

# GFF



# HELPS

## THE MAY NEWS LETTER

Issue 5, 20 May, 2019



### *Message From the Founder*

I have been In St Lucia, an Island in the Caribbean, for the last week looking at tourism related projects. At the same time Lisa, Emma, Becky and Sarah Kearney, an old friend, have been accompanying me to see if GFF HELPS could be established here. We are also gauging whether from this base we can expand our work to adjacent Islands in the Caribbean.

As a start I have donated \$100,000 to the Government to assist in cleaning up graffiti and rubbish that has been left over after the last hurricane. More on this as we proceed with our due diligence.

We have put on a local candidate in Sri Lanka and Sarah will be highlighting their initial program.

*Sir Owen Glenn*

KNZM ONZM LLD (Hon)  
Doctor of Law AKL UNI

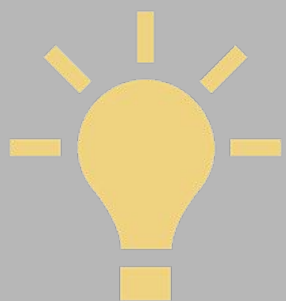
Ren Lapun of the Lepcha tribe of N E India—Master and Creator  
Ratu Sir Owen "Vuilawa" Glenn—Chief of the Mamanuca Islands of Fiji  
Hon member of the CPA Society of the South Pacific  
Harvard Graduate OPM 15 -1992

# Lighting up Homes Panipiason, Philippines

Willyn Carrascal



*“We not only help eliminate these problems but also create a safer place and turn a house into a home”*



In October 2018, GFF HELPS Philippines set out a new venture to bring light to those in need in the form of solar power in Madalag, a predominantly rural municipality in Aklan, Philippines. This area was chosen for the trial of the solar project after a long and careful consideration of necessity, accessibility and safety. Access to electricity is a basic need in any household and the lack of it may affect an individual's life in different ways. Families with no electricity will have shorter productivity as they heavily rely on sunlight during the day to do housework. At night, they would typically use kerosene in a glass bottle as light. This may be harmful to their health and a huge fire hazard, especially to houses made of bamboo and nipa (palm leaves). Students also find it difficult to do their homework without adequate lighting. By providing this necessity, we would not only help eliminate these problems but also create a safer place and turn a house into a home.

Through the help of a contact of our previous local partner, we were able to get in touch with the Mayor of Madalag, which then led to a meeting of barangay (village) officials. This meeting allowed us to introduce the project to the village captains and show them D'light D330. This kit contains one fluorescent light, two light bulbs with switches and a lithium battery powered by small solar panel. The next step that followed was a survey of the first target village called Panipiason, the furthest village in Madalag. It takes forty-five minutes to reach Madalag town centre via motorbike and another forty-five minutes to reach Panipiason through habal-habal (motorbike taxi). Taking these motorbike taxis is a must as the road is rough, steep and narrow.

Panipiason is large geographically but the population remains smaller in comparison to its neighbouring villages. Most houses were built from bamboo and a lot were donated by Red Cross after the devastating typhoon Hainan in 2013. This rural community tried to rebuild themselves with the very few resources they had. They are now recovering by making abaca fiber, a crop made from bananas and bamboos that they deliver through the river. However, they can only make very little profit from this as the 'middle man' buys their product for much lesser price than the market price. Panipiason also has beautiful rice terraces, solely for consumption. Their main source of water is from shallow wells, nearby springs and rivers. Panipiason was one of the two villages that did not have electricity until last year due to its distance from the main transmission lines.

Nevertheless, there are still a lot of houses that do not have electricity due to two main reasons, distance and inability to afford electricity installation and monthly fees. The barangay officials of Panipiason provided a list of people who fit our criteria to receive these solar panels. We prioritised families that lived in Sityo (site) Luho, the furthest part of Panipiason and households with no electricity that have children, senior citizens and people with disability. Prior to ordering the panels, we coordinated with the Mayor and Panipiason's village captain with regards to storage, logistics and distribution. We also organised the tools and materials they would need to install the solar panels. Initially, our plan was to provide a carpenter to install the panels but later realised that D'light D330 was designed for easy installation and that people from rural communities are self-efficient when it comes to construction work. If they're not skilled enough, the sense of bayanihan comes in, where friends or neighbours help each other to achieve a goal.

Later this month, we will be returning to Panipiason to find out how it has impacted the beneficiaries' lives since they received it four months ago. We look forward to sharing our findings with you. In the meantime, we are preparing to expand this into the next two villages in the coming months.

# Lighting up Homes

Panipiason, Philippines

*"the sense of **bayanihan** comes in, where friends or neighbours help each other to achieve a goal."*



Installed  
by the  
community



D'light  
solar  
panels



Panipaison,  
Philippines



# Free Medical Camp

Pudung, India



*Saom Tshering Namchu*

GFF India Representative &  
Project Director

A free Medical Camp was organized by Sir Owen G. Glenn (SOGG) Learning & Information Centre Pudung & Glenn Family Foundation team at Pudung Junior Basic School on 28th April 2019. The free medical camp was organized with the help of Darjeeling North Point School Alumni Association supported by Planter's Hospital Darjeeling. The "Clinic on Wheels" is an outreach program of the ex-students of North Point School in association with Planter's Hospital Darjeeling which provides free medical examinations and conducts various medical tests at locations around Darjeeling hills.

