

Issue 67 June 2022  
SALT OF THE EARTH  
Registered Charity 328328  
www.sote.org.uk  
Patron: Jeremy Irons



# Saltseller

## A celebration of £5 million



International Women's Day celebration 2010

All of us here at Salt of the Earth would like to thank each of you most profoundly for your generosity which has enabled us to pass the £5 million income mark.

Raising this amount of money is a great milestone. It is an achievement that, even in my wildest dreams, I could not have imagined when I first visited the salt pans of Tuticorin all those years ago. This has only been made possible by the support and generosity of many hundreds of people over the 33 years that the charity has been in existence.

When I am asked to describe how the charity works, I say that it is built on relationships and word of mouth. It started with the friends and families of the original supporters and has now spread out into many other networks. The result is that we now have a long term highly committed band of supporters. This enables us to plan our funding activities with greater certainty and confidence. For this, we, and our partner organisations in Tamil

Nadu, are truly grateful to you all.

This £5 million that you have given us has helped change the lives of tens of thousands of the rural poor in Tamil Nadu in many ways. Fresh water has been provided, jobs have been generated, trees have been planted, health care taken to villages, education enhanced and the poor and disadvantaged supported. On top of this, you have responded magnificently to our emergency appeals concerning the 2004 Tsunami and the recent Covid crisis.

This funding has not only benefited individuals and the communities they live in, but it has also markedly reduced the population drift to urban areas. This inevitably takes place when desperate village people mistakenly believe that life will be better in the cities. However, in my view, our most long-lasting and effective initiative has been our support for the recruitment, training and development of over 1,000 Women's Self Help Groups. This empowering of women is driving

the positive changes that are taking place in the villages. Sexism and violence are being profoundly challenged and women's rights are being promoted like never before.

The charity has always kept expenses to a minimum and is volunteer led. This means that a much higher proportion of your money has been able to be sent directly to the project partners than most other charities can achieve. It is also true to say that your donation goes a great deal further in Tamil Nadu rural areas than it would here in the west. A conservative estimate is that it is worth ten times more.

We face the future at Salt of the Earth with optimism and energy and there is still much to be done. Our three excellent partner organisations continue to tell us of the needs of the villagers they work with. With your ongoing support, we will be able to continue to fund them.

With thanks,  
Founding and Managing Trustee

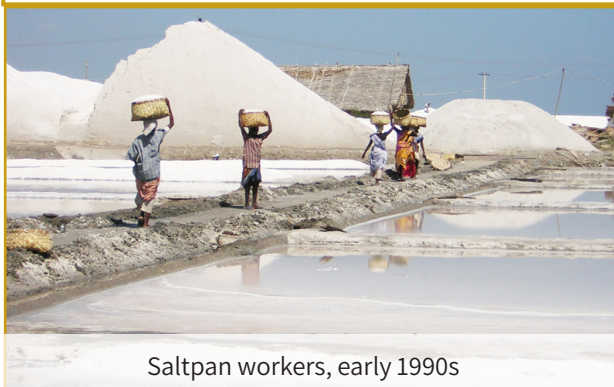
*Murray Hasbrouck*

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE £5 MILLION

The role of Salt of the Earth is, and always has been, the bridge between you, our supporters, and our carefully selected partners (NGOs) in Tamil Nadu. The NGOs consult with the communities they serve and make funding recommendations, which, in most cases, we are able to approve.

When everything is considered the amount of change and benefit that has occurred as a result of your support is enormous and long-lasting. Below we highlight major examples of what your donations have been spent on.

## MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES



Saltpan workers, early 1990s

Saltpan workers and their families were the first to benefit. These people lived and worked in a hostile and unhealthy environment. Work was low paid and seasonal. **Working conditions were substantially improved** and sunglasses were provided to offset the tremendous glare caused by the sun's reflection on the salt crystals. **Child labour, which previously was rife, was eliminated.**

A leprosy colony created by sufferers who had been ostracised by society was a major beneficiary. **Homes and a community centre** were built as well as a medical centre where daily treatment was given. Support groups were set up which were invaluable in improving the inhabitants' feelings of self-worth.

