



Hill Country Disability Group



Minutes of the meeting of Sunday 30th September 2007
at the Rural Knowledge Centre, Bandarawela, 11:30 a.m.

In attendance:

Mr. A. Ratnayake of Bandarawela; Mr. Robert Harwood, Mr. Patrick Harrigan, Ms. S. Prema, Mr. S. Srikanthan and Mr. S. Chandrakanthan of Koslanda; Ms. K. Thilegeswary of Ella; Mr. S. Vengadeswaran of Glenore Nanasala, Haputale. Mr. G.G.K.A. Bandara of Heeloya Nanasala

Attending as observers: Mr. E.G.P. Samuel and Mr. E.M. Chandarasekaren of Bandarawela; Mr. W. Chandrasiri Wijayarathne and Mr. P.V.P.B. Vithange of Ella; Mr. D. L. Kaluthanthri of the Social Development Society, Ella; Ms. R. Pushparekha of Koslanda; and Ms. V. Lingaswary of Newborg.

This is the third quarterly General Meeting of the members of the Board of the Hill Country Disability Group. Each new member introduced him in turn to the group. It was agreed this meeting chaired by Mr. S. Srikanthan and Mr. Patrick Harrigan would be conducted jointly in English and Sinhala.

Contact Details

An attendance register was signed by all members and their contact details were taken.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Patrick Harrigan, reported that he has raised to date US\$ 1,275 = Rs. 136,380 from among family and friends, mostly in the USA. The exact figures and donors are as follows:

Donor	Date	USD	= Rs.	Project
Joanne Capano	22.12.06	525	55,000	Hill Country Disability Group
Thomas Rupnicki	20.01.07	100	10,476	SLCT-HCDG
Gaja Lakshmi Param	16.04.07	200	21,880	SLCT-HCDG
Suyin Karlsen	16.06.07	250	27,500	Erosha Dharmapala
Helen Dalzell	05.08.07	100	11,000	SLCT-HCDG
William & Mary Pearce	16.08.07	50	5,500	SLCT-HCDG
Helen Dalzell	24.09.07	50	5,500	SLCT-HCDG
TOTAL		1,275	136,856	

These funds are received in dollars, converted into rupees, and deposited to the main account of our parent organization, the Sri Lanka Children's Trust, at Bank of Ceylon, Batticaloa branch account no. 3261940.

He also reported that the HCDG recently opened a current account at Peoples Bank, Koslanda branch, viz:

Account name:	Hill Country Disabled Group
Bank name:	Peoples Bank
Account number:	1650019859
Branch number:	260 (Koslanda)
Address:	Main Street, Koslanda, Badulla district
SWIFT code:	PSBKLKX

To date, the Treasurer has transferred Rs. 50,000 to the HCDG account out of total Rs. 136,856 so far raised. For a cheque to be valid, it must be signed by either the President (Srikanthan) or the Secretary (Prema), and countersigned by either Vice President (Ratnayake) or the Treasurer (Patrick). To date no cheques have been issued, but a standing order has been given for the bank to transfer Rs. 4,000 on the first of each month to the bank account of Erosha Dharmapala's teacher Buddhika at Peoples Bank branch in Haldummulla.

NGO Registration with Haldummulla Divisional Secretariat

The President Mr. S. Srikanthan and the Treasurer, Mr Patrick Harrigan, have been meeting regularly with the Haldummulla Divisional Secretary, Mr. Ratnayake, and the Social Services officer Mr. Indika, who are currently processing our application for NGO registration. We have to date submitted the accounts and history of our parent organisation, Sri Lanka Children's Trust, and the HCDG Memorandum of Association. Our NGO certificate of registration valid for Badulla District will be issued in due course.

National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities

Our parent organization the Sri Lanka Children's Trust has registered itself with the National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities. Once the HCDG is registered and has its own audited accounts and annual report, it may also get itself registered with the Secretariat.



