

## WIN highlights for 2022 to 2023



*WIN's foundations were built through adversity. When you create an organisation specifically to help those no one else wants to, primarily because their problems are varied, complex, time consuming and costly to resolve, then you know you're in for an uphill struggle. Add into the mix, societal prejudices, cultural conditioning, and bureaucracy, and it could arguably be a recipe for disaster.*

*Over two decades operating in the districts of Nagpur and Wardha, WIN has defied many odds and brought dignity and hope to thousands of lives. We are unapologetically small and extremely thankful to our supporters for sustaining the organisation through 20+ years. – (Leah S Pattison MBE)*

### **Why is there a need for Women in Need?**

While India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, it is also one of the most unequal countries.

Inequality has been rising for the last three decades. The richest have cornered a huge part of the wealth.

These widening gaps and rising inequalities affect women and children the most.

The rich are getting richer while the poor are still struggling to earn a minimum wage and access quality education, and healthcare services.

## Let's look at the figures from OXFAM India

The top 10% of India's population holds 77% of the national wealth

India has 119 Billionaires. Their total wealth is higher than the entire Union Budget of India for the fiscal year 2018-19 which was 24422 billion

Many Ordinary Indian are not able to access the health care they need. 63 million of them are pushed into poverty because of health care costs every year – that almost 2 people every second!



To appreciate where funds are utilised by WIN, it's important to have a comprehensive understanding of how the charity operates at every level. Newsletters and case studies illustrate the need on an individual basis, but do not adequately convey the depth and breadth of service provided by WIN each year.

The following report offers an in-depth account of WIN's annual operations.

# Protecting and Empowering Women and Girls through WIN's Advisory Services



Women approach us for trusted advice and financial assistance in a moment of crisis. Over the last two decades WIN has acquired invaluable knowledge and experience in addressing the many complex issues that come through our doors. We have a means tested system and a network of trusted professionals at our disposal, making our organisation one of the best sources of support and information in Nagpur, Wardha and Mangrul.

## Our Services

**Counselling and suicide prevention** – Indian women are conditioned to remain silent on matters relating to abuse, rape, and domestic violence. The impact of suppressing trauma has been keenly documented by WIN. Women take their lives because no one wants to hear them. They are completely isolated. There are no local authority counselling services or helplines.

WIN's suicide prevention campaign educates and empowers women and girls to talk. Our social workers are trained and experienced in counselling. They know how to navigate through often deeply personal and distressing accounts of trauma and abuse and can liaise with local police, doctors, and the courts. Women in distress can access the help they need, and our social workers often go beyond the call of duty to be available.

In addition to suicide prevention WIN helps those injured through attempted suicide. These are distressing cases requiring urgent medical attention which the charity pays for. Most are young women left with life changing injuries. Our support doesn't end with financial assistance for medical expenses. Our social workers create a care package that extends after the individual has returned home.

Poor mental health, whatever the cause, is a taboo subject in India, leading to many women struggling to cope under the high expectations of being wives, mothers, and daughters in law. Those who develop severe mental health problems are abandoned on the streets, where they're subjected to further abuse, trauma, and neglect.

WIN plays a vital role in highlighting issues relating to poor mental health. Our programmes are designed to promote awareness, dispel myths, and offer confidential support. The charity is advised by two of Nagpur's leading psychiatrists.

According to a 2018 publication in the Lancet:

*Suicide is India's leading cause of death among women ages 15 to 29, and rates for young and middle-aged women rank the highest among countries with similar demographics*

**Legal aid** – underprivileged women lack knowledge and confidence when it concerns the law and legislation. WIN's legal advisor helps women dealing with disputes relating to marriage / physical and sexual violations / child custody / inheritance rights / medical malpractice & tenant rights. In addition to advice tailored to their specific needs, women are equipped with a greater understanding of their legal rights through legal workshops hosted by the charity.

