

FURTHER UPDATE TO CALCUTTA HOPE'S SUPPORTERS

In March I posted a notice on our website informing Calcutta Hope's supporters about the difficulties we were experiencing with SEED, our project partner in India, and I enclose a copy of this (see below). Apart from several financial irregularities we were concerned about the standard of care SEED had been providing to the children in the Home. Unfortunately the situation continued to deteriorate. After we found that the boys were still being neglected (even though we had sent SEED adequate funds) we asked some of our local contacts to temporarily step in and provide any necessary food, clothing and medical care and to ensure that a proper level of hygiene was maintained. Our friends at The Hope Foundation (who have offices in Cork and Calcutta) did this for us. We are very grateful to the Foundation for their support but recognize that they cannot continue to do so indefinitely. We will, of course, be reimbursing The Hope Foundation for the assistance they have so kindly provided. So, unfortunately, we have had to cut out ties with SEED and the Home. Some of the boys have now been re-united with their families, some are old enough to live independently and it is our understanding that the remainder will be cared for by local groups. SEED say that the Home will eventually be used for a state funded scheme, so at least the building will continue to be used for the purpose for which it was intended.

So what will be Calcutta Hope's role now? Obviously we are deeply disappointed that relationships with SEED have broken down. Fortunately there are other partners in Calcutta with whom we have developed good working relationships and in whom we have confidence. One of these is the Economic Rural Development Society (ERDS) and in the long-term our intention is to build another Home in Boral, a suburb of Calcutta.

In the short-term we will devote our efforts and resources to working with ERDS supporting their widows and orphans' projects in both Boral and the rural district of Maldah where our new partner also works. The logic for Calcutta Hope's involvement in these projects is clear. Most of the children we have looked after have come from such families and we realise that it is much better to keep the children in their own homes wherever possible. These are children from the poorest families of daily wage labourers and a relatively small monthly sum can have hugely beneficial results.

I appreciate that some of you will now contemplate withdrawing your financial support from Calcutta Hope and if this is the case I do hope that you will contact me or Steve Derby to discuss the matter. I do assure you that we have made every effort to ensure that the funds you have contributed to date have not been wasted and have been devoted to the care of the Boys.

September 2013

IMPORTANT UPDATE TO CALCUTTA HOPE'S SUPPORTERS

Sadly, we have to report that we are becoming increasingly concerned about the level of care that SEED is providing to the boys in our Home. We also believe that SEED has been acting corruptly.

We made an unannounced visit to the Home in February and were bitterly disappointed in the way it was being maintained and in the care provided to the boys. We confronted SEED with our concerns (which included their "employment" of unnecessary, and invisible, staff) and explained that we

would no longer be able to support the Home. We gave them 6 months' notice of our withdrawal of support and, obviously, we hoped this would shock them into improving their performance.

A week or so ago we asked a contact of ours in Calcutta to visit the Home and report back to us. The situation is worse. She found that the standard of care and cleanliness to be very poor and said that some of the boys looked mal-nourished.

We sent SEED our normal quarterly payment less than a month ago so lack of funds cannot be an excuse for this.

We have dealt with SEED for about 10 years and have generally had a good relationship with them. They have looked after the boys well; we do not really understand why there has been this dramatic deterioration on their part.

Calcutta Hope now faces a dilemma. We cannot abandon the boys and we cannot keep supporting SEED. We are asking our other contacts and friends in Calcutta if they can help us by managing the Home in the short or medium term and we hope they will be able to do so. We will keep you in touch about this.

Whilst we need funds more than ever to overcome these difficulties I realise that some of you will be diffident about supporting us because of SEED's conduct. I hope that this is not the case and if you want to discuss this issue please do not hesitate to contact us.

We assure you that our sole concern is the welfare of the boys.

The Trustees and Director of Calcutta Hope