



One By One

Year 21, Sole Issue

March 13, 2022 (2021 Summary)

**“Don’t watch
the clock.**

**Do what it
does.**

Keep going.”

**Sam
Levenson**

2 Plus Years...

I started this newsletter on November 8th, 2021, I was not mentally ready to finish it until now....

“Two years ago today (Nov 8, 2019), I returned to India in a wheelchair and have been here ever since.

Having had spent 8 to 10 months a year in India since 1999, it has been quite the change—both good and bad. The time with family has been precious, the time away from my ‘second’ family has been insanely difficult.

The good news is that my health is better than it’s been for years. I have recovered fully from my broken ankle and dislocated

shoulder, and am enjoying the ease of staying fit (relatively!) in western life—swimming, treadmill (good for reading!), and walking outdoors.

This article is my ‘mia culpa’ for not keeping in touch and not being a good steward of information; for not communicating the incredible things that the staff and children of One! International have been up to.

In order to survive being away so long, I have been taking it one day at a time. Prioritizing the staff on the ground, honouring theirs and my own mental health, learning to be ‘nice’ to myself, and setting limits.

Though I have let communication slip, please be assured that our programs in India have not slipped an inch, and have instead jumped forward a mile.

Hopefully this newsletter confirms that for you.

Thank you for your belief in me and in One! International. Thinking of the 21 years of support that you have given warms my heart every day and gives me the strength to take life One! Day at a Time.”

...as I type (March 13th, 2022), my bags are packed and I am on my way ‘home’ after 2 years, 4 months & 5 days.

A new chapter filled with more love, more determination, and more hope begins.



Annual Program with a Twist

With COVID-19 restrictions, and more than that, our own precautions, we thought it best not to have live performances for our Annual Program—there are too many parents to host at one time!

Not wanting to miss another program, we settled on videoed performances shown to the parents in safe groups—like movie night, but where your own children are the stars!

Excited to have something to celebrate, the parents had huge smiles on their faces. Snacks were fed, awards were given and the children were celebrated. We asked our staff to perform this year too and hidden skills were revealed.



Here is a link to some of our favourite performances: [Annual Program 2021](#)

Pooja's Endless Potential

Pooja has been a student at our Nallasopara school since she was 6 years old. With the struggles of every day life in her community, it was at the school that she felt safe. She often expresses her gratitude for what the school has given her and what our social workers have taught her in various tough situations throughout her childhood.

Now 17, she is in Grade 11 and hopes to enter beauty pageants and become an actress. Pooja's parents want her to follow a more academic route where she also excels. Her English is remarkable and she has a curiosity for math and science as well. She is multi-talented and will succeed no matter her path.

To exemplify why she is exceptional, the following is her answer to an English assignment. "What topic/area would you like to address/change in India?"

"I want to change the poverty of India . I know I can't do this all over in India but I can give my contribution and change some place . Firstly , for this kind of change I have to grown up and start earning good so that I should not have to face any complications related to money . Today I am studying but one day I will get a really a high paid work and I will make that day with my hard-work . And after that I used to find a place where are some people who are not in good condition— we can't call them poor because they are not poor they are just not in good condition . I am not going to give them money but try to give them employment so they can work and get what they deserve because I think in India poverty is just because people working hard but not getting the right payment of their work be-



cause they are not educated so they don't have knowledge . So , I will try to provide them work and education to their children and I will definitely take care of this thing that they are getting right payment on their right hard-work. I also try that with children elders can also get some education for their selves . So, that's my plan, I hope It will become reality one day."

Teenage Workshops and Counselling

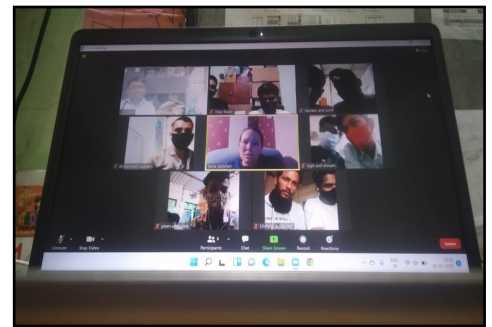
Through the pandemic, it became abundantly clear that isolation and lockdowns had a terrible affect on teenage mental health,

As soon as we possibly could, our social workers focused their attention on them. Even through lockdown and despite police beatings, Jeetu chanced home visits with those in the worst conditions. We know that he saved one child from suicide and probably kept many more out of severe depression.

