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HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT AID ABROAD

NEWSLETTER

Issue 12,
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2002

VISION: To see medical, literacy, education, agricultural & sanitation programmes established in countries as needed.

Visit to Yong Sheng County, China

Yong Sheng County has a population of 370,000 people and is situated in the mid north of Yunnan Province. Fresh water fishing and a drinks factory are two of the few local industries.

The Provincial Government of Yunnan invited HADA to visit Yong Sheng County to assess the reasons for the high maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates in the area and to propose solutions. We were also asked to visit the Star Lake Middle School, which had been damaged by a recent earthquake.

I was privileged to be part of HADA team to make the visit. Two medical doctors and a retired Physiotherapist from Australia were also part of the team. Throughout the two-day visit, we were warmly welcomed and received typical Chinese hospitality. Three rural clinics and the main hospital Yong Sheng town as well as the school were visited.



One rural clinic was essentially a pharmacy whilst the other two were in fact hospitals and, like the town hospital, performed Caesarian Section deliveries.

A major issue to overcome in providing proper antenatal care to the villages is the traditional view that childbirth is a family matter. Thus, outside help is usually not sought unless complications arise during delivery, leaving no time for help to arrive. The main causes of death are hypertension and haemorrhage.

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All donations for the projects mentioned in this Newsletter or any other HADA project can be sent to: -

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Visit to Yong Sheng County, China *Continued from page 1*

Lack of even basic equipment was evident across the board, although one larger clinic had taken out bank loans to acquire blood and urine testing equipment and an ultrasound scanner. We were impressed with the skill and commitment local health workers exhibited in such difficult conditions.

The doctors on the team felt that a relatively inexpensive and effective solution may be to set up a program to train local medical workers in the use of portable ultrasound machines.

Tests conducted in the villages themselves would identify 'at risk' pregnancies e.g. twins, placenta praevia, which could then be referred to hospital for confinement.

The Star Lake Middle School has a student body of 700. As a result of earthquake damage last October to the dormitories some of the boys were sleeping in tents. This area of China is extremely cold in winter and hot in summer. The most pressing need therefore seems to be to construct a new earthquake resistant dormitory block.

Other needs were also apparent, e.g. one small outside toilet block services the whole school teachers and students alike. Due to the lack of finance from the Government, the teachers all contributed to buy the school about 23 computers. The school cook went to the capital and did a one month computer course and now she's the computer teacher.

There are over 150 English teachers in the county. Most, if not all, have never spoken to a native English speaker until we arrived. During the visit the need was expressed for help to upgrade the English level and teaching skills of these teachers. HADA was asked to provide two native English speaking teachers for this purpose to be based in Yong Sheng town.

It was sobering to see first-hand the needs that people in developing countries have, the conditions in which they live and to know that we can do something to improve their quality of life.

Brian Allbutt

HADA - Astana

What does a young girl do when she is unexpectedly pregnant and does not know what to do?

It is very easy to advise her on one course of action or another but all the options seem difficult.

Keeping the baby when she is not ready to be a mother seems an awesome task. Giving her baby away for adoption seems a hurdle to trust someone else with one's child. Abortion?

Get rid of the problem seems such an easy option. The reality is that of these options abortion is the most damaging to the girl. Women are rarely told the consequences of their action about the guilt that just does not go away, the depression and strong desire to forget.

Then there are physical side effects such as bleeding, infection, sterility and later in life breast cancer which are much more common than we are led to believe.

In Australia if a girl needs help, where can she go? There are places which do crisis pregnancy counselling, where she can find help, especially pro-life organisations have organised these. If she wants to keep the baby but cannot stay at home there are places which will look after her for the term of her pregnancy. In Kazakhstan there is next to nothing. She goes to the doctor who most of the time will tell her to have an abortion as soon as possible. The Soviet Union viewed abortion as a form of contraception so family and friends (if they ever find out) will advise her to terminate her pregnancy as if the child never even existed.

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Yet almost every woman who has had an abortion is suffering from what psychologists call post abortion syndrome.

HADA Astana has begun working in this area. This year will be an important year as we are planning to found the first crisis pregnancy centre in Kazakhstan's capital city and perhaps the first such centre in the country.



