



THE BELAKU TRUST
RESEARCH & ACTION



THE BELAKU TRUST
APRIL 2012 / MARCH 2013

Dedicated to Community Health, Research and Action



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DEAR FRIENDS OF BELAKU

It is always a pleasure to write this annual letter. It gives me an opportunity to thank you for the support and practical help you have given us during the year. It is also a time to take stock of Belaku's recent challenges and achievements.

The drought in our area has, of course, created major difficulties. Shortage of food and rising prices has been very hard on the village families who find it difficult to manage in the best of times. Belaku was especially glad that some village women could make extra money by working in our income generating groups.

groups have gained in skill and confidence and the range of goods continues to widen. We were also glad to contribute the services of the Gelathis, home health visitors who can advise on nutrition at a time when right choices are especially important. The Anganwadis, besides helping preschool children academically, have always given them a nutritious midday meal and so it has been encouraging to see more parents valuing their service and more children attending.

We have now worked for nineteen years with the villagers of south Karnataka. It has become clearer to us every year that handouts, although sometimes necessary, will not solve the problems of poverty and lack of proper government services that trouble these communities. It has been very good to watch village people to take control of their situation as they have done by helping finance the Anganwadis. Belaku can assist in this process by meeting with government officials and discussing village needs.

I began and would like to end with a note of thanks. Our work would not be possible without the great and small financial contributions you so generously send. We would often feel overwhelmed and discouraged without the warm interest you take in our work.

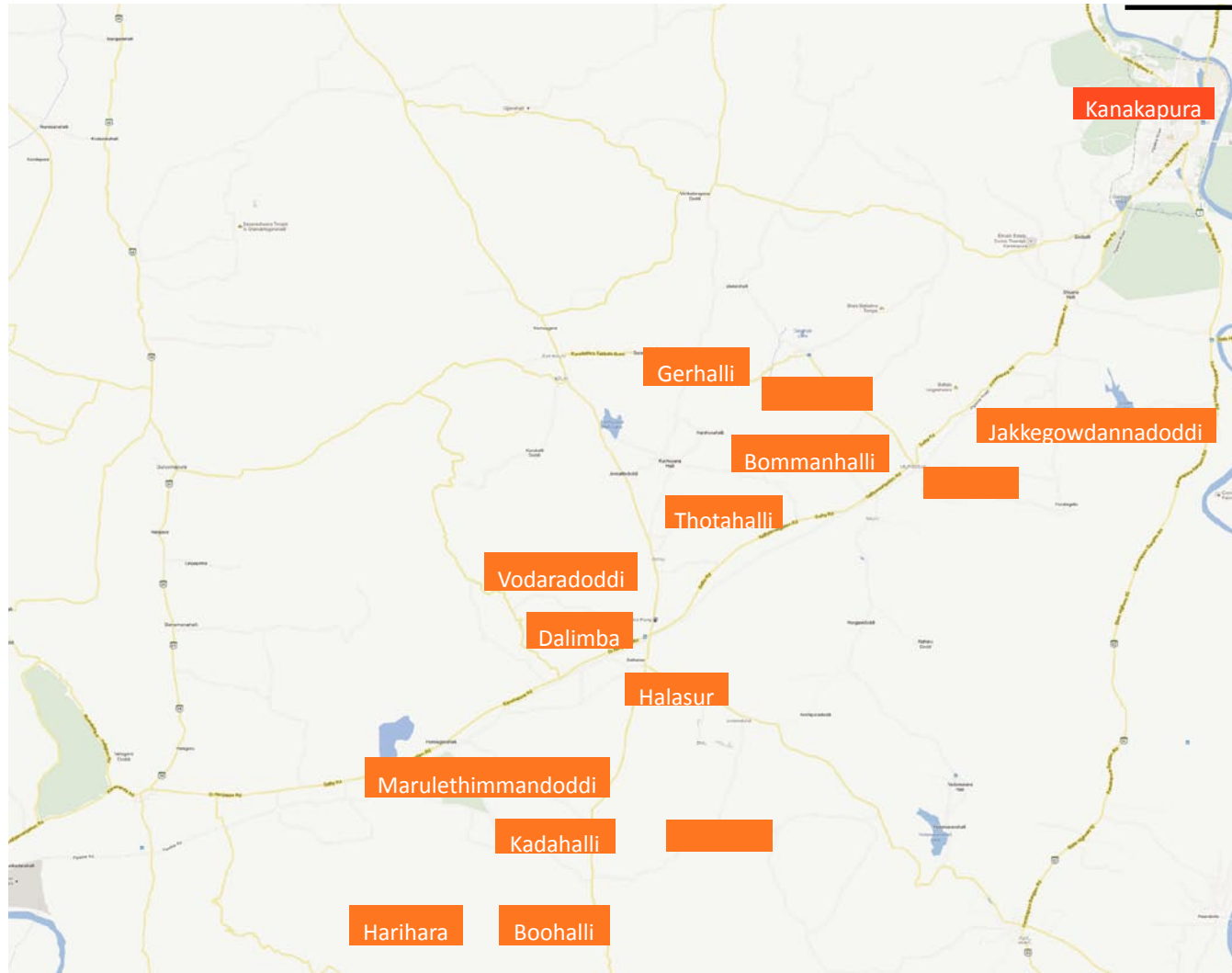
Thank you again.

