

The Sri Lanka Project Waxholm Rotary Club

Summary notes in association of WRK's 35th anniversary.

By Otto Ekenberg

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and Waxholm Rotary Club

Translators Note.

The following text is very close to a direct translation. A few changes have been made where the direct translation did not read very well. Further changes were made where some clarification was required for a non-Swedish.

Karin Gunnarsson

1. Introduction- start- "pilot"

The Waxholm Rotary Club (WRK) was founded in the autumn of 1969 and became a charter in January 1970.

Already in the beginning there was a great interest in the history of the organization and its founder Paul Harris. How he recognized a need for a forum where like-minded individuals could come together and discuss moral ideals of business and create a network where professional experience and "know-how" could be shared.

Today, new members are interested in learning the history in order to further understand its position and significance in contemporary society.

One winter season we addressed and analyzed- amongst lively discussions- questions surrounding the 'Four Way Test' and its implementation in history. We concluded the season with a paneled discussion with our governor as the guest of honor.

Once after a few years the members had become more comfortable and confident in their newly founded club it was time to find a utilitarian project. The representatives of the 'Four Avenues' coordinated group meetings among a group of brothers who met up to discuss the topic using their homes as venues holding evenings not that dissimilar to the evenings held in front of the fire by Paul Harris and the brothers in history. We felt that a project between WRK and a developing country would be meaningful.

The members of Rotary represent a wide spectrum of knowledge. Hence we decided that each member would use his professional network to source information, advice and further material in order to find an appropriate country and a suitable project proposal. Our first ports of call were all major charities as well as many companies and organizations with international relations importers, exporters, construction companies and other industries. We even were in contact with the Swedish Governmental Department of Foreign Affairs. To our great joy we often came in contact with veteran Rotary members in the various organizations and businesses. We were able to establish connections with other local Rotary clubs interested in international collaboration. But

where would our efforts go? Heini Schenck and Otto Ekenberg who were the keenest instigators traveled to the Rotary convention in Rome in 1979.

Nils Kågström, who was then the head of Rotary North with offices in Stockholm, got us in contact with Ernst Breitholz, a former Swedish president of RI. Ernst was interested in our plans and hoped that we would find a suitable project in a developing country. He wanted us to keep him posted on any development. A memorable moment from Rome was our meeting with the Pope Johannes Paulus II. Heini and myself belonged to the group of selected Rotarians who got the honor to attend. On the podium sat the our RI president, Clem Renouf (Australia) in the presence of the Pope. Clem saluted the Pope and the Vatican on behalf of the whole Rotary organization. The Pope responded with a 45 minute long speech addressed to us the present Rotarians. The Pope spoke of the importance of Rotary's positive work in promoting education of children and the humanitarian aid programs in liaison with WHO.

Imagine if Paul Harris would have had the opportunity to witness how his solitary dreams that lead to the founding of Rotary manifested in real humanitarian and social action. He would have heard from the Pope of how important his original ideas had become in promoting peace and freedom on earth.

Another important speaker was Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and also a special representative of the International Year of the Children. She expressed that UN welcomed the innovative and inspiring contribution Rotary makes to the International Year of the Children through its 'Health, Hunger and Humanity' program.

The conference coincided with Rotary's first vaccination project, which had just commenced in Dr. Aldaba-Lim's home country, the Philippines.

Heini and Otto also met John Stucky who then was the newly appointed chief of 3H; a worldwide program initiated by RI 'HEALTH-HUNGER-HUMANITY' which had an offshoot that turned into POLIO PLUS. John gave us good advice and hoped that we would find collaboration with another Rotary club which would find an application in the less affluent parts of the Rotary world.

In Rome we met Rotarians with diverse project experiences. Among others we met Lennart Strandberg and John Wadstein from Warmdö Skeppslag RK, who also were looking for project ideas. We agreed to keep in contact.

On returning to Waxholm Heini and Otto did an extensive report to the fellows in WRK. Our discussions continued. My wife Gun and myself planned a month long trip to Sri Lanka in the autumn 1979. Since I had worked for many years with Skanska I offered WRK that I draw on Skanska's project experiences abroad. I would also ask seek their advice on Sri Lanka as a possible country for our project. The fellows liked this proposal.

Skanska referred me to Lennart Renman, who was the senior engineer and head of operations for all main international projects at Skanska. Lennart and his colleagues

produced a thorough analysis of their project experiences in different developing countries.

Sri Lanka where Skanska had just started a multimillion project of the construction of a power plant in Kotmale. Skanska regarded Sri Lanka as a wonderfully beautiful country stricken by poverty. The population was seen as friendly, hardworking and mostly English speaking. Furthermore illiteracy was low.

I got the assignment from my fellows that during my visit in Sri Lanka been in contact with local Rotary clubs and explore possibilities of an appropriate collaboration.

On arrival in Sri Lanka I had been invited to stay in Kandy with the senior ear physician Bandu Edussuriya and his family. The old royal city of Kandy corresponds to Uppsala (Sweden) in that it is similar in size, full of history and culture and a hub for knowledge and the home of an old university. Bandu was one of the country's 18 ear physicians within a population of approximately 15 million. Bandu had, according to western standards a solid specialist qualification acquired on Sri Lanka as well as in India, England and the U.S. Bandu and myself soon became good friends and held many discussions of the conditions faced in finding a suitable project. Bandu wasn't a Rotarian but knew the fellows of Kandy RC (KRC) really well. During my days in Sri Lanka I had time to visit several Rotary clubs. Colombo, Kandy and Matale where among several places that I had the opportunity to visit.

My first visit to the club in Kandy was a fascinating evening of scented tea and beautiful outdoor surroundings.

I was able to make several friendly connections with several of the interesting fellows including the President. Among them were Cyril Ellepola, professor in pathology and Eric Garth, the world-renowned orchid culturist and superintendent for Peradeniya Royal Botanic Garden, where the British royals reside during official visit. Also Siri Patinayike who was the clubs symbolic 'Mr. Rotary' had among other efforts had produced the alternating weekly and monthly newsletters for 25 years. Professor Hilary Cruz who was the club historian. He informed us that the KRC was originally formed in 1938. Initially it had run against some difficulties and had applied for permission from the RI to reduce their meetings to once every fortnight. When the war arrived the organization was dormant.

Already in 1941 they were able to fulfill all the requirements and could thus be fully chartered. WRK, as is well known, sent a gift of 60 000 sek in conjunction with KRC's 60th jubilee. The purpose of the contribution was to renew our support to the funding of the project, which goal was to aid those impaired of hearing. The aim was that the money was to be used in the acquisition of more hearing aids and their batteries.

All the fellows of KRC were positively interested in finding a good collaborative project. There were plenty of areas of need that were too extensive for what could be realistically achieved in a poor country like Sri Lanka.

On the second meeting with KRC I brought Dr Bandu as my guest and as he was liked and well known in the community he was happily offered a membership in KRC. I had at this time become acquainted with Dr Kandy's colleague and hospital chief of Kandy General Hospital (KGH), Dr Rajapakse who had with great interest demonstrated how the hospital was operating and the conditions in which a developmental project with KGH and Peradeniya University would enter.

At the same time the local manager of Skanska organized meetings with specialists in construction, technology, hygiene and administration where these would be involved in investigating premises, electricity supply, organization and routines among other things.

A few weeks in Dr. Bandu and his wife invited Rotarian's and all head physicians of KGH for dinner. On this wonderful night of unity of opinion of all present it was established that the most disadvantaged group in Sri Lanka were poor children impaired of hearing. They were isolated without the possibility of further development. We decided that KRC and WRC would investigate possibilities of coming together in a project aimed at aiding those hard of hearing and deaf, focusing on poor children.