*The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION and REDRESSAL) Act, 2013; and the Hindu Marriage Act .8*

**Accessing government grants** – women from low-income communities ironically have little knowledge of the concessions and grants available to those living below the poverty line. WIN offers a personalised service, assessing the need, researching the grant/concession facility, and making the application on behalf of the individual. This can be a lengthy process requiring regular visits to local authority departments bringing an application to fruition. The following schemes are some of those utilised by WIN:

*BPL card / Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme / Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao / Nagpur's local MP Mr Nitin Gadkari is often approached by the charity to intervene in pending cases and applications as well as providing financial assistance for medical care.*

# Medical Aid – saving lives through intervention, awareness, and financial support

According to Oxfam India's Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story:

The number of hospital beds per thousand population in India (0.5) is lower than some lesser developed countries such as Bangladesh (0.87), Kenya (1.4) and Chile (2.1). The Oxfam India report shows that constant underfunding of public healthcare system in the last decade has also worsened health infrastructure.

The Oxfam Inequality report highlights our own experience as a charity supporting some of the poorest and marginalised members of society – SC women.

## WIN plugs the gaps in local authority healthcare services. The following points are issues addressed by the charity:

**Discrimination and abusive behaviour**- We regularly hear accounts of abuse and discrimination from women who visit local authority hospitals. The worst incident the charity encountered was that of a 60 year old woman, found in the grounds of one of the major hospitals in Nagpur. She had horrendous injuries to her feet, crawling with maggots. Discovered on a Sunday and with no doctors on duty, she was made comfortable with the promise of hospital admission the next morning. Returning early on Monday we found her naked, she'd been raped and left exposed while the public and staff busied themselves with their own concerns. The woman was feet away from the hospitals police office and yet no one bothered to respond to her obvious distress. Leah and Usha informed the police, the Dean of the hospital and insisted on an enquiry and immediate hospital admission. The response from the police was there would be no means of identifying the culprit therefore filing a report would be a waste of time. Hospital staff were resistant to admitting the woman due to the severity of her condition which would cause other patients in the women's ward to object. Our threats of publicly condemning this human rights violation led to her being admitted in the dirty laundry area at the back of a male ward. Raped, traumatised, in pain and with life threatening injuries this 60 year old woman was treated as an inconvenience in one of Asia's largest government hospitals – an institution created to serve the medical needs of the poor. The story ends tragically as the woman was removed by nursing staff a few days later and left in an unknown location. Our futile efforts to find her led to nothing. Our complaints to the Dean of the hospital also led to nothing. A charity representing a vulnerable woman could do very little to help. Imagine the countless others who have been abused in the hospital grounds or a best ignored and left to die. WIN is a much more experienced organisation that has developed a positive reputation and lines of communication with Nagpur's government hospitals. Such blatant human rights violations should never be tolerated, and the charity continues to protect women from medical discrimination and abuse.

**Lack of bedspace** – the charity negotiates with local authority hospitals to admit women in urgent need of medical care, which can be challenging. The easiest option would be to admit them in private hospitals, which we do occasionally BUT very few private hospitals are willing to take our women due to the severity of their problems. Many privately owned hospitals argue that the conditions of the women we rescue deter their more respectable clients. This kind of discrimination is unacceptable. WIN's role here is that of sensitisation, ensuring valuable bedspace is given to those most in need.

**Malpractice and Exploitation** – The charity addresses incidences of medical malpractice and exploitation, which is more prevalent in private practices. Patients are told they require costly surgery for conditions proven not to exist. Those who are terminally ill are easily exploited into paying thousands of dollars for treatment that won't make any difference to the prognosis. WIN prevents vulnerable women from being exploited by accompanying them to appointments and encouraging them to ask questions about their treatment. The charity makes sure treatment regimens are adhered to and that patients feel in control of their own bodies.