Yours,

Girish Karnad
Chief Trustee



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE STAND FOR



We are a group from various professional backgrounds, all committed to seeing a better life for the people of Kanakapura Taluk. Our focus has always been on the health and nutrition of women and children in this area and our research has shown how many factors hinder them from leading a healthy life. We see women coping with extreme poverty, lack of health information and ignorance of the skills needed to access and improve the services that should be available to them.

Our many programmes and activities have all been designed in the belief that:

- Charity and handouts are not the answer.
- Real, lasting change in our rural areas must come from the village communities themselves.
- We can work with these communities to help them gain the knowledge and skills to effect these changes.
- We can work with the existing services, which need to be strengthened, not sidelined or replaced.
- We stand for the right of the community to make their own decisions and have the healthiest life possible.

WHAT WE DO AND WHY

Our research has been sponsored by groups like UNICEF, the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation and the World Health Organization. It has shown us that poor health and nutrition in the villages comes from many related causes.

Poverty

- Lack of money restricts the diet of many families and forces village mothers to take ill-paid labour work far from home. Babies are left with older siblings who cannot give proper care.
- In response, Belaku has developed three income generation groups, where village women produce craftwork that we have been able to market worldwide on their behalf.
- We have given loans to women to buy livestock.
- We assist with medical help for the neediest families.

Lack of Knowledge

- Working together at the income generation groups and at other venues organized by Belaku gives village women the opportunity to discuss problems and share ideas and information.
- Belaku has trained home visitors, Gelathis, to give information on health and nutrition to mothers.
- Our Smart Start Programme also gives women help at home and concentrates on giving information on pregnancy and baby care.

Lack of Academic Education

- Education for village people has always been hampered by transport problems and lack of money. The lack of opportunity for children affects their health and the wellbeing of their community.
- Belaku supports the workers in government-sponsored Anganwadis, or preschools. These workers' functioning can suffer if they feel isolated.
- Under the programme A Future through Fun, Belaku organizes summer camps for children and young people. This is an educational enrichment experience. Some seven to eight hundred children and young people learn about health, environment and gender justice through games, films and computer programmes.
- When necessary, we provide scholarships so that local students can attend school and college.



