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WOMEN
IN NEED

20 Years ago, in November 2002 Women in Need (formerly known as START) registered a sister organisation (also known as START) in Nagpur. Without our Indian partner your donations would not have reached India.

Two decades on, lets us look back and celebrate the remarkable difference your support has made to thousands of women's lives

Far tougher than we imagined

We could never have anticipated the journey we'd take when setting up WIN. Looking back, our initial aim of providing much needed rehabilitation to women affected by leprosy seems easy. Easy in the sense that all we had to contend with was navigating our way, literally and metaphorically, through the most lawless parts of Nagpur and fighting to get help for the women we encountered. (I kid you not, there were several occasions we ran for our lives!)

In defending the defenceless you put yourself in danger. We battled injustices relating to those who were horrendously abused and neglected. Doctors refused to admit them because their state of physical decline was so bad "it would distress other patients" No! the reality was their conditions were so appalling the medics themselves didn't want to get involved. Under "normal" circumstances such women would be left to die at home or on the streets. No one intervened because by virtue of being poor and an inconvenience they were easy to dispose of – nobody wanted them to survive.

Those early days were a valuable learning curve because despite the barriers, there was such inspiration to be gained in witnessing those unwanted women thrive against the odds. At this point we were joined by Rajesh, Usha's brother. We asked him to help because of the dangers we faced, plus he wasn't at all scared of being hands on- greatly needed since employing staff was proving difficult.

When HIV hit the scene in 2003/4 things really got tough. The fear and stigma were so great that anyone suspected of having HIV would be denied hospitalisation. One of our Indian trustees at the time, Dr Charchekar broke the mould and showed exemplary courage by visiting patients in their home to administer medical treatment. Through his support WIN led the way in rescuing women and children with HIV and paying for ARV's which were not free in those days.

Fast forward 2 years to when the charity employed a small but incredible team – most of that team remain with us today working with dedication to offer help where needed, with a unique blend of compassion and fortitude.

We remarked at the beginning of the article that those early days, despite the obstacles and dangers, in hindsight seemed easy. Over the last 20 years we have since met the greater challenges of bureaucracy, a changing political climate and legislation, and financial upheaval.

Despite everything, YOU have been a constant throughout it all. Your donations have rescued and rehabilitated women – given, hope and meaning to their lives and dignity to those at the very end of theirs.

Thank you for helping WIN survive this far – and here's to the next, best 20 years!

([Leah Pattison and Usha Patil](#))

Some of the women & children who've benefited from your support over the years







Celebrating YOU - Throughout 2023 we would like to feature two WIN champions in our newsletters (seeking your permission first). There are so many of you who have donated over the years, and we want to celebrate your generosity



Society of Indian Doctor's raise £6500

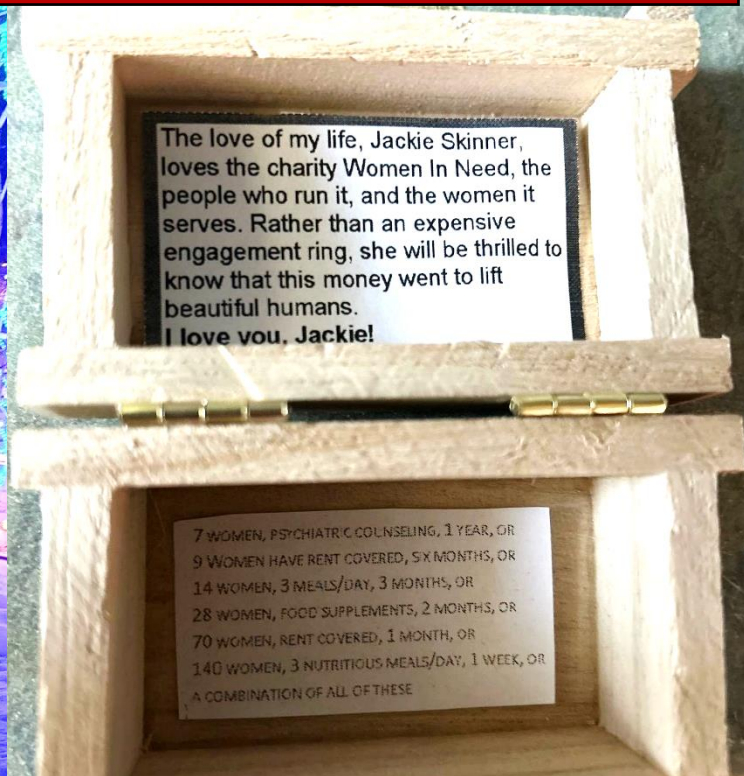
We are absolutely delighted that WIN was selected by the Society of Indian Doctors as the recipient of their Bollywood Ball fundraiser at Wynard's Grand Marquee. A tremendous amount of hard work went into organising the event and we are extremely grateful for everyone's generosity. A special mention to all the society's executive members including their Treasurer (left) Dr Rajesh Nanda Secretary (right -who was our main contact) and the Society's President Dr Sushma Acquilla (centre) -Thank you SO much X