**Shortage of Antiretrovirals** – ARV's can offer a normal life expectancy for people living with HIV. Failure to take the drugs however leads to retroviral syndrome or worse still, the risk of drug resistance and HIV treatment failure. In Europe and the US ARV's are readily available. In the UK they are free to anyone with HIV. In the US Patient Assistance Programmes ensure people with HIV can get access to the drugs they need. In 2004 India created its National AIDS Control Programme providing free ARV to anyone with HIV. However regular drug shortages put thousands of people's lives at risk – especially the poor who can't afford to supplement their treatment. In 2022 it was estimated that 500,000 people living with HIV were affected by drug shortages according to Delhi based NGO Network of Positive People. WIN provided Abacavir+ Lamivudine and Dolutegravir at a cost of 3000 rupees per person per month.

**Costly symptomatic treatment** – It's ironic that while writing this report the Indian Health Minister Tanaji Sawant has announced that all treatment in Government Hospitals' will be free. We eagerly await to see when and how this will be implemented. Since 2000 however WIN has financed women's health care at multiple levels. Currently the cost of treatment is at an all-time high with **medical inflation at 14% - the highest in Asia**. Though charges in Government centres are less than those in private ones, diagnostic tests such as MRI's CT scans etc can carry a significant cost to the patient. A major annual expense to WIN is the outlay for symptomatic treatment. Women with disease such as cancer, sickle cell anaemia, heart disease, kidney disease require ongoing treatment to alleviate symptoms. WIN plays a vital role in supporting these women.

**Difficulties accessing Primary Health Care** – PHC's are present in many parts of Nagpur. However, women fail to visit a PHC due to work commitments. The majority of the charity's beneficiaries earn daily wages and can't afford to lose a day's pay. This prevents early intervention and treatment for conditions such as TB, malaria, and cancer. In taking a mobile PHC to the women's doors WIN bridges the gap and builds community trust – especially important in minority communities.

**Period Poverty – providing sanitary protection and addressing poor menstrual hygiene** – More than 77% of menstruating girls and women in India use an old cloth, which is often reused, ashes, newspaper, dried leaves, and husk sand during periods. During menstruation women are prohibited from participating in day-to-day activities. They cannot enter the kitchen or a temple as it's believed whatever touched will become contaminated. This is especially so for HIV+ women and girls.

From a health perspective poor menstrual hygiene causes urinary tract infections (UTI) and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). WIN is instrumental in dispelling the myths around periods through our awareness campaigns. Women get a chance to talk openly with a doctor about any concerns relating to menstruation. They are provided with washable sanitary underwear which is not only more environmentally friendly than sanitary pads but offers a more discreet way for women to handle their monthly periods. Our programmes are conducted throughout the year and across some of the most impoverished communities. We offer medical, emotional, social, and practical solutions to all period related problems.

## **Women's Cancer's – tackling a lack of awareness and preventative screening and supplementing costly treatment.**

Within the last decade WIN has seen an unprecedented increase in the number of women with cancer, particularly breast, cervical, ovarian, oral, and rectal. Increasingly more young women between the ages of 20-35 are approaching the charity for support with treatment and living costs.

90% of married women supported by WIN are abandoned by their husband's following diagnosis, leaving them dependant on parents who have little resources to support themselves. Some of the women rent rooms and work until the disease makes it impossible for them to continue. The picture for these women is extremely bleak. It's a problem very few want to acknowledge – leading to countless women suffering unimaginable pain and isolation. In an ideal world those of us who work for WIN wish the funds were available to establish a palliative care hospital exclusively for women with terminal cancer. In the absence of such a large pot of funds however, the charity does whatever possible to educate, screen, facilitate diagnosis, treatment, and end of life care.

## **Additional free medical services provided by WIN**

- Eye care – free checks, cataract surgery and glasses.
- Anaemia Awareness – free checks and treatment to combat the epidemic of anaemia in underprivileged communities.
- Chronic Kidney Disease Awareness and screening– due to an increasing number of women requiring financial assistance with costly dialysis and treatment for CKD WIN's campaign is saving lives.
- Dental Care – poor dental hygiene impacts on health. Women struggle to access costly dental treatment so WIN offers free check-ups and treatment.