When I returned home I told my 'task group' fellows of the events and developments. They immediately accepted the proposal and in the following WRK meeting the case was presented.

Our charter president Eric Jarneberg with the committee and the present fellows confirmed the go-ahead of the collaboration with KRC. A quick correspondence followed which further cemented the collaboration, focusing on the aid of the hearing-impaired children of Sri Lanka.

WRK selected a Sri Lanka committee with ten members.

Otto was appointed chairman and Heini, secretary and administrator. All members were also instructed to help in supplying knowledge and contacts. I started by calling an old school buddy, Holger Krey, also a Rotarian and head ear physician at Borås hospital. He was enthusiastic and so was his wife, social policy chief of 'Inner Wheelers'. We made a preliminary medical plan. Next I contacted the chief physician of Hörcentralen at Danderyds Hospital (Stockholm) Lars Änggård. Lars wasn't a Rotarian, but was immediately interested. Heini and myself visited Lars at the Hörcentralen. We were put in white coats and guided around the facility. Heini contributed with some good practical suggestions and one of Lars's colleagues later asked me what kind of doctor Heini was with such extensive knowledge of business and administration.

Holger and Lars helped us sketch a concrete proposal of a simple and efficient hearing centre at KGH. The facilities would include a sound isolated room, an audiometer plus a nurse, which would receive specialist education and Dr. Bandu who wanted to have access to premises and permission to carry out research projects outside of his chief physician post.

It was suggested that Lars and LIC (Landstingets inköpscentral) could supply a suitable audiometer. We planned to collect second hand hearing aids.

Bertil Tronet, out then governor, spread a call for the collections of hearing aids throughout RN (Rotary North). KGH's committee chief, Dr. Rajapakse, solved local issues such as arranging a work permit for Dr. Bandu.

WRK was going to apply for subsidiaries from SIDA in order to send a hearing care technician from Danderyd's Hearing Centre to make local research and assist Dr. Bandu.

Skanska promised to help us with transporting the materials needed for the construction. Holger and Anna Maria Krey offered their holidays to accompany Heini and me on the next trip to Sri Lanka. Skanska supplied airplane tickets for the four of us and offered us accommodation in both Colombo and at the construction site at Kotmale.

It came as a surprise when John Wadstein of Warmdö Skeppslag RK, who is the Swedish head of the hearing aid manufacturer Option, contacted me. He had managed to acquire a batch of unused hearing aids that were no longer in production and offered them to us at a much reduced price. The whole cost including the freight to Sri Lanka would come to 25 000 sek.

One hearing aid at that time including testing came to a cost of 1500 sek. 100 hearing aids would then be valued at 150 000 sek. It was a great relief on our part at WRK that these new hearing aids were tested and ready to go and that we did not have to spend time collecting and testing second hand aids. We could now kick start our pilot project with the new hearing aids, which were not very different to the new hearing aids on the market. All we needed to do was to find the 25000 sek.

We had already discussed with our daughter organization, Österåkers RK, and prepared a preliminary proposal in coming together in a suitable project with WRK and Kandy RC (KRC). Another collaboration was initiated with Warmdö Skeppslag RK. These three clubs decided to form "3RC/D235" that became a representative organization for the three clubs and thus consisted of 130 members with equal representation from each club. Otto was elected chairman. It was decided that the 130 members of this organization would pay 200 krona each that would then cover the cost of the hearing aids.

John Wadstein volunteered to foresee the delivery of the hearing aids to KGH. To reduce the risk of theft it was decided that the appliances should be marked: "Belong to Kandy Rotary Club" At the same time the fellows at KRC promised home visits to the families who after Dr. Bandu's examination had been allocated a hearing aid.

SIDA granted us 40 000 sek to finance ear specialist Eva Martony's trip to Kandy and KGH. The members of 3RC/D235 had now decided that it was time for the pilot project to be launched and span the period of 1981-1982. The aim was a audio logical centre, AC that would be associated with KGH. Material and staff requirements as well as educational needs would be met with the help of responsible authorities in Sri Lanka.

On the Swedish side we were supported by Lars Änggård and Danderyds Hospital. LIC offered their services in providing education of Sri Lankan care workers specializing in the hard of hearing. Lennart Renman, Skanska, gave us permission to use Skanska's air transports for our deliveries free of charge and that the heavier cargo could go free of charge on Skanska's container transports.

During this time they cut the electricity supply for six hours daily. Experts from the Kotmale-project investigated KGH's electricity supply. A new generator was supplied by Skanska that ensured a 24-hour constant electricity supply.

Furthermore Skanska donated and installed air-conditioning among other important electrical facilities to make our operation run smoothly.

We were convinced that it was now time to start this pilot project between Kandy RC in Sri Lanka and 3RC/D235 in Sweden. The governors of each country strongly supported our plans.

In 1980 Otto went to the assembly in Chicago to meet Evanston and joined in the 75-year Rotary Jubilee. It was a fascinating Rotary experience with an interesting and captivating program of events. A lot of new friendships were made at events such as 'House of Friendship'. Another event was 'Home Hospitality' where I together with five other Rotarians first stayed with an older retired physician who had made important contributions in his hometown. Next we moved to a practicing surgeon. Together we all enjoyed the busy program, which was followed by evenings and nights with exciting and rewarding rotary discussions at the homes of these two families.

Personal episodes with two Presidents of RI.

The program included certain elements in New York on a Saturday. Late at night at a restaurant where me and a few other Rotarians were dining I had put my hip sack including my wallet on the window ledge. I had to rush off and didn't realize that I had forgotten my bag until I reached my hotel. The next day the restaurant was closed and I had to rush off to Chicago. I had told the former President of RI Ernst Breitholz of my misfortune and when he returned to Chicago on Monday he tracked me down and returned my bag to me.

" I passed by the restaurant on my way to the airport and your bag was still there."

Talk about SERVICE ABOVE SELF.

One evening in Chicago I had the privilege of accompanying some prominent Rotarians for a meal at 'Restaurant 95th' with a view over Chicago with its 8 million inhabitants. At the time that was equal to the population of Sweden. Suddenly entered the Finnish President of RI Rolf Klärich with his family and were seated by a table nearby.

Everybody at our table agreed to leave the IP of RI in peace with his family. But then Rolf rose from his table and approached our table to greet some of his of old Rotarian friends. The rest of us where also introduced. 'Rolle' startled as we got introduced and looked me deep in the eyes in that particular way that he is known for and asked, "Are there more than one Otto Ekenberg?"

"Not that I know of." I answered.

"Then it's you Otto!" he exclaimed and gave me an old bear hug.

"We had such a lovely time in 1945 in Stockholm- 35 years ago- when I had come to Sweden after being injured in the war."

On June the 16th 1980, after I had returned from Chicago, WRK got a visit from the President of RI James L. Bomar. He thought we had found a truly meaningful charity project in the planned collaboration between KRC in Waxholm and that of KRC in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

On June 25th Herbert Pigman general secretary of RI visited the newly opened RN office on Strandvägen in Stockholm. Accompanying the RN chief Nils Kågström, I got one and a half hours discussion with Herbert, concerning the project. We discussed possibilities of obtaining a 'Special Grant' that would enable further analysis and follow up on the project.

WRK had hopes that this project would become a prototype that would be included in RI's project bank. If this went through we would be able to join RI in their upcoming event 'Crusade against children's deafness'.

On the 1st of December 1980 the following headline and text in the national broadsheet 'Svenska Dagbladet':

"Donating hearing aids to Sri Lanka."