In September, we started a work-

shop program which included small seminars on specific topics, snacks, fun activities, meditation (or moments of silence) and plenty of time for questions and answers!

So far, we have covered mental health, depression, attraction, love and addiction. At first the students thought it was strange to speak on zoom with Tania Didi who is "old and Canadian", but they quickly built comfort and trust and could ask any question they had. With 4 groups and more



than 40 students (from both Khar and Nallasopara), the 4 hours of zoom goes faster than you would think.

Teenage energy is infectious & inspiring; bright lights for the future!



Restructuring— Upheaval Turned Opportunity

We have close to 50 staff members on the ground in Mumbai. 42 of these are past/present students or mothers of students. One of the principles of One! International is to uplift people and try to employ as many as possible.

Throughout lockdown, we worked hard to keep our staff busy and develop as many skills as possible. This paid off exponentially which was shown when we were able to resume classes in June under our Wellness Center status.

We were able to completely restructure staff, classes provided and student divisions. With so many student staff members ready and able to take on leadership roles, we divided everyone into three sections (Primary,

Middle and High School). We also decided that we needed to focus on the basics and recheck all of the students levels; we learned that everything had to be retaught and Levels 1 to 5 were sufficient.



videos will now be used moving forward in all classes to maintain consistency of teaching between schools and to ensure that curriculum is being followed. We are excited about this incredible video library that the staff have been able to build.

We also provide online classes (with videos) for our Grade 10 and 12 students—English, Math, Data Entry, Science and Business.

Unable to start fully teaching in-person classes and needing to work under the virtual class structure, our staff were able to make video lessons as they needed. They made 10 minute videos for each subject—English, Hindi, Math and Science for each level. These

The leadership team quickly learned that human resources are the hardest resources to manage but were determined to excel in their roles and faced the challenge with professionalism and determination.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc in all of our lives, but for One! International, it has allowed us to reset and start anew.

Emergency and Major Medical Fund

Our Emergency and Major Medical Fund (EMMF) saved another life in 2021. The fund was first created in 2010 when founding student Kokila was burned in a stove accident. Without the emergency donations that were given by past volunteers and sponsors, there is no doubt she would have died.

In March 2021, Aslam, father of Sohail (16) and Sama (13) and husband of Rizwana, one of our PreStep mothers, was diagnosed with a large malignant mouth tumour. He needed emergency surgery which we managed to arrange. The problem was that the second wave lockdown was called only 5 days later. Thankfully, with some calls and

persuasion, we were able to shift him to a public hospital ward for recovery where he lived for 2 months and underwent multiple plastic surgeries. He then had 10 rounds of radiation therapy.

Though he still needs reconstructive jaw surgery and many months of tough recovery, he is overwhelmingly grateful that he has his life. He knows it is because of our generous donors. Thank you to all who have made donations to our EMMF fund.

Vijay's Corner:

Vision in Action

“Success comes when words match with the actions. To bring a change in the community, words should be brought into action. Since the beginning of COVID in March 2020, One! International Family is up to their level best in handling various difficult situations and coming out of it successful. All the family members of One! International put intense effort in their action and kept many peoples' hope alive.

We used both strict and lenient methods in handling situations. More than speaking, we acted more frequently.

Every day was new for us and we made sure that we don't get stressed and keep our mental health balanced. One day at a time was our goal during the COVID and we have been continuing in the same way to keep our good work going.

Now One! International has been putting more efforts in action than words because 'Actions speak louder than words'. Big change was seen among the parents of the chil-

dren both in Khar and Nallasopara. We have been conducting Workshop and Movie Day last two months. And within a short period and few sessions, parents are very eager to come and attend the next workshop.

