



# Spring 2018 Updates on the Work

A group of seven traveled to India from February 22–March 9, 2018 with several members having considerable experience serving on boards in the education and medical field, which brought an interesting perspective and some helpful suggestions to our work.

Additionally, one TIGer comes from a background of public health nursing with research focused on care delivery for uninsured and under-insured populations. It became very clear that she noticed medical issues among our families the rest of us didn't have the public health background to see. She came equipped with a medical kit and conducted physical/social/emotional examinations as we visited homes, even accompanying some family members to the doctor and pharmacy. She also helped us review most of the medical records, looking for appropriate and normal treatment and was very helpful in our meeting with Dr. Shelly Batra.

Our women members were very interested in the future of the girls in our families and in the mothers whose futures appear to have little in the way of a trajectory to a better personal life. We left with some ideas about the role of mentoring for our girls, an idea that was particularly inspired by our tutor in Varanasi who is very ambitious and will be graduating from college this year.

On a fiscal note, we asked each of the schools if they had a system that would let us wire money directly to them. The Imperial School in Varanasi said we could and the principal was going to send the routing numbers, but has not done so yet. The Catholic School in Nowgong is implementing a parent portal next year that we hope we will be able to access for online payments. The other schools were less certain, but it is something we should pursue.



Amandeep

## Sikh School & Montfort

We visited the Sikh School and met with the principal and teachers and also toured Montfort where Amandeep attends school. His report card consisted of all A's and B's and one C. All of the other children are doing average or in Mansi's case, above average work in the Sikh school. Rojit's attendance was irregular according to school records but not according to Rojit or his family, so we, his father and the teacher tried to make sense of the teacher's questionable records and we reinforced regular school attendance.



Rohit

## Dr. Shelly Batra

The group had a long meeting with [Dr. Shelly Batra](#) about TIG's partnership needs in working with her, and the meeting went very well. She explained that there are many high

quality, less expensive private hospitals in Delhi and elsewhere that she would recommend we use if the medical condition is something more serious than what can be treated locally. The local protocol will remain the same—diagnosis and treatment by a local doctor/hospital. If it's more serious or we need some consulting, Dr. Batra will recommend a medical professional and hospital in her network. She agreed to be our contact person and was very enthused about the work TIG is doing with our families.

The plan we agreed to seems to be working. Govinda's family is our first test case. Govinda's father has been hospitalized for a kidney disorder. Dr. Batra told us the reasonable cost for a prescribed procedure. She also reviewed the medical records for Govinda's wife who has some kind of mass in her stomach. Dr. Batra recommended surgery and said that the medical bills and price quoted for the surgery were reasonable, so the board approved sending funds for Govinda's wife's surgery.

# NOWAGONG

## Bablu, Chanda, and Family

All three of Bablu's children are doing well, particularly the two girls, Sakshi and Jyoti, and have good attendance at the Catholic School in Nowgong. They're smart, outgoing children, and we were able to spend considerable time with them, helping them learn to work our smartphones, checking out all of their school progress reports, having them teach us games, etc.



Bablu continues to look for work, but has still not found a job.

Chanda seemed unhealthy so we took her to another location with a pre-arranged interpreter to do a medical examination. Clearly there were physical complications from her most recent surgery and Bablu did not seem to understand that she needed 6 months to fully heal. We put together a plan that included additional diagnostics and treatment.



# KHAJURAH

## Laxmi, Khalabhati, & Family

Laxmi and his wife, Khalabhati, welcomed their seventh daughter, Aakashi, in March. She seemed like a very good baby, and made hardly a sound, but, there is little joy around this baby. The societal pressure on the parents of seven daughters cannot be underestimated.

## Baba, Ramqueeya, & Family

TIGers expressed particular concern about Baba's family's living situation. There was anxiety about the hot-wiring Baba had done doing to get the fan, TV, and other electrical things to work. The one small room just didn't seem like a healthy place for 5 people, especially since the children are becoming teenagers; so we found them a better living situation—at least it's larger.





Hemant

### **Kidzee School**

This is the school that Baba's son, Hemant, and Mrs. Hanote's son, Zion, attend. It is a bright, light-filled school with lots of books and posters—a very engaging place that has lots of visual stimulation for young students. The school is a franchise—we passed by a Kidzee school in Varanasi—so perhaps there are standards and some additional funding that come from headquarters. Both boys are doing well.

### **Jain School**

We have four students here: two of Laxmi's daughters and Baba's older son, Krishna, and his daughter, Milli. We met with the principal and visited classes and heard the children are doing well. The school asked TIG for a \$1600 donation to buy benches and desks for the kindergarten and first grade classes, the only two classes with students still sitting on

the floor for school. We did not have the funds to fulfill this request.

### **Zion School**

Mrs. Hanote's school: One of Laxmi's daughters attends this school along with Ajay, the young man we took into our program two years ago; he is thirteen and just finishing 3rd grade because he was academically so far behind when he entered the school. We discovered that Ajay's parents had left him with an uncle on the family farm while they traveled to Kashmir for construction work, and the uncle was not providing him with lunch. Ajay rides his TIG-provided bike on a bumpy trail through the fields and onto a highway to commute to school, a 45-minute one-way trip. He stays late for tutoring. We were concerned about his ability to learn if he went hungry all day so after checking out some options, we settled on paying Baba's wife to make him a lunch every day. He is attending school regularly and doing well in 3rd grade. Mrs Hanote tutors him and feels like he may be able to advance two grades a year beginning next school year.



Ajay on his bike

# VARANASI

### **Govinda, Meera, & Family**

We visited the Imperial School for an update on all of the children who seem to be doing fine, which was confirmed by the tutor for Govinda's family, an amazing young woman who had all of us enchanted with her drive and her plans. We took Govinda's children and nieces/nephews shopping for uniforms, shoes, backpacks, etc. We'd visited Govinda's home the night before for tea and talked to his wife, Meera, about our plan to purchase school supplies for the students, and she, the first time anyone has ever seen her leave the compound, accompanied us to the store to shop for shoes, socks, backpacks, lunch pails, etc, helping us with fittings and making decisions. She clearly enjoyed the excursion and the kids' excitement, and we told her how helpful it was to have her come with us. This would never have happened had the shopping trip not included women.

Govinda's two brothers brought their two children forward while we were at their home and asked about enrolling them in school. Solone, a girl, is 4 years old now and, Warun, a boy, will be 4 on September 1st. We made

arrangements with Imperial to accept them and Govinda took his brothers/the wives as well as the children to meet the principal and get them tested for placement.

On the medical front, Govinda's father had a medical issue after we left. Additionally, Govinda was having respiratory problems, so we accompanied him to the pharmacy to make sure he got appropriate medicine.



Gunjan, Kusum, Ragini, & Kallu



Priya

### **Murat, Poonam, & Family**

We also visited and ate with Pammy and Priya's family. We delivered Priya's laptop, a gift from her sponsor, and she was thrilled. We also dealt with Priya's eye problems while there and took her to an ophthalmologist. The doctor said she has lost sight completely in one eye, likely due to an untreated childhood illness. We purchased new glasses for her, which takes into account the additional correction she needs in her good eye to compensate for the bad eye.



Pammy

