



**REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE
SCOTT BADER COMMONWEALTH GLOBAL CHARITY FUND
ON THE SMALL GRANT PROVIDED TO
CARERS WORLDWIDE FOR THE PROJECT:**

***SHORT BREAKS FOR CARERS OF
CHILDREN WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES
AND ADULTS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS***

**SOUTH INDIA
JULY 2013 - JULY 2014**



BACKGROUND TO CARERS WORLDWIDE AND OUR WORK

Carers Worldwide is a UK registered charity, set up to highlight and tackle the problems faced by unpaid family carers in developing countries.

Across the developing world, the daily needs of millions of sick and disabled adults and children are met by their carers. These unpaid carers are usually a family member, often mother or daughter, or maybe a friend.

However, there is currently no state or community based provision for carers in the most developing countries. There is no recognition of the contribution they make to the person for whom they care or to the wider society. Carers are invisible. As a result of caring responsibilities, many carers experience physical and mental ill-health, social isolation and reduced income due to restrictions on their ability to work alongside caring responsibilities.

Our highly effective model for creating **real and sustainable changes** in attitudes and practises involves partnering with existing agencies already working with sick and disabled people. In this way, we are able to facilitate rapid change in awareness and service provision for carers across large organisations, creating **significant and long lasting impact**.

Our activities at grass roots level are simple:

1. Identify carers hidden in the community
2. Access counselling and medical services where needed
3. Build on the skills and abilities of carers to care better and to determine their own goals for survival and development
4. Build self help groups so as to give an opportunity for friendship, to better represent their needs and to build livelihood options
5. Organise short breaks and respite for carers

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

In June 2013, the Scott Bader Commonwealth Global Charity Fund generously supported our project entitled “**Short Breaks for Carers of Children with Severe Disabilities and Adults with Mental Illness**” with a grant of £1,900, enabling us to implement a project with two of our project partners in South India to provide much needed short breaks for 100 carers.

There is little or no opportunity for respite for carers in our project areas (and indeed for most carers in developing countries) and they frequently feel that they are the only person carrying the load. The burden placed on them is immense and has a direct impact on their physical, mental and emotional health. Many carers become unwell themselves, and are in need of physical care or counselling.



Parvathamma cares day in, day out for Mallayya who has cerebral

The anticipated outcome was that the provision of short breaks would have a positive impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of carers, giving them time for themselves to rest and meet others. In addition, the disabled and mentally ill individuals being cared for would receive an increase in the quality of their care as a result of the emotional, mental and physical needs of their carers being better addressed. They would also have the opportunity to be cared for by somebody different while their main carer was away, which would increase their own social contacts and interaction outside of the home.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT

As a direct result of the funding provided by the Scott Bader Commonwealth Global Charity Fund, we were able to support two of our project partners – SACRED working in Andhra Pradesh state and SAMUHA working in Karnataka state – to implement the short breaks project with their beneficiaries.

Together, Carers Worldwide, SACRED and SAMUHA achieved the following:

- **15 partner staff and community workers were trained** on the importance of respite opportunities and how to facilitate these
- **146 carers (109 women, 18 men and 19 child carers - 11 girls and 8 boys)** benefited from a short break of one to two days
- **152 children with disabilities and 15 adults with mental illness** benefited from the improved emotional wellbeing of their primary carer and also from the chance to interact with additional individuals (some carers look after more than one family member)
- **112 other family or community members received training** on how to care for the disabled or mentally ill individual whose carer had gone on a short break



Carers on an overnight trip to a temple

This was a significant achievement in a 12 month period. Prior to this project, many of the carers had not had a single day off from caring since they became a carer.

It can be seen that we actually exceeded the target of 100 carers going on a short break. Overall, SAMUHA and SACRED work with a total of 223 carers. It was possible to include 146 carers in the short breaks project as many of the breaks took place on a group basis. This was a decision made by the carers themselves, since they had formed such strong bonds with each other through the regular carers self help groups also facilitated by Carers Worldwide that they wanted to take their breaks together too. This resulted in significant unanticipated benefits, including increased mutual support amongst the carers and the chance of group alternative care arrangements for the cared-for as well as the opportunity to benefit a greater number of carers.

The location for each short break was decided by the carers and was often a local temple or tourist attraction. The group of child carers chose to go to a wildlife park – something none of them had experienced before.

On occasions, a child did accompany their carer on the short break due to the complexity of their needs or the desire for the carer not to be too far away from their child. In these cases, accompanying staff members took on caring responsibilities and the carer still expressed that they felt relaxed and refreshed by the experience – a feeling they would not have had if they had left their child behind. The children also benefited from the opportunity.



Child carers letting off steam

CONCLUSION

This was an immensely successful project, made possible by the generous grant from the Scott Bader Commonwealth Global Charity Fund. Previously isolated and over-burdened carers, mainly mothers, were given the opportunity to have a break from caring, enjoy a trip away from home and spend time with other carers who could understand their daily trials and challenges. Strengthened by the experience of implementing this project, Carers Worldwide’s project partners SACRED and SAMUHA have committed to continuing to facilitate short breaks for carers and are exploring local sources of funding, now that they can clearly demonstrate the need and benefits.

We are most grateful to the Trustees of the Scott Bader Commonwealth Global Charity Fund for providing the funding to implement the project, the first of its kind and pave the way for further initiatives of this kind, benefiting carers who before now have had no recognition of or respite from their caring responsibilities.

“Thank you for the chance to have this break – you can’t know what it means to me. I get so stressed and low with worrying about my daughters and their future. It is a therapy to come away and have no cares for a day or two.”
Yellamma, mother of three girls who are all deafblind

“We didn’t really understand the power a short break could have for a carer. To see them come back smiling and refreshed is incredible. This will be a core part of our programmes for carers now.”
*Prabhakar,
Senior Disability Worker, SAMUHA*

If you would like any more information, please do not hesitate to contact:

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