



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

About SOPAR

SOPAR is an international development organization founded in 1977 by Angel and André Gingras with the mission to support and strengthen the development process of India's poor communities. Since its inception, SOPAR has grown to be regarded as a model non-for-profit organization because of its concrete results helping entire communities come out of poverty. In addition to community driven development programs, our organization is ardently involved in building the capacities of development professionals in best practices of sustainable development gleaned from over 42 years of field experience. SOPAR works with local partner organizations to enhance impact. We also support entrepreneurs and the corporate sector in order that they develop the tools to participate effectively in the sustainable development of their communities.

While SOPAR is headquartered in Gatineau, Canada with a charitable initiative in the USA, Bala Vikasa has its head office and training center in Warangal, India. Together, the three entities work as sister organizations pursuing the same mission and vision.

Our mission

We support and strengthen the development process of the poor communities in our world by:

- Helping the poor, particularly women, to help themselves through development programs
- Building the capacity of the people at the grassroots, the non-governmental organizations and the community-based organizations, through participatory training
- Providing technical support to agencies, institutions and government organizations involved in people's development.

Our approach



We help poor communities take control of their destinies by building on their assets— creating model communities where everyone —women, men, widows, orphans, children— can live a better life, independent of skill level, caste or religion.

WORD OF THE FOUNDERS



Let's go straight to the point!

June 3-6, the 2019 Women Deliver Conference (WD2019) took place in Vancouver. This gathering is held every three years. The last one, in 2016, was in Copenhagen.

The Vancouver Conference described itself as the world's most prestigious and most important conference of the 21st century "focused on gender equality and health, on the rights and well-being of girls and women".

According to WD, more than 7 000 people participated in WD2019 including world leaders, heads of state, activists, academics, journalists from all over the world, especially from the west. The conference claims to serve as a catalyst for the feminist cause in developing countries. This four-day event was largely funded and promoted by the Canadian government through Global Affairs Canada – a golden opportunity to brand its "new" feminist policy.

Yet, this feminist policy is not so "new" if we judge by the "Integration of Women in Development" training that all cadres and program staff were obliged to take in the 80ties and onward and if we are aware that CIDA "Women in Development" (WID) policies were implemented systematically - up until recently- in all projects and programs funded by the Canadian government.

Thus, "nothing new under the sun", except, a more assertive approach and a Prime Minister who speaks loud and clear about feminism. In his WD2019 opening speech, he underlined the acute needs for women and girls' sexual and reproductive health and announced, starting in 2023 an annual financing of \$1.4 billion over a 10 year period. This Canadian government contribution would touch 18 million of women/girls by 2030 all over the world. During his talk, the PM praised the contribution of the hundred NGOs involved in this program despite the fact that only a meager \$31 million over a 5 years period has been committed recently by Global Affairs Canada for small and medium size Canadian non-profit Civil Society Organizations. As we say in French: "Il y a loin de la coupe aux lèvres ! »

What is there to be said about WD2019?

Let's compare WD2019 in Vancouver to the conference held in Hyderabad to celebrate Bala Vikasa's 25th anniversary on February 9, 2016, or to the June 2017 and 2018 conferences held on International Widows' Day.

On February 9, 2016, more than 15 000 of our women members from 3 states and thousands of villages paid their own travel to participate in a grand convention in Hyderabad on community involvement. There, they shared their experiences and the results of their involvement: hundreds of model communities (129) and drinking water purification systems (970); hundreds of water irrigation ponds (766); countless activities for the education of young people, for women's health, for marginal farmers, for marginalized elderly people, for the mobilization of 15 458 widows ostracized by society, etc. Over time, 5 million rural poor have been reached through their own actions and by these "agents of change" gathered in Hyderabad (cumulative results as of March 2019).

The regional conventions of June 23, 2017 and 2018 - each of which brought together more than 10 000 widows- took place alternately in Hyderabad at LB Stadium and then in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. Organized by SOPAR-Bala Vikasa, these events were unique in their kind for these women left behind in Indian society. They gave widows the opportunity to rebuild their dignity and proclaim their rights and aspirations. An example of true "empowerment"!

