



**THE BELAKU TRUST**  
RESEARCH & ACTION



**THE BELAKU TRUST**  
APRIL 2014 / MARCH 2015

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Dedicated to Community Health, Research and Action





# THE BELAKU TRUST

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## DEAR FRIENDS OF BELAKU

In 1995, the Belaku Trust first began its work in the village communities of the Kanakapura Taluk. It found families burdened with huge and entrenched challenges: poverty, caste segregation, poor awareness about health and nutrition, poorly functioning state services -- like education and healthcare -- and the especially keen deprivation experienced by women and children.



The Belaku Trust has spent twenty years deepening ties and trust in those communities, aiming for a mutual understanding and support in the struggles and meeting the challenges. It has matched rigorous research in rural health and society with patient, responsible and committed programmes to help rural women achieve new standards of income, wellness, education for their children, access to public services **that are their right, and overall, greater happiness and dignity for their families.**

This year has been involving and challenging; one in which we have done much thinking about our role, effectiveness and future directions. It has also seen a move towards continuity in the programme, with leadership roles gradually devolving to staff at the community level. In the course of discussions about Belaku's future, we were moved and heartened to hear from the field staff that they wanted to see Belaku's work continue and were keen to explore a different staffing pattern, in which field coordinators take on the full responsibility for the projects of the organisation. The gelathis also felt that their training and skills would enable them to take more responsibility for the Anganwadi and Community Support Programme.

I hope that as you read this Annual Report, you will agree that no effort is spared to maintain our functioning and integrity. The Belaku Trust continues to base its programmes on carefully collected data and on the needs expressed by the women and families we work with. Even the best-conceived programmes will only be effective if they are professionally administered, and if the Belaku staff prioritise diligent planning and supervision.

Every improvement in staff skills as well as for our systems improves the role we can play in these communities. None of this would be possible without your help and encouragement. We have received support in many forms: your time, advice, money or simply a pat on the back. Without this, we know we could not exist, and neither could many of the dreams of the people in these villages.

Thanks from all of us for your interest and support in the Belaku Trust.

Yours,

Girish Karnad,  
Chief Trustee



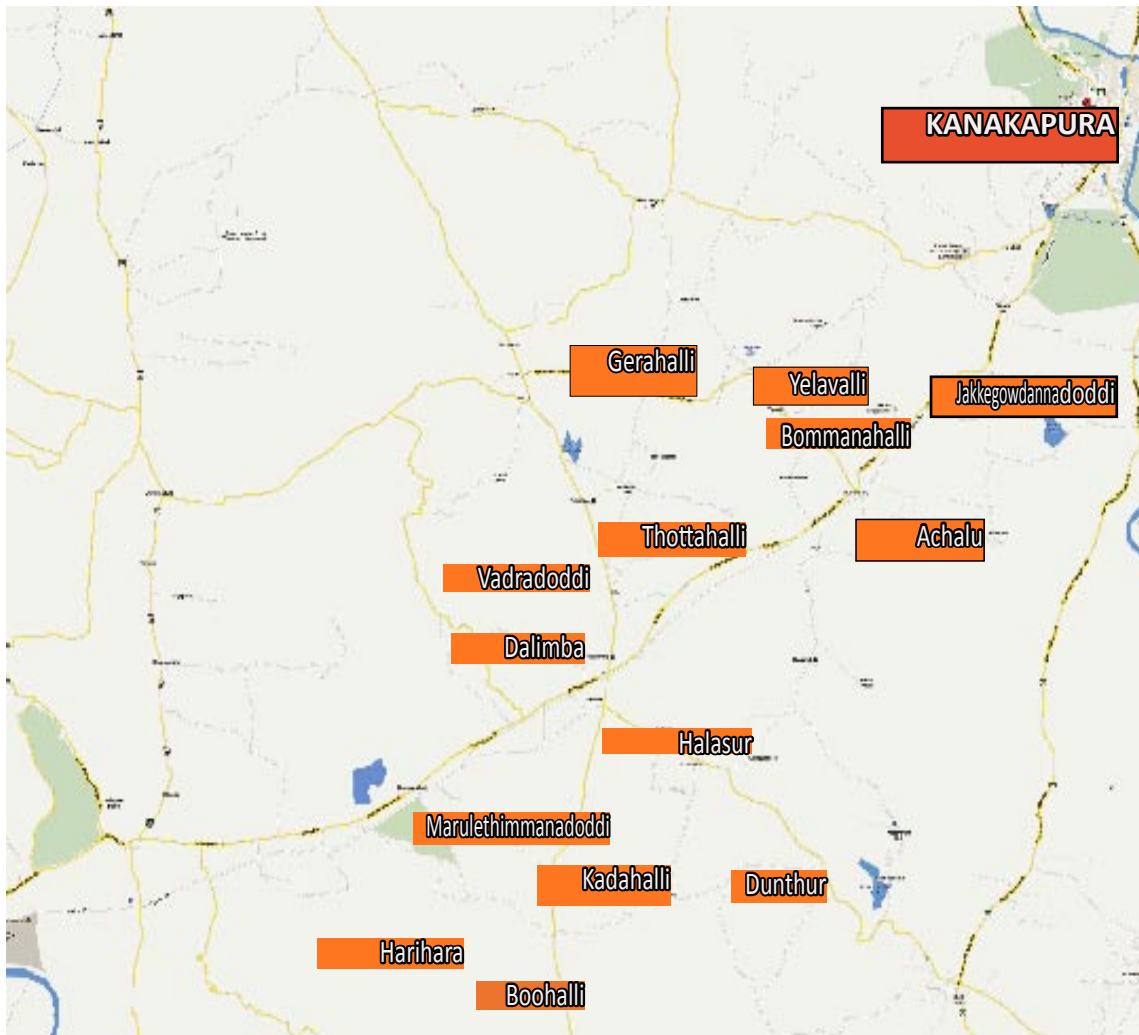
## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE STAND FOR

