



Issue 30 – March 2014

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Dear fellow-members of the TS and TOS around the world,

Welcome to the first edition of our electronic newsletter for 2014. We must admit that we were surprised when we noticed that this was the 30th issue since we began the newsletter in 2008 as one of the first initiatives to come out of our International Conference in 2007. How time flies!

2014 sees us beginning work on some of the ideas for the future of the TOS generated at our International Conference in 2013. You'll find an overview of suggestions from delegates as the first item in this newsletter and we invite you to read it and be inspired. We hear of groups that are already using this document as the basis for planning their commitments to action to advance the work of the TOS during the next five years in their countries and local groups.

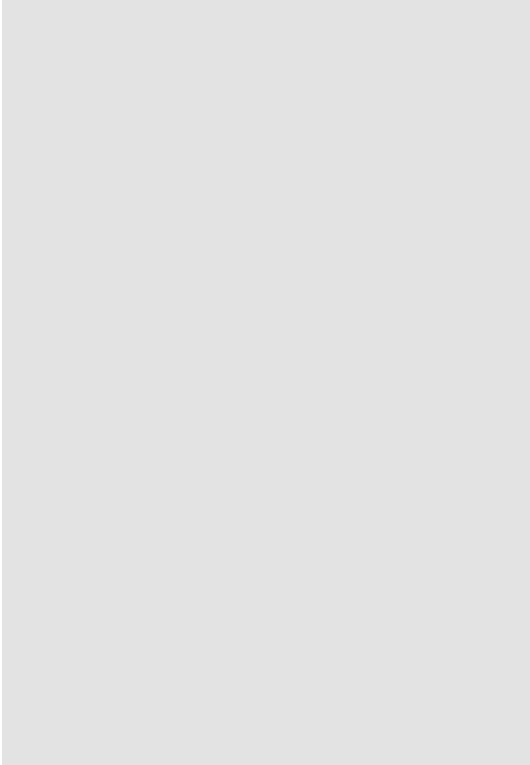
The response to the Philippines Emergency Appeal from groups and individual members around the world has been overwhelming. Thank you, everyone. Rosel Doval Santos, Vic Hao Chin and their TOS and TS team in the Philippines have done magnificent work in getting help swiftly and lovingly to affected communities. They've also made the time to regularly provide updates and you'll find these on our website in the [News](#) section.

Remember that the newsletter is designed to be read while you are connected to the internet.

Please also consider sending photographs of your TOS activities and news items that might be of interest to fellow TOS members. We would welcome your contributions by email to the editors at carolyn.tosinternational@gmail.com.

With best wishes in putting theosophical principles into action,

Carolyn, Diana and Geoffrey



The editorial team (L to R)

Geoffrey Harrod is the International TOS Webmaster. Carolyn Harrod is the past National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia. Diana Dunningham Chapotin is the International Secretary of the TOS.

To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice.

Confucius (K'ung Fu-tzu), Chinese sage (551-479 B.C.)

The TOS into the future: planning for the next five years



One of the main items of work during the International Conference in 2013 was the joint development of a *Plan of Action* for the TOS for the next five years – 2014-2018. After reviewing the implementation of the existing 2008-2013 *Plan of Action*, participants worked in small groups to share ideas and plan actions for the next five years.

The draft *Plan of Action* is organised in eight areas and provides suggestions for international TOS actions and suggestions for national or local TOS actions. It will be refined through a collaborative process during which all National TOS leaders will be invited to provide feedback and suggestions. TOS members are also invited to join this collaborative activity, so if you have further ideas when you read the draft, please send them to:

tos.intouch@international.theoservice.org

Our *Plan of Action* will only be a useful, living document, however, if we use it to guide our planning and decision-making at all levels of the TOS. You are encouraged to become familiar with it, to discuss it with fellow members and to refer to it when planning your local TOS activities.

[Read the draft *Plan of Action*....\(PDF\)](#)



Gender issues in Bhubaneswar, India

The TOS in the region of Mahabharat in the state of Odisha in India is attracting international attention for its work in combatting violence against women. Attention, all of our TOS groups who have sent support! The group's president, Dr Deepa Padhi, has sent us a most interesting report on the work accomplished for the period September to December 2013. Deepa returned home from the international TOS Conference held in the USA in July 2013 with the wind in her sails...

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The TOS in Tanzania adopts an orphanage

The TOS in Tanzania is developing ties of friendship with the children at the Kind Heart Africa orphanage in Dar es Salaam. It visited them in August, November and December of 2013 bringing gifts including teddy bears knitted by members of the TOS in France and Italy. The main purpose of the Kind Heart Africa association is to take care of orphans and vulnerable children and empower them to become useful members of society by providing education, health care and vocational training.

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Insights through service

Maria Rosa Martínez joined the TS at the age of 15 and has been active in the Annie Besant Lodge in San Rafael, Argentina ever since. She participates in any task required. For example, in 1973 she helped to start a theosophically-oriented local radio broadcast, *The Art of Learning*, which continues to this day (twice a week for over 40 years!). Since 2009, she has been part of the volunteer team translating *The Theosophist* magazine into Spanish. (Spanish readers can find the issues here:



www.revista-el-teosofo.com.ar.) Maria Rosa is currently the Secretary of the Inter-American Theosophical Federation. She helps realise the three objects of the TS through a variety of activities and tries to make them a living force in her own life. Above all, she loves to make it possible for others to contact theosophical teachings.

When land was bought in 1980 to create a Theosophical Centre, Maria Rosa and her husband Ernesto joined the project with enthusiasm and had the joy of seeing it take beautiful form over the years. In this short article, she talks about a truth she has learned through her work at the Centre. [Read more....](#)



A joyful party for children from slums in Kenya

“Dear All, When I opened the curtains yesterday morning, my heart dropped into my shoes! It was raining and the sky was full of dark, heavy clouds threatening to let lots more pour down. The day of our big outdoor party and rain! Too late to think about it – will go on as planned...”