Dedicated to the memory of Dr Poornima Nair who died from Covid May 2020

A uniquely romantic donation towards WIN from Jackie Skinner and Joshua Palmer

Jackie Skinner has been a WIN champion for years directing skilled volunteers to Nagpur. Everything Jackie does is motivated by kindness. Raising funds for non-profits like WIN or giving up her home to shelter a family from Afghanistan are just a couple of numerous acts of generosity. Whatever Jackie turns her mind to she does with fierce determination. Recently Jackie became engaged to her soul mate, Joshua Palmer. Instead of buying his fiancé an expensive ring Joshua donated funds to WIN.

Thank you! & CONGRATULATIONS to you both X



Nirbhaya 10 years on

In December 2012 the world's attention was directed towards an issue in India that had remained in the shadows – violence against women.



When 23-year-old Jyoti Singh was gang-raped by the driver of the Delhi bus she was travelling on, and five accomplices, the incident shocked the world. Jyoti, given the moniker "Nirbhaya" or the "fearless one" by the media, had fought back. But she suffered internal injuries and was thrown naked from the bus. She died within two weeks of the attack. The details of Jyoti's injuries still haunt Dr Mahesh Mishra who tried to save her life "The injuries that she sustained, I had never seen before, nor have I seen since. Ten years on, I still vividly remember her face".

Following Jyoti's death protests did bring about some changes - laws were amended to recognise wider and more nuanced definitions of violence against women, set

penalties for inefficient police action, and stricter punishments for perpetrators – significantly the death penalty. Justice for Jyoti was finally won by the determined efforts of her mother Asha Devi (above right) and advocate Seema Kushwaha (above left)

The battle to get justice for all victims of violence in India still has a long way to go as recent studies show that violence inside homes is epidemic in proportion.

Domestic violence is the leading crime against women in India, with four times more reported cases than rape. The brutal gang rape of Jyoti Singh was by no means a rare incident, but her tragic death did at least inspire a national conversation about addressing violent crimes against women.

Fighting for Manisha

The woman in the image (right) is 23-year-old Manisha Thakur who was referred to WIN for support with the cost of her medical treatment by social workers at Government Medical College Hospital Nagpur.

Married at eighteen, Manisha's life became a living hell due to persistent violence at the hands of her husband. The extent of brutality can be seen in the image. Manisha like so many countless other women felt powerless to protect herself through the fear of causing shame and disappointment to her family. Even whilst heavily pregnant Manisha was beaten resulting in complications requiring urgent medical attention. Though initially admitted in Chandrapur's government hospital she was sent to Nagpur due to a decline in her health. WIN provided 10 units of blood and all Manisha's post operative treatment. As Manisha comes from Chandrapur and was accompanied by her mother, all expenses for lodging and food have been covered by WIN too. Manisha's little baby girl is thriving, and we hope and pray that Manisha too makes a speedy recovery.

In 2023 WIN pledges to provide awareness and legal aid to more women like Manisha.



Manda Rangari – contending with poverty, tragedy, and mental illness

46 year old domestic cleaner Manda Rangari suffers from psychosis. She has lived with the illness for 2 years without treatment whilst trying to support her elderly mother and 9 year old son Pravin. Manda's life has been marred by tragedy and illness. Her abusive, alcoholic husband died 5 years ago. Two of her brothers also died prematurely from alcoholism, whilst her eldest brother was murdered. In 2016 her father had a stroke and died a few months later due to the family being unable to afford his treatment. The list of problems seems unbelievable and yet for many living in Nagpur's poorest communities, Manda's circumstances are not exceptional. Following help from WIN, within just two months Manda's mental health has greatly improved under the supervision of a psychiatrist. Pravin is back at school, Manda's mother has started treatment for a previously undiagnosed heart problem and the family home, however modest has been repaired.

Your donations make a difference



**Above left- Manda before starting treatment / Above Right-Manda clearly much improved after 2 months
Below left –the home before repairs / below right-after repairs**



A Christmas banquet fit for Children



And as 2022 draws to a close may all of us from Women in Need wish you a peaceful and joyful New Year!