

Karuna Trust: Your Continuing Legacy of Life

Primary Health Care in Arunachal Pradesh

Site: Itangar and Tezu

Years Supported: 11

Funding in 2016: \$12,000

Scope: Public-State Partnership to provide basic health care in remote impoverished areas

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Poor health is one of the most prevalent and avoidable causes of human misery. Tens of millions of people, more people than all of us who live in California, struggle each day to survive in a hostile, disease-laden environment. We can replace a heart, reconstruct a face, and add a missing hand, but diarrhea, malaria, and tuberculosis continue to claim lives and spread suffering across India.

One in three people in Arunachal Pradesh may not live beyond the age of 40. The inhospitable terrain, combined with inaccessible and scattered habitation results in poor access to medical facilities and poor health. High altitudes and remote areas record more premature deaths; the better-connected districts, particularly those in the plains, have substantially higher rates of life expectancy.

Some of the most basic medical care that we take for granted, such as relief from pain for us and our children, is not available to millions of people across the land. India's rise as a technological superpower and its growing influence across the world has come at the expense of those who can least afford to pay for it.



Since 2007 IFA has supported two primary health centers run by the Karuna Trust in Arunachal Pradesh: The Mengio center in Papum Pare district, which cares for 4386 people in 40 villages, and the Jeying center in one of the most remote regions of the Upper Siang district, which cares for 3278 people in 14 villages. A \$6,000 annual grant from IFA for each health center enables the Karuna Trust to tap into \$54,000 in matching State grants.

Karuna Trust has taken the money you give to attract nine times as much, and provide basic health care services that would otherwise not exist for thousands of people. In addition, your continued support over the past 12 years has given the trust the confidence to expand their activities. From the original health care center in Yalandur taluk, Chamrajnagar district in Karnataka, the trust now operates thirty centers in Karnataka alone, and continues to branch out to different states each year.



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OLD MATERNITY ROOM



RENOVATED MATERNITY ROOM



OLD CORRIDOR



RENOVATED CORRIDOR

Deciding to support the Karuna Trust in Arunachal Pradesh was not an easy choice for IFA in 2007. On the one hand, was the potential to mitigate the needless suffering of thousands of people; on the other hand, was the question: do we, as an organization, want to aid the privatization of public services? Do we want to fund an arrangement in which the Government provides 90% of the money and infrastructure, but a private trust gets all the credit? For 67, 328 people in Arunachal Pradesh, IFA's decision to support Karuna Trust has, literally, been a lifesaver. This past year has been one of consolidation with the addition of support and services for the heroic efforts of the caregivers. The medical centers have been upgraded to provide the basic amenities we take for granted, such as clean, ventilated rooms, passageways, and pathways.



OLD PATHWAY



RENOVATED PATHWAY

For an amount that is close to the annual medical premium for your family, IFA is able to support a health center run by the Karuna Trust. The Karuna Trust is able to focus on working against all odds. Needless pain and suffering is reduced in the lives of thousands of people. Their quality of life, if not life itself, is better today than it has ever been.

In addition to the upgrading their facilities for better hygiene and access, Karuna Trust health centers now use a mobile phone-based inventory management system to ensure a supply of essential, life-saving drugs and vaccines. Health-care providers are also able to use a mobile phone based system to consult experts who can review health records to provide instructions and advice on the best way to deal with medical situations.

You have done this for two medical centers over the years. Karuna Trust has learned from their experiences to expand services to almost 70 centers in six states. We may not be ready to solve all the problems of the world but your generous contributions continue to make a world of a difference in the lives of thousands of people. ♦

~ Rahul Mehrotra