PROGRAMMES

2012 / 2013

Gelathi and Smart Start Programmes

We have been involved in the government preschool (Anganwadi) programme for the past several years. The Gelathis work alongside the staff in the preschool (Anganwadi) to facilitate learning and good health and to ensure that the service achieves its full potential. The Gelathi programme, which was introduced in eight villages originally, has now been extended so as to expand the benefits to more children; it now covers thirteen Anganwadis in twelve villages. The Gelathis work in the preschool (Anganwadi) of their own village for three days and for another three days work in the preschool (Anganwadi) of the neighbouring village. They continue to do their nutrition and health counseling visits in their own villages in the afternoons for all the six days.

Over the course of our work in the past months, our field coordinators, who manage work in the villages, gathered information and in the month of September conducted a session on malnutrition in the area. Despite the length of time we have been working in the area, the presentation revealed eye-opening figures.

Isy Tavares, who is doing her MPH at Yale, interned with us and spent eight weeks working on issues of nutrition. She undertook a pilot study comparing nutritional intake and hygiene practices of children who are underweight with those of normal weight in the villages we work in. Her findings will help us make productive additions to our counseling sessions.

Income Generation Groups

The women's income generation groups that we support, Kirana, Deepa and Ushe, were involved in several sales as various groups and individuals have expressed interest in their work. These were met with an especially encouraging and positive response. It seemed as if they were at a sale every other day – at the homes of kind friends, at supportive corporates, at events organized by groups like A Hundred Hands and The Overseas Women's Club (OWC). The reception, income and feedback were all very encouraging for the women. Another venue for sales was the Bangalore International Centre, which used the products of the women's groups for gifts for many of their speakers.

New products and designs, such as soft toys, are being worked on. Wiewa van der Zwan and another volunteer, David Bostock, along with our field coordinator, Mani Venkatesh, conducted a design competition for the Deepa and Ushe women. These yielded some interesting new designs that have sold well.

This year the women's groups made double the profits compared to 2011.

Research

Baneen Karachiwala conducted a poster presentation, Quality of Care in Obstetric Services in Rural South India, in Colombo in October. Her findings met with great interest.

Summer Camps

The Belaku Trust ran summer camps with the funds generously donated by our long-time supporters, The Overseas Women's Club (OWC). Children of all ages, castes and social backgrounds joined in on a variety of activities at the camps, which were held across April and May 2012. Health, nutrition, hygiene and the environment were emphasized through various group activities. The computer lessons were a big hit this year too and all the children got turns playing on a math based game, a memory game and a drawing / painting programme.

We had assistance from a lot of volunteers in the planning and running of the camps. About 60 volunteers from ANZ helped us run the computer knowledge component of the camp as well as some of the other activities. Sara Krautbauer, who was volunteering at the time, helped with designing the games and curriculum and also documented how they went during the camp.

Other Activities

Belaku helped a woman from Kanakapura with gynecological and psychiatric issues get care at the Victoria hospital.

Krishna* (name changed), the teenaged son of one of the women in the income generation group Ushe, was helped with the procurement of a wheelchair with the funds donated to us by The Overseas Women's Club (OWC).

A lot of time and effort was spent in providing assistance to a mother in Boohalli village of Kanakapura taluk who gave birth to premature twin girls. Their story follows.

OUR STORIES

Lakshmi* (name changed) delivered premature twins in the Kanakapura Hospital. Dangerously small, at 1100 and 800 grams, the family was advised to take the mother and babies to a higher level hospital in Bangalore. Alarmed by what they heard would be the cost, they left saying they would go to the Bangalore hospital on their own, but instead turned home.

A day later, the Belaku staff came to hear of the babies, who were too small to breastfeed. After much persuasion and assistance, the parents and babies moved to the hospital that had been recommended in Bangalore, arriving late at night only to be told there was no place available in the Newborn ICU and were moved to a second hospital. Here again they were initially refused admission and finally grudgingly told that admission for one baby would be arranged, but the other would have to “find somewhere else”. The Belaku staff again intervened, meeting with considerable stonewalling and misinformation, and it seemed that only the mention of contacting senior health officials resulted in the final admission of both babies.

