

OFI in West Bengal

Letter n°43 - February 2022 - Special edition on OFI's visit to West Bengal

Situation in West Bengal

West Bengal is a state in eastern India, between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal. Its capital is Kolkata (formerly Calcutta, once the Capital city of the British India) and it was a major port for the British East India Company.



History of the relationship with OFI

The Dominique Lapierre Foundation has decided to close the operations in India and has therefore asked OFI and AVTM (AMIS DES VILLAGES DU TIERS MONDE) to continue, as friends and consultants, the works they begun in West Bengal. Dominique Lapierre and his wife (Dominique Lapierre) were instrumental in setting up many social organizations for the destitute and the disabled poor. Gaston Dayanand (ICOD) was the inspiration and mentor of all these organizations.

It is in this context that OFI (Benjamine Oberoi accompanied by Jimmy Cherian) met with three NGOs (Paras Padma, ICOD and Asha Bhavan Center) to take a stock of their administrative and financial situations as well as their activities.

They were able to discuss and plan the approach for the future. OFI has also contacted most of the historical donors to ensure collaboration on future projects.

Asha Bhavan Centre (ABC)



The Asha Bhavan Centre (ABC), established in 1999, is based in the town of Uluberia, Howrah district. It has various programs and centres across the State and works with marginalized communities, primarily with the disabled. ABC's areas of work include disability, health, education, community development and skills development. It reaches nearly 10,000 direct beneficiaries across West Bengal.

For 3 years, OFI has been committed to ABC to support 11 primary schools located in the remote areas (buildings, infrastructure, school support and Covid relief activities). In many schools, ABC has to deal with the constant problems related to climate change such as floods and cyclones.

For more information, visit ABC's website: <https://www.abcindia.org/>



ICOD

ICOD was established 20 years ago. Gaston Dayanand was the main force behind ICOD and is still the spiritual mentor, guide and father figure to all within ICOD and other organizations as well. Its vision is to build a centre for the rehabilitation of destitute, abandoned and disadvantaged people, with the concern of creating a beautiful environment.

ICOD is located in a village called Shyampur in Howrah district. It has about 86 beneficiaries and 28 employees who take care of 5 different units; Girls Home, Home for Disabled Women, Home for the Mentally Handicapped, Old People's Home and a Home for Boys. There were other projects that are closed due to Covid: vocational training, school project for children of brick workers, dispensary, etc.

For more information, visit the website: <https://icodindia.org/>



Paras Padma

Paras Padma is located 45 km from Kolkata in 24 South Parganas District in a village called Makrampur. Paras Padma focuses on young people with disabilities and, within this framework, this NGO has created a boarding school for 25 young people with physical disabilities, 3 outpatient centres focused on physiotherapy for children with multiple disabilities and an orthopaedic workshop, where orthopaedic aids are manufactured. Paras Padma welcomes 500 beneficiaries. OFI is ready to support physiotherapy units and can be a day centre.



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