"The three rotary clubs in Värmdö, Vaxholm and Österåker have with Hans Björkman's approval donated 100 hearing aids to the hard of hearing in Sri Lanka. Physicians in Kandy Rotary Club on Sri Lanka are facilitating the testing and service. The gift is worth 150 000 sek. The effort was initiated by a committee of the three Swedish clubs led by Otto Ekenberg following his visit to the country. Others involved are Lars Strandberg, John Wadstein, Heinrich Schenk and Stefan Cronberg. Sri Lanka's ambassador in Stockholm Mr. Badrapala Wickramatunga has personally liaised the donation to Sri Lanka."

After a yearlong collaboration Österåker RK and Värmdö Skeppslag RK wanted to resume their own local activities.

Afterwards WRK continued as sole Swedish partner, the collaboration with Kandy RC. The collaboration was successful and resulted in 30 well filled files documenting the projects developments and achievements. That's the amount collated by WRK alone not counting the other club's documentations. The continued report will eventually be comprised into some main points of this long process.

Eric Garth- Göran Wassberg- the orchid card

Eric, the world-renowned orchid cultivator, told me that in one of his many hybrid attempts he had managed to cultivate an unusually exquisite orchid, that he wanted to dedicate to Paul Harris. RI was contacted and granted that the orchid be named *Dendrobium Memoria Paul Harris*. The name was registered in London in the international register of orchids. Later there was an article about the orchid in 'The Rotarian'.

I asked Eric if he had used the picture of the orchid for pictures, postcards or any such thing. The answer was no. He explained that there were no resources in a poor country to easily produce this sort of thing. Shortly afterward Eric asked me if we in Waxholm RK could help producing a suitable commemorative card.

I contacted Göran Wassberg, who was planning to visit Sri Lanka, and asked if he as an experienced book producer wouldn't mind taking his camera equipment with him. He left and returned with beautiful images of the orchid. Now WRK had to contact Evanston to apply for permission to produce a series of postcards of the orchid that would then be offered for sale. The income would then be donated to the hearing aid project. RI even gave us the permission to use the Rotary symbol and add the text: "*Dendrobium Memoria Paul Harris: Eric Garth, the well-known horticulturist, of Kandy RC, Sri Lanka, dedicated this wonderful orchid to Paul Harris.*"

This photograph is distributed as part of a project of the Rotary Clubs of Waxholm and Kandy. Paul Harris was the founder of Rotary International in 1905. Rotary works in 154 countries through 875 000 members engaged on more than 20 000 charity projects all over the world"

Göran produced the large edition of postcard at cost price. Some of these were sent as a gift to KRC, who could sell these cards in Sri Lanka and thus contribute to our joint project.



In Stockholm I contacted SRR (The Swedish Rotary Council), whose members became interested. Heini and I were soon invited to an information meeting where we presented our project and showed the orchid cards. SRR responded very positively. They arranged and gave us permission to hold talks and sell our cards in any interested local Rotary clubs in Sweden and as such raise more funding for the Sri Lanka project. Furthermore SRR liaised a contact with 'U-fonden' (the Swedish fund for international charities) who holds the sole right to sell Christmas cards. The sale of the cards contributes to the 'U-fondens' own charity projects. But with their backing we got permission to sell our cards but only benefiting the Sri Lanka project.

It turned out that there were quite a few Swedish Rotary Clubs that wanted to hear more about our collaborative project with Kandy and the aid to the hearing-impaired children. Heini and I got busy visiting a number of clubs even outside our district.

It became somewhat a kind of Rotary crusade around the country- Otto held talks on the project and Heini explained the story behind the orchid cards and managed the sales. Groan's large production contribution could be evaluated to the sum of 100 000 sek.

Later we started a correspondence between the Sri Lankan children and our children here in Vaxholm schools. The common facilitator was the English language. The Sri Lankan children could draw and tell stories about themselves in Sinhala or Tamil. Their teachers contributed with the translation to English. When the letters arrived here in Sweden our teachers translated from English to Swedish. This led to an intensive correspondence that lasted for several years.

A few years later when Dr Bandu and his son Kapila and Prof. Cyril Ellepola came to Sweden, the first two visited several school classes. The Swedish pupils asked questions among other things of how their names were spelt in Sinhala. They discussed their different foods especially different uses of rice and what type of sweets there were etc. The pictures produced in this encounter and correspondence raised a lot of attention.

We managed to find an amount of medical equipment and material using our various contacts and in effect we begged for unused equipment that could be sent to Sri Lanka. With the help of several managing hospital directors and several councils we could collect needles, surgical equipment, operation tables and many other things. We also had the fortune that this was happening at the same time as a lot of health departments were updating their surgeries and thus we could acquire the old equipment that were being replaced.

It's difficult to evaluate exactly in monetary terms all the material contributions that we collected but a fair estimation would at least be valued at one million krona. All heavier equipment were collected and packaged at Göran Wassberg's print studio in Täby. There were many hours of good humor and laughs among the WRK fellows who worked hard at packing. Everything was then sent to Skanska's depot in Upplands Väsby, where the contents was put in containers and then transported to Colombo, and further transported to KGH on route to Kotmale.

Smaller and lighter equipment, hearing aids etc were delivered via Skanska's daily air transports.

Through my previous cooperation with Skanska I was appointed one of Skanska's transport managers and could thus transport my goods with governmental approval without passing customs. On Colombo I was received with the goods by Skanska staff and then transported to KGH.

KRC-contributions

On the 13th of April 1981 KGH declared that they had managed to collect 15 000 rupees. All sources had been used to little by little via donations of materials such as bricks, sand and labor to ensure the erection of the sound isolated premises as designed by Eva Martony. This was very successful.

Home for Mentally Disabled Children

KRC member, Siri Patinayake, made an incredible initiative in that he completely financed the building of a home for mentally disabled children in Kandy. He made this happen with the help of other KRC members. The whole children's' charity was voluntarily and freely offered by KRC 'Inner Wheelers' whose services were scheduled. It was an incredible charitable effort by Rotary and IW!

WRK donated pens, books, paper and other things to the children's' home. We were also able to give financial donations for the purchase of fixed equipment for the children's' home.

You should have seen the eyes of these shy children light up, when myself and Heini turned up with our contributions. Heini was soon involved in play. Picture big Heini surrounded by excited laughter and children hanging off his clothes dragging him to the floor. Prompting in voices of Sinhala or Tamil of which we understood nothing but could feel the sentiments of joy and excitement in our hearts.

Gösta Sandberg- our mentor

In the mid-seventies I contacted Gösta who was thought to be able to answer a number of my questions regarding our plans in finding a suitable charity projects. Gösta recommended that I should contact Evanston. It was known that RI had made an international register of suitable and current Rotary collaborations with developing countries. Gösta also promised his mentorship when we were further ahead in our plans.

Gösta could be regarded as Sweden's 'Mr. Rotary'. His ordinary profession was that of chief banker in Vasteras. But his entry in 'matrikeln' reveals another story. He had occupied all RI's and RF's highest positions. If Ernst Breitholz wasn't already the first Swedish President of RI Gösta would surely been just that.

Gösta was consequently with us from the very beginning, as our advisor and mentor. Our forthcoming project thus had a guaranteed support, regarding the organization and network that we would need to enter into the Rotary world. Gösta has been in close contact throughout the project and my last contact with him was just before Christmas in 2004. Even then I gave him an update on the developments in Kandy. Gösta had at this time recently turned 94 but still alert and interested. Recently he passed away after a full life and active participation in Rotary.

Gamini Jayasuriya- Minister of Health

Cyril Ellepola was through his professorship at the university in close contact with several governmental departments and ministers.

Dr. Singa Singanayam, our Rotary fellow in KRC, held a position as assistant director of health within the Ministry of Health on Sri Lanka,

Cyril and Singa had prepared a meeting on the 23rd of March with the Honorary Minister of Health Gamini Jayasuriya. Hence Bandu, Heini and myself had the honor of a personal meeting with Gamini who for many years had been a warm and devoted Rotarian but due to his career forced to leave his fellowship.

