



Hands to Hearts

INTERNATIONAL

Empowering Women ~ Nurturing Children

2008 Review and Annual Report

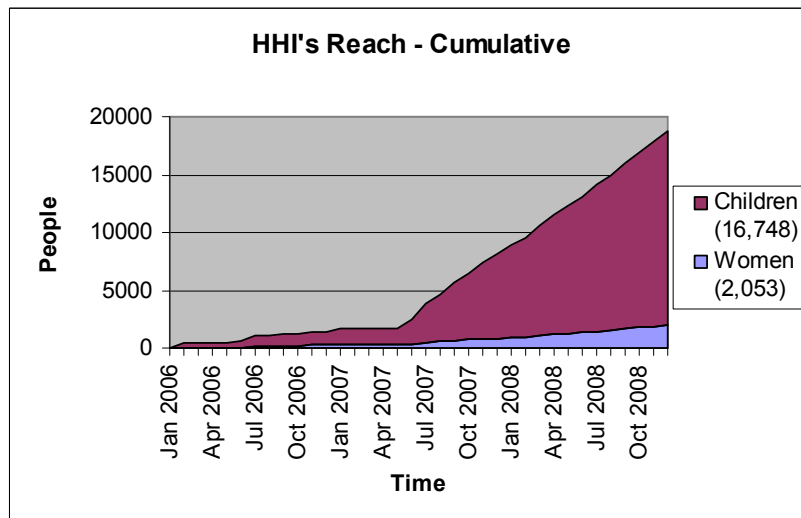
Hands to Hearts International (HHI) was founded in the fall of 2004 as a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of orphaned and other vulnerable children through improved early childhood care.

Background

About Hands to Hearts International (HHI): HHI originally began working in orphanages in Chennai, India, in February 2006. Caregivers trained by HHI demonstrate: significant gains in knowledge of early childhood development; more responsive interactions with children; greater awareness of child health and development; improved hygiene and nutrition practices. The children in their care show: increased weight gain; decreased illness; more responsive to soothing; increased language development; and better digestion and sleep (after practicing HHI baby massage). HHI has since expanded its services, integrating its curriculum into existing programs. HHI now trains teachers in the world's largest early childhood development program--India's integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)--in both Kerala and Orissa. HHI now offers technical assistance services to other NGOs and government groups focused on child health, allowing them to integrate HHI's curriculum within their own programs. These smart, strategic partnerships have helped to shape HHI's focus today: touching the most children possible at the earliest time with the simplest, most cost effective form of care possible.

Achievements in 2008

This was our third year of operations in India and each year we have managed to surpass our goals, while always remaining under our very modest budget projections.



Reach

- ✓ In India our 2008 impact goals were exceeded, with 83 trainings for 1,243 women, who are serving 9,479 children.
- ✓ Spending was less than 2/3 of the projected budget.

In Kerala and Orissa, HHI continued to conduct trainings for India's Integrated Child Development Services. HHI also trains crèche center teachers, orphanage caregivers, foster parents in HIV/AIDS villages, nurses, mid-wives, and this year a special outreach program to train rural village mothers in the principles of early childhood development was launched in an extremely remote area of Tamil Nadu.

Improvements to Curriculum

In 2008, HHI implemented our newly designed curriculum to address all the feedback we had from the field. HHI's new Curriculum on Early Childhood Development includes the following educational components: explanation of the four domains of development; connections across the domains; variations in development; early brain development; the importance of observation; bonding and attachment; baby cues; the role of play; health and hygiene; baby massage; and then detailed descriptions of the physical cognitive, language and affective development from birth to age five. Our curriculum molds to different cultures easily, using local songs, dance, games and stories. HHI also employs a standardized pre and post test of knowledge, as well as a follow up survey to continue to monitor and evaluate our impact.



The curriculum was designed by Christine Chaille, PhD who is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Portland State University. Her expertise is in early childhood education; she is published author of books on the subject and has given trainings throughout the US, Europe and parts of Asia. She worked in collaboration with HHI Trainers in India. The new curriculum has been greeted with enthusiasm by both Trainers and the trainees.