Sadly the larger infant died of pneumonia but the other was finally discharged after one and a half months. Even ensuring adequate follow up after discharge has been an uphill battle, but we are happy that she seems to be healthy and developmentally normal. Her mother has begun to work with the Kirana women’s group, and takes the baby along. This brings her an income that she can use for the child’s care.

This experience leaves us wondering how the family or others like them would have fared without our repeated intervention and why the system seemed so impenetrable.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- We plan to continue with our existing programmes.
- We are working with the people of Kanakapura Taluk who want their homes to be safe, healthy places. Health information empowers mothers but they also need to be more aware of the government services that should be available. We aim to work more closely with government service providers.
- We have concentrated on the health needs of mothers and young children. We also plan to direct our work to the adolescent problems of sexual health and sexual ignorance.
- Many village lives are made miserable by alcoholism and domestic violence. We plan to work with the families affected.

CHALLENGES

There have been many challenges in the last year. The drought in our area has caused great hardship and illness is always more likely when rural families are under this sort of pressure. The health care system in our area is ineffective and we continue to work with government agencies to make necessary improvements.

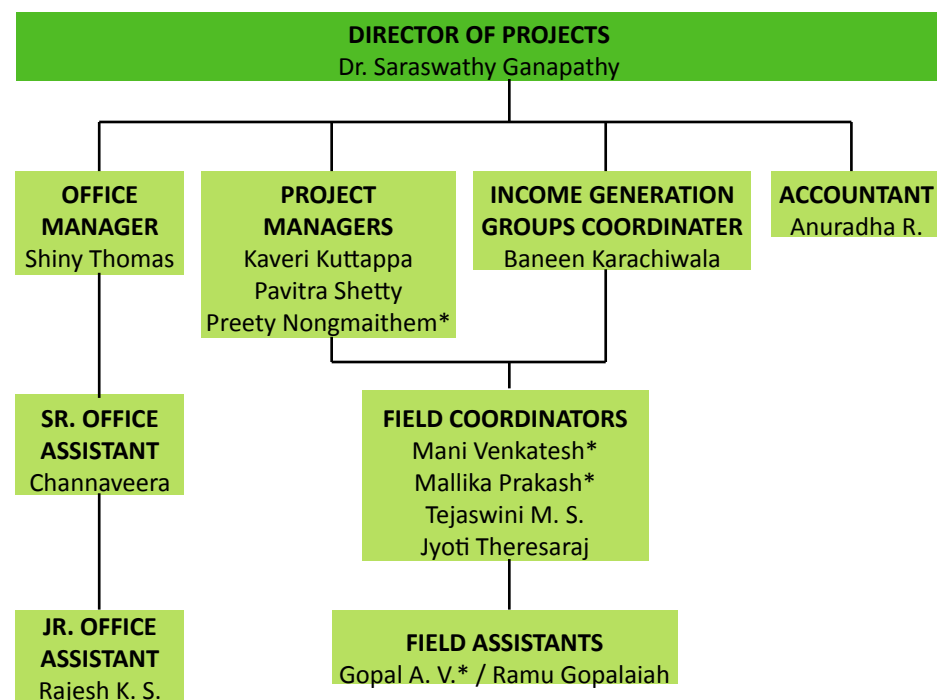
Daily organization of our programmes and raising funds in a volatile economy is challenging. We know we need to constantly evaluate our work style and be ready to change when necessary.

We must also remember that change is challenging for people. We aim to help women and children improve their lives but if this is successful, the family structure is changed and some members may feel threatened. We have to be sensitive to this.



GOVERNANCE

| Name | Gender | Role | Occupation |
|-----------------|--------|---------------|---|
| Girish Karnad | Male | Chief Trustee | Film-maker |
| Sarita Bakhshi | Female | Trustee | Business Realty |
| GS Jayanthi | Female | Trustee | Proprietor Ananya Boutique |
| Sadiqa Peerbhoy | Female | Trustee | Director - MAA Communications Pvt. Ltd. |
| Anjana Vivek | Female | Trustee | Chartered Accountant |
| VS Thyagarajan | Male | Advisor | Chartered Accountant / Financial Consultant |



*resigned from Belaku Trust prior to 31st March 2013

STAFF

The staff at Belaku helps us move ahead and put our efforts in the right direction, all the time keeping in mind our vision and goals. There were a few who had to leave because of other personal commitments.

