

Building Homes, Building Lives

The Mata Amritanandamayi
Math's Community
Housing Project





Building Homes, Building Lives

The Mata Amritanandamayi Math's
Community Housing Project



Building Homes, Building Lives

The Mata Amritanandamayi Math's Community Housing Project

Published by:

Mata Amritanandamayi Mission Trust
Amritapuri PO, Kollam 690546, Keralam, India

Website:

amma.org

© 2026 Mata Amritanandamayi Mission Trust

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, reproduced, transcribed, or translated in any form by any publisher.







Everyone in the world should be able to sleep without fear, at least for one night. Everyone should be able to eat to his fill, at least for one day. There should be at least one day when hospitals see no one admitted due to violence. By doing selfless service for at least one day, everyone should help the poor and needy. It is Amma's prayer that at least this small dream be realised.

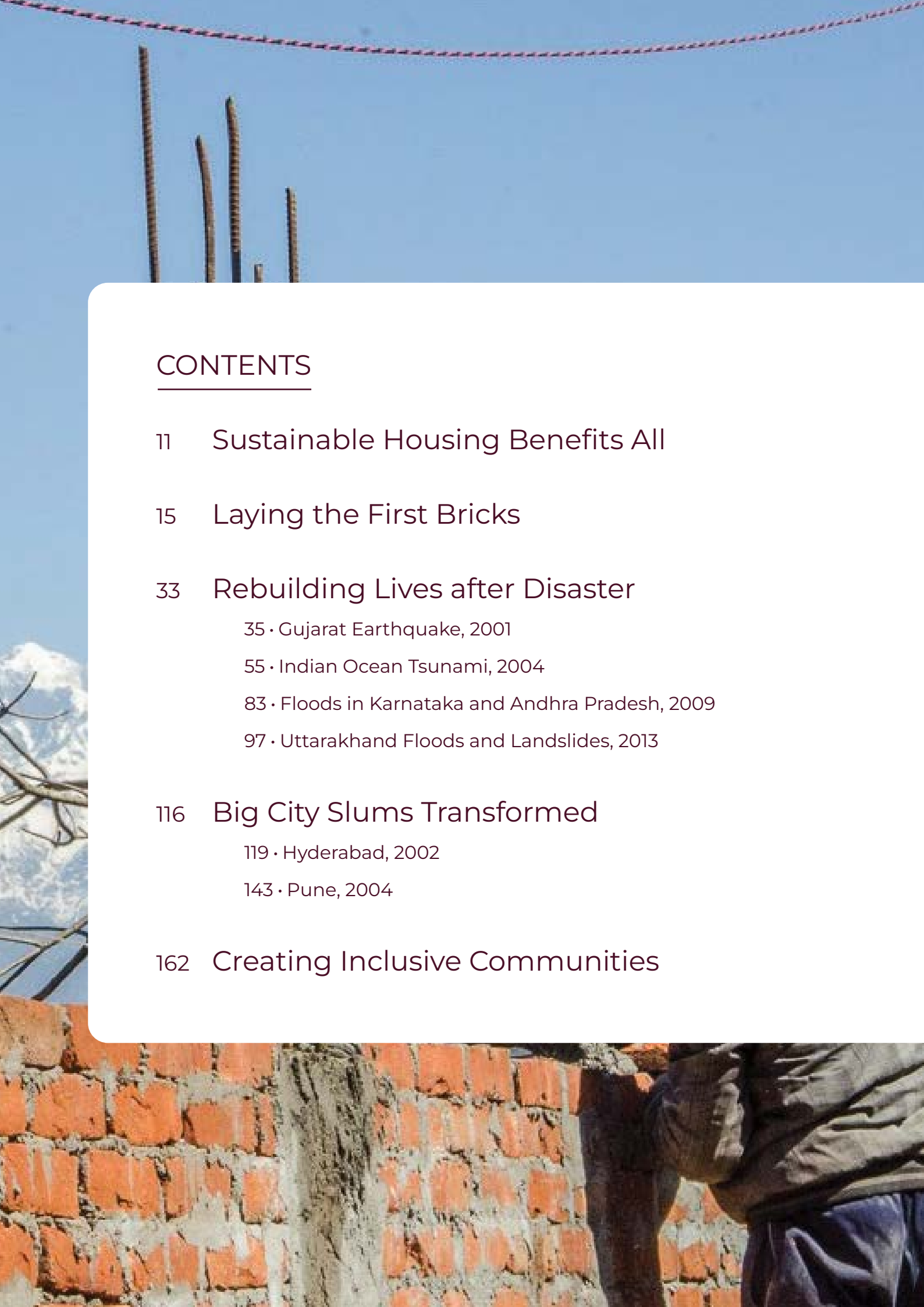
- Sri Mata Amritananadamayi Devi



*Mata Amritanandamayi Math
built 1000 new homes in Raichur,
Karnataka after floods in 2015.*