These grassroots gatherings organized by SOPAR-Bala Vikasa are really promising for the future. They can be compared favorably with the WD2019 and would not have happened without your support and encouragement.

Many thanks to all of you (members of the Board of Directors, employees, generous benefactors, etc.) who - in some way or the other- contributed concretely in making our world, a SOciety of PARTnership.

This year, our special recognition - the Founders' Award - is awarded to Stéphane Courtemanche.

While still a young man in school, Stéphane knocked on SOPAR's door. He wanted to volunteer for our organization. A great deal has happened since then! For 26 years, he has devoted himself to SOPAR's mission. His expertise in international development and advice remains invaluable for our Board of Directors. His involvement in our programs and especially his professional input to the community-driven development training program, remains an important contribution. Thank you, Stéphane!



Angel and André Gingras, CSM
Founders, SOPAR- Bala Vikasa

MESSAGE - PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR



Another year has come and pass and even though the Canadian government has yet to show any sign of renewed interest toward real community development, our organization has continued to flourish.

The results speak for themselves. SOPAR now accounts for less than 30% of the funds managed by our sister organization - Bala Vikasa - in India. This is a drastic reduction from 2 years ago, when we accounted for more than 40% of their source of funding. But even though our contribution to the program has reduced, the amount invested in India for community development programs has increased. With our help and support - women, orphans, farmers and entire communities are taking their future into their own hands and are building a better life for themselves.

The construction of the Bala Vikasa International Center is nothing short of an ambitious project undertaken by our Indian team. We believe that Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Entrepreneurship will be at the core of community driven development in the years to come. First, we start by changing people's mindset, then we create an economic environment that will give communities the tools to prosper.

Therefore, with the help of the SOPAR Foundation, we have shown our support for this important initiative by sending funds to assist in the construction - while making sure that every dollar sent by our donors for our community driven programs goes to where it was intended. We hope that the BVIC will be inaugurated in the first quarter of 2020. You are invited to come and join us for this long-awaited event.

In Canada - we have put some additional efforts towards renewing our School Program. We believe that it is important to teach our children about solidarity and helping them become the change they wish to see in the world. With the help of Denys Parent - who has led the SOPAR initiative in l'Ecole secondaire de Rochebelle in Quebec - this program is being reworked to lend itself to academic priorities stated by the Ministry of Education.

Finally, we are working with our First Nations to introduce them to our community driven approach. We are working in collaboration with Willis College and Giselle Robelin to put in place an accredited program that will support the future leaders of First Nations in getting community driven development training in India - and then get the required support in Canada to implement projects.

We are excited about these new initiatives as we believe they will set us on the right path to have the strongest impact in India and Canada towards helping those in need, help themselves.

Big thanks to all our supporters, benefactors and team.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc Gingras'.

Marc Gingras
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shobha Singareddy'.

Shobha Singareddy
Director

INTEGRATED APPROACH



INTERCONNECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS



WATER AND SANITATION



Water access is a challenge for millions of people across the globe. In the rural villages of India where we work, a high proportion of villagers still walk long distances every day to fetch water. The water they collect is often contaminated. Villagers face another problem: many water sources contain levels of fluoride that are above acceptable limits. These situations have direct and significant health and hygiene impacts on affected populations.

This year, we continued our work in order to facilitate access to water in rural villages. Up to now, more than 3 million people have been helped thanks to our well and water purification system project. Active participation remains an essential pillar of this program. We motivate villagers to contribute their time, energy and money to their water projects. We support elected local committees to play a central role in the projects' management and sustainability. While doing so, our members develop a sense of pride and ownership of the project which in turn, pushes them to lead other needed development activities in their villages.