Here is how Usha Shah starts out her report on the spectacular party organised by the TOS and a sister organisation, Karuna, for dozens of shanty town children in Nairobi last November.

[Read more....](#)



Golden Link College sponsors external scholars

Regular readers of our newsletter are well and truly familiar with the Golden Link College, the theosophical school established in 2002 in suburban Manila by the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Order of Service. During the year-end gift-giving and carolling activity of the college's students in the surrounding areas, it was found that some extremely poor single mothers have as many as 9 children, none of whom is going to school. Without education, they are destined to perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Two years ago, an external scholarship programme was started in order to permit some of the children to study in different public schools. [Read](#)



*Galina Burhach, Coordinator
of the TOS in Ukraine.*

[more...](#)

What's new on the International TOS website?

In our [Latest News](#) we welcome the newest addition to our TOS family – the TOS in Ukraine – and its Coordinator, Galina Burhach. The group is already active in service work, collecting warm clothing and footwear for needy citizens.

All of our newsletters, including our unnumbered special one of last December celebrating the outstanding humanitarian service of Mrs Radha Burnier, can be found [here](#).

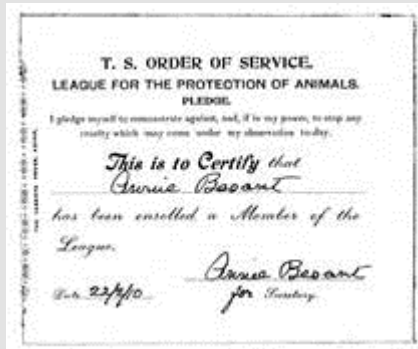
The new [Featured Article](#) is an interview with Barbara Bradley Hebert of Covington, Louisiana. Barbara is a member of the National Board of the Theosophical Society in America and a college counsellor.

In this interview, Barbara talks about how theosophical principles and the theosophical worldview influence her work and her relationship with clients.

Our [Featured Project](#) highlights the success of the Olcott Memorial High School in providing a solid Years 1 to 10 education for underprivileged boys and girls in Adyar, India. It shares the exciting news of the recent decision to turn the school into a 'Higher Secondary School' by adding classes at eleventh and twelfth year levels. At completion of their schooling, students will be able to apply either to a university or for entry to a vocational training programme. It is hoped that some of them will join the Vocational Training Centre recently set up on TS land.

The school relies on donations for 70% of its funding and the TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin, is appealing to TOS groups and individual TOS members to consider donating to the Olcott School. For details on how to donate from outside India, write to Diana at tosinternational@wanadoo.fr.

You'll also find additions to the TOS photo gallery and the expanded *Inspiration* section. Go to <http://international.theoservice.org>



From the archives: Annie Besant's pledge to protect animals

In February 1910, Dr Annie Besant signed a pledge with the TS Order of Service League for the Protection of Animals. She pledged to "remonstrate against, and, if in my power, to stop any cruelty which may come under my observation today."

[View the Pledge here....](#) (PDF)

Not tested on animals!! Where to find cruelty-free products



As well as using animals in the development of drugs, millions of animals are used to test skin care products, cosmetics and general cleaning products. Often we simply purchase products from habit, but should we challenge ourselves with the question: When alternative methods of testing are available, is it ethical to poison, burn, maim and kill animals in laboratories causing them unimaginable pain, fear and loneliness?



Not only are animal tests cruel, they are completely unnecessary. The majority of ingredients commonly used in household cleaners or cosmetics have been safety tested years ago. And the differences in animal physiology mean that even brand new ingredients can't be accurately tested for human safety on anything other than humans.

My favourite brand of shampoos and body washes proudly announces that they are TESTED ONLY ON PARTY ANIMALS, that is, humans. Finding products that are not tested on animals can take some searching because the major multi-national companies that produce our everyday personal and household cleaning products, such as Procter & Gamble, Unilever and Colgate/Palmolive, continue to test ingredients or products on animals.

Even if animal testing does not take place in your country, you may unwittingly be buying imported products at the supermarket that have been needlessly tested on animals. However, there are numbers of small companies in most countries that produce ethical products. It's just a matter of finding them!

If you are like me and looking for cruelty-free products, then, [Read more...](#)



India bans animal testing for household products and cosmetics

In a recent 'good news' report, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) celebrated the successful outcome of their campaign in India to ban animal tests. The decision to ban animal testing of household products comes from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) following efforts by PETA India's science policy adviser, Dr Chaitanya Koduri. The committee decided to replace a skin sensitisation test – which is currently performed by rubbing harsh chemicals into guinea pigs' shaved skin – with non-animal testing methods, followed by human skin patch tests. This move will end all animal-poisoning tests for cleaners, detergents and other common household products in India.

[Read more....](#)



A poem by Annie Besant

Did you know that, as well as writing passionate prose urging TS members to work together for social justice and the welfare of all life on this planet, Dr Annie Besant also wrote poetry? Here we share one of her poems which challenges us to take action.

[Read more....](#)



An energetic year of service in Chennai, India

The TOS, Chennai Region is made up of two groups, the TOS, Chennai Group and the TOS, Besant Group. Together they provide a wide range of medical and social welfare services to the underprivileged members of their community. In the following report, the Joint-Secretary and Head of Projects in the TOS, Chennai Group, Mr C.V.K. Maithreya, shares the highlights of the Region's recent activities.

[Read more....](#)



A comment on contemporary society

This cartoon challenges us to consider our attitudes to other's misfortunes. Are we becoming a society of spectators?

[View a larger image here....](#) (PDF)



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Prayer

Who pant and struggle to be free,

Who strive for others' liberty,

Who, failing, still work patiently,

They truly pray.

Who, loving all, dare none despise,

But with the worst can sympathise,

Who for a truth a martyr die,

They truly pray.

Who, when a truth to them is
known,

Embrace it through smile or frown,

Who dare to hold it though alone,

They truly pray.