Evaluation Findings

In attempt to evaluate knowledge gained by participants, research was compiled on 43 HHI Trainings, it was found that the average gain in participant knowledge from the pre-test to the post-test was over 50%. The greatest learning was regarding cognitive development, as most caregivers were unaware that babies both had thoughts and emotions before they are able to speak words. In the open ended surveys the most common answer to "What was the most important thing you learned in the training?", 152 women answered "Love and care is the most important thing for the children's development."

“If parents do not realize that their interactions with their children are important for their child’s development, or they are not aware of the need to support their child’s emerging capacities, they are less likely to provide appropriately stimulating and responsive caregiving” (Richter, 2004)

HHI’s Instructional DVD

Another accomplishment during 2008 was the creation and release of HHI’s instructional DVD, *Baby Massage ~ Nurturing & Bonding Through Touch*. HHI produced the DVD to spread our unique infant massage method to HHI trainers, care providers, prospective organizational partners and new parents around the world. The DVD highlights the infant massage method developed by HHI that enhances the bond between parent and child, providing the foundation for healthy physical, social and language development. The DVD’s producers and editors, Vermilion Films won the Sundance Audience Choice Award in 2007 and in 2009 was nominated for an Academy Award for their excellence. Thanks to the contributions of the organization dotSUB, the DVD has been translated into eighteen languages (using subtitles).

This DVD was a major part of HHI’s strategy to build not only offer quality training material, but to generate greater awareness about HHI and by marketing this product on our website and to stores, to build a solid and reliable earned revenue stream.



“If the window of opportunity presented by the early years is missed, it becomes increasingly difficult, in terms of both time and resources, to create a successful life-course.”

(Irwin et al., 2007)

HHI’s Growth Through Collaboration

This year, HHI was invited to present a symposium of three papers at the International Step By Step (ISSA) Conference in Budapest, Hungary. These papers presented the overall model of HHI’s program, the creation of the new curriculum, and the implications of potential applications for HHI’s model in a wide array of development and crisis settings. The presentations were very well received by an audience of international experts in early childhood development and in the aid community. This led to an invitation for HHI’s Founder/Executive Director to present at UNICEF’s New York City headquarters, where UNICEF, World Health Organization and Better Care Network representatives attended. There was great interest, particularly in applying HHI’s model into disaster or conflict settings to help both the children and the mothers recover from trauma.

Meetings were also had with Save the Children US, CARE India, Catholic Relief Services, Family Health International, World Vision, LAMB International and Sustainable Harvest. All expressed interest in applying HHI’s model within their own programs. These organizations understand that HHI’s training and support would strengthen and streamline their own operations. HHI had initial contract negotiations with World Vision and Catholic Relief Services to work in India and Family Health International to work in Guyana, though these contracts never came to term due to agencies lacking seed funding. These early signs of significant interest were of great hope though, demonstrating that HHI’s model is in line with not only best practices, but with agency needs.

Other Highlights of 2008

- ✓ HHI Director was contracted to write “Empowered Parenting” concept paper for Save the Children, USA.
- ✓ A volunteer used HHI’s Baby Massage DVD to teach at an orphanage in Kenya.
- ✓ In recognition of the power and reach of HHI, Founder and Executive Director Laura Peterson was awarded the 2008 “Making a Difference for Women Award” from Sorptomist International of the NW Americas.

Financials for 2008

In the last fiscal year (10/07 - 9/08) operated with only \$141,607. Of these funds 50% came from individuals and corporations; 35% from foundations; and 15% was earned income. The earned income was from payment from an adoption agency, contract work for Save the Children USA and from the sale of the newly released HHI Baby Massage DVDs.

Thank you believing in HHI!

To all of those who have generously given gifts of time, talents and resources into the creation of Hands to Hearts International – your investments are reaping beautiful returns, and the benefits will be felt around the globe in ways which directly impact children, women, communities and entire social systems. We hope that you recognize how valuable you have been to bringing all of this about for thousands, and soon tens-of-thousands, and we hope that HHI continues to be your *social profit* of choice while we build for our sustainable future of global greatness!

In deep appreciation,



Laura Peterson, Founder & Executive Director
laura@handstohearts.org

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