Gamini was well informed of our 'Pilot Project' and already knew that we'd been able to help 16 children with hearing aids. Gamini on behalf of the nation honored our joint Rotary activities and deemed our aid to poor hearing impaired children very meaningful. The Hon. Min concluded with best wishes and told us to keep him informed regarding future developments.

Newspaper reports on Sri Lanka

The 24th of March in 1981 the Sri Lankan newspapers 'General News' among others reported:

"Rotary Club gifts hearing aids to children."

"The Swedish Rotary Club movement believed in promoting peace through Participation in community service projects, said Dr. Otto Ekenberg, leader of a delegation from Waxholm Rotary Club, Sweden yesterday.

He was commenting on how international friendship could be promoted and peace achieved through participation in community service projects, after he gifted 300.000 worth of hearing aid equipment to Health Minister Gamini Jayasuriya, for use of poor children in the Kandy District with hearing defects. The Minister in accepting the donation said that he was grateful to the Waxholm Rotary Club for the donation and the Kandy Rotary Club for organizing it. The gift would help to correct hearing aid difficulties of a large number of children in Kandy, who had suffered for a number of years owing to their inability to pay for such equipment. Each aid cost about Rs. 3000. He said Sri Lanka welcomes such donations from organization abroad to improve the health conditions of the people. The Health Department would now be able to start a screening project for children with hearing difficulties in the Kandy district, and distribute the 100 hearing aid sets to the deserving.

Dr Ekenberg later said that he was in Kandy, two years ago staying with a doctor friend, when he found a large number of children with hearing difficulties, who could not afford to pay for hearing aids. This motivated him to make the donation as part of his Rotary clubs international community service projects. Mr. Heinrich G. Schenck of the Waxholm Rotary Club, Health Ministry Secretary Mr. B. C. Perera and Dr V. Singanaygam, Assistant Director, and Ministry of Health participated.

Appendix 1. Kandy RC- "Andy Bera" (=weekly newsletter) 1981-03-25
Report of the delivery of 100 hearing aids to Sri Lanka's Hon. Min of Health for the delivery to Kandy RC.



Heini , Bandu and Otto at the entrance of the newly inaugurated Centre for the Deaf at KGH.

Early patient experiences.

In conjunction with the inauguration at AC, KGH, a representative of the newly founded parent group for hearing-disabled children presented their heartfelt gratitude for the help that their children had received. One woman mentioned how her daughter would have been trapped in isolation and illiteracy could now with the hearing aid be able to join school and had already made great progress as well as her psychological stability and independence had grown.

Another example is that of a benefiting home visit to a remote village where one gainfully employed member supported a family of 25. The family lacked the means to

pay for the small bus fare to neither AC nor the batteries for the hearing aid. A 21 year old who had become completely isolated due to his deaf and muteness had started to hear and had developed speech so rapidly that after just a few months he was able to start simple vocational training that was expected to lead to gainful employment.

Rotary trip March 1982

SRR suggested that Rotarians Sweden over would be invited to make a trip to Sri Lanka and thus be able to study on location the cooperative project between Kandy RC and Waxholm RK and how it was manifested in the aid of children impaired of hearing. D235 supported the idea. Skanska's travel service worked out the necessary details. A common invitation went out to all Rotarians around the country. To our delight around 40 Rotarian's with their wife's signed up. Skanska travel service took care of all practical and economical organization regarding the trip and allocated us a tour guide, a retired British colonel. Furthermore Otto was appointed "Rotary Tour Leader". On route to Sri Lanka we would make stops at both Bombay and Madras in India. Rotary clubs in respective places were contacted. The group first came together at Arlanda airport where some of us met for the first time. Then we flew to Teheran and onto Bombay. In Bombay three Rotary presidents met us with their assistants who gave us a warm welcome.

The three Indian Rotary fellows had prepared a banquet with dinner and entertainment. It was clear that our Indian Rotary fellows had eagerly awaited our arrival.

They're where approximately 200 Rotarians including their wives present. The entertainment contained music, song, Indian dances mixed with both Rotarian and culture specific traditions. The program was divided into two parts.

During the various Rotary gatherings I delivered greetings from Waxholm RK, SRR, and The Swedish Rotary Council.

Appendix 2

App. 2 contains SRR's greetings from the chairman at the time Allan Månsson.

During the break after the first part of the program, the managing Indian Rotary president approached me with a beaming smile across his face and requested that we Swedish Rotarians would sing something typically Swedish as a conclusion of the evening. Lacking a singing voice myself I frantically tried to find someone who would be up to the task and finally found a savior in Malte Olsson, a Rotary fellow from southern Sweden. Who responded in a heavy local accent:

"Sure I'll do it! I love so..nging!"

When the whole program ended I rose to say thanks to our Indian fellows for this wonderful and memorable evening. Followed with an introduction of Malte from the most southern part of Sweden, Trelleborg, who had promised to sing a few songs. The response was jubilant. Malte, who's a tall silver haired man, rose slowly to the stage,

turned to the audience bowed and took a deep breath before commencing the first song 'Sverige' which was followed by 'Land du välsignade'. The songs were received by huge applause and salutations and Malte offered an encore with the song 'Till havs'. Malte had saved us from embarrassment by delivering a fantastic performance. We all got to experience a magical international Rotary evening.

As you may well gather the rest of the trip contained many interesting encounters, which from this night onwards always concluded with song from our Malte Olsson, who made a success everywhere.

Malte and his wife Evy and myself soon became good friends where we kept in contact for many years. Malte was a peculiar man. He had started his career as a plumber and then worked himself up to become a successful entrepreneur. His political views were firmly on the left but he was still a devoted Rotarian. He was jokingly called the 'King of Trelleborg'. When asked whether he knew a many languages due to his interest in travel he replied:

"I only know the international language of southern Swedish with a little help from subtle body language from time to time. It has worked the world over."

During our trip there were several opportunities to witness the efficiency of his particular international language.

On route Bombay, Madras, Colombo through to Kandy the group spent a lot of time together and made strong bonds, which continued on our return to Sweden. The trip proved how meaningful Rotary is in bringing people together.

The highlight of the trip was our goal to visit our 'Centre for the Deaf' AC at KGH where Bandu with his colleagues and the EBBA-group (ref on another page) demonstrated what had already been achieved in aiding these disabled children. The group then went to the famous "Tooth Temple" where the Buddha's holy tooth is preserved. At the temple and at several other sights we could enjoy the colorful ceremonies and the amazing drums that are part of Sri Lankan culture.

Another generous gesture by Skanska was the use of the Camping in Kotmale to hold a Rotary intercity meeting where all Rotarian's of Sri Lanka could meet. Skanska's specialists, around the grand site along the river Mahaveli Ganga, guided Rotarians, by the busload. This was followed by an exquisite lunch at the camping. When the lunch was followed by coffee and liquors and we held the actual intercity meeting. I welcomed all present and gave an illustrated description of our project, which Heini backed with the formal statistics and developments. Then spoke Bandu and KRC's president of the importance of this project. Rotarians from other parts of Sri Lanka also spoke of the importance of this project as an inspiration for the spread of more projects like this across Sri Lanka.

The whole trip was made according to plan and when we returned to Arlanda I dare to say that we all agreed that we'd had an amazing, inspiring and memorable time. Rotary at its best!

One of the participants Per-Olof Hemlin from Uppsala RK with his wife, became so interested that they financed their own travel for the next work trip to Sri Lanka where Per Olof made himself available as Heini's assistant. A beautiful example of 'Service above self'.