In musing, strength must come to
dare,

Petitions are but empty air,

Brave action is the only prayer,

Thus learn to pray.



Annie Besant

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Theosophical Order of Service International Newsletter

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In a recent 'good news' report, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) celebrated the successful outcome of their campaign in India to ban animal tests. They wrote:

"India has decided to end tests on animals for household products following campaigns by PETA India, PETA and PETA U.K., which included appeals from scientists as well as MP Maneka Gandhi and other members of the Indian Parliament.

"This decision comes from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) following efforts by PETA India's science policy adviser, Dr Chaitanya Koduri, the only representative from an animal-protection group to sit on the BIS committee on household products.

"The committee decided to replace a skin sensitization test – which is currently performed by rubbing harsh chemicals into guinea pigs' shaved skin – with non-animal testing methods, followed by human skin patch tests. This move will end all animal-poisoning tests for cleaners, detergents and other common household products in India.

"The move comes on the heels of India's decision last year to end tests on animals for cosmetics following a PETA India campaign. India is now the second nation, after Israel, to end tests on animals for both cosmetics and household products."

Congratulations, India!!

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Not tested on animals!! Where to find cruelty-free products

In our December 2013 newsletter we shared an article on why testing products on animals is unnecessary. As well as using animals in the development of drugs, millions of animals are used to test skin care products, cosmetics and general cleaning products. Often we simply purchase products from habit, but should we challenge ourselves with the question: When alternative methods of testing are available, is it ethical to poison, burn, maim and kill animals in laboratories causing them unimaginable pain, fear and loneliness?

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My favourite brand of shampoos and body washes proudly announces that they are TESTED ONLY ON PARTY ANIMALS, that is, humans. Finding products that are not tested on animals can take some searching because the major multi-national companies that produce our everyday personal and household cleaning products, such as Procter & Gamble, Unilever and Colgate/Palmolive, continue to test ingredients or products on animals.

Even if animal testing does not take place in your country, you may unwittingly be buying imported products at the supermarket that have been needlessly tested on animals. However, there are numbers of small companies in most countries that produce ethical products. It's just a matter of finding them!

If you are like me and looking for cruelty-free products, then you'll find some helpful advice below.



Look for accredited products

One of the easiest ways in which you can be confident that your choices are genuinely cruelty-free is to look for an accreditation logo. These generally take the form of a bunny.

Once certified as cruelty-free by an accrediting organisation, companies have the opportunity to be licensed to use the cruelty-free logo on product labels and promotional materials.

Many of these products have the added bonus of not using ingredients derived from animals.

Visit the websites of organisations promoting the rights and welfare of animals

More than 1,300 companies refuse to harm any animals for their products anywhere in the world. You can show your support for compassionate, cruelty-free companies by using [PETA's brand-new global Cruelty-Free Shopping Guide](#) every time you shop. You can order one from their website:

<http://www.peta.org/living/beauty/order-cruelty-free-shopping-guide/>

Alternatively, use their site to search for cruelty-free companies or particular products. Go to:

<http://features.peta.org/cruelty-free-company-search/index.aspx>

All companies that are included on PETA's cruelty-free list have signed PETA's statement of assurance or submitted a statement verifying that neither they nor their ingredient suppliers conduct, commission, or pay for any tests on animals for ingredients, formulations, or finished products.



United Kingdom based organisation, **Cruelty-Free International** provides an on-line search facility that enables visitors to their site to identify accredited products that are available in their particular country. Go to: <http://www.gocrueltyfree.org/consumer>

It only lists products accredited by Cruelty-Free International, so you may need to look for a cruelty-free organisation in your own country to get a more complete list of products available to you.

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Choose Cruelty-free is another organisation that accredits companies producing cruelty-free products. See their website for a list of ethical products: <http://www.choosecrueltyfree.org.au/cruelty-free-list/>





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By next school year, the plan is to increase the scholarship to 100 students. The programme is being managed by volunteer college students of Golden Link under the supervision of Ms Janice Gapaz, the Student Affairs Officer of Golden Link. This programme is in addition to the internal scholarship programme for hundreds of students who are studying in Golden Link and the other theosophical schools in the Philippines.

Here are photos of a gathering of these external scholars and their parents and scholars at the Kern Hall of Golden Link, where a talk on parenting and the value of education was given. The scholars received shoes and school supplies. GLC college student volunteers conduct Saturday tutorial classes for these students in language and in mathematics. The scholars are also being guided in personality development and character building. Library books have been made available to them. We have observed the impact of these programmes on both the students and the parents, and it is certain that such intervention will significantly alter the destinies of these families, particularly of the scholars.



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Insights through service

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When land was bought in 1980 to create a Theosophical Centre, Maria Rosa and her husband Ernesto joined the project with enthusiasm and had the joy of seeing it take beautiful form over the years. In this short article, she talks about a truth she has learned through her work at the Centre.



A Moment of Insight and Encouragement in Service

When we feel called to service – in the street, our place of work, at home, or at a TS branch or Centre, we soon find that there never seems to be enough time, money or helping hands for all that is crying out to be done. However, an insight I have gained in the course of my service work is this: if the cause is genuinely philanthropic, unselfish and impersonal, it always finds support. There is an unknown power that helps us at the proper time. It may appear in the form of a donation to permit paying for something, or of the arrival of the right person, or as a sudden injection of energy into an exhausted body.

I would like to relate a true story that illustrates this conviction.

In 1980 a piece of land with nothing on it was bought for the Theosophical Society in Argentina with money gathered from 11 members who thought that the dream of a Theosophical Centre was possible. It was known that the task would be hard; it proved even harder than expected!

Most of the work, except that of the construction itself, was done by a very small group of members who were constantly present. But age, family and financial problems whittled the group away over the years. The work required a great physical effort and certain skills were just not available at that time.