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We are a group from various professional backgrounds, all committed to seeing a better life for the people of Kanakapura Taluk. Our focus has always been on the health and nutrition of women and children in this area and our research has shown how many factors hinder them from leading a healthy life. We see women coping with extreme poverty, lack of health information and ignorance of the skills needed to access and improve the services that should be available to them.

All our programmes and activities have been designed keeping in mind that:

- / Charity and handouts are not the answer.
- / Real, lasting change in our rural areas must come from the village communities themselves.
- / We can work with these communities to help them gain the knowledge and skills to effect these changes.
- / We can work with the existing services, which need to be strengthened, not sidelined or replaced.
- / We stand for the right of the community to make their own decisions and have the healthiest life possible.



# WHAT WE DO AND WHY

We believe that a constant interaction between research and field activities is the most effective way to function. Our research has been sponsored by groups like UNICEF, the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation and the World Health Organization. It has shown us that poor health and nutrition in the villages comes from many related causes.

## / Poverty

Lack of money restricts the care provided to children in many cases, forcing village mothers to take ill-paid labour work far from home. In response, Belaku developed three income generation groups, where village women produce craftwork that we have been able to market on their behalf. We have now handed over the running of this programme to another organisation. We give loans to women to buy livestock, which enhances their incomes and diets. We give money for medical help to the neediest families.

## / Lack of Knowledge

Working together at the income generation groups and at other venues organized by Belaku gives women the chance to discuss problems and share ideas and information. Belaku has trained home visitors, Gelathis, to give information on health and nutrition to mothers. Our Smart Start Programme also gives women help at home and concentrates on giving information on pregnancy and baby care.

## / Lack of Academic Education

Education for village people has always been hampered by transport problems and lack of money. The lack of opportunity for children affects their health and the wellbeing of their community. Belaku supports the workers in government-sponsored Anganwadis, or preschools. These workers' functioning can suffer if they feel isolated. Under the programme **A Future through Fun**, Belaku organizes summer camps for children and young people. Some seven to eight hundred children and young people learn about health, environment and gender justice through games, films and computer programmes. We provide scholarships so that local students can attend school and college.