2018-2019 Results:

86 bore wells built (SOPAR)

Cumulative: 6500 wells (SOPAR & Bala Vikasa)

37 water purification systems installed (SOPAR)

Cumulative: 970 water systems (SOPAR & Bala Vikasa)

WOMEN AND WIDOWS



In India and especially in rural villages, women are viewed as second-class citizens. They have limited opportunity for education and skills development, land ownership, employment and financial independence. They are especially vulnerable to inequalities and, violence against them is widespread. Widows face added prejudice: superstitious and cultural beliefs place irrational restrictions upon them. Because of this, widows and their children are sidelined from society and harassed. Most have a hard time feeding their children. Widow suicides are common.

Again this year, SOPAR continued its work with and for women including widows. Our Women Integrated Development Program continued to emphasize the creation of self-help groups. These groups bring women together. They build up their capacity and encourage their active participation in different activities geared toward empowerment and development. More than 229 708 women have participated in our groups since we started in 1994. 15 000 widows are part of the movement. Trainings and skills trainings are offered on various subjects and help women become leaders in their families and communities.

2018-2019 Results:

- 88 878** women members in **750** villages
- 695** new members
- 6075** women benefitted from microcredit
- 120** young widows received mentoring and participated in monthly trainings
- 86 001** people participated in awareness sessions on widows' issues
- 37 233** villagers attended general health awareness sessions and received medical check-ups and needed medication

Cumulative: 229 708 members

CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Despite an increase in India's literacy rates, a significant number of orphans and poor children still do not have access to education. Most start working at a very young age or become beggars to provide for their needs. Those who have the privilege to attend school, face poor infrastructures, shortage of funds and school supplies.

We believe every child -rich or poor- should have the opportunity to play an important role in the development of their society. For this, we continued again this year to support the education of orphans and poor children. Up to now, more than 1500 have been supported. But financial assistance for education is not the only aspect of this program: much attention is given to build the children's self-esteem and confidence. Our women program members play an important role in this. They are the ones who identify the orphans in their villages. They develop close ties with them and offer their love and support. SOPAR also pursued its partnership with many rural public schools in order to improve infrastructure facilities and foster a conducive teaching environment.

2018-2019 Results:

4 139 orphans, semi orphans, handicapped and poor children helped for their education

25 272 women attended Solidarity Days to celebrate orphans' birthdays

3 369 orphans, semi orphans and poor children of college level participated in our Youth Convention

FOOD SECURITY



Farmers in India are suffering from the harmful effects of excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers. Over the decades, chemicals have taken a toll on the land and yields are plunging. The cost of pesticides and fertilisers has flared-up. The loans farmers need to buy expensive, modified seed varieties are pushing many into a spiral of debt triggering farmer suicides across the country.

SOPAR's Food Security Program is designed to provide an alternative to conventional, chemical-based agriculture. We introduced the concept to small and medium scale farmers by establishing food security groups and farmer committees. We offer training on organic farming techniques. With knowledge of alternative soil enrichment and crop protection methods, more and more farmers -close to 1050 up to now- are coming back to traditional farming methods. With the shift, they witness significant reduction in crop investment and increase in crop yield. Growing concern over toxic foods also results in selling organic products with a premium.

2018-2019 Results:

978 farmer families from **41** villages using organic farming methods on **1045** acres

34 trainings for **2243** food security program members

1384 women and men farmers participated in our Food Security Convention

29 acres of land fertilized with silt obtained from our Desiltation Program

MODEL COMMUNITIES



70% Indians live in rural areas. Most rural villages lack basic amenities, quality education and health services. Illiteracy, subsistence economy and weak social and political consciousness prevent communities from using their local assets and their human resources to drive their economy, improve their quality of life and reduce inequalities.

Our Model Community Program was born in 2014 out of ambition to change the course of these events. It all started when men and young adults in our Women Program villages expressed the desire to be part of the change and engage in community projects. This program promotes the emancipation and empowerment of India's rural villages. Again this year, we closely guided elected committees -7 to 9 members per committees for each of our 129 model villages - and offered them capacity building sessions and trainings. With our support, they exercised leadership and put in place development activities in the health, sanitation, social justice and environment fields. This year, many model communities were rewarded with national and district-level awards for their unity, their hard work and their commitment to making their community a model for others.