One winter they were offered the wonderful gift of 200 poplars and the loan of a pick-up vehicle to move them. The opportunity was exceptional and the work of picking them up and planting them could not wait. The roots of the trees were without protection and the temperature was below 5°C. A neighbouring farmer agreed to help unload the trees and protect the roots from the freezing temperature overnight before planting the next day. It was a working day and only one member was available to collect the trees. She had a two and a half hour break in her schoolteaching schedule and that was all. She couldn't call on her husband, because he was working. She had a quick lunch then the race started. Go and get the pick-up. Drive to the nursery, load up the trees, go to the TS land, meet the farmer, unload the trees and protect their roots. Return the pick-up vehicle and rush back to school. Have you ever tried moving 200 saplings? Well, when she arrived at the TS land with the trees, the neighbouring farmer was nowhere in sight. The minutes ticked by and no help was on hand. Impossible to unload and carry 200 trees all alone. Disappointed and tired, our member looked into the distance and couldn't see or hear anyone for miles. She looked within, desperate, trying to find the strength and courage to face the situation. At that very moment, another neighbour came into view. "What are you up to?" he asked. When she explained her plight, he warmly offered to help her with the task at hand. They worked side by side in rhythm and she was able to arrive back at her school just as the bell was ringing.

There are about 2,000 trees planted in the Theosophical Centre now. Those 200 poplars are amongst them.

How was it that a kind neighbour arrived at that crucial moment in that isolated spot? We may lack a rational answer, but to me it is simple: the work had to be done. Will was present, the 'I' was absent, and it was accomplished. Let me repeat the insight – the conviction – that I wish to share: if the cause is genuinely philanthropic, unselfish and impersonal, it will always find support. There is an unknown power that provides help just when it is needed. I wonder if any of you have had the same kind of experience?



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The TOS in Tanzania adopts an orphanage



The TOS in Tanzania is developing ties of friendship with the children at the Kind Heart Africa orphanage in Dar es Salaam. It visited them in August, November and December of 2013, bringing gifts including teddy bears knitted by members of the TOS in France and Italy. The main purpose of the Kind Heart Africa Association is to take care of orphans and vulnerable children and empower them to become useful members of society by providing education, health care and vocational training. It is run by a devoted Buddhist monk, Rev. Ilukpitiye Pannasekara Thero. More information on the association can be found here:

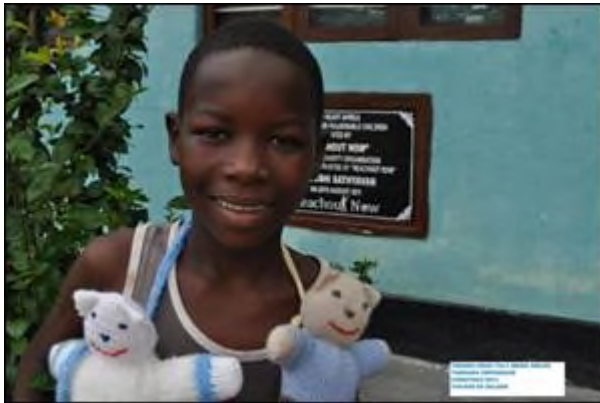
<http://www.pannasekara.com/My%20Project.html>



On November 10, Mr Ebrony Peteli, the General Secretary of the TS in East Africa, visited the orphanage of 74 children with key workers of the TOS in Tanzania. From left to right:

Mrs Lila Chohan, Miss Khyati Dubal, Mr Harsukh Dubal, Mrs Deepa Kapur, two resident boys of the

orphanage, one at primary and the other at secondary level, Mr Ebony Peteli, orphanage supervisor Mama Kimatare, Mr Jayant Chohan and Mrs Vina Dubal.



At the end of 2013, the TOS in Tanzania also took teddies to the Mother Teresa Children's Home for the mentally retarded. Photography was not allowed there.

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Gender issues in Bhubaneswar, India

The TOS, Mahabharat in the state of Odisha in India is attracting international attention for its work in combatting violence against women. Attention, all of our TOS groups who have sent support! The group president, Dr Deepa Padhi, has sent us a most interesting report on the work accomplished for the period September to December 2013. Deepa returned home from the international TOS Conference held in the USA in July 2013 with the wind in her sails...

Dr Padhi writes:

The team first organised a workshop for counsellors in the city of Bhubaneswar on the topic, *Learning the art of empowering the victims of domestic violence*. Ms Anindita Paul, an experienced and respected counsellor from D came to conduct the workshop. Thirty counsellors from all over Odisha attended, along with researchers from the Department of Psychology at Utkal University. The participants found the workshop e helpful.



On October 26 and 27, the TOS held its biggest event of the year graced by the presence of the Royal King of Puri, Odisha, Sri Dibyasingha Dev. Guest of Honour, TOS National President, Sri Birendra L. Bhattacharyya, inaugurated a billboard erected near a premier Autonomous College. Sponsored by the TOS in Australia, it carries the slogan ***From womb to tomb woman is being abused. Empower women, empower humanity.***



On the same day, a needy senior citizen at our day care centre and a multiply disabled boy, Kanha, were given wheelchairs. The Besant Selfless Service Award for 2013 was presented to Mr Sushant Sahu for his work reuniting missing persons with their families.



A wheel chair for a needy senior citizen



Mr Sushant Sahu receiving the Besant Service Award

The whole programme was covered by 18 newspapers and three TV channels. A commemorative magazine – called ‘seva’ (meaning service) in India – was released to mark the event. It contains a photo of the signatures of all those attending the July 2013 international TOS conference who participated in the signature drive to show solidarity towards the victims of the violence in India. The souvenir includes articles by TOS workers Dorothy Bell (Australia), Renee Sell (New Zealand), Rosella Milano Fanzio (Italy) and Ananya Rajan (USA).

In the photo, right, the ladies in white saris are the victims of violence.



Thanks to the wide media coverage of the TOS’s activities on gender issues, I was invited by the State Women’s Commission to participate in a workshop making policies for the protection of women in Odisha. The commission also gave us permission to add its helpline to the billboards, which is of immense practical help to women and female children.