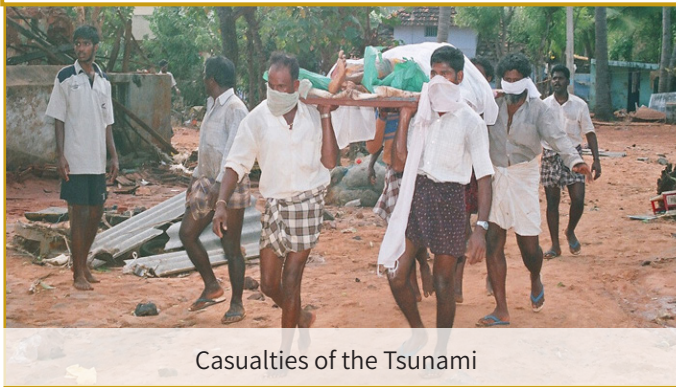
Elsewhere gypsy, snake catcher and begging communities have been similarly supported.

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

A major issue our NGO partners have always brought to us is the position of women in the villages in a highly patriarchal society. As a result, the recruiting, training and supporting of Women's Self Help Groups (WSHGs) has always been a big priority and will continue to be so.

Some changes in the past 25 years have been external, like the arrival of mobile phones for example, which allowed arrangements about the next meeting to be passed around. However, more changes have been brought about as a direct consequence of membership of WSHGs. **Over one hundred thousand women have received training** which enables them to save money regularly, support each other and commit to making life better for themselves, their daughters and their communities. The personal change and growth in confidence arising from membership of these groups has brought about **real social change** in the villages.

## EMERGENCY APPEALS



Casualties of the Tsunami

On 26 December 2004, India was one of a dozen countries hit by a devastating tsunami. Houses and facilities were destroyed, and several hundred thousand were lost. Murray and Janet, who were in India at the time, visited impacted locations and launched an emergency fundraiser that **raised over £200,000 in three months.** Our tsunami appeal funded food, clothing, cooking utensils, and shelter for thousands of fishing village families who had lost everything. It funded replacement nets and boats, and provided counselling services for many traumatised men, women, and children.

As well as our appeal, we obtained over £200,000 from CAFOD, a large Catholic charity, to build eight new village community centres in affected shoreline villages. Our tsunami response provided **support to an estimated 1 million people.**

From 2020-2021, we launched two emergency appeals to provide aid during India's Covid crisis. The **appeals raised over £80,000** and provided food, water, medical support and hope to many thousands of marginalised families. The appeal funded extracurricular schooling that **taught and fed children for 18 months** in the complete absence of government education.



A march for women's rights, early 2000s

## WATER



Water from reverse osmosis plant

The rural poor are without running water in their homes and they mostly rely on government pipelines. Unfortunately, these pipelines, which supply water to a central water tank, are often inadequate, and irregular and the water is of poor quality. On top of this, salt intrusion of local water tables is a growing problem.

As water is so fundamental to good health and well-being, the provision of it has always been a priority and **over 100 water generation and purification projects have been built**. In most cases, bore wells and pumps have been installed as an alternative to government water supplies. In addition, **ten reservoirs have been built** to catch the monsoon rain as have several rainwater harvesting systems. In response to the 1996 drought, money was raised to buy

two water tankers which supplied life preserving liquid to desperate villagers. **Two reverse osmosis plants** to make brackish water drinkable have been commissioned, as have water storage tanks to villages, schools, and community buildings. **2,000 water SAWYER filter kits** for families for home use have also been distributed to the most needy.

## EDUCATION

Via the child sponsorship scheme, thousands of sponsored and other children have been given extracurricular education classes to supplement the often inadequate government schools. Our partner NGOs over the years have tirelessly worked to encourage parents to send their children to school, and now nearly every child attends full-time education up to the age of 16.

School premises and facilities are often inadequate and poorly maintained and many schools have been helped. **Toilet blocks, fresh water facilities, granite floors and teaching equipment such as smart boards** have all been provided.



New granite floor in primary school

## HEALTH



Village man with prescribed glasses

Healthcare services in many rural villages were non-existent when we started. Now, with your support, **access to healthcare for over 100 rural communities** has been created by mobile clinics staffed by qualified doctors, with free medicine provided for those who cannot afford it. **Two Jeeps** were purchased for these clinics, thus enabling patients to get medical help without travelling many miles and giving up a day's pay in order to go to a government health centre.

Cervical cancer screening camps have screened thousands of women and have supported patients throughout their cancer surgeries. Eye camps have tested villagers and hundreds have been operated on for cataracts for free. **Over 10,000 pairs of glasses** have been supplied. Our anaemia programme for adolescent girls has helped to improve the red blood cell count of over 100 young women and provided valuable menstrual health information.

