



BODHI held another successful AGM, in Sydney, in April, 2018. Minutes, audit and reports [here](#). Reports of BODHI co-founder Colin's recent (Feb-March) visit to India to BODHI supported projects at these links: [Aryaloka Education Society](#) (Nagpur), [Bahujan Hitay Women and Child Welfare Society](#) (Pune). Each of these projects is led by dalits (long ago called untouchables), inspired by [Dr Ambedkar](#). A highlight was getting to know Dr Nair, the new doctor at the clinic in Pune, which provides valuable, highly subsidized services to many people.

### **What's happening with our newsletters?**

At the AGM BODHI decided to suspend the production of newsletters. However, we will instead produce shorter messages such as this (with links to more substantial writing) four times a year. Colin also has a blog, which some of you may find of interest. He has written, for example, several essays about "planetary health", [here](#) and [here](#).

### **The crisis of displacement: long predicted, now reality**

Almost every day the media reports something which would be horrifying, were we not so inured to it, to do with migration, such as desperately [overcrowded](#) boats in the Mediterranean, [suicidal](#) asylum seekers on Manus Island, or [crying children](#) held in cages in Texas. Hungary is [criminalizing](#) the provision of legal advice to the tiny number of refugees that manage to enter its territory.

The UNHCR (UN High Commission for Refugees) recently [reported](#) that the number of displaced people in the world has again increased (to 68.5 million), exceeding the record set only last year. The media (and most politicians) have an appalling blindspot when it comes to migration; it is as if they must think asylum seekers appear by magic. They do not. People seek safety (and better lives) because conditions at home have become intolerable or hopeless.

The refugee crisis that [Norman Myers](#) and many others have long warned of is unfolding. Governments, academics, UN agencies, the media and most NGOs have a responsibility to not just publicise the crisis; they should also seek to reduce it. That is only possible through the creation of a fairer world, whose elements include improved education, health care and family planning in many low-income settings.

Colin recently co-authored a [letter](#) published in Nature, about refugees, and also wrote a [commentary](#). These argued that environmental and social determinants of migration are very often intermingled. Calling refugees "economic" is designed to denigrate them, but thinking of their cause as purely environmental is simplistic.

## **Statement on the [Rohingya](#) on our website**

BODHI abhors violence, both individually and collectively. For further information (7,000 words with many references) please [see](#) the individual statement by Colin.

## **What is BODHI?**

Since 1989 BODHI has supported more than 50 development projects mainly in India, Bangladesh, Thailand and the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. BODHI is (we think) the world's third oldest Buddhist influenced development (aid) organisation. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been our patron since we started. BODHI also works for social justice, supporting not only attempts for self-empowerment by dalits in India but also [Indigenous people of the Chittagong Hills](#), Bangladesh.

## **Reaching new donors**

Although BODHI has funds to meet its existing commitments for several years very few new donors have recently emerged, other than people we have personally met. If you are reading this but have never made a donation, you may think that \$20 is not worth the trouble. We assure you that it is. If you are already a donor (THANK YOU!), please consider forwarding this letter to someone you know.

A recent [survey](#) found that the average Australian thinks that overseas aid accounts for 14% of the Federal budget (search for the word "aid"). The true figure, according to the Lowy Institute, is about .8%. However, the more common comparison is government donations as a percentage of gross national income. In Australia this is about [0.22%](#), or 22 cents in every \$100. Some countries, including [Norway](#) and Britain, give approximately 5 times as much.

## **How to support our work**

To help us continue (and expand) our work, please consider making a donation which you can do safely by clicking [here](#). Please note that we can no longer accept credit card donations, but bank transfers, cheques and paypal are fine. (Transfers are best). The end of the financial year is upon us. Donations are tax deductible if you pay income tax in Australia.



Mrs Sushma Chavan, an assistant teacher at Hadaspar balwadi (kindergarten) (Pune), and her two daughters (photo by Colin, March 2018). This room is also used for sewing classes, and as training for a beauty parlour and hairdressing, in the afternoons. The children in this very poor slum are also given a nourishing lunch. This photo was taken during Colin's second visit here, after an earlier visit in 2015. BODHI donors "Stitch n Bitch" (Hobart) provided the sewing machines in this room.