We received 146 teddies from the knitting team of the TOS in Italy, as part of its participation in the Teddies for T project. On Children’s Day in India – November 14 – we distributed 25 teddies and snacks to the needy children at Besant Play School in Bhubaneswar. Seventy-five teddies were later distributed at Aadruta Children’s Home, a refuge for abandoned and orphan girls. Instead of celebrating my granddaughter’s birthday within our own family walls, I decided to hold the party at the Children’s Home, cutting a big cake, playing games, painting faces and giving gifts to the children. Another 26 teddies were given to the children of a missionary home. Some knitted bells received as a gift at the international TOS conference were donated to the home as a decoration for the children’s Christmas tree. The remaining 20 teddies were given to the orphans of Mission Ashra – a home for destitute women and children.





In November, Mahabharat Group organised two large fundraising sales. The money gathered will go toward the cost of artificial limbs, a wheel chair and a disabled allowance for a man, aged 35, who lost his two legs and two hands in an accident.

On November 29, the TOS's third billboard was installed, this one sponsored by the TOS in Italy. The slogan this time is ***From womb to tomb, woman is being abused. Women's rights are human rights. End abuse.*** This billboard was unveiled by the Chairperson of the State Women's Commission.



A large number of impoverished women fall victim to violence when their husbands become addicted to drugs or alcohol. Members of the Mahabharat TOS Group have decided to help reform these addicts by sending them to an addiction centre where they are treated for a period of three months. The cost is Rs. 6000/- [US\$100] per month. One person is currently being treated there financed by our Group. In this way crimes of domestic violence can be reduced.



On December 19, the Mahabharat TOS Group organised a workshop on gender equality at a leading public school in Bhubaneswar. Students participated in group discussions and group tables with six students in each group. They produced brilliant ideas for combatting gender discrimination which they presented before a large gathering of students, teachers and members of the TOS and TS. They also illustrated the theme through painting and theatre scripts. The paintings are so effective that the members decided to bring out a book with them. This workshop was sponsored by TOS, Italy.

Below, we bring you photographs from this student workshop.





We would all like to express our heartfelt thanks to overseas TOS members for their donations supporting some activities. Above all, we are grateful to you for caring so much about gender discrimination and violence toward women. Your moral support is precious to us.

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An energetic year of service in Chennai, India

The TOS, Chennai Region is made up of two groups, the TOS, Chennai Group and the TOS, Besant Group. Together they provide a wide range of medical and social welfare services to the underprivileged members of their community. In the following report, the Joint-Secretary and Head of Projects in the TOS, Chennai Group, Mr C.V.K. Maithreya, shares the highlights of the Region's recent activities.



Providing free medicines

Free medical service

A free medical service was conducted on all Sundays from 10 a.m. to 12 noon with up to 100 patients attending each week. Workers of the TS at Adyar and underprivileged people from neighbouring areas have benefitted from this service. Dr Revathy, Dr S.D. Inbaraj, Dr Uma Natarajan and Dr Sunita Maithreya have provided their services on a voluntary basis, ably assisted by Mrs Vasanta and Mr Krishnasamy.

The TOS group is very grateful to Mr Palaniappan for his donations and for supplying medicines free of cost.

A homeopathy service was also provided every Sunday from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. by Dr Rama Subramanyam who was assisted by Mr N. Raghupathy.

Health camp

A health camp was conducted in May in which doctors from various disciplines like Dialectology, Ear, Nose and Throat, Ophthalmic, Dental, Physiotherapy, Gynaecology, Paediatrics and General Medicines took part. Blood tests and bone density tests were also taken.

Nearly 300 patients living in poverty attended this camp.

Members of the Vasanta Round table also helped in the camp.





Seeing Eyes for Everyone (SEE)

On the first Sunday of every month specialists from Udhi Eye Hospital screened patients. Spectacles were supplied to those who needed them. Cataract patients were taken to the hospital for surgery. In the current year about 135 under-privileged people were given spectacles and 8 persons underwent surgery. Since 2007, nearly 15,000 patients have been screened and individuals needing spectacles or surgeries have had these provided completely free.

Strength, Health and Energy programme (SHE)

127 TS workers at Adyar were given a complete health check-up with the Precision Diagnostics Centre in Sastri Nagar, Chennai. About ten workers were sent daily in a van to the diagnostics centre. Among the screened workers some were diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension or kidney problems. The results were given to the TS Dispensary for further treatment. Both the TS and its workers were happy with this initiative.

As part of the SHE Project free dental check-ups and treatment have been provided with the help of the Sri Ramachandra Medical Centre, Thiruvanmiyur.



Dental check-up

Donation to Uttarakhand Flood Relief

80 boxes of relief material were dispatched by volunteers representing various NGOs, under the leadership of the TOS, Chennai Region. Money was also collected for the relief project.



Other environmental and social welfare activities

- Beach cleaning was carried out regularly under the supervision of Dr M. Srinivasan and Mr Sethu.
- A physically handicapped man was provided with part payment towards a wheelchair to enable him to set up his mobile tea stall.
- Around 100 children attending the Social Welfare Centre at Adyar were supplied with new