Hill Country Disability Group



The President and the Treasurer have been visiting the NSPD almost monthly to meet Director Mr. M.A. Alam, and have obtained forms in Sinhala and Tamil whereby families having handicapped dependents may apply for and receive Rs. 3,000 monthly stipend. Since this support is available to all handicapped individuals, and since our society's funds are so limited, the members were strongly urged to obtain the forms and make efforts to distribute them to families who qualify. Once forms are completed and returned, the Treasurer will deliver them to the NSPD in Colombo. The forms need to be completed and certified by managers of tea estates, stating each individual's disabilities and requesting the money in order to help the concerned families.

The Treasurer also reported that the NSPD will pay up to Rs. 10,000 only on a one-time basis for small scale projects, especially those that alleviate suffering of the handicapped or empower them with a livelihood. This form too is available and will be distributed by e-mail or by post to active members who request the forms. Examples of such projects are: sewing machine for tailoring livelihood; minor refurbishing of a building to operate as a small shop; purchase of seeds and fertilizer for home garden, or CDMA phone as telecom business.

HCDG Database

It was agreed that a simple form should be designed so when a member visits a family, he or she can record all the relevant information and forward it to Koslanda Nanasala where the HCDG database is being compiled.

Individual projects

- **Erosha Dharmapala** (12) of Haldummulla is a polio victim who is being sponsored by Ms. Suyin Karlsen of the USA. An A Level graduate, Ms. Buddhika who lives nearby, has started tutoring Erosha for three hours per day since 1 August in return for a Rs. 4,000/mo. salary. We are visiting Erosha monthly to monitor her progress and to deliver school & art supplies. A German woman, Anna Baumann, stayed with Erosha and family for two days in July to determine better the family needs. She found that Erosha is a very talented artist; we have since then published many of Erosha's drawings on the Children's Trust web site and we hope to frame some of them and hold an exhibition some day.
- **Tamilchelvam** and **Mahindan** are two physically and mentally disabled brothers living with their family on the Ambitikande Tea Estate. The Estate has enabled its families to purchase colour TVs on inexpensive instalment plan, and this family has also taken advantage of the plan. But two months ago their electricity supply was cut off because of failure to pay the electricity bills. We are discussing how to help the family to restore electricity so the boys can watch television.
- **Parameswari** of the Koslanda Organic Tea Estate is another polio victim whom we have presented with a Sony Triniton colour TV that had been donated to the Treasurer, in addition to the wheelchair that was presented earlier. We are also helping her to start up and operate her own small shop from the window of her family quarters. We hope to launch the shop on Sunday 14 October as a special Day for Handicapped People in Koslanda Meeriabedda.

HCDG publicity campaign

The President and the Treasurer also reported progress in starting a publicity campaign to draw public attention to the plight of Hill Country handicapped, and the steps our society is taking to empower the handicapped. On 6 September we directed a bus full of journalists and Rupavahini TV team to visit Erosha Dharmapala in Haldummulla and to visit the Koslanda Nanasala where President S. Srikanthan was interviewed at length. The Treasurer also reported meeting the features editor of *The Sunday Times*, who has agreed to publish any photo article we can provide about our projects. The first of these articles should appear before our next meeting.

CDMA Telecom Livelihood Project

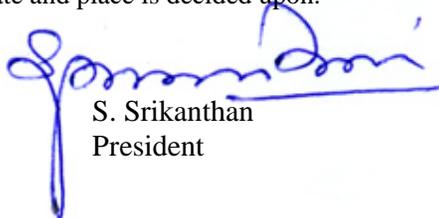
The Treasurer has been engaged in discussions with possible project partners, but still there is no progress.

Wheelchair Project

No progress has been reported on this project. The main project partners are the Kiwanis Club of Colombo City, the Rotary Club of Colombo East, and the Wheelchair Foundation of the USA with the HCDG acting as facilitator. We have so far facilitated communications between the project partners, but without any agreement.

Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting can be in late November or December. Everyone will be informed when the exact date and place is decided upon.


S. Srikanthan
President


Patrick Harrigan
Treasurer