The day started with registration of local residents visiting the camp, where a team of three doctors - Dr. Plaban Das, Dr. Yasmine Tamang, Dr. S. Bag, a Physiotherapist, Mr. Vishal Yonzon - and a crew of staff nurses and lab technicians were stationed. The attendees were examined by the doctors, who then suggested any follow up tests required or arrangements were made for free medicines. 115 people were registered and examined. Medical tests included Lipid Profile, Blood Glucose Tests, Uric Acid Tests and R.A Factor Tests. A total of 13 ECG (Electrocardiography) tests were done on location. Reports of the medical tests were handed out later in the afternoon with doctor consultation. Prabitra Subba, aged 84, was the oldest among those attending the camp on Sunday. Chandra Bahadur Chettri, 82, thanked the doctor and the entire team for arranging the camp and for bringing the mobile laboratory to the area. The camp was assisted by village volunteers mobilized by SOGG learning Centre Pudung along with our GFF team. GFF helped to provide free medicine for the patients and provided lunch & tea for the volunteers and the medical team.

Health Camps are one of our main activities conducted in partnership with various organizations like Rotary Club, Lions Club, Red Cross, local eye hospitals and other medical institutions. With the help of Sir Owen & GFF we have been able to organize more than 40 Health Camps in the region of Darjeeling & Kalimpong hills.



## Medical Camp Continued....

**The SOGG Learning Centers** which started in the year 2014 were inspired and supported by Sir Owen Glenn. These Learning Centers' main aim is to prevent children from dropping out of school and becoming child labourers. Our Learning Centers help by providing free tuition after school to village children, because many village children do not have the right kind of environment to study at home. The Learning Centres also help previous dropouts to return to education and eventually get better jobs. Our Centers are located in three villages namely Chibbo, Bong & Pudung. These villages were part of GFF's first Village Development project (2007-2013) where GFF implemented health, water, sanitation and education projects. Besides the regular free tutorials, we also organize various forms of awareness programs (health & hygiene, environment, human trafficking, agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, etc.) among villagers. We also teach sports, music and culture preservation and help youth get connected to vocational studies opportunities in order to get a proper employment.



GFF Patron / USA Representative

**Lauren L. Pittman**

### Dr Stein Initiative

Together with friend and heart surgeon Dr. Alex Stein, Sir Owen's philanthropic and compassionate vision begins to take shape in Northern India under GFF USA.

The Kalimpong Region has been selected as the focus of a medical mission to bring much needed sophisticated heart surgery to this under-served area of the country.

Although in the early stages of the "mise en scène" the project set begins to take shape as Dr. Stein and GFF USA's Lauren Pittman form partnerships and obtain the necessary permits as well as local hospital cooperation. Excitement is building for this pet project, proposed on a bus in India, where Sir Owen hosted Dr. Stein, family and friends on an incredible trip this past October. Sidenote: If you have yet to see the Jai Ho video, it is one for Bollywood. Dr. Stein is tasked with getting his team together and traveling from LA in early November. This will be the landmark of the newly formed GFF USA and is sure to bring life, literally, to those in need thanks to our very own knight in shining armour, Sir Owen Glenn.

## Introducing Pavithra Gunasekara



I am a recent graduate from SANASA Campus, Kegalle, Sri Lanka, having completed a Bachelor of Science in Regional Science and Planning. My degree programme was based on community development where I got the opportunity to engage and work with a SANASA Primary Society (local cooperative community groups). With their collaboration, I developed an “Integrated Rural Development Plan” for four years under five pillars: community empowerment, uplifting the low-income families, developing infrastructure facilities, improving education & health and developing the local cooperative community groups. The second project was on encouraging small to medium entrepreneurs in Makola South area by aiding credit finance.

My experience at SANASA Campus inspired me to become more involved with the community while developing my personal and professional skills to identify my career path. The knowledge I have gained through my degree has allowed me to build rapport in the village and effectively communicate to achieve a common goal. My passion for assisting the community was enlightened and fueled by the practical experience I grew in the field. Therefore, I am proud to say I have completed my studies at SANASA Campus, Kegalle, based on cooperative principles with the leadership of Wishwaprasadini Dr P.A. Kiriwandeniya and to continue to build my experience with the Glenn Family Foundation HELPS Programme.

SANASA Campus, has a diverse university model compared to conventional universities around the world, due to its ‘green university’ concept with a strong focus on sustainability. The Center for Co-operatives and Community Development Studies (CCCS) plays a vital role on this campus; they directly interact with the rural community and conduct community-oriented programmes where students get the opportunity to integrate with villagers. The opportunity to integrate international volunteers and SANASA Campus students through the GFF HELPS programme will bring a tremendous impact on the community and the international exposure will foster the development of a global mindset in the Kegalle district.