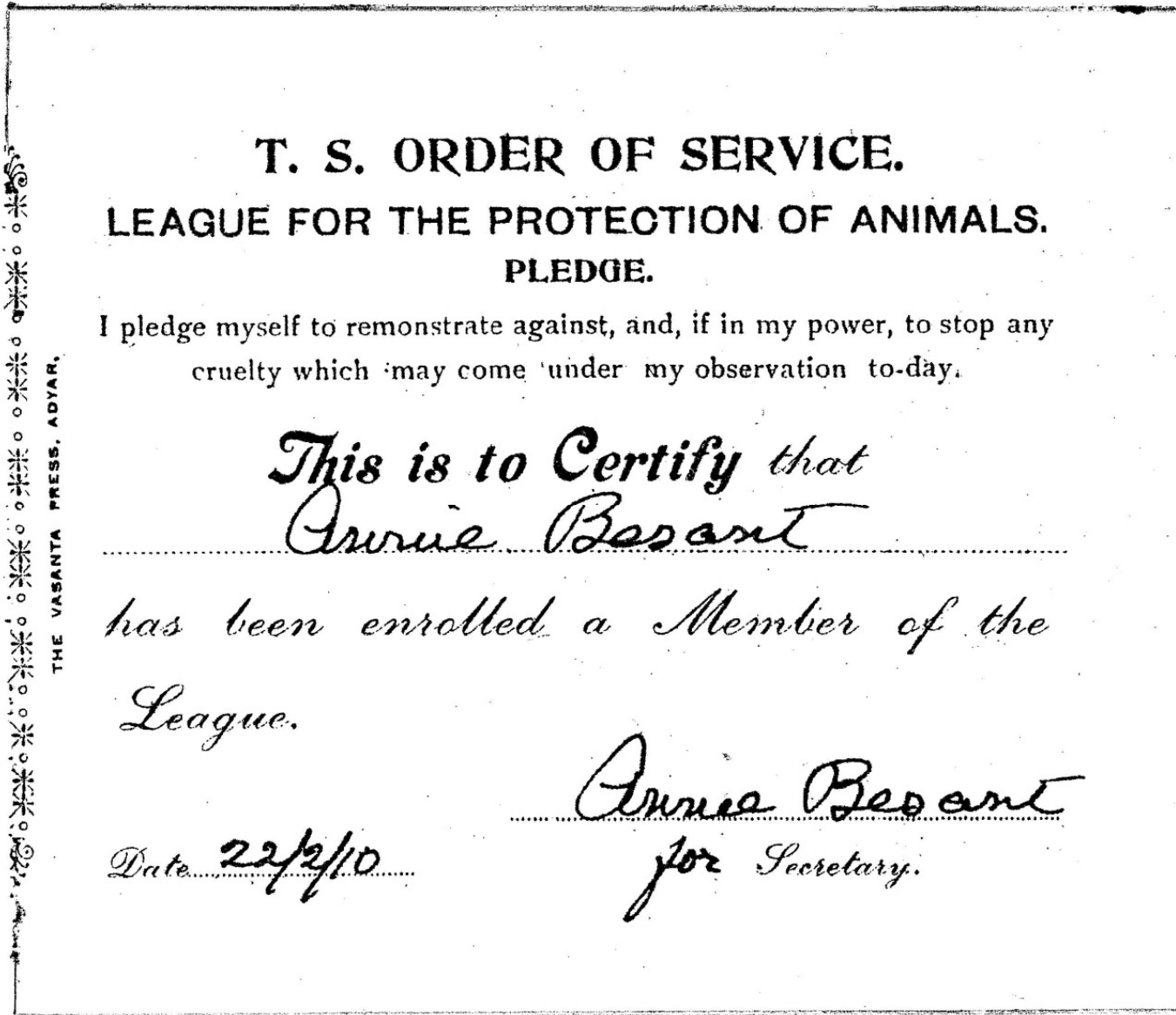
- dresses and sweets.
- Under the leadership of the TOS, Chennai Region, 80 boxes of relief material were dispatched for the Uttarakhand Flood Relief programme, by volunteers representing various NGOs. Money was also collected for this relief project.
 - Donations from members were used to provide utensils to impoverished people, to contribute towards students' educational expenses and to purchase books for students. Members also conducted seminars on education at Tanjore and Coimbatore.

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From the archives: Annie Besant's pledge to protect animals



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The TOS into the future: planning for the next five years

A compilation of further ideas for advancing the work of the TOS,
from the second plenary session of the International TOS Conference, July 2013

Area	Possible international TOS actions	Possible national or local TOS actions
<p>1. Development of International TOS Charter/Constitution/Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Communicate the <i>Principles of Organisation</i> document as widely as possible within the TS, including to TS Sections where the TOS does not exist. * Translate the <i>Principles of Organisation</i> document into local languages. * Encourage as close and harmonious a relationship between the TS and TOS as possible. * Review existing policies and materials in terms of promoting theosophical action in the wider community, and using a sustainable business model for large projects. Explore the potential for new projects along these lines. * Set a limit on terms of office for those appointed. <p><i>POLICY MATTERS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Don't be restrictive in the areas of service designated for TOS activities. * There is a need for flexibility to allow structured and unstructured approaches to service to walk side by side. * Be sensitive to local situations/cultures and allow for differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Collaborate with the International TOS to translate the <i>Principles of Organisation</i> document into local languages. * Develop as close and harmonious a relationship as possible between the TS and TOS at branch and Section level. * Consider making TS members automatically TOS members, as in USA. <p><i>POLICY MATTERS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Don't be restrictive in the areas of service designated for TOS activities. * There is a need for flexibility to allow structured and unstructured approaches to service to walk side by side. * Be sensitive to local situations/cultures and allow for differences.