# DETAILS OF MAJOR PROGRAMMES

## 2014 / 2015

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### Anganwadi and Community Support Programme

Belaku has been collaborating with the Government's Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programmes since 2006. Our aim is to increase community involvement and support of the anganwadi (preschool) programme as well as to improve health and nutrition of pregnant women and young children. Women from the community, called gelathis, have been trained by Belaku to work with the children in the pre-school as well as carry out counselling sessions with families.

#### Preschool Component

The coverage by the gelathis has been expanded to now cover fifteen villages. As the gelathis gain in experience, more responsibility has been given to them and they now draw up the curriculum for the pre-school sessions and plan the resource materials and methods like songs and stories for these sessions. The gelathis interact regularly to optimize their ability to conceive of and carry out interesting programmes with the children.

#### Home visits to families with young children and to pregnant women and new mothers

The gelathis continue to make visits to homes in the afternoons. Growth charts of all the children attending the pre-school are maintained and reviewed with the families. Families of malnourished children are visited several times a month.

We have observed that pregnant women and lactating mothers often do not receive appropriate care and advice. The Gelathis visit regularly and share information as well as answer questions about problems perceived by the families.

#### Summer Camp 2014

The camps are held annually and are eagerly awaited by the children. They were once more funded by the Overseas Womens's Club of Bangalore. Alagammai Meiyappan, a trained teacher helped us with planning and also visited the camps. The field coordinators and gelathis took on more of the responsibility for planning the camps this year.

From the 10th of April to the 28th of May, we held the summer camps in 10 villages with a total of over a thousand children between the ages of 2-16 attending. The children were split into three age-groups: 3-5s, 6-10s and 11-16s. Gelathis, local women trained by Belaku to work in the government pre-schools, were given 4 days of training prior to the camps on how to conduct and facilitate each activity for each of the groups. It was a challenge but also a delight to handle 100+ boisterous children each day.

We ran age-appropriate activities for the three age-groups. The children not only had fun but also learnt about teamwork, competitiveness, nutrition, sanitation, environment and their rights as children. Children of all different backgrounds, girls and boys, enthusiastically participated in the activities. We strongly believe that this non-didactic method helps children absorb and retain important concepts more effortlessly.

#### Income Generation Groups

The three income generation groups, Kirana, Deepa and Ushe, have made great progress over the last years. Their skills have improved markedly as well as their ability to handle more of the management issues like purchasing, keeping track of stock. They now function with very little direct supervision in the field and have also been making a regular profit for the past few years. After considerable consultation and discussion, the production and marketing aspects of these groups was handed over to the Samarthanam organisation, which shares our aims and is more oriented towards marketing for women's groups. Our belief is that this will enable Belaku to focus on what are our strengths, health and development. We will continue to work with the women of the Kirana, Deepa and Ushe groups on these fronts and have already held several sessions on financial management.

**Medical issues:** A woman from the village was found to have a serious gynaecological problem and was helped by Pavitra Shetty and Dr. Shaibya Saldanha to get in touch with a hospital for her surgery and follow up care. Jogi Siddegowda, who is paraplegic and works with the Ushe group, needed consultation which was generously provided by Dr. Nandkumar Jairam.



# STORIES FROM THE FIELD

The life of one of the women from the income generation groups has provided us with considerable encouragement in terms of our aim of empowering the women to be self-reliant.

Nagamani (name changed) is a single woman from a poor household. Being unmarried and in her thirties put her in an unusual situation in the community and she faced some difficulties because of it. After her parents' death, she was dependent on her brother and sister-in-law and it was while she was living with them that she began to work in the income generation group. A few years later, her brother died and she then faced considerable harassment from the sister-in-law. Attempts to find an amicable solution failed, and finally Nagamani decided that she would take a place of her own and live separately. "If it was not for the confidence I have after working and the support from the others in the group, I would never have been able to do this. Now I am not worried about what the others in the village say -- I can look after myself" she says confidently.



# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The staff members who are gradually taking over the planning and functioning of Belaku's programmes will continue with our existing programmes and have their own ideas for additions that will strengthen the work.

These include

- Directing our work to the adolescent problems of sexual health and sexual ignorance.
- Working with families affected by alcoholism and domestic violence.

