



PARTNERING FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND RENEWAL – TRANSFORMING LIVES



YOUR IMPACT

All Aboard for India!

The Railway plays a central role in the life of India. The same is true in the operations of our Indian microfinance partner, Christian Service Society (CSS). They have used the Indian Railway to serve tens of thousands on the outskirts of Kolkata. But they started with very humble beginnings.

Starting with Bicycles

CSS has been serving the Indian poor in the name of Christ for over 25 years. They started with the savings of their founder and current CEO, Himadri Munshi. They went on bicycles, dedicated in so many ways to making a difference in the lives of the materially poor by providing them access to affordable capital to start or grow their small business.

Eventually their dedication and effectiveness caught the eye of organizations that could help CSS grow. This allowed them to purchase motorbikes and expand their West Bengal footprint in serving the materially poor. By the end of their second decade, they had over 15,000 active clients – full of innovation and motivation in building small businesses to support their families.

Efficient Growth

As successful as CSS had become, Himadri Munshi wanted to find an even more efficient means of reaching the materially poor. The cost of fuel and purchasing and maintaining the motorbikes was increasing. That's when the thought of using the Indian Railway came to mind.

Over the last five to seven years, CSS has almost doubled in size – now approaching

30,000 active clients. Their loan officers use the Indian Railway to go to one station and walk a five kilometer radius around that station serving up to 200 clients. Then the next day, that loan officer will go to the next station on that line and serve another group of clients. In 2017, CSS is opening new stations on the Kamarkundu train line. Each station will serve at least 150 clients with average loans of \$67. It takes \$10,000 of loan capital to expand to a new station. (Interested in helping open a new station? Give a gift to The India Fund and 100% of it will support CSS's work.)

Surplus for the Poorest

CSS has long been a microfinance institution dedicated to transformation. 99% of the clients they serve are Muslim or Hindu, and 90% are women. They carry out their microfinance operations so efficiently that they generate a surplus. When they used motorbikes, their surplus margin was 20%. With the lower expenses associated with using the Indian Railway, it jumped to 30%.

CSS uses that surplus to serve the truly poorest of the poor in and around Kolkata. They have two boarding homes for at-risk girls and boys. They offer free preschools, teenage tutoring, and animal husbandry programs in many of their clients' villages. They also support village pastors as they minister to the spiritual needs of the Indian people. Today's CSS team is made up of over 100 hardworking, inspiring staff, so dedicated to empowering the materially poor. Jesus' vision that the kingdom would come to West Bengal as it is in heaven is becoming reality.

Celebrating 25+ Years of Partnership!

How we thank God for 25+ amazing years of extending more of the kingdom of heaven to earth! Through your prayers and financial support, God is at work enabling tens of thousands of the materially poor and non-poor to experience economic, social, and spiritual transformation. Thank you!

If you would like to send a tax-deductible donation to PEER Servants, you can direct 100% of your gift to any of our Microfinance Partner Funds. See the back side of the newsletter for contact info. Thank you for your generosity. God bless you!

Todd G. Engelsen

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President



Aug 10 Lydia Awards Celebration

It's one of our favorite events of the year – our Lydia Awards Celebration! This year our three finalists include a Guatemalan garbage recycler, a Filipina seafood catcher/processor, and a Sri Lankan farmer/pastor. Come hear their inspiring stories as told by the volunteers on Teams Guatemala, Philippines, and Sri Lanka and vote for your favorite while enjoying delicious cuisine from their countries. We'll gather in Room 205 of the Grace Chapel Adult Learning Center, 2 Militia Drive, in Lexington, MA. It's a free night, so bring a carful for an evening of inspiring stories, great food, and lots of fun. See you at the Lydia Awards!

WHAT TRANSFORMATION LOOKS LIKE



Saving in Peru

Kallarischichis, PEER Servants' Peruvian microfinance partner, is extending their reach to serve some of the materially poorest women among the country's indigenous peoples. Savings are often more valued than a loan among such groups as they are not yet ready to use a micro-loan to support business growth. These are three of the young women in one of the savings groups where they save a couple dollars a month. They are starting a small card business to generate income and will eventually qualify for a micro-loan.



Like Father, Like Son in Burundi

Ernesto is a very successful tanner in Makamba, Burundi. He's also a great father, not only providing for his family, but teaching his sons the trade. Ernesto has been able to expand his business through the support and encouragement of Hope Fund Burundi, an indigenous Burundian microfinance institution that has invited PEER Servants to partner with it to further extend the kingdom.

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS



Bertram Lim is one of three Singaporean volunteers who are part of the PEER Servants family. He focuses on networking our microfinance partners in Eurasia to help them learn from each other in their respective areas of strength. Here he is at a training in the Philippines that included staff from our Moldovan and Indian partners.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

We'd love to hear from you!

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"Ate" Ruth Callanta, CEO and Founder of the Center for Community Transformation (CCT), PEER Servants' Filipino partner, has been one of many of the board and staff of our microfinance partners that have been dedicated to training others in the network over many years. As microfinance practitioners, they are well-equipped to offer relevant training to strengthen and encourage others.

Best Trainers? Our Partners!

What happens when you combine networking as a service with reciprocity as a core value? You come to appreciate just how much each microfinance partner has strengths in which they can train others in the network. Our microfinance partners have long played a central role in our training. Here's how it happened.

Networking as a Service

PEER Servants offers four services to its microfinance partners – **capacity building, networking, resource development, and general encouragement/support.** Each of our microfinance partners is an autonomous microfinance institution (MFI). That can be a bit lonely and daunting at times. By becoming a PEER Servants partner, they also join a network of indigenous Christian MFIs. PEER realized early on the importance of networking the partners closely together so that they could share their experiences and challenges with each other.

This led to PEER's first global gathering of its partners in 2004 – an event called "Kopano", which means "unity" in two of the local South African languages. Kopano established a much closer, intimate global network that we have been building on ever since.

Reciprocity as a Core Value

Reciprocity is grounded in the belief that God has made us for each other. Each of us as individuals and people groups have been given a gift by Him that can strengthen others and extend more of the kingdom of heaven to them. We enter each other's presence not just focused on what we can give to others, but what we can receive from them. This belief that it is sometimes better to receive than give is particularly relevant in global partnerships focused on empowering the materially poor.

Reciprocity has a corollary – God has not only given our partners as gifts to us, but to each other as well. We soon saw how our Asian partners had something to offer the African partners, and the African partners had something to offer the Americas partners. Each of them have strengths. As we identified those strengths, each partner became both teacher and learner in the global network.

It's TEE Time!

"TEE time" in the PEER network isn't a call to the golf course or an afternoon break with hot beverage. It's "Transformative Economic Empowerment." TEE are global and regional trainings where our partners and volunteers do the training together. In 2017, we had three TEEs – one in the Americas (Peru) on general microfinance operations, one in Africa (Burundi) on risk management, and one in Asia (the Philippines) on management development. In Peru, Hector and Julio from Potter's House/Guatemala shared how they tell their story to attract new partners. In Burundi, Pierre from Hope Fund/Burundi shared how his team assesses prospective clients to effectively manage credit risk. In the Philippines, "Ate" Ruth Callanta from CCT/Philippines shared how she mentors and develops hundreds of staff members to create a formidable force for extending God's kingdom to the materially poor. TEE has become our primary means of training our partners with very encouraging results.

Now PEER is pursuing additional ways to network our partners. The Microfinance Trans-Pacific Partnership was launched in 2017, bringing together our Filipino, Guatemalan, and Peruvian partners and PEER Servants to encourage and train each other. The world is small and getting smaller every day. It's a great time for global networking!