2018-2019 Results:

129 villages on the way to becoming model communities

903 volunteer committees

6321 committee members acting as agents of change in their village

54 national and district-level awarded to our model communities

HUMANITARIAN



Poverty takes many forms. One of them is the precarious situation in which live many elders in our program villages. These elders are without family and income. Most are undernourished and suffer from neglect and isolation. They need support.

While SOPAR's primary mission is community development, we feel called to help these elders. For many years now, we have been working to meet their basic needs. Our women program members are still the cornerstone of this program. They identify individuals who are in need in their villages. Each elder is matched with one of our woman members who visits, helps, offers moral support and from time to time, invites them to share a meal. Women thus put into practice, and with happiness, the human values they learn in their monthly meetings. Minimal food supplies and clothing are distributed thanks to our members' support and that of our donors who are sensitive to the cause.

2018-2019 Results:

913 old and destitute supported

23 614 kilos of rice donated by our beneficiaries to the old and destitute

\$18 260 collected among local donors in India for this program

TESTIMONIALS

Kavitha is 37 years old. She lives in the village of Thirumalayapalem with her husband and two daughters.

“My life and my family’s life have changed completely with Bala Vikasa. The meetings helped me increase my knowledge and become more self-reliant. Now, both my husband and I work at my shop. We have been able to save good amounts of money and we have recently built a small but nice home for our family. We also invest in our daughters’ education because we now understand that education is the best way to get out of poverty”.



Rajitha was married at a very young age, is uneducated and became a widow more than ten years ago.

“One day, there was a religious celebration in my village. Widows are traditionally not accepted for this type of celebration. Politely, I asked the priest why widows are not allowed to take part. He answered that it is not written in the holy books and that it is not law but only superstitious beliefs. With this information, I encouraged him to include widows in the celebration. The very next day, the priest invited widows to take part in some rituals. Many villagers were unhappy and manifested their disagreement, but the priest stood strong”.

Recognizing Rajitha’s efforts to change the situation of widows, the State Government awarded her the “Visista Mahila Puraskar” Award on Women’s Day 2019, under the “Agent of change” category.

Tirupathi is a member of our Organic Farming Program.

“For the first time in my life, I am proud of being a farmer. I am happy to contribute to this important farming shift. It gives me immense satisfaction”.



PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING CENTER



Over the past 42 years, SOPAR has gained a thorough understanding of the complexities and dynamics of development work in the context of rural India. Through lessons learned and with time, we have come to understand that development requires a change in attitudes and active participation. This is the reason why capacity building is at the heart of our community-driven development approach. It is also the reason why we put in place the Development Training Center (PDTC) in 2002 with the objective to build the capacities of our beneficiaries as well as development workers and improve the efficiency of the development practice.

The PDTC conceives and delivers a wide range of short and long-term trainings, seminars and workshops for various stakeholders: program beneficiaries, staff, national and international development agents. Up to now, 13 465 individuals from 79 countries (including from 29 states in India) have attended our courses. Our international program enables development professionals from across the globe to share their knowledge and expertise with others and familiarize themselves with best development practices and emerging trends.

2018-2019 Results:

708 development agents participated in our capacity-building programs

11 Indian states and **35** countries represented

Agents of change from **143** NGOs attended our trainings

Cumulative: 13 465 agents of change from **79** countries and **29** Indian states

BALA VIKASA INTERNATIONAL CENTER



We believe that businesses can play an important role in community development by way of vibrant partnerships between the corporate and social sectors. To this effect, SOPAR is putting in place its new Bala Vikasa International Center (BVIC) in Hyderabad- a center for responsible entrepreneurship that functions as a platform for mutually enriching partnerships between corporates, entrepreneurs and society. When up and running, the 20-acre campus will be comprised of training and conference halls, meeting rooms and a residential facility.