# Food Aid – addressing the rising cost of food in India



**Food inflation August 23 is 11.5%** and the cost of living in general is pushing those living below the poverty line towards further deprivation. It's a shocking fact that WIN is required to supplement the most basic needs of women who approach us for help. They struggle with anaemia and resulting exhaustion because they can't afford a nutritious diet. Many are single mothers with children to support and do without food to ensure their children eat. In Nagpur WIN is responsible for supplementing the poor diets of women living below the poverty line.

The charity also operates a **Meals on Wheels** service delivering cooked meals to the sick and elderly.

## Getting Children back to school and learning



Women with chronic health issues are often cared for by their children. With no family support, many have little option but to depend on their offspring for personal care and even to beg for food. In taking over the responsibility of the mother's needs WIN enables children to get back to school and learning. To further facilitate this process we communicate with schools, provide uniforms and books and additional tuition to help a children catch up the months or years lost.

Our support extends into further education offering a select few gifted students the opportunity to take a degree. Those with less academic ability are offered vocational training in subjects of their choice.



# Rescue, rehabilitation, and repatriation for abandoned women



Indian women are all too often abandoned when illness prevents them from working and functioning at home. It is illegal for a husband to abandon his wife, but police and the judicial system are usually sympathetic towards the husband.

WIN has a 2 staged approach to helping homeless women. Firstly, those who suffer from severe mental illness are registered with the Regional Mental Hospital in Nagpur (RMH). This is a complex process requiring a court order following psychiatric assessment at Nagpur's Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH). Neither the police, medics nor the courts are helpful in the process, but WIN has experience dealing with obstacles and getting vulnerable women the professional help, they deserve. Once a woman is admitted in the RMH our social workers visit to ensure she is being well cared for. Our staff are also instrumental in locating family members and re-establishing lost connections.

Secondly, women with mild mental health problems or any other health issues are sheltered by WIN where rehabilitation and repatriation are closely monitored. Our shelter is situated in the village of Mangrul. Here women receive a care package tailored to their needs. Most of the women have PTSD having experienced trauma on the streets. At our shelter they find safety, companionship, and plenty of emotional support from our trained and experienced staff. When family members are located the process of repatriation is taken carefully to ensure that support of the individual continues at home. This is achieved with regular contact and home visits to address any arising issues.

# Community care for the sick and elderly

WIN has an unmatched care in the community service. Over 20 years we have seen and dealt with it all. We've rescued women imprisoned by family members, nursed the dying, addressed cases of sexual abuse and domestic violence, provided ulcer management and a multitude of other health related care services in the women's homes. WIN repairs and decorates houses, provides essential furniture, which many of our women don't have. We reconnected electricity supplies cut off due to unpaid bills and continue to provide the very best care to vulnerable women. Without our support such women are left to suffer unimaginable neglect and deprivation without access or resource to help or rescue.



# Combating Isolation and Loneliness through social events

WIN's social events and trips generate a great deal of excitement. 20 years ago we organised our first day trip out for 50 leprosy patients. Bus companies refused us the hire of a bus because of the stigma associated with leprosy. Then we struggled to source caterers willing to cook for the women. That trip though initially difficult to organise proved so successful that we realised the value of lifting morale through companionship and good food in a beautiful setting.

Nagpur is a densely populated and polluted city. Noise and chaos are inescapable. Our women live in urban shanty towns, in poor housing with little sanitation and often no running water. Add to this medical and socio-economic related problems and you might just understand how valuable our social events are. A day to escape the problems and to be spoilt.

From the early days of catering for 50 leprosy affected women, WIN organises events and outings for hundreds of women with a variety of problems throughout the year.

In addition to outings WIN provides treats and new clothing for women and their children on Diwali and Christmas.





गृह मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
**HOME AFFAIRS**

## Renewal of FCRA licence 2023-28

For an NGO to receive approval from India's MHA for the renewal of FCRA is a significant achievement. It is important for donors to appreciate that the process of renewal involves scrutiny of accounts, programmes, and a project site inspection from the Crime Investigation Bureau. No stone is left unturned.

During the last two years 22,000+ NGOs had their FCRA licences cancelled by the MHA. WIN's Indian partner START secured a 5 year FCRA renewal this year. This FCRA licence validates the credibility of our operations.