CONTENTS

11 Sustainable Housing Benefits All

15 Laying the First Bricks

33 Rebuilding Lives after Disaster

35 • Gujarat Earthquake, 2001

55 • Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2004

83 • Floods in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, 2009

97 • Uttarakhand Floods and Landslides, 2013

116 Big City Slums Transformed

119 • Hyderabad, 2002

143 • Pune, 2004

162 Creating Inclusive Communities





SUSTAINABLE HOUSING BENEFITS ALL

Born in 1953 in a poor fishing village in the southern state of Kerala, **Amma grew up surrounded by families who survived with barely a roof over their heads.** During monsoon, many mothers spent entire nights protecting their children from the rainwater that leaked through thatched huts. Seeing this as a young girl, Amma envisioned a world where everyone had safe and peaceful homes.

In 1981, the Mata Amritanandamayi Math (MAM) was established in Amma's birthplace, and **in 1987, monastics and volunteers began building homes for people in the area.** They quickly saw that these people 'in need of shelter' did not at the same time 'need pity'.

In fact, they deserved respect. It had taken great strength to overcome the challenges they faced. Now, with proper homes in which to ground their lives, they were setting an example of what it takes to gather the courage to survive.

In 1996, Amma officially announced a project to build homes for the poor, all over India.

A national advertising campaign for Amrita Kuteeram, which means cottage in Malayalam, stated: "Any person of any religion who does not have a source of income or is destitute may apply, irrespective of his possessing land or not. Destitute widows, women abandoned by their husbands, sick people who are unfit for work, handicapped persons, and destitute elderly people will be given preference."

The request brought an overwhelming response—more than 2,20,000 applications arrived at the Amritapuri Ashram. Brahmacharis coordinated the newly established Housing Office and worked day

and night to classify the applicants in terms of urgency. Small teams travelled to communities, including remote rural and tribal areas, and construction began with the help of local devotees and paid labourers.

Since then, more than 48,000 houses have been built in over 80 locations, including impoverished villages, urban slums, and communities where people have lost their dwellings after floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis. In most cases, it is state governments that have provided the land, and the units commonly have two rooms, a veranda, and a separate bathroom. With an average of six people living in each house, over 2,50,000 people have moved into the safety and comfort of a place they call home.

In 1948, the United Nations stated in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights that everyone has a fundamental human right to housing. As a basis for stability and security, a home should be a sanctuary—a place to live in peace and dignity. For Amma, this means more than constructing houses for individuals. MAM works to build entire communities, complete with town halls, roads, electricity, wells, sewage systems, and clean drinking water.

From a community perspective, stable housing benefits all socio-economic strata by reducing inequality and building resilience against economic crises and natural disasters. A cross-cutting goal in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is an essential driver for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by directly alleviating poverty and leading to support in health, education, employment, and social inclusion.

Housing Projects by Location

More than 48,000 homes in over 80 communities

TAMIL NADU

Amritapuram (Rameshwaram, Ramanathapuram Dt.)
Panagudi (Rosmiyapuram, Valliyoor, Tirunelveli Dt.)
Amirpalayam (Sattur, Virudhunagar Dt.)
Scavanchers Colony (Sivakasi, Virudhunagar Dt.)
Aruppukkottai (Virudhunagar Dt.)
Kollencode, Kaliyakavila, Marthandam, Kuzhitturai, Kulachel and Kanyakumari
Ettimadai, Nallampalayam and Madukkarai (all in Coimbatore Dt.)
Arikkambedu and Vellanur, Ambathur, Avadi and Maduravoyal (all in Tiruvallur Dt.)
Ernavur, Karikattukupam, and Kovalam (Chennai Coastal Region)
Ramabelur, Pinjumedu, Satyamangalam (all in Erode Dt.)
Kumbakonam
Pudukkuppam
Villages in Cuddalore, Kanyakumari and Nagappatinam Districts