<p>2. Staffing International Secretariat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Map the worldwide organisational structure. Identify gaps in personnel using flow charts. * Seek volunteers to assist in duties: publicise needs. * Appoint regional secretaries/'liaisons' in areas of the world where they are not working already. * Identify more experienced TOS workers to tour regionally and give talks to both TOS and TS groups. These touring speakers (or 'ambassadors') should be certain to explain how the TOS differs from other philanthropic organisations. * Mentor national TOS leaders. * Explore the possibility of paying staff – develop professional staff. * Identify a financial advisor (or team) for the TOS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Identify more experienced TOS workers to tour regionally and give talks both to TOS and TS groups. These touring speakers (or 'ambassadors') should be certain to explain how the TOS differs from other philanthropic organisations. * Mentor local TOS leaders.
Area	Possible international TOS actions	Possible national or local TOS actions
<p>3. Increasing awareness of the TOS's existence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Place a big button saying "TOS e-newsletter" on website homepage for people to sign up to receive it. Also include the button on Facebook. * Place "What we stand for" as key words on the home page. * Awareness of the TOS at TS Section level is critical: encourage a TOS presence at TS conventions/regional and federation conferences. * Encourage TS/TOS collaborative projects and community outreach. * Request information on TOS on all TS websites and in magazines. Encourage the starting of new groups through feature articles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Identify TOS members to act as 'TOS representatives' in connecting with community groups. * Awareness of the TOS at TS Section level is critical: encourage a TOS presence at TS Conventions/regional and federation conferences. * Encourage collaborative projects between TS and TOS. * Request information on TOS on all TS websites and in magazines. Encourage the starting of new groups through feature articles. * Try to include specific TOS page in national TS magazines. * Encourage local TS branches to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organise regular communication and networking between National TOS leaders to build community. * Support National TOS leaders in developing and co-ordinating TOS teams and activities within their countries. * Encourage National TOS leaders to organise national conferences for TOS members where there are enough members to warrant it and where such gatherings do not already take place. * Using Skype, "go-to" meetings or Adobe Connect, create an idea pool to share experiences. * Increase use of video and U-Tube. * Use social media to demonstrate TOS in action. Find a volunteer to activate a Facebook page and keep it active. Twitter to be used to announce and inspire e.g. daily inspirational quotes. * Write articles about TOS activities and the philosophy behind it for non-TS/alternative magazines. * Consider the communication obstacles faced in reaching out to communities where illiteracy is high and where internet access is impossible e.g. rural areas, especially India. * Look more closely at the UN NGO status. * Develop films, internet and TV programmes to demonstrate that the TOS work and the spiritual goals and multi-ethnic and interdenominational activities pursued by the TOS can show brotherhood in action. * Provide a standard international TOS presentation letter to which local groups can add the particular 	<p>incorp-orate TOS presentations in their prog-ramming, making them fun and joyful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * National TOS leaders communicate with one another as regularly as possible to build community. * Encourage National TOS leaders to visit their groups. * Create national coordinating teams to encourage groups to participate and have key workers to activate work. * Organise national conferences for TOS members where there are enough members to warrant it and where such gatherings do not already take place. * Using Skype, "go-to" meetings or Adobe Connect, create an idea pool to share experiences. * Increase use of video and U-Tube. * Use social media to demonstrate TOS in action. Find a volunteer to activate a Facebook page and keep it active. Twitter to be used to announce and inspire e.g. daily inspirational quotes. * Use personal and professional contacts to develop interest in the TOS. * Write articles about TOS activities and the philosophy behind it for non-TS/ alternative magazines. * Explore the placing of ads and stories about the TOS in printed non-TS publications. * Do e-mail campaigns to all TS members and other interested people.
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	project for which they are wanting sponsorship.	* Contact corporate and local companies about sponsorship and the volunteering of their employees' time. (Write TOS presentation letter to local manager or Chief Executive Officer to invite their participation.)
Area	Possible international TOS actions	Possible national or local TOS actions
3. Increasing awareness of the TOS's existence (continued)	<p>FOR YOUTH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Highlight and share stories about young people involved in TOS projects. * Create a "Youth TOS". * Provide information about affiliated ceremonial/service organisations such as The Round Table. * Facilitate networking between TS/TOS Sections to connect young people wherever they travel or go to school. * Create a certificate of merit for children participating in writing or art activity on a service-related topic provided by TOS. Enquire of Vic Hao Chin how to promote the activity without competitiveness. * Publish youth contributions on the website. (Ensure that the child's full name is not given for protection reasons. Pen name can be used, for example.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Explore the possibility of issuing TOS membership cards. * Consider the communication obstacles faced in reaching out to communities where illiteracy is high and where internet access is impossible e.g. rural areas, especially India. * Involve local community leaders and opinion-makers in TOS functions. * Submit reports on the activities of the TOS to local newspapers. <p>FOR YOUTH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Engage young people in schools, colleges, universities to become involved in TOS projects. * Create a 'Youth TOS'. * Encourage children to participate in the ceremonial work of the affiliated ceremonial/service organisation called The Round Table. Create Round Table groups. * Network with other Sections to connect young people wherever they travel or go to school. * Read stories to children in libraries. Use 3-D printing in instruction. * Create a certificate of merit for children participating in writing or art activity on a service-related topic provided by TOS. Enquire

		<p>of Vic Hao Chin how to promote the activity without competitiveness. Publish youth contributions on website. (Ensure that the child's full name is not given for protection reasons. Pen name can be used, for example.)</p> <p>* Identify retired TOS members able to mentor needy children or unemployed youth in trade skills and to donate trade tools.</p>
4. Development of international TOS publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Explore existing resources/publications from likeminded groups. * Produce more booklets like Nelda Samarel's <i>Helping the Dying</i>. * Produce an international magazine available to all countries in the different languages. * Translate TOS publications into local languages where useful. * Sign up TOS members for (free) E-news. * Publicise our E-newsletter. * Develop international tri-fold brochure suitable for any country. Place on website to be printed locally. * Explore website (RSS) linking mentioned by Vic Hao Chin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Collaborate in translating TOS publications into local languages where useful. * Sign up TOS members for (free) E-news. * Publicise our E-newsletter.
Area	Possible international TOS actions	Possible national or local TOS actions
5. Increasing awareness of the nature of the TOS's work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Include on the website and in magazines more personal stories on how theosophical ideas help people cope in their lives. They will make the reading more meaningful to the public. * Provide information and resources to help groups coordinate TOS activities with existing UN themes – it provides a readymade framework of ideas for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Include on national websites and in publications more personal stories on how theosophical ideas help people cope in their lives. They will make the reading more meaningful to the public. * Coordinate TOS activities with existing UN themes – it provides a readymade framework of ideas for activities.

