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start2womeninneed@gmail.com

www.women-in-need.co.uk

**WOMEN**  
IN NEED

Thank you for your continued help throughout 2021. Your donations brought hope and sustained the lives of women and children during yet another year of COVID related challenges



### Christmas Cheer for women & children

On Christmas Eve sweets, gifts, & hot food were distributed to children living in a small community close to WIN'S office. Women were gifted food parcels to bolster their sparse supplies over the festive period.

Over 3,000 women vaccinated against COVID through your donations



To increase vaccine uptake, WIN takes local authority health workers to the heart of Nagpur's poorest communities. In doing so, those reticent to have the vaccine are inspired to get vaccinated when seeing friends and neighbours get their jab.



## Fighting cancer in the pandemic

Throughout the pandemic WIN has supported women battling cancer, ensuring safe and timely transport to appointments, and paying for treatment, food, and rent. Shashikala is one of the few who has successfully beaten cervical cancer thanks to our help.



Above & below left: Shashikala in 2020



**Above left:** Shashikala's physical transformation is clear from the woman Leah and JAZBA founder Anish met in 2020, to the one seen today.

Recently her small home, made of corrugated tin and wood was given a face lift to boost morale.

# Supporting women with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)



## The Problem

The exact burden of CKD and End Stage Chronic Kidney Disease (ESCKD) in India is undefined, yet it is a huge public health problem. CKD along with other non-communicable diseases has been neglected due to the challenges of communicable diseases and infant mortality. WIN is often approached by women in need of assistance with costly treatment and dialysis and it has become increasingly more apparent that women with CKD is on the rise.

## The cause

Poverty, poor sanitation, pollutants, nephrotoxins such as heavy metals present in vegetables and indigenous remedies are contributing factors. Diseases such as diabetes and sickle cell anaemia also lead to kidney failure. A lack of awareness and timely screening prevents early intervention.

## The Solution

WIN's support for women with CKD has saved lives. The charity pays for specialist advice, dialysis and treatment as well as assisting patients with registering on a donor waiting list.

**In 2022 WIN would like to introduce a CKD screening program** to address the lack of early detection.

## Screening

The Glomerular Filtration Rate GFR test is a blood test that detects early-stage kidney disease when it is most treatable.

## Cost

£3

**We can prevent hundreds of women developing CKD**

## Meet some of the women with CKD helped by WIN



**Left:** 40 yrs old Pramila has sickle cell anaemia resulting in ESKD. From a family of modest means in a village near Wardha, Pramila was unable to afford the twice weekly journeys to hospital, causing further kidney and heart damage.

WIN pays for the rent of a room close to Sevegram hospital allowing easy access to the medical care she urgently needs. The charity supports the cost of ongoing treatment and though Pramila's health was critical, regular dialysis has produced a marked improvement in her kidney function.

**Right:** One of the lucky ones, Maria Sheikh had a life-saving kidney transplant. WIN supports her monthly medical costs, including immunosuppressants.



**Above:** Shakuntala is a single mother with 2 teenage daughters. She works as a labourer - a challenging job for most women, but for Shakuntala having HIV and CKD makes it even more exhausting. Through WIN's support a senior Nephrologist has provided Shakuntala with an improved treatment program leading to significant health gains.



**Left:** When 35 yr old Radha was diagnosed with CKD her husband left her along with their young daughter. With no family support Radha approached WIN for help with travel costs and treatment. Having lost her job as a domestic help last year, WIN provided equipment enabling Radha to start her home-based tailoring enterprise.

# Nagabai- an extraordinary ordinary woman

Usha and I met Nagabai in 2000 when WIN was a leprosy charity called START. She lived in notorious “Gangabai Ghat”, a place where addicts, criminals and outcasts lived, close to one of Nagpur’s largest “Ghats” or crematoriums. I remember Usha’s mother expressing concern when we announced plans to help leprosy patients living there. Yet on arrival our own reservations were quickly eased as residents brought plastic chairs on which to rest and offered tea, while shouts for “Nagabai” ensued.

A woman who clearly commanded affection and respect came bustling forward with tremendous energy. Nagabai had the typical features of someone ravaged by leprosy. Facial nerve damage gave her an unusual permanent grin, while her weeping eyes were the result of paralysed eyelids. Nagabai’s hands were fingerless and gnarled and her feet bandaged.

One could be forgiven for feeling repelled by her appearance, yet the moment Nagabai spoke you were struck by a remarkable warmth, intelligence, and joy – very much at odds with her traumatic past. At 11 Nagabai caught leprosy leading to her being forced onto the streets. At this stage her condition was defined by the early signs of the disease – light coloured, insensitive patches on the skin. No one would have guessed this child had the dreaded “Maharogi” (mother of all diseases), making her vulnerable to abuse on the streets. Yet it was at Gangabai Ghat that she encountered warmth and protection, and later compassion, when leprosy caused significant nerve damage and deformity.

Nagabai was unapologetic for begging. With such deformity what other means of earning did she have? She invested the coins collected over many years of sitting outside the ghat, exposed to extreme summer heat and monsoon rains. She barely missed a day’s work and was later able to afford her dream of building a single roomed brick house to replace the stick hut she lived in most of her life.

There is far too much colourful detail which sadly cannot be relayed in a newsletter. One day, Nagabai’s story, and that of all the other inspirational women we encountered, will be documented.

For now, we pay a simple tribute to this remarkable tenacious woman who died of COVID. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Nagabai will continue to delight in our wonderful memories, remembering especially her infectious laughter. (Leah Pattison)



## Lighting the smiles of children at Diwali – India's festival of light



Thanks to donations gifted every year for the purpose of helping underprivileged children celebrate Diwali. This year a lucky chosen few received sparklers, sweets, snacks, and new clothes.



For over 20 years Women in Need has offered a unique and invaluable service to thousands of women in desperate circumstance. Their plight all too often unseen, unheard – ignored. WIN has survived against a backdrop of bureaucracy leading to the closure of bigger, more prominent organisations such as OXFAM, Amnesty International and Human Right's Watch. Time and time again we witness systemic ignorance and apathy towards society's most vulnerable, and yet, WIN continues to survive, transforming individual lives and influencing significant, positive change within local authority departments. Ours is a small yet tenacious organisation. And with your continued support we will continue changing lives and offering hope.