KERALAM

More than 20,000 houses spread throughout the districts of Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kannur, Kasargod, Kollam, Kottayam, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Palakkad, Pathanamthitta, Thrissur, Thiruvananthapuram, Kodungallur and Wayanad
Village colonies in Thiruvananthapuram (Airport Colony) and Kochi (Ambulangal)
Villages and individual houses in the districts of Ernakulam, Alappuzha and Kollam

KARNATAKA

Hirisave (C.R. Pattana, Hassan Dt.)
Mulki (Mangaluru Dt.)
Hosahalli (Mandya Dt.)
Madhuvanahalli (K.R. Taluk, Mysuru Dt.)
Gandhi Nagar (Mysuru Dt.)
Gokulam (Mysuru Dt.)
Dongrampura and Dirampur (Raichur Dt.)

ANDHRA PRADESH

Gudimalkapur (Mehdipatnam, Hyderabad Dt.)
Film Nagar (Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad Dt.)
Amrita Nagar (Proddatur, Kadapa Dt.)

PUDUCHERRY

Karaikal
Near Deepak Cables
Puducherry Taluk

WEST BENGAL

Puljour Amaravathi and Bidhan Nagar
(Durgapur)
Amritabati Housing Colony (Durgapur)
Panihatti (Kolkata)

RAJASTHAN

Sanganer, Jaipur Dt.

UTTAR PRADESH

Telibagh (Lucknow - New Brindavan Yojana Dt.)
Koraon (Mirzapur Dt.)
Pratap Nagar (Ghaziabad Dt.)

MADHYA PRADESH

Piplani, near SOS Village (Bhopal Dt.)

GUJARAT

Dagara, Mokhana and Modsar (Bhuj, Kutch Dt.)

MAHARASHTRA

Ajanta Nagar (PCMC, Pune Dt.)

UTTARAKHAND

Siror (Uttarkashi Dt.)
Bhatwari Sunar, Nag Jagai and Chunni
(Rudraprayag Dt.)

ODISHA

Baleshwar
Bhubaneshwar

ANDAMAN ISLAND

Bamboo Flat and Austinabad, South Andaman

SRI LANKA

Thekkawatta
(Kalutara District, Western Province)
Periyanilavanai
(Ampara District, Eastern Province)





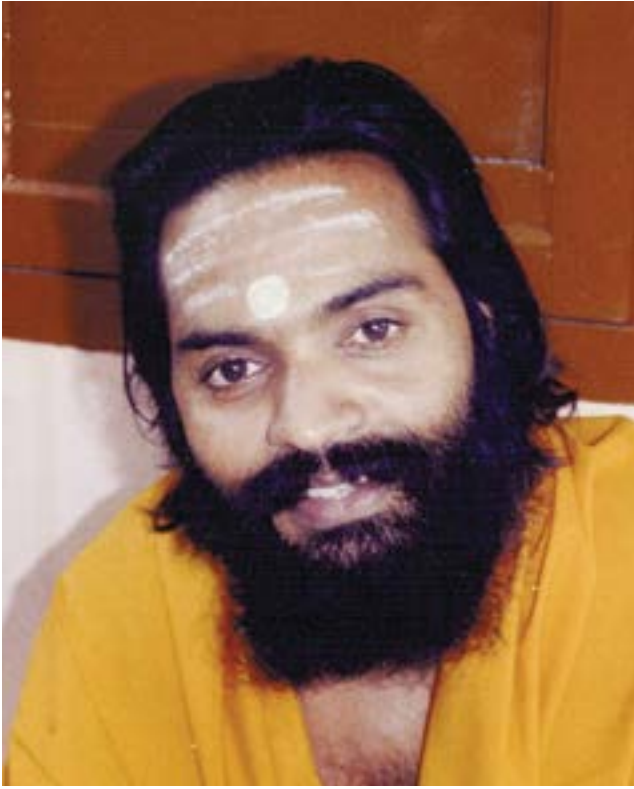
LAYING THE FIRST BRICKS

Amma entrusted her elder sister, Smt Kasturi, to lead the beginning of building homes for the poor with the first houses built in the Amritapuri Ashram area. Construction quickly expanded throughout Keralam, reaching all districts. In isolated, hilly areas, the teams even had to get out and push their vehicles to navigate narrow, slippery roads.

