



THANK YOU!

From TEAR Australia

In recognition of 18 years of fruitful partnership between **The Muneer Social Welfare Society (MSWS)** and **TEAR Australia**, and in recognition of the tremendous strengths and capacities of the many inspirational local community groups that **MSWS** support and empower.



If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

– Isaiah 58:10

It has been a privilege for **TEAR Australia** to support **MSWS** as you have worked for sustainable development for communities in Delhi, Bihar, Ultra Pradesh and West Bengal. We celebrate the achievements of **MSWS** in helping to create a community in which everyone - young, old, women, men, people of all abilities - can participate in their own development.

Matthew Maury – National Director



TEARA AUSTRALIA

GIFTS THAT SUPPORT
Community

VILLAGE PACKAGE



Your gift of a Village Package helps give people in a poor and marginalised community the skills and resources they need as they work together to create new hope and opportunity for themselves and their children.

INCREDIBLE INDIA!

So says the tourist slogan. And what an incredible country it is. But for many families in West Bengal or Bihar, the Taj Mahal or the Bollywood Studios may as well be on another planet. Just surviving is incredible enough. But TEAR's partner the Muneer Social Welfare Society – Muneer for short – is working with poor rural communities to help them improve their health and income-earning potential, and strengthen their ability to withstand the destructive effects of floods.



the gift of a Village Package

TEAR's Village Package is a comprehensive development package designed to make a difference for generations to come. Initiatives are tailored to suit the community's social and economic needs and include activities like women's Self-Help Groups, savings schemes and micro-credit, adult literacy, health education and family planning promotion, and disaster mitigation.

HOW IT WORKS

By buying a Village Package, you're providing vital assistance to the work of one of TEAR's Indian partners, Muneer, which is working in 12 villages in West Bengal and 13 in Bihar.

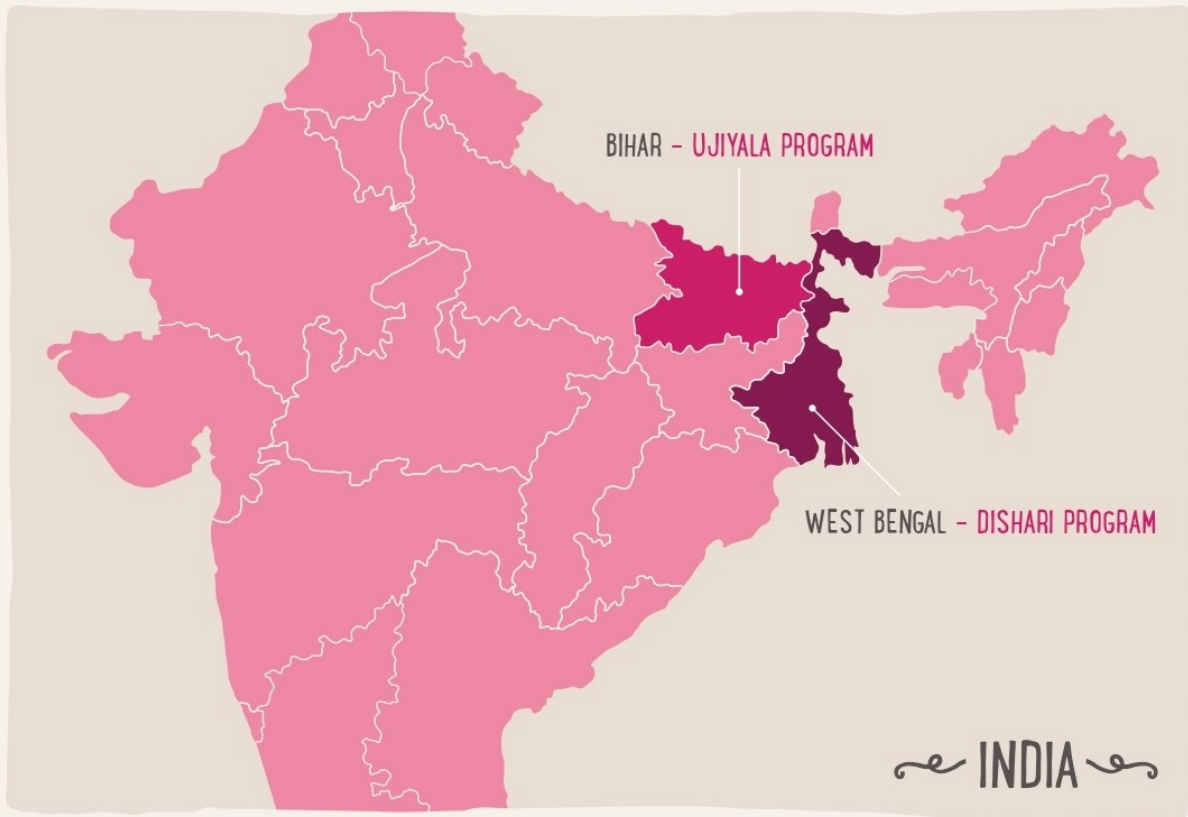
To keep our administration costs at a minimum, we are not able to offer an individual report on each village. Instead, we provide a general update on the project and the activities your valuable support is going towards.

