



**OUR  
BISWAS**

**Women Helping Women Through Nano Finance**  
**[ourbiswasusa.org](http://ourbiswasusa.org)**

**Annual Report (April 1, 2017- March 31, 2018)**

Dear Friends,

Namaskar! Ki Kati! ("Greetings" in Luganda)

We cannot thank you enough for your kindness, trust, and support for years in different ways to help us through Our Biswas to work for the women of Odisha and Uganda. The success of each step is due to the team effort. We are all extremely humbled to be part of this team with you all. The women of Odisha and Uganda send their gratitude and love for you all.

#### **A. Financial Statement (April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017)**

The following amount was directly transferred from Our Biswas account (US) to Aamara Biswas organization account (Odisha, India).

Date	Transfer	Received
October 26, 2017	21,000	20,980
November 23, 2017	40,000	39,980
Total	61,000	60,960
Total Expenditure		58,790

The following amount was directly transferred from Our Biswas account (US) to respectively to the **Albertine Rift and Kyaninga Community Conservation and Area Organization (ARKCCAO)**, Kyaninga, Karbole District, Western Region, Uganda.

Date	Transfer	Received
June 9, 2017	1,000	1,000
November 6, 2017	1,000	1,000
November 21, 2017	400	400
Total	2,400	2,400
Total Expenditure	2,400	2,400

## **B. Projects in Odisha**

### **Nano Finance Project (\$17,600)**

Aamara Biswas (AB) has implemented the Nano Finance project in three new areas; the villages of Bolangir and Baragarh districts and in the slum areas of Cuttack district. The return of the payments is very regular. It is too early to give the status. The responses from the women are very positive. AB also has expanded the NF project in some existing areas by investing more funds. AB has given loans to more than 1,000 women this year due to your kind contribution. We are planning not to invest more money in two areas; Sambalpur and Jagatsinghpur districts. This is a testing to see how the system sustains without further financial support. AB has invested enough money for the above two areas. By recirculating the returned loans, the system can sustain and new loans can be given to other women from different villages. For the coming year, AB is planning to expand the NF project in different areas according to the demand and return status.

### **Anugul Training/Production Center (\$635)**

AB started a small training center in Khamara, of Anugul district by renting a small room. The girls already started earning nominal amount by selling the garments. 10 girls have taken \$200 (\$20 each) from AB for buying fabrics from their business for making garments. They have started earning some money by selling their products. Though the amount is nominal, this encourages them for the future. Some women come from other villages to the center

for getting training. The girls and women pay a nominal amount for admission and a monthly payment for maintaining the machines. AB pays onetime expenses for buying sewing machines and other necessary items to start the training center. AB also pays each month the rent and teacher's salaries. Such small center trains many girls and women for their livelihood purpose with minimum financial support.

### **Sanitary Napkin Unit (\$420)**

It is a very difficult and challenging project. At the same time, it is an important project to support the women's health. The women understand the benefit of using disposable sanitary napkins. Once they use it, they do not want to go back to the old style. However, the price of the pads must be affordable. Currently, the making price of a package is higher than the selling price. The most difficult part of getting good raw materials. AB is planning to upgrade the machines and buy raw materials from a reliable source. The unit is functioning with your kind support.

### **Aamara Biswas Center (\$20, 000)**

The construction of the second floor of the AB Center was possible due to the kind contribution of our donors. The purpose of the second floor is to provide space for different trainings which are given by the Government and others. We just finished an awareness training for Sanitary napkins, importance of toilets and discard of polythene. The next training will be making ropes, doormats, and other products from coconut husks. Both the trainings are supported by the Government. The center is situated in an interior village of Jagatsingpur district of Eastern Odisha. In the beginning of May 2016, the Jagatsingpur Training/Production unit and Sanitary Napkin unit moved to the Center from their rental places.

### **Salaries for the Coordinators (\$3285)**

AB needs new coordinators when expansion happens. As a result the total salaries budget increases. Currently, AB has 12 coordinators who oversee the Nano Finance projects in more than 80 villages. Some coordinators take advance salaries for one year for education and for their emergency expenses.

### **Travel, Office supplies, Auditor's fees, and Printing (1850)**

Some coordinators travel to rural areas for monitoring the projects. We have an annual meeting with all the coordinators. Some of them travel from far distance. There are other expenses; printing, office supplies, paying auditor's fees and miscellaneous expenses. This

year AB has bought a computer with printer, which is used significantly to documents for others. The money we have collected will be used for buying cartridge and maintaining the printer.

### **Fixed Deposits (\$15,000)**

This amount is kept as a fixed deposit in the bank for the future sustainability of the organization. Currently, the accrued interest covers administrative costs and the salaries of the coordinators for six months and some other small expenses. The goal is to increase the amount, so that in future the administrative expenses and the salaries will be covered completely by the accrued interest.

## **C. Projects in Uganda**

As the first program outside of Odisha, India, Our Biswas implemented the **Nano Finance project Kampala** in April 2016. In its first year, the initiative has impacted nearly 250 women across this sub-Saharan African country, in the urban slums of Kampala, the capital city, and in the remote villages of Kasese district in central Uganda, as well as in Kyaninga in the western region. . The women in these disrupted and disadvantaged communities believe in possibility, and are clearly demonstrating to themselves, their families, and to us that they are on the path to achieving it.

Since April 2016, 52 moms of children at the Clover Foundation have participated in spark of Nano Finance. In under two years, 34% of participating women have revealed their industriousness by paying back their nano loan 5-10 times within this period by growing and collaborating in business that include raising chickens, selling vegetables, making clothing and bags, and operating hair salons.

### **Bliss Feme, Kanyampara-Kamughobe, Kisinga Sub-County, Kasese District**

Our Biswas began its partnership with the Community-based Organization of Bliss Feme in January 2017. The 50 women of Bliss Feme live in the hills of one of the most remote and impoverished villages in Uganda where the conditions are dire and where the challenges are many, from hunger and sickness to lack of education as well as theft. The only option for work is subsistence farming and as a result the women struggle to pay back their loan within the one-year time frame. It is promising, however, that in just two additional months, the women of Bliss Feme revealed their moxie and grew from 58% to 92% in their ability, as a group, to take second loan!

## **Albertine Rift and Kyaninga Community Conservation and Area Organization (ARKCCAO), Kyaninga, Kaborole District, Western Uganda**

In the fall of 2017, in November, the third community in Uganda joined the Nano Finance initiative, with 56 women, growing to 126 women, the following spring. The partnership began because of a longtime relationship between April Stone, the Uganda Lead for Our Biswas and Simon Kateeba, a community activist in Kyaninga. Almost immediately Simon reported that, "all the moms are doing well and are very appreciative of the support of Nano Finance."

### **E. Concluding Remarks**

We are extremely humbled with your trust and support for more than 10 years. The success of the projects is due to the coordinators' hard work and the women who trust the organization and understand the importance of small loans and returning them in time. We hope, with your help and trust, we will continue our service to empower the women in extreme poverty in different parts of the world. **Due to your kind support, Our Biswas is planning to implement the Nano Finance system in Nepal in the beginning of 2019.**

Please visit the website; [www.ourbiswasusa.org](http://www.ourbiswasusa.org) to hear the stories of the women of Odisha and Uganda.

*Submitted by Joyasree (Ranu) Mahanti, Founder and President of Our Biswas.*