## 6,796 women's lives within the period of July 22 to July 23 through the following programmes.

1. **Mobile Primary Health Care** – total number of women / children served with free medical care = Total **2,532** (July 22 146/ August 205 / September 125 / October 230 / November 198 / December 218 / January 23 225 / February 165 / March 187 / April 203 / May 218 / June 234 / July 178)

### Impact of this service:

- Provides free medical care to those who need it most.
- Prevents more serious illness progressing through early detection.
- Builds community trust with minority faith groups where some women are denied permission to attend important health programmes such as breast and cervical cancer screening. WIN has broken down existing barriers between these communities and the local authority health services.
- WIN's social workers get disclosure on other serious issues such as domestic violence and sexual abuse thorough trust gained by this service.

2. **Anaemia Awareness and Prevention Campaign** – 18 areas covered / **1350** women attended / 970 Hb tests completed due to prior survey review where clinical symptoms of anaemia were detected. Women provided with Iron supplements in tonic and tablet form. 8 women required blood transfusions.

### Impact of this service:

- Improving health and quality of life.
- Preventing future cases of anaemia through awareness. Women are the main instigators of addressing family health issues so information they acquire can positively impact the whole family.
- Addressing the issues by educating women on the nutritional value of affordable foods.

3. **Menstrual Awareness and Hygiene Campaign** – **1133** women attended 15 programmes hosted by Dr Ashwini Kawle and Dr Dhore. Consultation and treatment provided for women presenting clinical symptoms of bacterial and fungal infections. Distribution of sanitary underwear (3 pairs per woman). Doctors' fees, medicines and travel included.

### Impact of this service:

- Educating women on the importance of menstrual awareness and hygiene.

- Treating infection in a timely manner.
  - Empowering women and girls through knowledge – dispelling myths and misconceptions.
  - Providing women and girls with safe and convenient sanitary underwear.
4. **Chronic Kidney Disease – 703** women screened for CKD based of clinical symptoms. Family and medical history as well as lifestyle were additional factors.

**Impact of this service:**

- Educating women about the symptoms of kidney disease.
- Providing early intervention for those with early stage KD
- Detecting women with CKD and helping them access treatment to extend their quality of life.

5. **Breast and cervical cancer screening and awareness – 598** women were selected to attend screening and detection based on clinical symptoms.

**Impact of this service:**

- Awareness and early intervention save lives.
- Most women had benign tumours and were referred onto the local authority hospital for guidance.
- Those with cancer are being supported with their treatment programmes.

6. **Leprosy and TB Screening and awareness - 480** women attended programmes organised by WIN in collaboration with local authority leprosy paramedics. Although the prevalence of leprosy is significantly less than it was 20 years ago, when Nagpur had a high prevalence rate of active leprosy cases, our detection programmes continue to spread awareness and information about the early detection of leprosy and where treatment can be accessed.

Tuberculosis continues to be a concern to the local authority with some drug resistant and extra drug resistant cases occurring due to discontinuation of treatment.

**Impact of this service:**

- TB awareness and treatment is crucial to preventing the spread of this common infectious disease. Urban slum communities have a moderate to high prevalence of TB. Drug resistant forms are a threat to the entire population regardless of living conditions.
- Due to the unpleasant side effects of TB drugs discontinuation of treatment is common. WIN's awareness programmes continue to dispel the myths and misconceptions surrounding TB and leprosy.

# Examples of ongoing treatment plans highlighting the financial support given by WIN

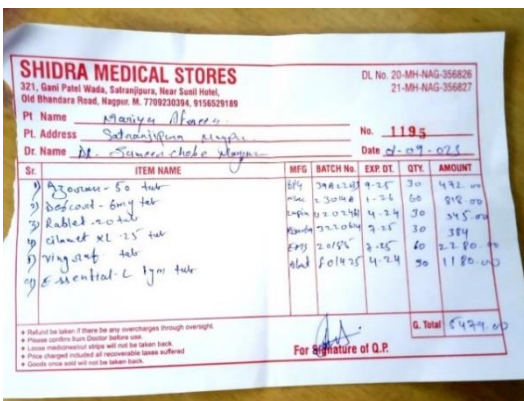


Mariya

Mariya is a rare example of a woman from a low-income community who successfully received a kidney transplant from a kidney donated by her mother. It is exceptional for someone from her background to afford a transplant, let alone the cost of immunosuppressants to prevent the kidney from being rejected.