On May 17, 1998, the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, handed over a symbolic key for the first 5,000 houses during the ceremonies to inaugurate Amrita Hospital, Kochi. By 2002, the initial target of 25,000 homes throughout India had been met. Volunteers were deeply moved to see how those in need of shelter suddenly had new lives.



Amma's elder sister, Smt. Kasturi, gives instructions for one of the early homes near Amritapuri.



Swami Prēmāmṛtānanda Puri (left), Swami Sadāśivānanda Puri (right), and Swami Dhyanāmṛtānanda Puri (below), brahmacharis at the time, were among those who formed the Housing Office.



















Pushing vehicles through slippery roads in Idukki, a densely forested, mountainous region which is home to many tribal communities.





In 1998, members of Japan's International Volunteer University Student Association (IVUSA) began to visit on a yearly basis to take part in building homes.









In 1998, Honourable Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee hands over a symbolic key for the first 5000 homes during the inauguration of Amrita Hospital, Kochi.





At Amma's birthday celebrations in 1999, some grateful recipients come to receive darshan. The first 5000 homes were complete.









REBUILDING LIVES AFTER DISASTER

The world is seeing an increase in natural disasters, and with global warming, their frequency and severity will continue to increase. Meanwhile, the destruction of a home leaves people at their most vulnerable. Amma's initiatives begin with immediate aid in the form of medical treatment, food, and emergency shelter, and then transition to long-term relief, including scholarships,

vocational training, and permanent shelter. As a vital factor in this work, MAM has rebuilt communities in India and Sri Lanka to move people from ruin to recovery. Construction includes Gujarat after the 2001 earthquake, India and Sri Lanka after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, Karnataka after monsoon flooding in 2009, and Uttarakhand after floods and landslides in 2013.





Gujarat Earthquake, 2001

On January 26, 2001, Gujarat suffered a devastating earthquake in which 20,000 people lost their lives. Amma immediately dispatched a disaster relief team of 12 doctors, two ambulances, and 100 university student volunteers from Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham. As communities recovered, Amma adopted three completely destroyed villages in the

Kutch District, the location of the earthquake's epicentre. MAM rebuilt 1200 homes from the ground up, as well as community centres, a church, a mosque, and a temple. This included strengthening the building structures in the event of future catastrophes, as well as the revival of community and social infrastructures.













Laying the first stone and performing traditional rites for the beginning of house construction.

















Construction included schools and community centres in each village to provide an infrastructure for bringing the survivors together and educating their children. MAM also built a temple, a mosque, and a church.





In March 2002, Amma arrived at the newly completed villages. Thousands of people welcomed her with their traditional rites. Most were meeting Amma for the first time.













Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2004

The relief and rehabilitation work led by Amma in the wake of the Indian Ocean Tsunami stands today as one of the most multi-faceted, comprehensive, and sustained disaster relief projects ever undertaken by a nongovernmental organisation. What made the ₹200-crore (\$46m in 2006) project unique was its holistic nature—every aspect of the tsunami survivors' lives was considered and improved. Once housing construction began, it went on day and night without

stop. On April 18, 2005, MAM became the first NGO in India to complete government-approved housing for those displaced, and every couple of months, MAM would turn over another batch of about 500 houses. By the end of the project, more than 6100 tsunami-resistant homes were built in Tamil Nadu, Keralam, and the Andaman Islands, alongside another 160 in Sri Lanka.













Keralam











On December 18, 2005, President APJ Abdul Kalam handed over keys to one batch of houses in Alappad, Keralam.





Tamil Nadu

President Kalam also visited a construction site in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu. Born in that state, he expressed gratitude for the building of new homes for poor fishing families there. It was MAM's largest rebuilding project after the tsunami.

















Andaman Islands



In the Andaman Islands, the first 200 homes were built in Bamboo Flat and Austinabad.



Sri Lanka

On February 23, 2007, Amma handed over the key for 100 houses to Sri Lanka's Honourable President, Sri Mahinda Rajapaksa.

MAM constructed apartment buildings in Thekkawatta, Kalutara District and Periyanilavani, Ampara District.