At hypertension camps, our partners have screened several thousand adults and provided lifestyle counselling for any concerns. In 2021, MASARD launched an ambulance service and transported close to 50 Covid and non-Covid related cases to nearby hospitals. MASARD's **child and family counselling service** are the first of its kind in the local area and has helped over 100 individuals to deal with female domestic violence and marital problems, anger, anxiety and depression.

## FACILITIES

Since 1988, help has been given to rebuild schools and homes, gardens, secured compounds and to build community centres. Offering a designated space for our partners and the people they support to call their own has been a privilege to provide.

In 2018 a much needed **three-storey Rural Development Centre (RDC)** for MASARD was built. The building is a multi-functional space, acting as a counselling office, admin office, meeting room, and training centre. In 2020 a **community kitchen facility** was built for our partner CRUSADE. The space caters for celebrations, Self Help Group and staff meetings.



The Rural Development Centre (RDC)

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Sports day at a residential school

In a society where most live hand to mouth in poverty, the plight of the disabled is even more difficult. What little government money there is available is often impossible to access because of ignorance and illiteracy and job opportunities are extremely limited. Parents of children born with disabilities are often ostracised leaving them without help of any kind.

Over the years help has been provided to combat these great injustices. For 15 years support was given to a **specialist residential school for children with learning and physical difficulties** and a mobile clinic was set up to visit the homes of affected families to give treatment and support. A successful campaign was run to make schools more accessible and receptive towards children with disabilities.

Currently, support is pledged to **185 specialised Self Help Groups** for 1200 people with disabilities. Members are provided with a safe space to thrive and are supported in obtaining loans and national IDs. Groups have access to training such as tailoring and embroidery. In 2020, CRUSADE launched an independent trust to support members with disabilities and their families.

Since we began working in rural Tamil Nadu the climate has presented increased challenges to the life of the villagers. The area is currently experiencing record high temperatures.

To help alleviate this **over 350,000 trees** have been planted across Tamil Nadu, each tree selected for its timber, medicinal, fruit-bearing, or shade producing capabilities. As well as trees, hundreds of kitchen gardens have been set up allowing families to cultivate their own organic vegetables and fruits. **Medicinal herb cultivation training** has been provided to several hundred Self Help Group members for them to enjoy home-grown supplies of homoeopathic remedies. This activity has been accompanied with climate change awareness campaigns.

Both CRUSADE and MASARD now operate their own **tree nursery** to help supply saplings to the villages and organic grow bags are being produced to allow produce to be grown on rooftops and pavements for hundreds of families.

## ENVIRONMENT



Environmental awareness campaign

## INCOME GENERATION



Women learning sari embellishment

By empowerment of rural people through skills training workshops, many families have been helped to create sustainable incomes. Over the years, **close to 3,000 men and women have been trained in tailoring, embroidery, wire bag making, animal rearing, hair and beauty services, pottery, or sari embellishment.** Training programmes have enabled people to become self-sufficient and build savings.

Loans from the savings accounts of Self Help Groups savings or local banks have enabled many members to start their own businesses and take pride in their achievements.

In 2020 MASARD **trained over 100 young women** in a variety of training programmes to empower them with options after education. Several of these young girls are now running successful wedding beauty services, embroidery, and tailoring businesses.

**We hope you will agree with us that your £5 million has not only provided much needed support across a wide spectrum of activities, it has provided excellent value for money.**

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST 6 MONTHS Nov- May

MASARD

**NEW Cloud Clinics**



Patient receiving support from MASARD staff & online clinic service at RDC

As well as mobile clinics, MASARD has launched a cloud-based online clinic in their catchment area. We have funded the setup of the scheme which included a subscription fee for an online medical service and technology for the Rural Development Centre. The online medical service (Medi360) is specifically designed for marginalised communities. Villagers can book online consultations with doctors across India who provide advice and referrals to the rural poor.

The service has been eagerly anticipated by MASARD, and we are looking forward to expanding medical access for the rural poor using modern technology.

CRUSADE

**Women's Day Celebrations**



Women's Day celebrations in action

CRUSADE celebrated International Women's Day on 19th March at their community kitchen compound. The 80 attendees included self-help group members, CRUSADE staff, health care workers and special guests from the Panchayat and local universities. The event featured speeches from local dignitaries, poem readings, and celebrations of CRUSADE's recent achievements. Man Vasam, (meaning 'The smell of the Earth') a cultural group from Chennai Loyola College, entertained the audience with a folk arts performance.