RN's then chief editor Nils Norling, Enköping Trödgens RK, presented the Swedish and Sri Lankan Rotary collaboration in RN- nr 7/1983 under the headline "internasjonalt"- see next page.

PICTURES

The Tamils- 1983

The conflict between Tamils and the Singhalese is ancient. The distribution has always been between 70-75% Singhalese to that of 20% Tamils. The government had tried to meet some of the Tamils demands of independence but would not grant them an independent stat in the northeastern part of Sri Lanka. The total area of Sri Lanka is about 1/7 of Sweden. The majority of ordinary Tamils had accepted the government's decision but a group of extremists had come together and via terrorist activities demanded the government of an independent state. This group was referred to as the 'Tamil Tigers'. This in 1983 turned in to a full on war where civilians were killed daily.

Until this date we Rotarians had never reflected on whether our friends in Kandy RC where Tamils or Singhalese. But on our following visit we where informed that several of our friends had been killed, others escaped and some had just disappeared. At KRC the work continued as usual but everybody was laden with sorrow and grief. We understood that the government would under these circumstances not fund our operation- since the government's resources had to be used to fight the Tamils.

II. Period 1 - 1979-1986

Project development after the 'Pilot Project'

With a 350 000 sek bursary from SIDA could the 'Centre for the deaf' expand. The new centre was called 'Audiology Center', AC. By a 'Special Grant' of 260 000 sek from the Rotary Foundation the specialist education of staff commenced.

Lars Änggård, Danderyd Hospital, LIC, among others agreed on educating the staff at KGH and thus the EBBA-group was formed. It consisted of four audiologists, Eva Martony, Bo Dorné, Birgit Gustafsson and Anders Edsholt. These four specialists managed the project on the ground.

They returned on a yearly basis for a monthly duration to oversee the building of the audio technical laboratory, the repair of damaged hearing aids and other equipment as well as educating the staff on audiometry and earplug manufacture among other things.

In Sri Lanka there was a lack of healthcare workers who were educated in the care of those who are impaired of hearing. Therefore we had to ask The Ministry of Health to supply five suitable nurses, which the EBBA-group could offer a specialist education. The response was very enthusiastic and instead of five nurses they sent us nineteen. It did slightly concern the EBBA-group of whether sufficient learning could be made in such a large group but the students were keen and hardworking and led to a very successful meaningful result.

The EBBA-group also evaluated the health care technicians at KGH and selected two suitable candidates who would come to LIC in Stockholm to be given a one year long specialist education within audiological technology. All the selected candidates had to sign a contract that they would work for KGH for at least five years.

Dr. Bandu visited Sweden on two occasions, in 1983 and in 1985, in order to study Swedish Audiology Centers, in the way they were managed and administrated. Bandu also visited Manila and several other schools and institutions which specialized in the care and education of those with a hearing impairment. Bandu's program also included visits to several of Sweden's main university ear clinics and could thus witness with the technical forefront of audiology research and microsurgery.



Bandu outside Vaxholm hotel during his visit to Vaxholm Rotary Club.

Authority support in Sri Lanka and Sweden

Our small 'Pilot Project' between two Rotary clubs grew to become an 'Inter-country' cooperation. Hence it was important that authorities were informed and approved of this joint project. In Sri Lanka we built a lasting collaboration on a governmental level through continued contact with the Education and Social ministers. We even were in contact with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. We also had a close relationship local and regional authorities.

In Kandy the mayor was proud to be called 'Citizen Number One' and wanted to be addressed as "His Worship". He came to KRC on several occasions and was pleased that this project had started in his district. When the mayor heard that the mayor of Vaxholm, Sven Flood, was visiting Sven was cordially invited to 'Citizen Number One'. This was mentioned in the press. Consequently all Sri Lankans addressed Sven as 'His Worship' too.

In a Buddhist country it was very important that the bishop was well informed of our organization. The bishop in Kandy approved of the project and felt it was a positive and meaningful addition to the region. Naturally we were in close contact with the Swedish embassy.

In Sweden we had already established connections with both business and medical expertise via our Rotary network. Furthermore there was in contact with the Sri Lankan ambassador at their embassy on Strandvägen in Stockholm. Since the project had now

grown into quite a large cooperative project it was felt that connections and support from higher authorities was missing. Hence I received help from Ivan Hultan, educated lawyer and staff director at SPN (National Staff Authority). We had worked together for many years and he knew the routes we needed to take in order to contact authorities relevant to our cause. Ivan arranged for us to present our project to Gertrud Sigurdson, then social minister and several state secretaries including a representative from the Foreign Ministry, which is the ministry in charge of all SIDA's operations.

We also visited the head of Social Administration, Barbro Westerholm. All of the above mentioned were positive towards our project and our collaboration with Sri Lanka.

One evening I received a phone call from PDG's Ragnar Martinsson who had the task of collating and declaring all Rotary's projects internationally. He called me to say that:

WAXHOLM-KANDY CLUBS COOPERATIVE PROJECT IS NOW THE WORLDS
LARGEST CLUB PROJECT

We were on all sides (KRC and WRK) proud and pleased of the achievements that had been made. Even in the face of adversity we had managed to pursue our joint charity project.

By the mid-eighties it was thought that we had achieved our preliminary goal. There was an operational Audiological Centre, AC, at KGH. The audiological technology laboratory had begun their research. There were nurses with specialist education on location. Our efforts had resulted in that we had in 5 years moved the care of those impaired of hearing 20 years forward in time. From the 1920's to what would be in equivalent in the west as the 1960's.

In 1985 when WRK celebrated their 15th anniversary the club was honored by Rolf Klärlich's presence. He held a long inspiring speech where he among other things emphasized on the importance of our charity program in collaboration with Kandy RC.

1986-04-12- Final Report of Special Grant 681 to RF

WRK's final report to the Rotary Foundation addressed to the Managers Programs Department Howard Nochumson, Evanston, USA. Signed by Lars Lindström (President of Waxholm RC) and Carl-Arne Tydén (Trustee of Waxholm RC). The report was referenced by Otto.

Reply from RF regarding above-mentioned Final Report:

The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International 30 April 1986

Re: Special Grant 681

Dear Rotarian Ekenberg:

Thank you very much for your letter of 12 April and the excellent final report on Special Grant 681. We are pleased to learn of the overwhelming success of this

project to provide instruction and materials for the Audiological Center at Kandy General Hospital, Sri Lanka.

We very much appreciate the excellent reporting that you have done throughout the project.

Members of the Rotary Club of Waxholm are to be commended on their involvement in this outstanding international service project.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Patricia Groenewold

Special Grants Supervisor"

1986-07-23 Report of the ENT-CARE Rotary collaboration between Sri Lanka and Sweden.

Addressed to Hon. Minister of Woman's Affaires and Teaching Hospitals

Mrs. S Ranasinghe. Signed by Otto.

The Sri Lankan government presented their warm regards to WRK and apologized for their withdrawal of promised funding. But in the long-term the Sri Lankan government promised economical support for AC and in spreading their new knowledge around the country.

III. Period 2 – 1986 – 1992

These are the events following the presentation of our final report to the Minister of Health.

We reported that KGH now had an Audiological Centre and that Dr. Bandu together with his closest associates could independently continue in developing the centre. The Minister of Health explained that he was very pleased with the results of our Rotary project but wanted to pose a question mainly directed to myself:

Is there any chance that the project could be continued over yet another period- with the goal of building and equipping an educational centre at KGH, whereby Sri Lanka would gain the resources to educate a large number of audiologists and other relevant staff that could supply the needs nation wide. And moreover to create opportunities for AC to be able to carry out advanced micro surgery bearing in mind the high numbers of children suffering from “leaking ears” but also those suffering from serious tumors. Surprised by the question I directed my gaze towards Bandy, Cyril and Dr. Singa Singanayam from KRC and others present. After some deliberations I responded as the medical chief, that all of us involved in the project thanked for the confidence shown and that we would within our clubs explore the possibilities for a continuation of the project and would return with a reply as soon as possible.