- Shubhamani resigned from our staff after two years of working with the Gelathi programme.
- Preety Nongmaithem was with us as programme coordinator from July 2012 to January 2013.
- Pavitra Shetty, who had been volunteering with us, came on board as part time staff member in December 2012 and is involved in overseeing the Gelathi and Smart Start Programmes.
- Ramu joined as our field driver at Kanakpura in February 2013.
- Two of our field coordinators, Mani and Mallika and our field driver, Gopal have opted to move towards new endeavors.

MEDIA / PUBLICITY

The Belaku Trust email ID has been changed from belaku@belakutrust.org.in to belaku@belakutrust.org, at which we can be contacted for suggestions and contributions.

Our old website went through a major revamp with help from one of our past volunteers, Victoria Coffey.

In addition to the new website, we have created a new facebook page The Belaku Trust. We will close down our earlier facebook page Belaku Trust, so if any of you were connected via this, we hope you will all link to our new facebook page.

Harmony magazine of June 2012 carried an article on Dr. Ganapathy and her work with Belaku. The article can be read on our blog <http://belakutrust.wordpress.com/>.

If you would like to read Ayesha Aleem's article published in India Today about Belaku, put the following link in the web browser: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/shes-every-woman.../1/251949.html>.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT ...

We are enormously grateful for the support we have received during the year. It has come from individuals, family foundations and corporate houses.

Dr. Girish Karnad was invited by Drs. Anil and Bharathi Mundkur to Sydney, Australia in September of 2012 to speak at a private dinner for family and friends. Many at that event generously donated towards Belaku's work.

Belaku participated in the Food for Chang event on October 8th 2012 organized by Bangalore Cares during the JOY OF GIVING Week (October 2nd till October 8th 2012). Himatsingka and Biocon supported us by their generous donations and many friends purchased tickets to the dinner.

We appeal again to your generosity for help in maintaining programmes like the following:

Rs. 500 (USD \$8) supports educational enrichment programmes for rural children. Boys and girls who have never travelled more than a few miles from home benefit from trips to museums and historical sites. At summer camps they can meet new people and learn about health and the environment.

Rs. 2000 (USD \$30) supports a community health care worker for a month and gives families easy access to health care and advice.

Rs. 20,000 (USD \$300) supports the three women's income generation groups for one month. This covers training, marketing and production costs. These groups have contributed greatly to the welfare of women and their families. We very much want to keep them strong.



HOW TO DONATE

Cheque Donations

Please make out to the Belaku Trust,
697, 15th Cross Road,
JP Nagar Phase II,
Bangalore, India, 560078

Direct bank transfer

For Indian Citizens

Account name: Belaku Trust
Bank RTGS Code: SBMY0040008
Account no: 54018362960
Address: State Bank of Mysore, Banashankari Branch,
305, 40th Cross, 2nd Main Road,
8th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore, 560 082

Overseas

Overseas direct transfers can be made through our Bank's partners in your country of residence. For full information on how to donate this way please contact us at belaku@belakutrust.org.



Donating as a US Resident

For US residents looking to make tax deductible donations – please donate through People for Progress in India

Online

www.ppi-usa.org

Please email PPI at ppiusa@ppi-usa.org informing them about your donation to the Belaku Trust.

Check

Mail checks payable to People for Progress in India (make sure you write Belaku Trust somewhere on your Check) and mail to:

People for Progress in India (PPI), c/o S.K. Srinath,
13927 SE 47th St, Bellevue, Wa 98006, USA

Please be sure to give your email when sending a donation via PPI. PPI will not provide your email to any other organization.

