

Kerala Partnership (KP) was created in 1998 a few months after I made a trip to Kerala to attend an international mental health conference. During the visit I met not only many people living in the rural villages who were struggling to 'make ends meet', but also for the first time Dr David Shiers and Mike Smith both of whom were also at the conference. David soon became one of the three trustees of KP when it was registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and Mike and Marion (Aslan) have been strong supporters from the start. Their energy and enthusiasm over the years has been brilliant and the donation of all money raised from this book is another demonstration of that willingness to help fund the initiatives KP arranges to help in the relief of poverty and hardship.

KP is small in terms of funds raised each year (£10 000 to £15 000) but adopts a 'direct action' approach; all funds go directly to trusted village-based volunteer groups to carry out agreed schemes and projects. Those who are most in need are helped regardless of their religion or caste, and whenever possible they contribute in some way to the scheme. For example, one focus for KP is:

- House construction and repairs: the family may give a small amount of money to go toward the total cost, or the adults will carry out some of the labouring. (A 'new' and very basic home might cost about £300).

Other activities in which KP is active with its Kerala partners include:

- creating sustainable employment (for example by teaching sewing skills to young women);
- providing 'food aid' to poor families (10kg of rice per month per family currently costs about £2.60);
- giving monthly 'pensions' to elderly individuals (about £3 each per month);
- supporting a small home for the children of sex-workers (who would otherwise suffer extreme stigma and discrimination) – about £15 per month each;
- funding the majority of the running costs for a home for elderly, destitute people – again about £15 per month.

Thank you for purchasing this book.

David Clarke, on behalf of the Trustees, Kerala Partnership
(Jane and David Clarke; David Shiers)