After the meeting we gathered and discussed with Dr. Rajapakse at KGH of what the outlook was for a continuation of the project along the lines of the Minister of Health’s wishes.

What were KRC’s resources?

I promised that I would raise the question to WRK immanently. We were after an assessment able to see if we could realistically acquire funding from SIDA and RF and necessary educational- and staff resources.

After my return to Sweden WRK went ahead in researching and analyzing the possibility of continuing the project into a second period.

The first realization was that the project would need to leave club level and enter into district level within World Community Service (WCS). WRK had to investigate the possibility of a 20% contribution from SIDA and one of 50% from RF to be able to raise

sufficient funds. Our continued activity, including fundraising, demanded more responsible people/organizations than the two Rotary Clubs already involved.

Our governor discussed the errand with the Swedish Rotary Council (SRR). They responded by saying that our district was willing to form a WCS-committee with PDG Stig Bruse as chairman. A corresponding committee would be formed in Sri Lanka. Thus the demands as set by Rotary were fulfilled and we got the go ahead of continuing our work.

Cyril Ellepola- The Med Lab Project - Ingmar Jungner

Cyril was from the start very active in the joint project. When the Hearing Care program started Cyril brought our attention to another medical problem. Cyril wasn't only a pathologist at the University of Peradeniya he was also responsible for the medicinal laboratory research program which had a lot of shortages. There were problems in areas of staff and education as well as resources. Cyril enquired whether the Rotary clubs both in Kandy and Waxholm would come together in a second project. There was a desperate need for the education of medical and technical staff since the demand was huge and urgent. What were lacking were the resources to educate due to lack of premises and expertise.

Following discussions with Bandu and Heini I promised to research the possibilities of yet another Rotary collaboration.

Among the lab physicians who were Rotarians I came together with Ingmar Jungner, a competent and suitable person to discuss the issue with. We knew each other as both colleagues and through Rotary. Ingmar had together with his older brother Gunnar's created and shaped the new automatic laboratory techniques that were at this time beginning to spread world-wide. Furthermore Ingmar was the owner and director of 'Calab', a large private medical laboratory. Ingmar and Otto went over several times of how it could be possible to start a research centre at Peradeniya University.

Ingmar finally decided to accompany me on my next visit to Kandy in order to meet Cyril on location and together study the chances of improving the technical laboratory standards as well as developing a rational staff education plan. We went together in 1985. Skanska again provided the travel among other things. Initially there were long discussions between Cyril, Ingmar, Bandu and myself, which later continued at the existing Med Lab School at Peradeniya University who showed a positive interest. Ingmar and Cyril would formulate a plan on which WRK could make a decision. Included in the plan was that WRK together with KRC would support the project with advice but should the project develop adequately it was thought that the managing of the project should be taken over by Ingmar Jungner and the his local Rotary Club Ladugårdslandets RK.

After careful preparations WRK confirmed that there was a need for an active Med Lab Charity Project and that they would initially be involved but that the further developments would be taken over by Ingmar and Cyril and organized through Stockholm Ladugårdslandets RK and Kandy RC.

As a result of this, I received the honorary title 'The Twin father of the Medical Rotary Collaboration-Project between Kandy RC and Waxholm RK'.

The Med Lab project commenced and included two main components.

The first comprised of increasing the quality and quantity of Med Lab operations on Sri Lanka.

The second component was to improve the staff education resources that were urgently needed. The existing Med Lab education centre needed rebuilding and the pedagogic competence needed to be improved by locating qualified educators.

In 1988 Cyril took some time out from his duties in Sri Lanka to pursue under Ingmar's direction further education at Calab and other modern laboratories. Ingmar had arranged accommodation for Cyril and his wife Rani.

The project continued. WRK was able to sponsor parts of the project due to the RF sponsorship. With this funding could Ladugårdslandet RC on their own approach SIDA and RF for further larger funds.

The Med Lab School was rebuilt and enlarged. Furthermore the amount of competent laboratory educators was increased. The Med Lab technical resources were increased and updated to modern standards. Thus the Laboratory education was quickly improved. Year after year a new batch of qualified lab researchers and technicians was supplied and spread around the country.

The total cost of the project amounted to 3 million sek.

Heini Schenk and Sven Flood pass away.

In 1985 Heini suddenly passed away during surgery, which was a difficult personal loss for others and me. The project then also lost the experience and excellent administrator who had been in charge of all the financial issues.

Sven Flood had during the last few years been of great assistance to Heini in the project. Within less than six months Sven suddenly passed away too.

This was both psychologically and practically a challenge for those involved in the project.

Fortunately prior to Heini's passing, he and myself had concluded the application procedure to SIDA and had been granted three years of financial support.

Moreover together with several of our governors we had managed to procure a 'Special Grant' from RF, which gave us a large bursary. I was in personal contact with 'Trustee' within RF who administers the 'Special Grant'. Rolf Klärich was at the time chairman in 'Trustee' and we knew each other well and 'Rolle' ensured our interests with the committee.

'Trojkan'

Heini's financial and administrative competency and experience was hard to replace. Heini had after his retirement been able to dedicate himself full-time on the project. While I was doing my daytime job Heini was able to on a daily basis make telephone calls, make reports and manage the financial side among other things. Heini and myself were in close contact on a daily basis.

All important financial decisions were made. SIDA, RF, several authorities and all our Rotary connection were used to be able to contact Heini when required.

Three merited fellows were preliminarily selected as Heini's replacement. A 'Trojka' was formed to manage all finances and administration while I continued being in charge of the medical issues. The three fellows who had each an area of expertise were Carl-Arne Tydén, Per Lundbeck and Sven Sering. Sture Lundin was later added to the group as a technical expert.

After six months Sven Sering left for Skåne in the south of Sweden where he shortly after passed away. There were only Carl-Arne Tydén, Per Lundbeck and Sture Lundin left in the 'Trojkan'. The main medical responsibilities remained with myself. Jan Kinman the ear professor who had worked with the project for several years went in 1987 to Sri Lanka to work locally at AC by KGH. Jan and Bandu then jointly managed the medical responsibilities at KGH. I still had the overall medical and Rotary connected responsibility. We myself, Bandu and Jan jointly held the main medical chief trio. The 'EBBA-group' and the other medical experts were the foundations of the operations at AC that aided us in the management on site.

The Tamils continued their revolt and guerilla groups came to families at night to recruit young men still residing in their family homes. Nightly visits were also made by the governmental army.

The Edussuria family was growing anxious. The son Kapila was at risk. Bandu called me. I contacted the immigration authorities in Sweden to investigate the possibility of bringing Kapila to Sweden to live with me and my wife Gun. After an intense dispute Kapila was finally permitted to come and stay in our family home on Skarpö. Kapila was to complete an intense course in the Swedish language that was to be followed by a Swedish medical education at 'Karolinska Institutet' (KI). We could also arrange for Kapila's young wife Deepthie, who had recently commenced her medical studies on Sri Lanka, to come and stay with us and continue her studies in Sweden. Both Kapila and Deepthie adapted quickly to the changes and put all their energies into their studies. Kapila and Deepthie participated in WRK's 20th anniversary celebrations. Later we received a telegram the Colombo University had reopened after a three-year closure. Former students were then invited to return to their previous plan of study. Kapila who had studied hard in Sweden went to Colombo and passed all examinations and could then continue his further studies in Sri Lanka. Kapila and Deepthie returned home to Kandy. Their presence was missed at our home on Skarpö but both me and Gun were pleased that we had been able to help this young couple.