BVIC's overall mission is to provide comprehensive support in the form of knowledge and tools to corporates and entrepreneurs with the aim of helping them to actively contribute towards sustainable development for a better society. The center, through various collaborations, has developed ties with many corporates and industry professionals and experts and initiated discussions and deliberated on the important themes of social entrepreneurship and responsible business. It helps businesses in creating effective CSR strategies and meaningful social programs SOPAR has also interacted with hundreds of young minds to channelize their thoughts and innovate in creating sustainable business solutions for social problems.

2018-2019 Results:

14 startups have successfully completed the incubation program and are providing effective solutions to social issues

10 innovative social start-ups joined the second batch of the incubation program

Over 1000 college students are aware about social enterprises and incubation opportunities

Published **Social Responsibility Series no.4** on Business Responsibility & Entrepreneurship

BVIC organised and took part in **50+ seminars and workshops** in collaboration with various reputed organisations

ACTIVITIES IN CANADA



Just as SOPAR believes in the amazing potential of youth in India, we also believe that youth in Canada have the possibility and privilege to effect change in their communities and abroad. To this end, SOPAR works with teachers, students, parents and school communities from across Canada to raise awareness on the challenges faced by developing countries and on ways to become agents of change.

Youth Changing the World is an educational program that offers young Canadians an extraordinary experience in international cooperation. Through various awareness sessions facilitated by their teachers, students expand their horizons and learn about the concepts of international solidarity. They are then asked to organize fundraising activities in order to help build a well in our program villages. Thus, the title of our program: Youth changing the World! This year, we started a new initiative within this program- our Young Ambassadors Committee. Keen and interested students offered their time to spread the “SOPAR word” in their surrounding schools, friends and family circles.

Canadians interested in international development can also participate in our community-driven development courses in India. These one-month courses are attended by agents of change from around the world. We also organize guided trips to India once a year for Canadians wanting to observe, firsthand, the results and quality of SOPAR’s work.

2018-2019 Results:

Participation of **21** schools from **6** provinces in our YCW Program

45 YCW borewell projects

24 people participate in our solidarity trip

4 Canadians participated in our community-driven development training

TESTIMONIAL

In January 2019, Ariane Lacelle participated in SOPAR'S community-driven development training in India

In January 2019, I had the great opportunity to participate in SOPAR's Community-Driven Development training. This one month-long internship at Bala Vikasa's campus in India has been of great benefit to me, both personally and professionally. The new knowledge I acquired is now reflected in my daily life through my new perspective on development and as well by a change in my perception of the world and social injustices. I am a graduate of the International Development Baccalaureate and this training allowed me to add a practical side to my studies. I saw the positive and concrete effects that Bala Vikasa has on marginalized communities in India. I am eager to use my new knowledge in my future career, whether in Quebec or abroad. This internship made me grow and made me live emotions that I cannot put in words. I came back with friends from all over the world, my head is full of wonderful memories of a beautiful country and culture and above all, the confirmation -beyond doubt- of wanting to work in the development field.