In the workshop, we have been showing short motivational videos and having group activities among the parents. Many of the mothers in Nallasopara were not able to live their childhood and youth age due to child marriage and hence were so happy to attend such a workshop. We saw a big change in the parents after the first workshop. Many of the parents were stressed and seem to be hopeless during the first workshop. But at the second one, there was big smiles in many faces and wanting to express their feelings and problems to us.

We are also trying to keep simple and not hurrying in many situations.

Each and every one of the members of One! Has been contributing their best to keep the hopes alive and

work for the wellbeing of the community in a positive way. One day at a time we are moving ahead and hope that the change we want to see in this world is not so far. “

- Vijay

PARENT FOCUS—Tania

We will be focusing on parent mental health in 2022. There has been an increase in domestic violence and we are hoping that some stress relieving fun activities might help—even if it is just a small step.

Many of our children are stressed and worried and the reason many times are the family's financial woes that their parents have shared with them.

We will be having a Parent Meeting once a month and a Parent Activity Day once a month. Seeing the parents bi-weekly will help to build more solid relationships and trust. We will listen and hopefully be able to build better programs to ease their struggles even more.

We are excited to have a team in place that is committed to parents knowing the difference it will make in the lives of our children.

Struggling with Addiction—Nowhere to Turn

The majority of our children face struggles of addiction in the lives of family members at home. It's often fathers, but sometimes it's mothers or siblings as well. Generally, the stresses of daily life are too much and they turn to alcohol, — drug use is also increasing.

We try to mitigate and offer counseling and options, but often the

addictions are too strong.

Our main goal is the safety of children and spouses. Unfortunately, we don't have many options. The community often helps and many families have been willing to take care of children when needed.

Some parents reach out for help when sober and have open conversa-

tions about their addiction with social workers. Some are even willing to go to a facility for help. The only public health facility in the city has 50 beds and keeps patients for just a week; private facilities are far beyond our financial limits.

A future dream: to start a facility of our own on a farm with equal measure of love and hard healing work.

Following Strengths and Passions—Choosing Careers

When I first started teaching on the side of the road in 2001, the goal was literacy. It is unbelievable how far we have gone from just ABC and 123.

Our University Fund has been supporting Jeetu (Mechanics), Vicky (Computer Science) and Sunil (Medicine) over the past 3 years.

Jeetu received his certificate and is looking for apprenticeships.

Vicky will graduate in April of 2022, he has consistently been in the top 10 percentile in his class of over 100 students.

Sunil (in Tbilisi, Georgia) has completed 2.5 years of his MBBS degree. He hasn't been able to do

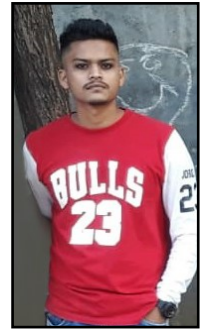
any practical/clinical classes due to COVID but has survived online learning and hopes to get in the hospital and meet patients in 2022.

We will have two new students joining career paths through our University Fund in 2022.

Ekta has been dreaming of an MBA for many years and was finally able to properly study for the entrance exam. She performed well and has gained acceptance into a Top10 state college.



Saurabh wasn't exactly sure what he wanted to study, but knew it was something that would help people. He took two years to decide after attaining his Bachelor of Commerce Degree. He is now committed to Law. He, too, did well on the entrance exams and is choosing which college to attend.



What happens when a mechanic, a computer scientist, a doctor, a businesswoman and a lawyer walk into the world....they make a profound difference for their families and are role models for their communities!

ONE! INTERNATIONAL POVERTY RELIEF

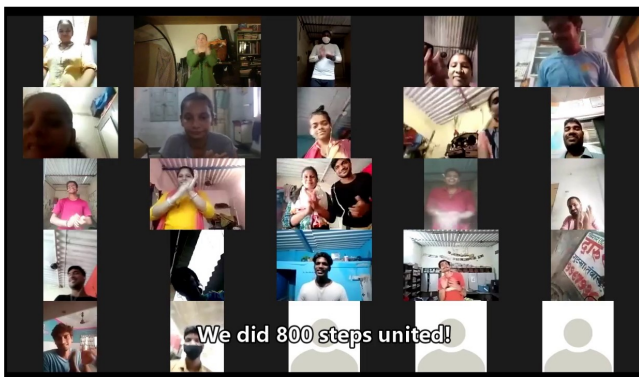
MILES TO MUMBAI IN MAY

"Walk one for One! A kilometre (or more) a day, one step at a time"

When we first started Miles to Mumbai in May, it was the Indian team that we were sure would struggle to reach their goal, we were completely wrong!