Just some of our initial projects will include:

- *Teaching English to students and in the rural villages*
- *Teaching essential IT skills in our newly refurbished department*
- *Teaching First Aid to students and in the rural villages*
- *Environmental awareness and recycling initiatives*
- *The creation of mobile libraries and introduction of digital learning teaching aids*

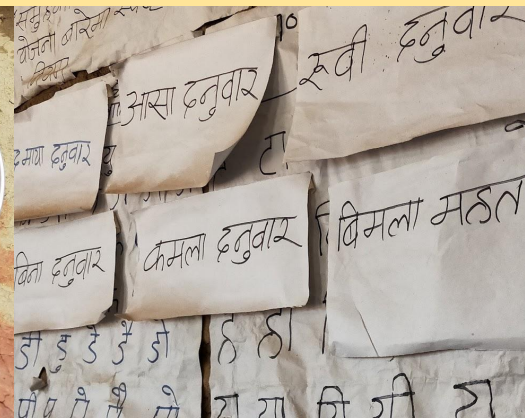
In my new role as Project Coordinator, I will continue the plan initiated by first Sri Lanka GFF Representative, Tharaka Munidasa, to build a collaborative link between SANASA Campus, GFF and the local communities. This linkage will help to ensure the sustainability and local ownership of our projects. I believe I can share my knowledge and experience with future volunteers to maximise the projects’ success. I am very excited to work with the Glenn Family Foundation and SANASA Campus to share their vision to the surrounding communities in Kegalle, Sri Lanka.

# Empowering the women of Kavre



## Shona Warren, GFF Representative

Kavrepalanchok region lies east of Kathmandu, among hills and agricultural fields. For the past three months, the GFF representatives Sulochana and Shona have been working with two villages in the region with the support of Child Development Society: Teen Gharey and Jareytar. Still recovering from the 2015 earthquake, the towns face problems related to health, society, education and infrastructure. With CDS, the women of the two towns are involved each week in a women's group called SEEP – Self Education and Employment Program. The program has been running for many years in different areas of Kathmandu, to great success. The program provides the women with a small amount of money, literacy and numeracy education, and empowers them to start their own business and build their economic independence from there. The SEEP groups in Teen Gharey and Jareytar are still in their infancy, and with the help of CDS, GFF has been meeting with them to help discuss the problems facing the community to better understand what GFF's role can be, as well as to provide lessons on WASH (Water Sanitation Hygiene) and Menstrual Hygiene Management. GFF has also begun a program helping out at the local primary school in Teen Gharey providing computer literacy training to the teachers, which they can pass on to the students and make use of a computer lab that has previously been donated to the school. During our visits, we have spoken to the incredible women who make up the community to better understand their daily lives and what they enjoy about living in such a beautiful region of Nepal. Below is one of the women, Bimala's, story.



### Bimala Mahat, 39

*I was born near here, in Thulogaon, not far from Teen Gharey. What I love about Teen Gharey is that I feel safe here- there are no natural disasters like landslides or floods. I am a homemaker; I take care of my two children. I love keeping my house and the area around my home neat and clean. I love gardening and growing flowers. I believe that if we share our sadness and grief with others then we feel much lighter. I would like to work and earn money for my family, but there is no work here in Teen Gharey. My favourite foods are green vegetables, dairy, beans and pulses. I love to grow my own greens in my garden and use those in my cooking.*

# GFF Philippines Summer Camp

## Michael Fanning, GFF Representative



Elementary school summer holidays begin in April and end at the end of May here in The Philippines. That meant GFF would not be able to call around to schools and continue its workshops, mobile libraries and digital tablet training during these two months. Instead, we created some posters and a summer camp plan and called around to some local barangays (villages) to inquire about potential interest. Out of the 6 villages we asked, 5 of them replied that they would like a summer camp held there, which we are holding in local sports halls or classrooms. Each summer camp lasts 5 days, from Monday to Friday, while each day introduces a new theme. Monday is Countries of the World Day, followed by Create a Comic Book Day, Science Day, Quiz Day and finally, Sports Day. This variation during the week ensures students are entertained and most importantly, they leave with new knowledge.

I have noticed geography skills are not a strong point here, so we try to teach the kids about the 7 continents and about new countries, giving basic facts about countries both near and far away. Students have the freedom to express their creativity while they create a comic and then they can get hands-on with some science experiments. Quiz Day boosts not only their general knowledge but knowledge about The Philippines, while Sports Day includes relay races, basketball and football. It is sometimes a challenge while playing football because basketball is so instilled in culture here that many students naturally want to use their hands even playing football! After completing our first summer camp we had the next week's schedule free, so we allowed the children that missed out on the first week to attend a camp the following week (we have a maximum of 50 children per camp).

Teaching at the summer camps has allowed me to get closer to these set of students because we were teaching them for 5 days so it's easier to build up a bond and assess the student's skills, weaknesses and personalities. The students were able to use the books, stationary and balls we brought with us each day. They especially enjoyed leafing through the boxes of books we brought. Poorer households might not have many books, so it is a big plus when we see these children really appreciating and becoming fascinated by these books. It is a summer well spent! A price cannot be put on a good education.