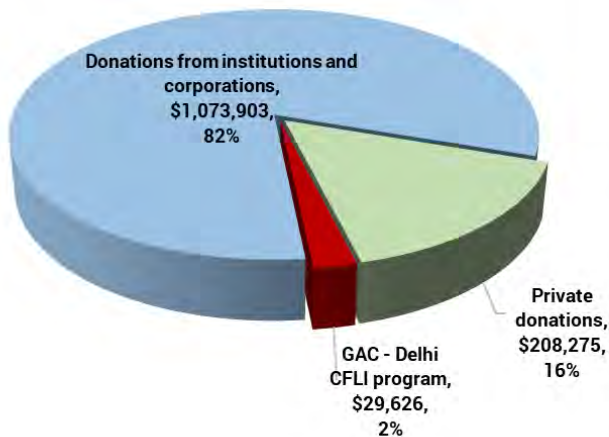
FINANCIAL RESULTS

SOPAR-BALA VIKASA

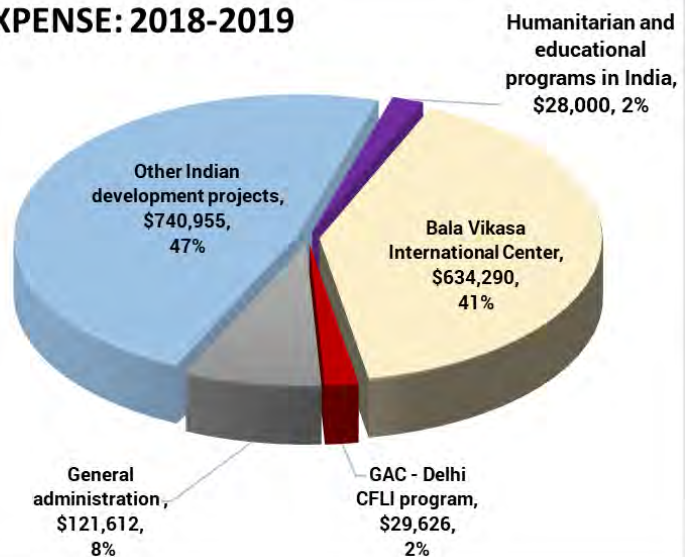
FINANCIAL AS ON MARCH 31 2019

	2019	2018
INCOME		
Contributions		
Private donations	208 275	167 760
Donations from institutions and corporations	1 073 903	873 665
GAC - Five-year program	0	30 080
GAC - Delhi CFLI program	29 626	
	1 311 804	1 071 505
EXPENSES		
GAC - Five-year program	0	118 973
GAC - Delhi CFLI program	29 626	0
General administration (Schedule A)	121 612	160 036
Other Indian development projects (Schedule B)	740 955	840 747
Humanitarian and educational programs in India	28 000	76 500
Bala Vikasa International Center	634 290	0
	1 554 483	1 196 256
Deficiency of revenues over expenses before other income (charges)	(242 679)	(124 751)
Other income (charges) (Schedule C)	5	(3 997)
NET	(242 674)	(128 748)

INCOME: 2018-2019



EXPENSE: 2018-2019



THANK YOU

For more than 42 years and in close collaboration with Bala Vikasa- our sister organization in India- SOPAR has been developing community development programs that are adapted to the needs of the populations it reaches, that are implemented with dedication and professionalism and that actively involve villagers and making them the true actors of change. We are proud of what has been accomplished so far.

"Helping communities help themselves" requires the participation of many people. We would like to thank everyone who joined our mission this year. Without you, we could not have such a tangible and lasting impact. Our results are yours and for that, we are very grateful.

Thank you to everyone from all over the country who gave their time and donated to our cause.

Thank you to all our religious congregations, foundations and corporate partners for their trust and loyalty.

Thank you to our funders for their partnership and their investment in reducing inequalities in our world.

Thank you to Bala Vikasa employees and volunteers who are dedicated to the task.

Finally, thank you to our program beneficiaries who found the courage to take control of their lives.

During the celebrations of Bala Vikasa's 25th anniversary in India in 2016, our founders asked the crowd of 15 000 people, "Who is Bala Vikasa? And the crowd answered: "We are Bala Vikasa". Indeed, together "we" are SOPAR and Bala Vikasa. Thank you!

VANDANAM!

Founders

Angel (Bala Theresa) Gingras and André Gingras

Board of Directors

Marc Gingras, President

André Bourassa, Vice-president

Bernard Giroux, Treasurer

Éric Gingras, Secretary

Stéphane Courtemanche, Director

Louis Guay, Director

Natalie Sawaya, Director

Employees

Shobha Singareddy, Director

Janice Aubry, Program Manager

Philibert Lafrance, Accountant (part time)



sopar

**HELPING COMMUNITIES
HELP THEMSELVES**

www.sopar.ca

SOPAR

Registration No.: 119156578RR0001
1 chemin des Érables, Gatineau, QC, J8V 1C1 Canada
1-819-243-3616, 1-866-443-3616
sopar@sopar.ca, www.sopar.ca