From mid 2001 we have been training counsellors for this centre and have at present a group of seven local women ready to be directly involved in this work. The challenge is finding funding for premises, the local staff and to support the ladies during their pregnancy.

One idea we have which locals seem to feel will work is sponsoring a pregnant girl to board with a pensioner (this will assist the pensioners as well as the girl as these people are living on relatively little).

Crisis pregnancy counselling covers a number of related issues.

Our counsellors, photo above, will also need to be ready to help victims of rape and sexual abuse, as well as counselling women who have had abortions. Unlike Australia, referrals for more specific issues are not available. We would be happy therefore to also have specialists come and give our counsellors further training.

A supplementary project to the counselling is the teaching of health lessons especially for schools and universities. Recently two short term volunteers (a German nurse & an Australian medical student) have been involved in the project. Apart from the lack of teaching on abortion and the life of the unborn there are many issues that need to be more publicly addressed. For example, Kazakhstan is at present one of the highest risk countries in the world for AIDS.

One local paper on this problem described the potential increase in AIDS as "a powder keg under a huge country in the centre of the Central Asian" giving reasons such as the promiscuous sexual lifestyle of youth with a lack of public discussion on the issues of sexual health.

Bruce Hanke

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Credit Card Facilities

We are pleased to advise that we are able to offer credit card facilities to those supporting HADA projects or for payment of annual memberships. This will make it easier for you, as donors, however we need to mention that the bank charges us over 7% in fees for this service/facility.

Credit Card Number: ☐ Visa

☐ Master Card

☐ Bankcard

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Name on Card: _____ Expiry Date: ____ / ____ Signature: _____

HADA President's Report for 2001

Much has happened since this time last year and we are greatly encouraged by the efforts of our overseas workers. We also wish to thank you for your support of them and their various projects, for without your help they may not be able to continue.

CHINA

HADA Yunnan is functioning well and being presented with funding proposals by local authorities and the needy. Staff now includes two families and two ladies. Currently they are assessing projects in pig farming, water, medical equipment and school buildings, and are continuing to sponsor school students from a number of different areas.

While in China our Vice President, Brian Allbutt was invited to visit and assess a proposed project in an area near Lijiang, Yunnan. His interesting article is included in this publication.

KAZAKHASTAN

Several ladies have been trained in counselling and the Crisis Pregnancy / Women's Counselling Centre will be commencing this year. More detailed information is given in Bruce Hanke's report.

BULGARIA

At the January Board meeting it was agreed that HADA continue with investigations to establish an office in Haskovo. Workers would be required to research the needs of the poor in this city and investigate the opportunities for setting up a computer and language school to assist in giving saleable skills to those without jobs.

FINANCES

The amount raised by the various arms of HADA this last financial year total AUD \$182,225.15. Of this amount \$118,141.77 was raised independently of our Australian office and sent directly to the bank accounts within the countries concerned and used for their respective projects. We have not been able to include these figures in our audited statement because of difficulty in verifying the figures against differing overseas accounting standards. The HADA financial statement is for the funds raised only in Australia.

TAX DEDUCTIBILITY

Preparation of documentation for HADA to receive accreditation from the Australian Taxation Office is progressing too slowly, and a concerted effort will be made in coming months to complete this documentation.

MEMBERSHIP

For accreditation we need more than 100 members. At the January Board meeting figures indicated we had 101 members. Membership renewals are due on 1st April. Each year we need to look for new members to maintain the numbers and we would ask you, our current members, to be active in nominating like minded people to become members. Thank you.

BOARD

I would like to thank personally each member of the Board for their assistance and participation in the past year. They have been faithful stewards. Chaney Carter is a new addition to our Board and he joins us as the Projects Officer.

FUTURE

We look forward with great expectation at the opportunities to assist in developing countries where we may be able to alleviate the hardships of the local sidelined minorities.

Neil Young

Donations to any of the projects that HADA supports would be gratefully received. HADA will forward 100% of all funds received for projects less bank charges. Details of credit card facilities are indicated on the bottom of page 3.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email Address: _____

Donation General Fund: \$ _____

Donation Project Name: _____ \$ _____

TOTAL enclosed: \$ _____