CARE

**Baby goats are born**



Project participant helping baby goat feed

Last year, CARE provided begging families with three goats each. Goat rearing was an income-generating project requested by the local people, and participants have taken to the challenge with enthusiasm. In late 2021, the first round of goats produced kids, which meant that the scheme could expand to neighbouring villages. For each three kids born within the programme, one kid is given to a family on the waiting list.

CRUSADE

**Third water project**



S.Medu village borewell construction

In 2021 we funded three village water generation projects with CRUSADE. The final borewell was drilled in December at 150ft deep, and three motor pumps were installed. The project was delayed due to heavy rainfall, but CRUSADE has now completed the construction. As the land is Panchayat owned, they have agreed to support this project by digging pits for tree planting before the onset of the monsoon season.

## CRUSADE

### Mental Health training



Health care workers and training staff

In February, CRUSADE staff and village health care workers attended a three-day mental health training course. A team from SCARF (Schizophrenia Research Foundation) in Chennai, led the programme. Training covered addictions, symptoms of mental health, coping mechanisms, and misconceptions. Attendees reported that the training offered good exposure to mental health concerns, and animators reported that they felt more comfortable identifying and supporting concerns in the future.

## MASARD

### NEW Porridge project



Porridge project launch, April 2022

To help combat child malnutrition, MASARD have launched a Porridge project. Funded by SOTE, 75 children will receive a nutritious health mix for six months. MASARD village animators are distributing the health mix to families on a weekly basis. Children's weight and statistics will be monitored, and families will be supported and encouraged throughout the process.

## GUIDED VISIT TO INDIA - 2023

We are intending to run our annual Indian Visitor Programme in January 2023. We will continue with the same-successful format of a 14-night visit arriving at Bengaluru (Bangalore) 19th January and departing Chennai 2nd February.

The cost of our programme will be £1,350 per person sharing a room and will include breakfast, transport, and a programme leader. Airfares, insurance, and visa costs are not included.

During the visit, you will meet all three of our partner organisations and witness first-hand the impact your donations are making. The visit also includes attractions in a variety of Southern Indian cities.



Visitors trip with CARE staff and local children, 2020

Attendees on previous trips have enjoyed:

- Meeting our partners
- Interacting with rural village people
- Learning about SOTE projects
- Heritage tours
- Visits to temples
- Indian shopping experiences
- Travelling to different cities
- Meeting sponsored children
- Visiting Auroville
- Food tours and experiences

**If you are interested in joining the programme, please contact Murray Frankland at [murray@sote.org.uk](mailto:murray@sote.org.uk) for further details.**



Tour guides Billie and Paul with CRUSADE CEO, Jothi

# FUNDRAISING - Expanding our capabilities

Social fundraising has always been an important way of supporting Salt of the Earth. Organising fundraising events is a fun and satisfying way of raising money using your time and expertise at no expense to yourself. Covid restrictions have caused a pause in this activity, and we are now looking to start up again.

We are conscious of the administrative difficulties in organising events, so we have set up fundraising pages on our website, [www.sote.org.uk](http://www.sote.org.uk) to give you a helping hand. Sign up online and the platform we have set up will assist you. If you need any further support, please contact [lena@sote.org.uk](mailto:lena@sote.org.uk)

## Create a donation page:

If you are fundraising without a target start or end date, our new donation pages are here to help. Donation pages can include photos, a description, and track the amount you have raised online. Offline cash donations can be added to your total. You can also print out a unique QR code for easy payments.

**Ideas: Meditation classes, Art workshops, Services, General donations on behalf of your premises**

## Events pages:

Events pages advertise your upcoming event and take ticket payments through our website. Tickets payments for the event will come straight to Salt of the Earth, and you can track your attendee list.

**Ideas: Restaurant takeovers, Parties, Exhibitions**



## Individual fundraisers:

If you are **running a marathon, jumping out of a plane, making cakes at a sale, hiking, or doing a sponsored silence at school** – individual fundraising pages are the way to go. These pages have a start date, and end date, and display a fundraising target. You can customise your page and share the link with your friends online.

## Team fundraisers:

First, set up a team fundraising page and state your overall target. Then, using the team fundraising page, set up a page for each person participating. Each person taking part will have their own page which can accept donations, tell a story, and show a total. Team members' totals will be combined on the team fundraising page and updates can be added collectively.



## In memory pages:

When raising funds in memory of a remembered person, you can now accept donations through your own online page. Images, videos, and information about your loved one can be added to the page, and you can take payments via credit, debit card and PayPal. Your unique website link can be provided as an alternative to cash donations at funeral services and can be shared online with friends.