	<p>activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Coordinate with governing agencies such as European Union and UN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Offer workshops for the general public.
<p>6. Development of support materials for different lines of service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop web conference facilities. * Provide PowerPoint templates and logos in colour to download. * Expand lists of materials with a theosophical theme in all categories (children, ecology, etc.) on website, linking to outside resources. * Make available on the website an automatic translation service. * Add more information about animal welfare to the website – on how to find cruelty-free products, on vegetarianism, etc. with links to articles and source websites such as a vegetarian society. * Show the sacredness of life by using pictures of children, animals and workers doing TOS work. * Highlight each week a feature article on the website home page. * Offer Apps (phone applications). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Network with like-minded national organisations in the animal, social welfare and environmental areas and share and promote appropriate resources. * Promote international TOS resource material to TS and TOS members and the wider community. * Add appropriate material and links to national TOS websites.
<p>7. Skills and inner development programmes and resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Encourage TOS groups to hold leadership seminars for the workers to strengthen the organisation. Skills to be developed should include decision-making as a team. * Mentor and network National leaders. A skills matrix is needed: whom do we have? Build relationships. * Provide training in technology and resources to help those who want to volunteer their services; identify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Identify potential leaders in local groups. Encourage TOS groups to hold leadership seminars for the workers to strengthen the organisation. Skills to be developed should include decision-making as team. * Mentor local groups. A skills matrix is needed: whom do we have? Build relationships. * Provide training in technology and resources to help those who want to volunteer their services;

	<p>mentors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Encourage National TOS leaders to promote the inner transformative work with local groups. * Emphasise the three 'pillars' of the theosophical life (study, service and meditation) to ensure a balanced approach. 	<p>identify mentors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Encourage local TOS groups to include specifically the inner transformative work in their programmes. * Emphasise the three 'pillars' of the theosophical life (study, service and meditation) to ensure a balanced approach. * Organise spiritual retreats for youth.
Area	Possible international TOS actions	Possible national or local TOS actions
<p>8. Development of financial management policy and procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide templates for reporting monies. (Of course national and local groups' needs will vary.) * Examine the usefulness of an Intranet coordinated accounting system. * Provide assistance for grant writing and help in the writing skills necessary to record/report on the use of donated money. * Develop an official policy of accepted ways of operating for groups receiving donations for their projects, specifying conditions for this financial support: the necessity of sending receipts and regular progress reports, showing a budget where applicable, undergoing an annual audit, etc. * Legal advice could be sought on charitable organisation status for the TOS in certain countries. * Where possible, encourage meetings between donors and beneficiaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide local groups with templates for reporting monies. (Of course local groups' needs will vary.) * Work with local groups receiving donations for their projects to help them meet the conditions for continuing support from other TOS groups – sending receipts and regular progress reports, showing a budget where applicable, undergoing an annual audit, etc.
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A joyful party for children from slums in Kenya

Usha Shah, the Convenor of the TOS in Nairobi, writes to us about a recent party that she and her TOS group organised to bring some special fun and laughter into the lives of children from two slum areas in Nairobi. As you read, it was an outstanding success – a memorably happy day despite the weather.



“Dear All, When I opened the curtains yesterday morning, my heart dropped into my shoes! It was raining and the sky was full of dark, heavy clouds threatening to let lots more pour down! The day of our big outdoor party and rain! Too late to think about it - will go on as planned...”

At 11 a.m. I left home with the rain positively beating down on the top of my car and me praying for the rain God to take a rest. He did only in short gaps but could not dampen the children’s spirits or mine.

Before long the food – scones, dried fruit, crisps, chocolate éclairs, biscuits, fluffy wafers, bhajias (fried Indian snacks) and a drink - were all lined up with plates and serviettes. The gift packs containing school stationery and clothes were in cartons ready to distribute at going home time. Tents and chairs were placed to receive the honoured invited guests from the Deep Sea Blue slum and Gachie slum.

The entertainment group had not arrived to set up the tarpaulin and the bouncing castle. I stood in the rain directing them on the mobile phone and they made it by 12.30.

They put up everything just in time for the arrival of the children – a few in presentable clothes and most in very worn ones – all with eager anticipation on their faces. As they turned into the alley, they gave squeals of delight seeing the bouncing castle and the tarpaulin. All of them just loved bouncing up and down and landing on their backs, all the while shouting happily and laughing uproariously. The timid ones cautiously joined in and ended up loving it all as well.



Off on the side, face painting commenced and a BIG queue formed. Sadly, a few missed out through lack of time



Hilarious games followed with much laughter and gaiety. Yours truly took part in the tug of war and enjoyed it too. The puppet show was a hit and had the children laughing heartily. Acrobats put on an incredible act keeping the children spellbound too!



Then came the fire show with the performers playing around with lighted batons. They ATE the flames and then threw them back out. One could see the shock and amazement on the faces of the children. Singing followed and prayers were recited before the food was served. All this time the rain and the sun competed, not disturbing the high spirits of the children in the slightest.



Next the gift packs were presented, along with the teddies knitted by our Italian and French TOS members. Each child received a mosquito net too – a very useful article to have in the slum which is vulnerable to malaria.



Mrs Indu Shah, the Assistant Secretary of the TS Lodge in Nairobi helped distribute gifts.



Usha Shah gives a child a mosquito net.

The guests did not want to leave, as you can imagine. I got countless hugs and invitations to visit them. I felt humbled to have received so much love.

Here and now, I pass on this love to each person who helped, directly or indirectly, to make November 29, 2013 a fun filled and joyful day for those who need faith that all will be alright one day. A special thought to the lady who knitted that teddy which is now a treasured toy for a child who has so little in life. Thank you. Be blessed, all of you. As I write this, I have tears in my eyes and gratitude to the Supreme....

Usha Shah, Convenor, TOS Nairobi

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A comment on contemporary society

Are we becoming a society of spectators?

SOCIEDADE DO ESPETÁCULO



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