ABOUT THE PARTNER

Muneer was founded in 1992 by husband and wife Asad and Shuvra Masih, Christians from West Bengal. The name "Muneer" comes from an Urdu word which means "lighthouse", symbolising its commitment to shine Christ's light in the world. The organisation's vision statement declares: "The vision of Muneer is to establish a progressive society, which will be free from exploitation, where overall development and dignity of every one will be secure, where people can live with solidarity, co-operation, and brotherhood and where they can protect their rights."

Beginning work in Delhi, Muneer expanded into Bihar in 2009. It responds to the needs of the poor and marginalised through projects that include emergency relief and disaster mitigation, health education and family planning promotion, education for children, adult literacy, community empowerment, women's Self-Help Groups and savings and micro-credit schemes.





WHERE MUNEER WORKS

UJIYALA: 13 VILLAGES

1. Balahi
2. Badibag
3. Bahadurganj (Maharajganj)
4. Tari
5. Satmalpur (Ward No-2)
6. Satmalpur (Ward No-3 & 4)
7. Hansa (Ward No-15)
8. Nagarbasti (Ward No-6 & 7)
9. Nagarbasti Hansa (Ward No-8)
10. Hansa (Ward No-11)
11. Hansaganj (Ward No 14)
12. Noorganj (Ward No-1)
13. Satmalpur (Maliagachi)

DISHARI: 12 VILLAGES

In **24 Parganas** district:

1. Baguadanga
2. Rajapur (North 24 Parganas)
3. Kantabagan (North 24 Parganas)
4. Tipi (North 24 Parganas)

In **Murshidabad** district :

5. Govindapur
6. Nutangram
7. Gopal Nagar
8. Srikantapur

In **Paschim Medinipur**
(or West Midnapore) district:

9. Khajuri
10. Dashagram
11. Kilanda
12. Rautarabari



GIFTS THAT SUPPORT
Community





Left: adult literacy class in Hansa village. Below: tailoring class in Satmalpur village.



UJIYALA – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM, BIHAR

TEAR is supporting Muneer's work with 13 villages in Samastipur District, which is one of the poorest areas in Bihar State. The three-year project, which commenced in April 2011, is Muneer's first long-term community development project in Bihar.

Local people face a number of key challenges. Many children miss out on an education because there are no buildings or teachers within travelling distance. Consequently, adult literacy rates are not high and vocational skills low. Most adults make their living as farm labourers, firewood sellers, or in the local stone mines – low paid, back-breaking jobs with little security. There are few medical facilities within reach, and most families cannot afford treatment. The elderly, children and pregnant women rarely receive health care when they need it.

During the rainy season the low-lying district is often beset by heavy floods from the nearby Ganges and Gandak rivers. Water lies over the land for several days, causing costly losses to crops and livestock, destruction of property, and an increase in water-borne diseases.

WHAT THE PROJECT IS DOING

Muneer's staff initially held a number of community meetings in different villages in order to find out what local people understood as their most important needs and priorities and make sure that the voices of women, the elderly and young people were heard. Over the three years of the project, the objective is to empower each village to chart their own path and take charge of their social and economic development.

MAIN FOCUS AREAS

Adult literacy. Train men, women and young people in functional literacy and numeracy so that they can confidently manage basic financial transactions and be less vulnerable to exploitation.

Vocational training. Provide women in particular with access to training in skills such as tailoring, so they can find employment or start their own businesses and contribute to their family's income.

Women's empowerment. Support women as they form Self-Help Groups to save money, practise new income-generation skills, and learn about their rights.

Health awareness. Train local health volunteers to provide families with usable information on improved nutrition, disease prevention, sanitation and accessing available health-care services.

Community empowerment. Form strong and inclusive Village Development Committees that will help each community direct its own future.

Disaster mitigation. Building the capacity of the villages to respond to emergency situations and reduce the potential harm caused by future flooding.





Right: demonstration on social mapping, to help visualise the village for disaster response.
Below: demonstration on first aid.



DISHARI – DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM, WEST BENGAL

MAIN FOCUS AREAS

Disaster preparedness. Create village disaster mitigation task forces to plan for disaster preparedness and manage disaster responses, ensuring that the most vulnerable are at the forefront of all flood prevention and relief initiatives.