## Online raffles:

When running an online raffle, the system can automatically draw winners and send notifications. We hold a local authority gambling license, so please email [lena@sote.org.uk](mailto:lena@sote.org.uk) for the terms and conditions before setting up an online raffle.

**Idea: Contact local businesses and ask for donations, get creative with your photos, and share your raffle online with friends and colleges!**

**During the setting up of a fundraising page, our website will ask you how you wish to divide your donations. Unrestricted funds allow us to use your donations to fund projects that are most at need.**

**When creating a fundraising page, please consider donating 100% of donations to general Salt of the Earth, rather than a specific SOTE campaign.**

## BECOME A SPONSOR

### SPONSOR A CHILD: £18 a month

Donations support the development of a child, as well as funding projects that their families and village communities can access. By sponsoring a child, you will help to ensure that mobile health clinics, skills training, and livelihood incentives can continue for several years in rural villages.

**Learn about children on the sponsorship waiting list online [www.sote.org.uk/child-sponsorship](http://www.sote.org.uk/child-sponsorship)**

### SPONSOR A VILLAGE: £1,800 per annum

Village sponsors provide mid to long term assistance to deprived rural villages with a population of 2,000 to 4,000 people. Donations enable SOTE's core interventions, as well as specialised support.

**Villages can be sponsored by individuals, offices, or teams of people. Learn about villages waiting to be sponsored online [www.sote.org.uk/village-sponsorship](http://www.sote.org.uk/village-sponsorship)**

### PLANT TREES: for £2 a tree

Trees and kitchen gardens provide food, shade, income, and herbal remedies to rural poor families as well as help to mitigate the effects of climate change on the local area. Offset your carbon footprint with a one-off donation or help us continue our environmental support by becoming a tree planting sponsor.

**Visit [www.sote.org.uk/tree-planting](http://www.sote.org.uk/tree-planting) for more information**

## LEAVE A LEGACY

Would you like to continue to support the rural poor in Tamil Nadu after you have gone? You can do this by naming Salt of the Earth charity in your will and specifying a sum (pecuniary legacy) or a percentage of your estate (residuary).

Any legacy left to the charity will be free of inheritance tax. The amount left to SOTE will be subtracted from the net value of your estate before any tax liability is calculated. If you have already made a will and would like to add a legacy to our charity, then this can be done by making a codicil to your existing will. It is a simple process that your solicitor can help you with if required.

## OUR PROJECTS

-  Water
-  Environmental
-  Livelihood
-  Women's Empowerment
-  Health
-  Child Development



@saltoftheearthcharity | [www.sote.org.uk](http://www.sote.org.uk)

## ETHICAL GIFTS

Ethical gifts are beneficial items that help to improve rural people's health and livelihoods. To purchase an ethical gift online, please visit. *For more information, please visit:*

**[www.sote.org.uk/ethical-gifts](http://www.sote.org.uk/ethical-gifts)**

### Newborn Baby and Mother Package - £22.50

Gift contains a baby mosquito net, a cotton towel, dress, nappies, paracetamol drops, iron drops, sanitary products, iron tonic and a health mix drink.

### Small Smart Cooking Stove for a Family - £22.50

Donate an environmentally sound cooking stove.

### The Gift of Sight - £12.50

Donate an eye test, cataract referral and glasses.

### The Gift of Trees - £10.00

Plant 5 trees to help protect the environment and increase nutritional security.

### Medical Check for an Elder - £15.00

Pay for an elder to have a full medical check up and also receive a thick blanket for the monsoon.

### Water Sawyer Filtration Kit - £25.00

Donate a water filter kit to provide clean water

## FREE WILLS SERVICE

Do you want to create a will without the need for a solicitor or complicated paperwork? If so, an organisation called FreeWills.co.uk could be the answer.

Free Wills is a service that creates for users a basic will, free of charge. If you want to, you can include a donation to Salt of the Earth from a charity drop-down menu. From there, you can state what you wish to donate in the event of your passing. We have signed up for the service ourselves and found it very simple to use.

Type **[www.freewills.co.uk/charity/sote](http://www.freewills.co.uk/charity/sote)** into your browser. Then, follow the step-by-step instructions to complete your will free of charge.

## BECOME A PRIVATE DONOR

As we continue to grow as a charity, we are inviting the participation of more private donors. **If you or your business are eager to learn more about becoming a private donor, please email [murray@sote.org.uk](mailto:murray@sote.org.uk)**

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