In all cases, the emphasis will continue to be on empowering the community and working closely with government service providers.

# CHALLENGES

There have been many challenges in the last year, as always, and the devolving of responsibility to younger staff at the community level, equipping them with the needed skills is high among them. Further, ineffective public services, unresponsive staff and a creaky system continue to face us. Daily organization of our programmes and raising funds in a difficult economy is challenging. We know we need to constantly evaluate our work style and be ready to change when necessary.

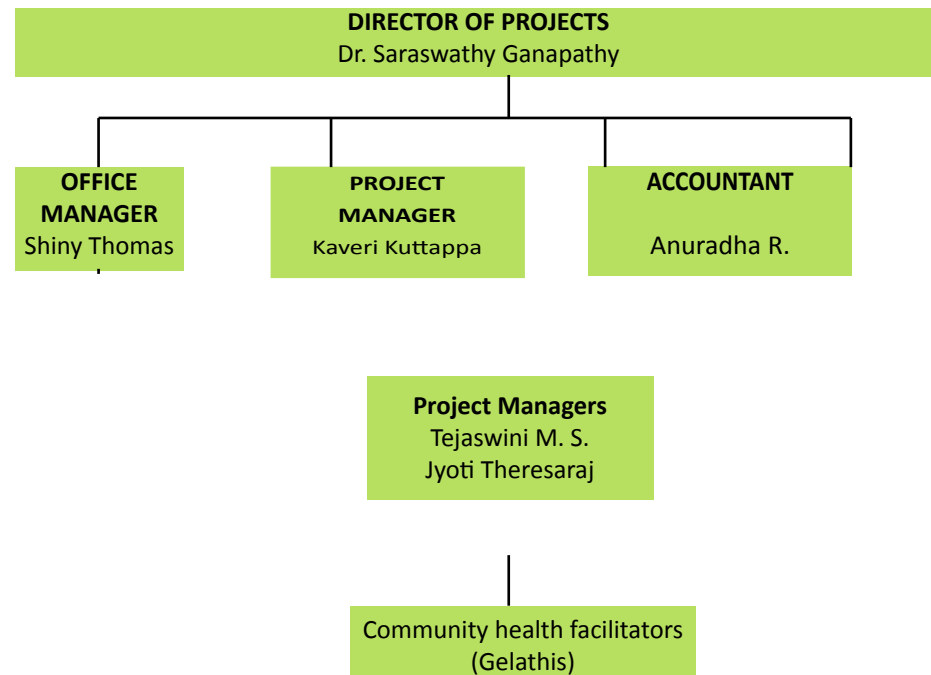
Change is sometimes threatening to people. We aim to help women and children improve their lives but if this is successful, the family structure is changed and some members may feel threatened. We have to be sensitive to this.





## GOVERNANCE

| Name            | Role          |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Girish Karnad   | Chief Trustee |
| Sarita Bakhshi  | Trustee       |
| GS Jayanthi     | Trustee       |
| Sadiqa Peerbhoy | Trustee       |
| Anjana Vivek    | Trustee       |
| VS Thyagarajan  | Advisor       |



## STAFF

The staff at Belaku are of paramount importance in helping us move ahead and put our efforts in the right direction, while keeping in mind our vision and goals.

As part of our continuing effort to enhance abilities, Jyothi Theresaraj attended a session on Legal Awareness Training at Indian Social Institute.

Staff changes:

Raji Mohan, who was working part time with the women's income generation group resigned in May 2014

Pavitra Shetty, who had been volunteering with us, came on board as part time staff member in December 2012 and was involved in overseeing the Gelathi and Smart Start Programmes. She resigned in November 2014 to return to the United States.

Office assistants Channaveera and Rajesh were taken on by Samarthanam and they will provide continuity for the work of the women's income generation groups.

# WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT ...

We are enormously grateful for the support we have received during the year. It has come from individuals, family foundations and corporate houses.

We appeal again to your generosity for help in maintaining programmes like the following:

**/Rs. 500 (USD \$8)** supports educational enrichment programmes for rural children. Boys and girls who have never travelled more than a few miles from home benefit from trips to museums and historical sites. At summer camps they can meet new people and learn about health and the environment.