The premise of the event was for people on all sides of the world to join together in exercise in any way possible—cycling, swimming, running, walking...anything!

Our team in Mumbai was in full lockdown. The only way to participate, was to walk in a spot. So, we did just that! Every night in Canada, I started the zoom link and between 20-30 members of the team in India joined me. We started with 800 steps and finally worked our way to 6000 each night (about 4.5 km). While we stepped, we laughed and played games. Pictionary, GK



quizzes, dares but the ultimate favourite was virtual cricket! A virtual die rolled over and over with batters against bowlers.

The Indian team of about 70 people managed to go the distance —



11,943km. Top participants in India received a T-shirt which they have miraculously kept white and still proudly wear many months later.

The International Team tried valiantly, but needed more members. Maybe next time!

The camaraderie built can not be replaced. The joy and smiles on everyone's faces brought hope and strength to face the challenges that came and are still to come.



Written by Tania unless otherwise mentioned.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Canada:

112 Garland Crescent, Sherwood
Park, Alberta, Canada, T8A 2R2

Phone: (780) 467-6254

India:

Phone: (91) 98205-17805

EMAIL: info@one-international.com

Instagram:

[oneinternational-
al.povertyrelief](https://www.instagram.com/oneinternational_povertyrelief)

Facebook:

[OneTaniaDidi](https://www.facebook.com/OneTaniaDidi)

www.one-international.com

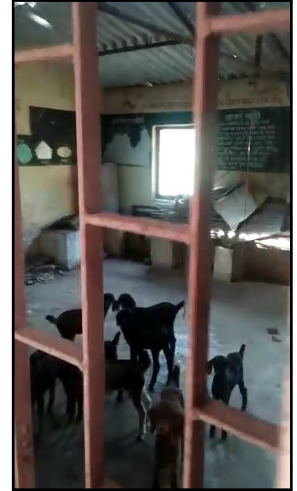
A New Village Endeavour!

We are excitedly researching some villages close to our social worker's home-
stead—Vikas' family lives on a farm that is 10 km from the closest village and 30 km from the closest hospital and other essential services.



Vikas is showing us tribal villages that are between 50 to 500 people each and are about 50 km farther into the forest and mountains.

At one village, the local school has become the home for the goats. There is no doubt that just a little bit of help could go a long way. We are hoping that the villagers welcome us and we are able to slowly start making a difference.



Help Needed!

There are many ways that we are needing help these days. Examples are fundraising, policy writing, grant writing, English editing, video editing, remote medical support, admin support, and the list could go on.

If you feel you have time and energy to give, please reach out. The world is in a COVID fog, but we believe that helping others will lift that fog at least a little!

Contact: info@one-international.com

Appreciation from the Board of Directors

—Gordon

“The pandemic has challenged One! International over the past 2 years. The staff and volunteers have had to change and adapt so many times, and so often with little to no warning. But change and adapt they have! The Board of Directors is very pleased and proud of our staff and volunteers. All have been steadfast and have gone so far above and beyond what could have been expected that words are not adequate. On behalf of the Board, thank you. For everything you have done. For so much.”

COVID-19 Vaccination Drive

For the first half of 2021, in Mumbai, it was near impossible to get vaccinated unless you were ready to pay. Anxious to help keep our staff safe, we decided to give them stipends to encourage vaccination. We are proud, that 100% of our staff are vaccinated with only Kokila still needing her 2nd dose.



We then turned our focus to the parents. One! International was able to provide help by gathering necessary information and taking people to centers as needed. We tracked the certificates and reminded people for their second doses. This hard work has paid off as more than 75% of parents are now fully vaccinated.

We were extremely relieved when 15-18 year olds were finally able to get vaccinated. Within one week, all of our students of this age received their first dose.

To date, our team in India is also relieved that no one has had COVID-19.