Medical planning.

Even in the beginnings of this joint project, I could see the potential of the network of specialists accessible through Rotary connections. It was astonishing to see how these incredibly busy people sacrificed their time and energies and shared their extensive experiences and knowledge to lift this project off the ground. There are too many details and amazing charity to declare but needless to say this are grand examples of 'Service above self'.

If it weren't for this extraordinary effort it would have cost 'SIDA' several millions to organize, administer and carry out. Just finding the 'Know-How' needed would prove an immense task that we were able to source through the Rotary network free of charge.

I just want to mention a few of the main people involved - Rotary member and associate professor Ingmar Klockhoff, chief of Children's Audiology clinic at Uppsala University Hospital - Rotary member and professor, Börje Drettner, head of Ear Nose and Throat (ÖNH) Clinic at Huddinge Hospital- Rotary member and professor, Nils Gunnar Toremalm, head of ÖNH Clinic at Malmö General Hospital and Lund University Hospital.

From the very beginning professor Jan Kinnman from Börje Drettners clinic became involved in the planning of the Audiology Centre and he later went to KGH to work on location. Heini was all along the keeping an eye on the administration and the financial evaluations.

Daya Samarasinghe visits Malmö.

In 1985 the Sri Lankan state secretary of the Ministry of Health, Daya Samarasinghe, made an official visit to receive a charity donation of a hospital from the Finnish government. I had to my surprise been informed of this visit by the Sri Lankan ambassador in Stockholm who had called me to arrange a meeting in Sweden with myself and Dr Bandu Edussuriya who the was on his second visit to Sweden . The state secretary wanted us to show him the medical resources available in Sweden that should be made available to the AC in Kandy. The Sri Lankan government was prepared to extend Dayas visit in Scandinavia by 24 hours.

The rush was now on!

We called Nils-Gunnar Toremalm in Malmö/Lund who was able to reschedule his responsibilities in order to accommodate Daya's visit the following day. Bandu, Heini and myself flew to Malmö. The next morning, 7am we were all gathered on the harbor awaiting the ferry that goes between Copenhagen and Malmö. On arrival it was straight onto MAS (Malmö General Hospital) where Nils Gunnar had arranged breakfast and we started our conversations. This was followed by a day packed full with discussions, observations and demonstrations with hearing care and ear microsurgery at its centre as well as educational facilities available.

Afterwards we shared a late dinner, which followed on to Nils-Gunnar's home where we stayed until 2am the following morning. Daya could now give a first hand account to his Minister of Health and thus the plans regarding the AC in Kandy could continue.

Goals for Period II

According to our agreement with Sri Lanka's government, i.e. The Ministry of Health, the Swedish side had to state certain terms conditions that needed to be fulfilled by the project and that The Ministry of Health needed to improve.

WRK's first and most important point was the application and negotiation with SIDA and RF to grant the project sufficient funding.

The medical plans included three main goals:

1. Further development of AC including increased staffing.
2. The construction of an educational centre (EC) at KGH.
3. Commencement of surgical activities leads by a Swedish specialist who was scheduled to work alongside Dr. Bandu and his colleagues for at least one year.

Since >50% of the Sri Lankan children suffered from otitis and hearing impairments the microsurgery was prioritized within the project. Sri Lanka made great investments into Primary Health Care. Among other things was the start up of mobile health units that would be able to provide basic health care to even the remotest parts of the country. These mobile units it was hoped would be able to carry audiological recourses to screen the hearing of children. The Swedish doctor at KGH would assist in the provision of resources needed in educating staff sufficiently.

At WRK it was estimated that the total duration of this new period would last between 1986/87-1992.

SIDA - contributions

Heini was part of the preparation and operation in collaboration with SIDA to make a three-year plan. This meant that WRK could be awarded one years funding amounting to over one million sek. After an approved account by SIDA, we would be optioned for the same support the following year. And if this year worked according to plan we had yet another years support. Hence we could pursue the goals of our medicinal plans.

"Special Grant-drama"

The day before the decisive meeting 'Rolle' Klärich, who then was the chairman of 'Trustee', telephoned me and informed me that a large number of applications had arrived at the same time and that we had to revise our application and express clearly the urgency of our project. We would need to get this to Evanston by 1pm (American time) the following day. 'Rolle' also recommended us to ask for a higher

sum perhaps of one million dollar, which would never be granted but at least it would help to communicate the large need and contribute to larger aid. He added that he wanted to make sure our project got the funding but as a chairman he wasn't involved in the final decision of the 'Trustee'.

It was yet another rushing moment. I managed to get hold of Nils Kågström at Rotary North. If we revised our application throughout the night and returned it to his office by 8am he would try and assist us in getting it motioned in Evanston.

We struggled all night long with changes and additions according to 'Rolles' suggestions. It amounted to 15 pages. We arrived in the morning with our new plan and enquired of how we could access the telex to get it to Evanston.

"No, not telex, we have just installed a new device the fax machine"

None of us had ever heard about 'fax'. One of Nils's colleagues fed our document into the machine and silent wonder was spread among us. The application was posted and Nils had called Evanston. Around 10 30 am the chief secretary in Evanston called. The application had arrived! Around 12 30pm he called again. He informed us that copies had been made and ready for the meeting that was to start within half an hour.

A sigh of relief!

'Rolle' called me later that evening and told me about the meeting with many long discussions concerning the many applications. It had been decided that WRK should be allocated 350 000 US \$ divided in ten installments of 35 000 US \$ over five years.

District conference in Kandy 1987 30th of January to 1st of February

1987 was one of the last years where Sri Lanka and the Indian Tamil Nadu belonged to the same district. A Sri Lankan governor and a governor from Tamil Nadu took turns to make an annual visit of the district. In 1987 the governor of Kandy made his visit. To join in the traditional celebrations one would need to be of a cast. As invited guest I also received a mark on my forehead to illustrate my cast and could thus join the various ceremonies. It was a symbol of the importance of our Rotary collaboration. It was exciting, interesting and memorable to participate and experience the culture.

During the conference questions regarding the forthcoming judicial council were discussed among other things.

There was an animated debate around the question concerning the acceptance of female Rotary members. Present 'Inner Wheelers' were divided. Most found that

IW's independence was good and were pleased with the close relationship with Rotary. But obviously there were some professional women that would have preferred to be active Rotary members.

The final decision was that these women of Kandy got the permission to join Rotary in the same way as their Nordic counterparts.

Choice of Ear Doctor.

The earlier mentioned ear professor, Jan Kinnman, had participated in the role of adviser on most of our preparation meetings during a period of several years.

The Saudi government had turned to Sweden in their quest to find a qualified ear professor to oversee the modernization of the ÖNH clinic in Saudi Arabia. Jan was selected but the Saudi's changed their mind since they wanted someone who was younger. Jan was close to retirement.

Jan had extensive experience of working in Asian countries and when the plans changed regarding his departure to Saudi he offered to assist with only his pension as income in the development of a microsurgery unit at AC and EC. This is yet another example of 'Service above self' and this offered by a person who wasn't a Rotary member.

Realization.

Out of a medical view point the project went according to plan this in spite of a times hard and warlike challenges in the fight between guerilla Tamils and governmental troops. Certain delays in construction and failed deliveries of hearing aids occurred from time to time since the Sri Lankan government could not supply the agreed funding because of the cost of war.

Jan Kinnman made a fantastic effort in his work of developing the Educational Centre at KGH. We knew in advance that Jan was a very skilled educator and also a video maker. Jan wrote compendiums, made several video recordings, which were then made into audiovisual educational means. He also planned and carried out several courses including all fields within hearing and ear care. Jan trained the staff systematically and took assistance of the EBBA-group. Individual earplug production and the education of audio technicians were carried out efficiently and according to plan. The microsurgical education was at the same time introduced and ensures by Bandu and his colleagues.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs' interest in the project

On the trip to Kandy in 1987 Jan Kinnman were to be introduced and "installed" at his year long position as consulting specialist in ear surgery and audiology.