Flats in Periyaniyanai, Sri Lanka.







Floods in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, 2009

The unprecedented floods in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh destroyed lakhs of hectares of crops and displaced 25 lakh (2.5m) people. Amma initiated a ₹50-crore (\$10.7m in 2009) relief package including medical care, food, supplies, and homes for the displaced. Housing construction took place in the Raichur District of Karnataka where people

from four villages lived on an island in the River Krishna. The 1000 new homes were built on the mainland high enough to avoid future flooding, yet close enough for access to the river as a community water source. MAM also provided the survivors with interim shelter and livelihood by hiring them in the hundreds for housing construction.





























Uttarakhand Floods and Landslides, 2013

Extremely heavy rains led to floods in the mountainous state of Uttarakhand and caused major landslides. More than 5000 people were killed and many homes were destroyed. MAM immediately held medical camps to treat the injured. Soon after, Amma launched a ₹50-crore (\$8m in 2013) relief and rehabilitation project. She pledged

construction of 250 houses in the districts of Rudraprayag and Uttarkashi, a challenging undertaking given the terrain. In phase two, the initiative focused on restoring schools by demolishing damaged classroom buildings and rebuilding modern facilities complete with tables and benches. The children had been used to sitting on the floor.







































BIG CITY SLUMS TRANSFORMED

Amma has led construction of apartment blocks for families who used to live in precarious makeshift dwellings. Her initiative included homes for 900 families in the outskirts of Hyderabad, Telangana in 2002, and 700 families in Pune, Maharashtra in 2004. Each unit is a solid structure built with proper plumbing, running water, and electricity. Since the residents do not need to pay rent,

their income can be used to establish a better quality of life. With a home to study in, children can pursue a formal education, and adults, especially women, have a stable base from which to start home-based businesses such as tailoring. After construction, MAM's support continues through tutoring for children, adult education, and weekly medical checkups.







Hyderabad, 2002

In 1999, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sri Chandra Babu Naidu, came to Amma during her programme in Hyderabad and asked if MAM would help construct proper housing for families living in two of the city's major slums. Amma went there to visit the residents and promised to help. In the larger one, a fire had destroyed where the people previously lived, so they were in makeshift

huts they built themselves, mostly from plastic and cardboard. The second location was an abandoned construction site which did not even have water supply and electricity. By 2002, MAM completed 900 new homes in low-rise apartment blocks, two or three storeys high, complete with road access, water tanks, and electricity, as well as bore wells for water supply.

















Brahmachari Śrīdāmṛta Chaitanya, Br Rajesh at the time, was part of the team in Hyderabad.



































Pune, 2004

The neighbourhood of Ajanta Nagar was spread across eight acres as a mass of walls made from stone, mud, or scrap material with roofs of rusted iron sheets and plastic thatch. Amma began a partnership with the Maharashtra state government to build 11 blocks of five-storey apartment buildings, and 700 families moved into sunny new homes with proper plumbing, water, and electricity. Having come from the slums, they needed

support to transition into mainstream society. Meals were provided on a regular basis, as well as medical camps to support health and well-being. MAM also supported education for the children by giving school supplies and holding tutoring sessions on Sundays. The classes were open to children from surrounding slums as well, as many were dropping out before 8th standard, especially the girls.







































CREATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Through her house-building initiative, Amma has also established housing colonies in city outskirts and villages across Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Keralam, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. This is more than a list of locations. These are actions that have freed families from makeshift housing and homelessness—conditions that put their lives

at risk every day. It was how they grew up. It was all they knew. Beyond providing shelter, these homes have helped the people establish new individual and community identities rooted in their cultural traditions. From the larger perspective, having a place to call home instills a sense of worth as citizens who have the right to be recognised in society.



Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu





Vellanure, Tamil Nadu



This location is focused on providing homes for people with disabilities, especially caring for the blind.





Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu





Durgapur, West Bengal





Kolkata, West Bengal





Mysuru, Karnataka





Hirisave, Karnataka

A community centre,
dining hall, & skills training centre



Sri Ganapati Temple



Ernakulam, Keralam





Pradhatur, Andhra Pradesh





Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh









Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh





Jaipur, Rajasthan





Bhubaneswar, Odisha

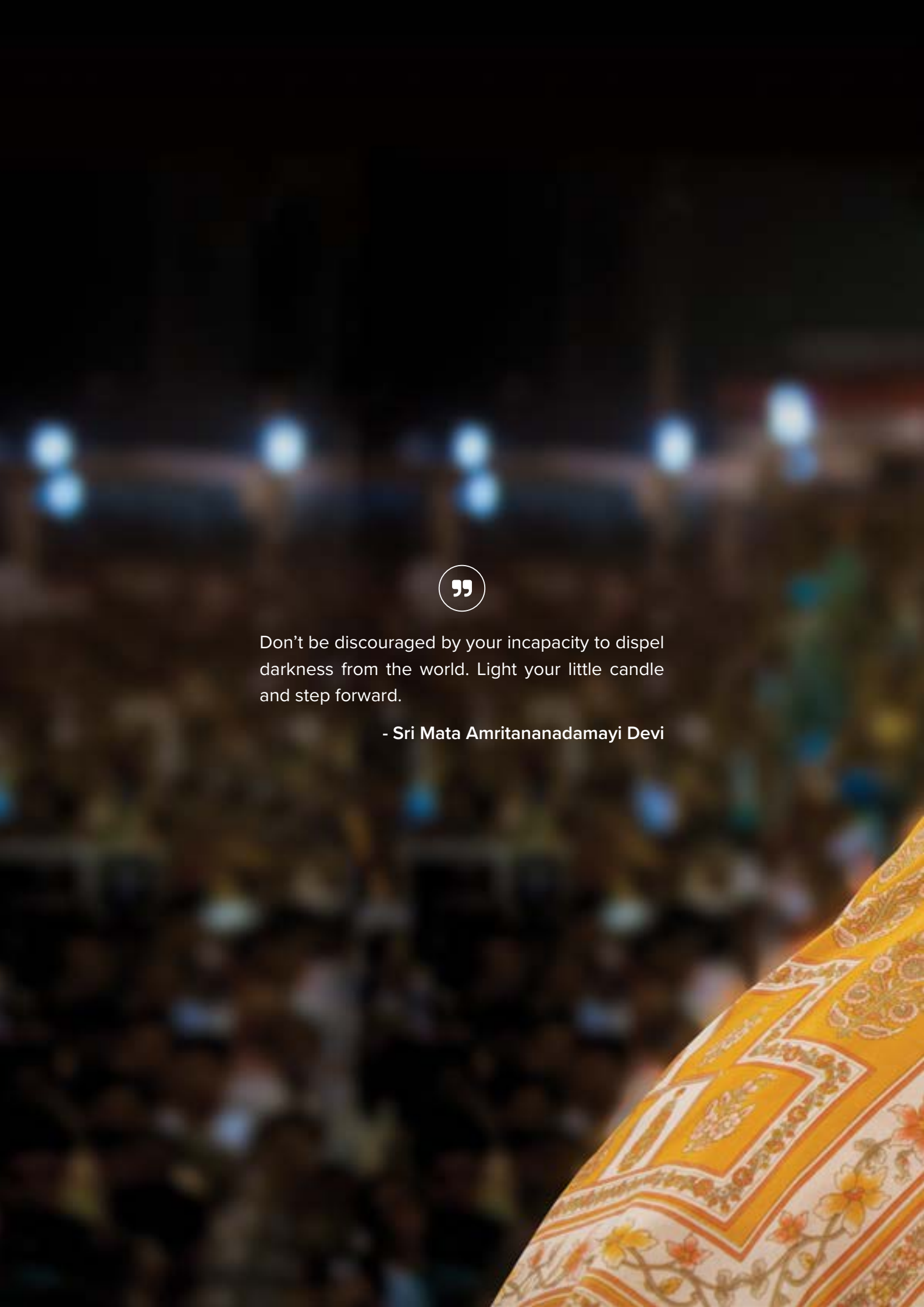




Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh







”

Don't be discouraged by your incapacity to dispel darkness from the world. Light your little candle and step forward.

- Sri Mata Amritananadamayi Devi





Mata Amritanandamayi Math
Amritapuri PO, Kollam 690546,
Keralam, India



amma.org

UPDATES ON AMMA'S INITIATIVES



Mata Amritanandamayi Math
Amritapuri PO, Kollam 690546,
Kerala, India



amma.org
UPDATES ON AMMA'S INITIATIVES