Donating as a UK resident

For UK residents looking to make online donations, please visit <https://www.cafonline.org/>. Please email us at belaku@belakutrust.org with your Name and Address once you have made the donation online.

For residents of other countries

For cheque donations or direct bank transfers, please contact us at belaku@belakutrust.org for details. Click the link below if you would like to make your donation online using Ammodo <https://www.ammodo.com/donate?123748target=blank>. Please email us at belaku@belakutrust.org with your name and address once you have made the donation online.

WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Donors

One especially gratifying example of support is that one of our previous employees has been generous enough to provide a scholarship for a young woman to go to college. She is the daughter of one of the women in our income generation group. A complete list of our donors is available in our audited accounts.

Professional and Student volunteers

Wiea van der Zwan, who has volunteered at Belaku for a long time, with the Ushe group as her special interest, has returned to the Netherlands and will be much missed by Ushe and the rest of us.

Pratima Gokhale (Bangalore)

Victoria Coffey (AU)

Sameer Sharma (US)

David Bostock (UK)

Cassandra Martin (AU)

Isy Tavarez (US)

Claire Russell (AU)

Claire Corbin (US)

Stephanie Westcott (AU)

Marc Blessin (Germany)

Arjun Shankar (Bangalore)

Supporters

Sarah Burns, who was our charities coordinator from The Overseas Women's Club (OWC), returned to the USA and Lene Simonsen took over her role.

Mr. K. T. Ganapathy was the driving force who ensured that our revamp of software and security of our computer systems was accomplished perfectly.

Ms. Vinita A. Shetty (Journalist/Producer) graciously nominated Belaku for the Asia Society Asia 21 Public Service Award. We made it to the final shortlist for this award which was a huge honor in itself.



NETWORKING

We collaborate and share information with many categories of people:

- with students who come to experience the realities of the village situation
- with organizations with similar interests
- with local planners and policy makers.

Belaku Trust was involved in a network meeting with the Child Rights Trust regarding a draft of the Early Childhood Education Policy along with a discussion about programmes to combat malnutrition.

Mr. Keshav Desiraju, the current Health Secretary, visited various Government facilities in March and met with Belaku staff and Gelathis at the time. His obvious concern for the optimum functioning of the local health facilities heartens us and has provided a link between the government staff and Belaku.



VISITORS



We were privileged to have Smt B Jayashree, Rajya Sabha MP and Shri Anand Raju spend a day with us, visiting various village projects. Shri Ambareesh, the well-known actor, graciously entertained some of our staff at his home and promised help with fund-raising.

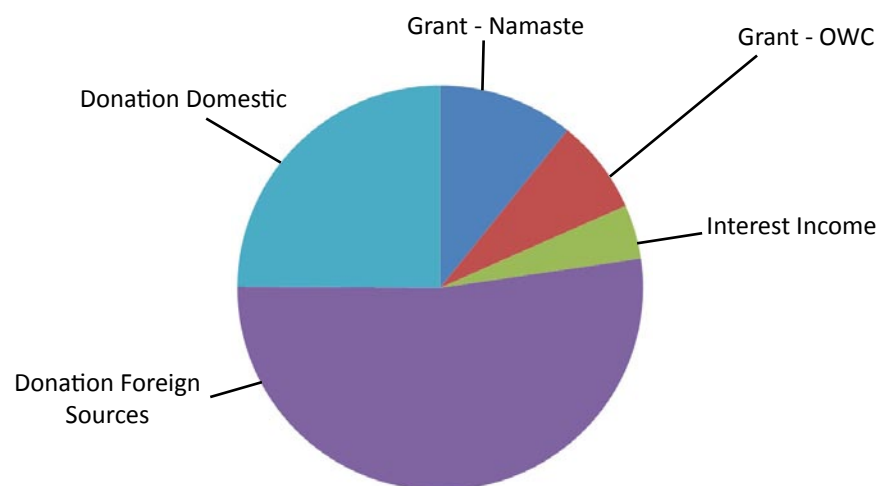
Other welcome visitors were:

Erin Mee and Leila Shankar
Keshav Desiraju
Olga Graf
Kerry Scott
Kathryn O'Connor and Julia Williams of Youth Challenge Australia
Danielle Edwards with friend Matthew Webster
Bharathi Mundkur
Denzil Fernandes
Aroon Shivdasani
Eric Vivien, Delphine Marie-Vivien
Jane Ogilvie of Youth Challenge Australia
Prof. Birgit Weller
Stephanie Volpini

FINANCES

2012 / 2013

Income for the Financial Year 2012 - 2013

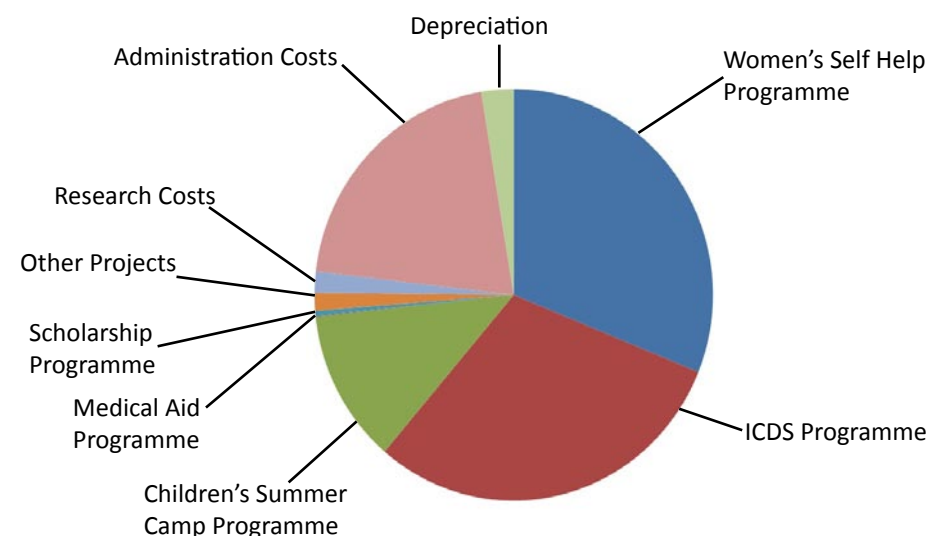


Total Income Rs. 31,19,253

| Income | Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Grant - Namaste | 11% |
| Grant - OWC | 8% |
| Interest Income | 4% |
| Donation Foreign Sources | 52% |
| Donation Domestic | 25% |
| Total | 100% |

The Belaku Trust was registered in 1995 under the Indian Trust Act, Reg. No. 290. All donations are exempt under section 80G of Income Tax Act. You will receive your Tax exemption certificate once payment is received. We are registered under section 6(1) of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976, with Registration number 094420976 and can therefore receive foreign contributions.

Expenditure for the Financial Year 2012 - 2013



Total Expenditure Rs. 27,86,253

| Expenditure | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Womens' Self Help Programme | 31.1% |
| ICDS Programme | 30.1% |
| Childrens' Summer Camp Programme | 12.1% |
| Medical Aid Programme | 0.1% |
| Scholarship Programme | 0.4% |
| Other Projects | 1.4% |
| Research costs | 1.7% |
| Administration Costs | 20.6% |
| Depreciation | 2.6% |
| Total | 100% |

Bankers

State Bank of Mysore, Banashankari Branch
305 40th Cross, 3rd Main Road, Jayanagar 8th Block
Bangalore 560082

Auditors

T. Sriram and Co., Chartered Accountants
2974 17th Cross, K.R. Road
Bangalore 560070

Audited accounts are available on request.



CONTACT DETAILS

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E: belaku@belakutrust.org

W: www.belakutrust.org

FB: www.facebook.com/belakutrust

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