**/Rs. 2000 (USD \$30)** supports a community health care worker for a month and gives families easy access to health care and advice.

**/Rs. 20,000 (USD \$300)** can help a woman purchase livestock which contributes to the welfare of women and their families.





# HOW TO DONATE

## Cheque Donations

Please make out to the Belaku Trust,  
697, 15th Cross Road,  
JP Nagar Phase II,  
Bangalore, India, 560078

## Direct bank transfer

For Indian Citizens  
Account name: Belaku Trust  
Bank RTGS Code: SBMY0040008  
Account no: 54018362960  
Address: State Bank of Mysore, Banashankari Branch,  
305, 40th Cross, 2nd Main Road,  
8th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore, 560 082

### Overseas

Overseas direct transfers can be made through our Bank's partners in your country of residence. For full information on how to donate this way please contact us at [belaku@belakutrust.org](mailto:belaku@belakutrust.org).



## Donating as a US Resident

For US residents looking to make tax deductible donations – please donate through People for Progress in India

### Online

[www.ppi-usa.org](http://www.ppi-usa.org)  
Please also email PPI at [ppiusa@ppi-usa.org](mailto:ppiusa@ppi-usa.org) informing them that your donation is for Belaku Trust

### Check

Mail checks payable to 'People for Progress in India'  
(make sure you write Belaku Trust somewhere on your Check) and mail to:  
*People for Progress in India (PPI),  
c/o S.K. Srinath,  
13927 SE 47th St, Bellevue, Wa 98006, USA*

**Please be sure to give your email when sending a donation via PPI. PPI will not provide your email to any other organization.**

**Note:** send the donation to PPI mail box directly, if sending between December and March (PPI, P.O. Box 51231, Seattle, WA 98115-1231).

## Donating as a UK resident

For UK residents looking to make online donations, please visit <https://www.cafonline.org/>. Please email us at [belaku@belakutrust.org](mailto:belaku@belakutrust.org) with your Name and Address once you have made the donation online.

## For residents of other countries

If you plan to make a donation by cheque or direct bank transfer, please contact us at [belaku@belakutrust.org](mailto:belaku@belakutrust.org) for details.

If you would like to make your donation online using Ammodo please use the link below <https://www.ammodo.com/nonprofit/the-belaku-trust>.

**Please email us at [belaku@belakutrust.org](mailto:belaku@belakutrust.org) with your name and address once you have made the donation online.**

# WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

## / Donors

A complete list of our donors is available in our audited accounts.

## / Professional and Student volunteers

Belaku has always had the great privilege of talented and committed volunteers working with us, both from Bangalore and other parts of India and overseas and our good fortune in this regard continued this year.

We thank Gayatri Devadasan, Keerthi, Alagammai Meiyappan, Swati Rao, Maija Pulkkinen from Finland and Kim Darrah from the UK

## / Supporters

Many groups and individuals continue to help us with various aspects of our work. Several corporates, schools and individuals held sales of the women's products, Drs. Nandkumar Jairam and Shaibya Saldanha were of great help with medical problems, Mr. KT Ganapathy continued to advise on computer functioning.





## NETWORKING

Dr. Ganapathy participated in a lively session at the graduation from the bridge course run by Headstreams for women from slums and low-income backgrounds who want to continue their education or take up training for better job prospects.



## VISITORS



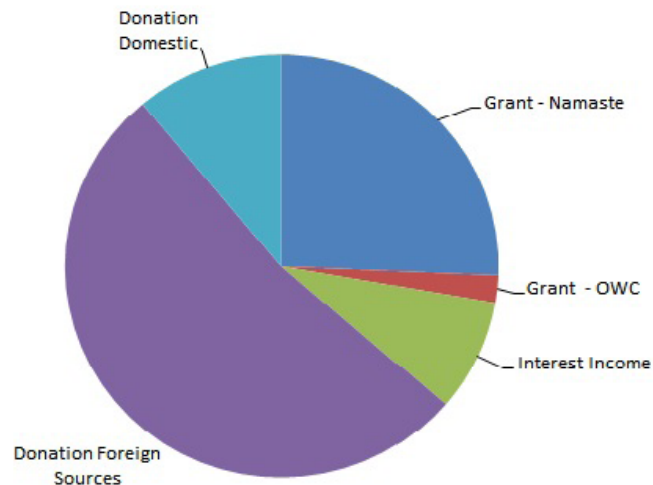
We had visits from friends and supporters:

- Sally Thomas of OWC and friend visited the Summer Camp at Bommanahalli in May
- Nicole Donaldson and Amy Hunter of VOICE Australia spent time with us in August and the Namaste group went around the villages in October

# FINANCES

## 2014 / 2015

### Income for the Financial Year 2014 - 2015

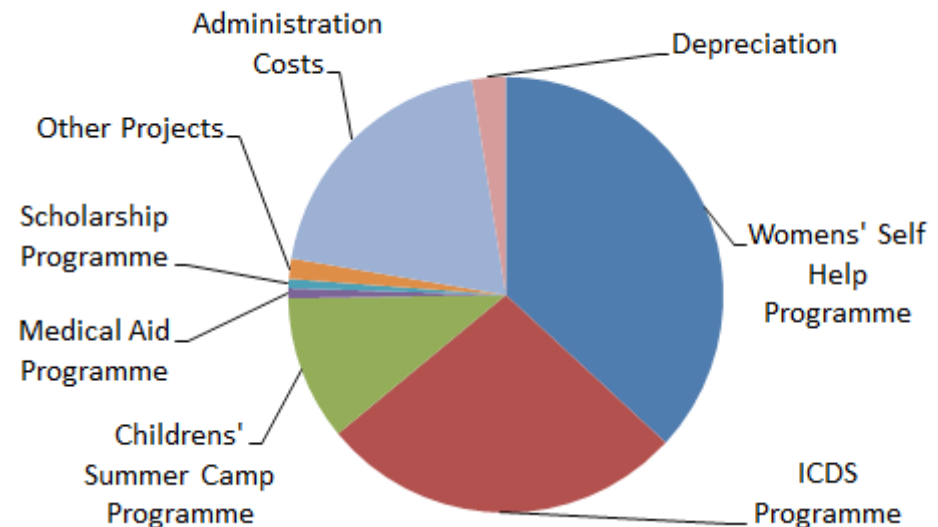


Total Income Rs. Rs. 2876187

| Income                   | Percentage  |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Grant - Namaste          | 26%         |
| Grant - OWC              | 2%          |
| Interest Income          | 9%          |
| Donation Foreign Sources | 53%         |
| Donation Domestic        | 11%         |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The Belaku Trust was registered in 1995 under the Indian Trust Act, Reg. No. 290. All donations are exempt under section 80G of Income Tax Act. You will receive your Tax exemption certificate once payment is received. We are registered under section 6(1) of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976, with Registration number 094420976 and can therefore receive foreign contributions.

### Expenditure for the Financial Year 2014 - 2015



Total Expenditure Rs. 2749591

| Programme                        | Percentage  |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Womens' Self Help Programme      | 36.9%       |
| ICDS Programme                   | 27.2%       |
| Childrens' Summer Camp Programme | 10.7%       |
| Medical Aid Programme            | 0.7%        |
| Scholarship Programme            | 0.7%        |
| Other Projects                   | 1.5%        |
| Administration Costs             | 19.8%       |
| Depreciation                     | 2.5%        |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>100%</b> |

#### Bankers

State Bank of Mysore, Banashankari Branch  
305 40th Cross, 3rd Main Road, Jayanagar 8th Block  
Bangalore 560082

#### Auditors

T. Sriram and Co., Chartered Accountants  
2974 17th Cross, K.R. Road  
Bangalore 560070

Audited accounts are available on request.





#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

T: +91 80 26596933

E: [belaku@belakutrust.org](mailto:belaku@belakutrust.org)

W: [www.belakutrust.org](http://www.belakutrust.org)

FB: [www.facebook.com/belakutrust](https://www.facebook.com/belakutrust)

697, 15th Cross Road

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#### **THE BELAKU TRUST RESEARCH & ACTION**

