOW** | ACTION
BEGINS
HERE

i ICICI Bank

**NRI
OF THE YEAR**

POWERED BY  Global Indian
International
School



Bhupendra says...

"I am humbled and honoured to receive this prestigious award. My deepest thanks go to The Times of India Group and to the esteemed Panel of Judges who selected me. I share this award with all those who have been on in this remarkable journey with me. My wife Hersha, my siblings, my wonderful Board of Trustees, who over many years have given me their wisdom, support and generosity and not least, my immense gratitude to the Foundation's army of dedicated supporters.

Finally, I thank the generous donors who give so kindly of their time, talent and monies. Together our life changing work is inspiring many to get involved and secure our legacy of making a huge difference to the lives of the poorest in India".

TIME NEVER STANDS STILL



The saying 'Time never stands still' certainly resonates with Bhupendra, known as Bhups to everyone. He is one of the most active people I know and doing such pioneering work with the Kamla Foundation.

From his walk along some of the Great Wall of China to a Philanthropist of the Year Award, he is constantly seeking new challenges. Bhups also represents the traits described in The Times of India by the author Vinita Dawra Nangia under the title 'Time never stands still'.

'Here are a few priorities to help you remain true to your core ...

- Keep in mind long-term goals. Plan for work, life as well as for a meaningful life beyond work.
- Do not try to please everyone; you never can!
- Be your own critic; do not be affected by others' praise or ridicule.
- Recognise your self-worth. Focus on what or who gives meaning to your life!

It's Your Life – Best of O-Zone **By Vinita Dawra Nangia**

We are proud of our partnership with Kamla Foundation. Cobra Foundation is an independent charity, established in 2005, that provides health, education and community support for young people in South Asia, especially through the provision of safe water. Our charitable objectives include giving help with Disaster Relief in the Region.

The Kamla Foundation falls right in the middle of our objectives and we hope to work together for many years to come. Because of the heavy demands on our funds, similar to grant-making charities of all sizes, we 'top-up' our small financial awards with complimentary Cobra beer! Whilst this does not in itself constitute a charitable donation, free beer does significantly offset the cost of events and also raises money for key objectives.

With my core family roots in India, I am strongly committed to supporting the Kamla Foundation, together with other charities doing such inspirational work for the benefit of disadvantaged people on the great sub-continent.

My late father, Lieutenant General Faridoon Bilimoria, was the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and my widowed mother and brother live in Dehra Dun.

I will continue to work tirelessly in the House of Lords and with Cobra Beer to help support those in the greatest need.

With my very best wishes to the Kamla Foundation.

Pictured: Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE DL



“Together we are giving people not just a new smile, but a second chance at life”

MEET KINJAL



Our work with the Medlife Foundation is a partnership born out of a mutual ideal that good healthcare should be available to all, regardless of wealth. Together, we work on a set of shared values, helping to identify, support and change the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in rural Gujarat, by performing free cleft lip and palate surgery. A cleft lip, sometimes referred to as a ‘harelip’, is an opening in the upper lip that can extend into the base of the nostril. A cleft palate is an opening in the roof of the mouth.

In conservative rural societies, where looks can seem to be of paramount importance, ‘looking different’ can cause a severe sense of insecurity and inadequacy. People with unrepaired clefts are often viewed as outcasts and ostracised. Cleft children are often bullied which can lead to a lack of confidence. They will never know the simple joys that we take for granted, like going to school, making friends or earning a living.

By resolving facial birth defects, we are performing life-changing operations; helping vulnerable families overcome prejudice. In turn, reducing the number of family breakdowns caused by the deformity and supporting the mother who usually carries the burden of such defects. Our collaboration has enabled Medlife Foundation to significantly scale up its activities and in turn become more responsive and extend its reach and impact.

Meet Kinjal

Kinjal Meghnathi is a toddler born into a life of abject poverty. Her mother is a housewife and father a seasonal agricultural labourer. Soon after her birth, the parents became aware of her cleft lip and were very concerned for her future and indeed the views of the wider community. Due to illiteracy, entrenched traditional values and living in a rural conservative society, they thought the child was cursed and they would be stigmatised and shunned by their

family and wider community.

After counselling and re-assurance they came along to a rural camp hosted by the Medlife Foundation. Here they were given extensive advice and support and after examining Kinjal, the parents were encouraged to register her for the free life changing operation. The parents reluctantly agreed and now have a child free from the deformity and the acceptance from wider society. Kinjal can look forward to a life of normality away from stigma and isolation. The parents are now ambassadors for our work and helping us to reach out to other vulnerable people experiencing a similar predicament.

We firmly believe that everyone deserves to live their lives with dignity and for those born with a cleft lip, cleft palate deformity, dignity begins with a smile.



BEFORE



AFTER

Sponsor a Cleft lip operation

£195

Sponsor a Cleft Palate operation

£230

The **co-operative** bank

In 2017 we were approached by the Co-op Bank to help front and celebrate a remarkable milestone, 25 years since the launch of their Ethical Banking Policy.

They were the first mainstream bank to lead on such a ground breaking Policy. We were selected from thousands of charities who bank with the Co-op and were delighted to play a key role in their campaign.

We were particularly proud to work in partnership with the bank, as they genuinely offer an alternative approach to banking; one that is committed to its values and ethics and is driven by the things its customers care so passionately about. This was the defining reason I chose to bank with the Co-op, very soon after the Foundation was created over a decade ago.

The campaign consisted of a photo shoot, filming, promoting the work of the Foundation in a series of posters and Banking brochures and literature, culminating in an advert launched across multiple channels in September 2017. It was also heavily promoted on catch-up TV, YouTube, Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and across a number of online channels. Furthermore the campaign also featured across the Bank's branch network and website.

The launch of the advert coincided with my walk on the Great Wall of China. It seemed surreal to have messages pinging to my mobile from the other side of the globe (from family and friends) saying that they just saw my mug shot in between Coronation Street. The campaign proved to be a great success and was re-run again in October last year.

It was great to see the campaign unfold across the country and for a short time seemed to overtake my life. On a routine trip to the Co-op Bank, I was waiting in line to deposit some cheques that the Foundation had received and was in a world of my own. As I inched my way to the Counter, I looked up and noticed there was a giant poster of myself on the wall. Now I'm not sure I was ready



for a larger than life poster of myself smiling down at me (come to think of it, nor were the general public) unsettling to say the least!.

You can view the films on: www.co-operativebank.co.uk/25

or see the full content on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/user/CooperativeBankUK>)

Following on from the success of the 25 year Ethical Banking Policy campaign, earlier this year the Co-op launched a new promotion to help current and potential customers understand how as a Bank, they are different. Once again the Foundation was selected to help front the campaign.

This new business banking campaign continues to celebrate the values and ethics of the Bank by promoting the great work it does with their customers, charities and partnerships. This collaboration has proved to be extremely beneficial for the Foundation, helping to raise our profile to a wider audience.

As part of this campaign the Bank is developing a new brochure which will be available across its branch network and on its website. Alongside this, another advert is being launched highlighting business banking and the Foundation plays a prominent role within this too.