WIN pays for Mariya's monthly anti-rejection treatment enabling her to live. Not a day goes by that she isn't grateful for that.

Annual medical expenses for Mariya are \$797 / 753 euros / £658  
Below left: Receipt illustrating Mariya's monthly medical expenses



Deepali

Following brain surgery to remove a cancerous tumour Deepali suffered crippling post operative symptoms that made life unbearable.

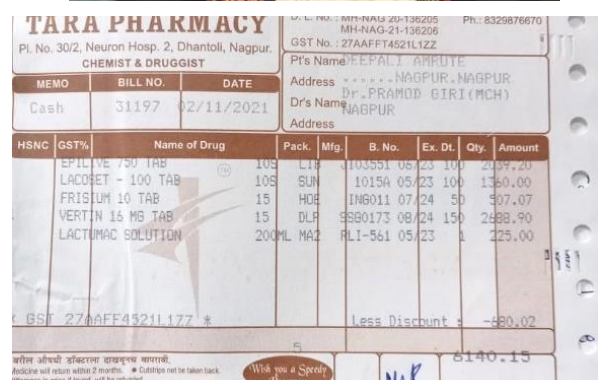
WIN pays Deepali's symptomatic treatment that has transformed her quality of life.

Expenses (including medical, travel, food and clothing expenses) for Deepali are:

Medical \$940 888 euros + travel + clothing, sanitary wear etc \$192 / 181 euros

\$1,132 / 1069 euros / £934

Below right: Receipt illustrating some of Deepali's monthly expenses.





## Reshma

Reshma has been plagued with illness for the last 8 years. Chronic Kidney disease, Hypothyroidism, and fatty liver disease cause crippling pain. Despite multiple health issues Reshma managed to get into further education through grit and determination.

Reshma's family circumstances are extremely poor. Her father died after being electrocuted. Her mother is blind and therefore can't work, and her younger brother does what he can to earn a small income that barely provides enough to feed the family and pay the bills.

WIN's support for young women and girls like Reshma transforms lives and restores hope.

Medical Expenses:

\$750 / 708 euros / £619

Below: Today, Reshma is working hard towards her 12<sup>th</sup> standard exams next year. She would love to become a social worker...perhaps a future WIN/START member of staff?!







## Priyanka

Priyanka was diagnosed with thyroid cancer after being admitted in hospital following a scooter accident. At the same time her father was battling the last stages of kidney cancer. Priyanka was the main bread winner for her mother and father. Her two sisters being married and no longer living at home.

Priyanka prided herself on being an actively supportive member of the wider family circle and yet when she was diagnosed with cancer and unable to work or afford costly treatment, she found that none of her relatives were willing to help.

Thankfully a consultant at GMCH referred Priyanka to WIN for financial assistance with her treatment and today she is in remission.

Expenses for Priyanka:

\$733 / 692 euros / £605

Below left: Priyanka today – much improved and extremely grateful.

Below: Medical receipt illustrating her expenses



Rainbow Medinova Diagnostic Services  
Central Bazar Road, Ramdaspeth, Nagpur, Maharashtra 440010  
www.rainbowmedinova.org  
0712 - 663 6666

**MONEY RECEIPT**

Money Receipt #: 293696 Date : 18/10/2022

Cash Received From: PRIYANKA DAWALE of Rs. (7000.00 (Seven thousand Only)) For Bill No. 589040

7000 RS  
Paid

Total Bill Amount	Rs 24500.00
Concession Amount	Rs 1500.0
Received Amount	Rs 23000.0
Balance Due	Rs 0.00

Thank you for your support