Poverty fighting. Give villagers the skills and resources to tackle the specific causes of poverty and build strong and resilient communities, through health awareness, vocational training and adult literacy education.

Advocacy. Support community members as they work together and engage with local government to access pensions and other entitlements.

Community empowerment. Form self-managed, inclusive community-based organisations (CBOs) that will help each community manage its own development pathway.

TEAR is partnering with Muneer in their work with 12 villages. This three-year project commenced in April 2012.

West Bengal is a delta area where countless streams and rivers run into the sea. Its alluvial soils are ideal for farming and its extensive coastline helps make it the country's leading fishery area. However, more than 40% of the total area of the State is susceptible to flood, and when disaster strikes, the effect on lives, property and food production is enormous.

The participating villages are all in low-lying areas and are affected by flooding during monsoons and when river levels rise. They lack adequate infrastructure for both disaster mitigation and response – poor drainage, fragile levy banks, no rescue boats and scant health care resources. In addition, many youths and men migrate to towns and cities in search of work because of few opportunities at home, leaving women, children and the elderly to cope with floods alone.

WHAT THE PROJECT IS DOING

The project has two broad aims. Primarily, Muneer wants to empower communities to more effectively prevent and respond to flooding, to minimise loss of lives, livelihoods, roads, buildings and livestock, and reduce secondary effects such as the spread of infectious diseases. But disaster mitigation alone isn't enough. The ultimate aim is to equip each village with appropriate resources, skills and structures to address the root causes of poverty and work together for a strong, sustainable and equitable future.





This village community participates in "social mapping" to help identify what the project should focus on.

Muneer staff conducted a Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis with representatives of each village in the Dishari project. The purpose was to gain a systematic understanding of local disaster risks and hazards, to assess available community resources for preparing and responding to disasters, to ensure that child protection is a priority in all aspects of disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and to arrive at a village response and mitigation plan.



Tailoring students in Bahadur Ganj Village proudly display some of their garments. Muneer is running tailoring classes in two villages as part of the Ujjiyala project. Each village has two classes, mostly made up of teenage girls. Each girl is asked to pay 40 rupees (70c) per month and attends a two-hour class six days a week. For most of the students, this is the first time they have learned how to sew. The next challenge will be for students to find markets for their work so they can earn a regular income.



It is impressive that Jamil, a young male staff member, has been able to start and sustain the class, made up mostly of reserved Muslim women who don't usually interact with men outside of their families.

Members of the women's literacy class in Badibag village pose with the group's facilitator. None of the women had attended a literacy class before and they were very excited to grasp the opportunity given to them by Muneer as part of the Ujjiyala project. The group is a forum for discussing health and women's rights, and members have also learned about various government entitlements they are eligible for, including bonuses for women who give birth in a hospital. The students are excited about what lies ahead: "We will shine in the future!" they said.



"LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR." – MATTHEW 22:39

Pray for our partner:

- Pray for staff of Muneer as they listen to the voices of the poor and marginalised and stand beside them over the long haul. May they truly be a "lighthouse" of hope and encouragement.
- Give thanks for the changes that are already happening in people's lives, as they learn new skills, work together, and try new ways of doing

things. Ask God to encourage them in their successes and strengthen them when times are hard.

- Pray for TEAR's project staff as they seek to be good partners for Muneer. Give both agencies humility, patience, insight, courage and a teachable spirit.
- In vulnerable places like Bihar and West Bengal, floods are getting worse and rainfall

patterns are becoming more erratic. The world's climate is changing – and the people who have done least to cause this crisis are the ones suffering the most. Pray that we in Australia will have the courage to modify how we live for the sake of the poor and our planet – and that our Government will take climate change seriously.





“THEY ASKED ONLY ONE THING, THAT WE REMEMBER THE POOR, WHICH WAS ACTUALLY WHAT I WAS EAGER TO DO.” – GALATIANS 2:10

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Your financial support is significantly improving the living conditions for communities in West Bengal and Bihar with whom TEAR’s partners work.

TEAR hopes that, as well as giving financially, you and your church community will find other ways to engage with TEAR's work:



LEARN:

Grow in your knowledge and understanding of God's heart for the poor, from a developmental and biblical perspective. Sign up for TEAR News from TEAR Australia.



SPEAK OUT:

Through your engagement with TEAR and in response to the Bible's teaching on justice and compassion, become empowered to speak out about issues of poverty and injustice to those in power in our nation.



PRAY:

As an individual, or within your normal group, pray in an informed way for poor communities around the world, that their lives might be transformed. There are some prayer points on the previous pages to start with.



LIVE WELL:

God may also stir you to consider how your lifestyle choices impact on the lives of the poor. TEAR can provide you with resources and ideas for lifestyle changes that help reduce the impact on poor communities.



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GIFTS OF LIFE. Hope AND Opportunity



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