Suddenly a dinner invitation by the Foreign Minister arrives. It is to be held at the most prestigious hotel in Colombo. Outside the hotel it was posted:

"The Minister of Foreign Affairs is holding a dinner for Dr. Otto Ekenberg and associates from Waxholm RK, Sweden. In honor of the meaningful Rotary collaboration with Kandy RC aimed in the aid for children impaired of hearing."

There were approximately twenty present.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed his gratitude over the prestigious Rotary collaboration between Sweden and Sri Lanka. He also expressed his joy of Jan Kinnman's contributions in his work at KGH where now there was finally hope for the children with otitis.

The Minister had heard about Jan's skill experience of eye surgery and from the time when he was positioned at the Nordic Hospital in Korea. The Minister asked Jan if he would be interested in spreading the development of eye surgery and the education of Sri Lankan physicians. Jan thanked him for the trust and honor, but explained that within the current set-up there was no room for expansion. After the meeting Jan and me discussed the matter. Jan foresaw that the expansion of the microsurgery would become just as large as the already running ear and hearing care program on Sri Lanka and considering Jan the current timeframe of his presence on Sri Lanka and his age he felt it would be too hard for him to take on another large project. I supported him 100%. Jan politely explained to the Minister of Foreign Affairs our refusal of his flattering offer.

The administrative and financial responsibility was completely taken over and managed by Per Lundbeck who had Sture Lundin as technical co-worker.

The WCS-committee under PDG Stig Bruse's management worked very well and Rolf Lahnagen, Stockholm Västerled RK, as appointed administrator made great contributions.

IV. Period 3 – Project Conclusion

During period 2 we achieve all our planned activities. This meant the AC and EC had reached the desired standard and size. Sri Lankan technicians were educated at LIC in Stockholm. The education at EC was well regarded due to the excellent educational material that Jan Kinnman had produced. Jan introduced microsurgery and trained Bandu and his colleagues in this huge area of expertise. The entire audiological operation was brought up to current standards.

Our commitments and agreement with Sri Lanka's government regarding Period two was concluded in 1992. Included in this was the plan to spread the knew “ear-and hearing-care” knowledge throughout Sri Lanka.

The government later asked Jan Kinnman if he would consider staying for longer. After renewed considerations and deliberations with Stig Bruse and the WCS-committee Jan accepted. Per Lundbeck had at this point left WRK and Rotary. Jan continued his amazing work without direct or formal support from WRK but naturally did WRK's committee and myself support him fully and warmly.

The Med Lab project was now entering its concluding part and had now involved the Rotarian and senior physician Johan Killander, Danderyds RK, for the final follow up and inspection. Johan also took upon himself to assist in the inspection of our Rotary collaboration with Kandy RC. Regarding medical issues Jan and myself were still in close contact. Our friendship lasted until Jan passed away.

Jan had in the final stage of the project still administrative support from Stig Bruse and Rolf Langhagen in the WCS-committee, who together with Jan and Johan Killander put together the final report and the final accounts.

Jan Kinnman

Many scientific reports were produced by Jan and Bandu and presented at international conferences.

It should be added that professor Tore Lundborg followed our work from start to finish. Tore, who was earlier associated with SÖS (Södersjukhuset) and worked for a long time for WHO as president in IFOS (International Federation of Oto-Rhino-Laryngological Societies).

IFOS is an international Non-Governmental Organization who is connected to WHO.

In 1991 Jan published, through IFOS, ‘Ear-Nose- and Throat Diseases in Developing Countries’

The same year in October wrote Tore Lundborg a long report to Jan about IFOS, which began with:

“This is an official IFOS Agency answer concerning your most valuable information about the Swedish Rotary project to promote ear care in Sri Lanka. Please, accept IFOS congratulations for pioneering efforts, meriting both respect and admiration.

2) IFOS would like to see that the Sri Lanka system would be designated an IFOS global care center, implementing the possibility of later expansion to a WHO center.”

Reports

Throughout the entire duration of the project reports have been made to all involved authorities on all levels, SIDA, RI/RF, WCS-committee, regional and local authorities. The Collaboration between various agencies has during the whole period worked well. No complaints have been brought to our attention.

For those who require comprehensive information are directed to the Waxholm Rotary Club archive where all original documents and reports are stored.

The definitive conclusion occurred on Jan Kinnman's return to Sweden. Jan Kinnman produced an exact and detailed concluding report dated 01/06/1995. It consisted of > 300 pages and was titled: 'HEARING CARE IN SRI LANKA'. The report is an account of the huge and exceptional work that Jan has undertaken during his stay at Kandy General Hospital. Jan also put together the most important accounts of all finances and administrations.

Jan Introduction.

The project 'Hearing care in Sri Lanka' started as a joint undertaking of the Rotary Club of Waxholm, Sweden and the Rotary Club of Kandy, Sri Lanka on the initiative of Dr Otto Ekenberg, Waxholm, Sweden.

After Jan 's 7-page long introduction where he touched on the main parts of the project as well as recognition of the projects participants, he writes:

“It must also be remembered that the whole thing started with

Dr Otto Ekenbergs initiative already in 1979! He has made an outstanding work, and I am happy to conclude: that now all of his ideas have been realized and put into action.”

Appendix 3. WRK's response and thanks to Jan Kinnman

19-04-1995

In 1999 Bandu's daughter, Nimalka, also a physician, came for a visit to Sweden and WRK. Nimalka made reports on the progress of the AC's operations in Kandy. Her husband Dr. Sivakumar reported on the current situation on Sri Lanka in general and answered many of the present fellows' questions.

23-02-2005

Bandu wrote to me and told me of the effects of the Tsunami disaster. He also reported on the conditions at KGH:

"The AC is doing well. We have given about 2300 hearing aids so far in addition to conducting a hearing impaired clinic every week where about 50 children are seen. We have trained 20 audio technicians and 20 speech therapists and they have been appointed to various hospitals in the island. This was a major job handled by Dr. Fernando who helped in the training program. The deaf children's parents have started an organization called the "Kandy Deaf Children's Parents Association" and they are collecting hearing aids as donations for us. That is how things are at the moment".

Otto has on two occasions been awarded by RI/RF the 'Alumni-sign', which is a symbol that indicates that WRK has been operating under the RI/RF and that Otto as project leader has been the "tool" which has represented WRK.

The 'Alumni-sign' is awarded to a club member that represents one of RI/RF's meaningful service sectors. In this case it was awarded due to Otto's chief position in the WRK charity project with Kandy RC.

I'd like to conclude my paper on the Sri Lanka project to give my heartfelt thanks to WRK including all present members and all previous fellows, for all the years we've had together and the trust that has been invested in me as project leader in the realization of the project collaboration with Kandy RC.

Final words.

It has been fun and interesting to pursue the development of the Sri Lanka project for 15 years. We have all tried to keep Rotary's ideals and made use of the Rotary world's enormous "know-how".

With financial support through individual Rotarians and the large funding from the Rotary Foundation and SIDA we have reached our common goal in ensuring Sri Lanka's entry into an up to date modern hearing care.

The Rotary collaboration between Kandy RC in Sri Lanka and Waxholm RK in Sweden has enabled many domestic and international friendships to be formed between Rotarians along with their families and friends. I want to emphasize head ear physician DR. Bandu Edussuriya's devoted and selfless work. Thanks to "doctor Bandu"s contributions our joint project has been able to reach its goal.