

Annual AID Conference, Boston, MA. May 27-29

The 2000 AID US Conference, hosted by AID, Boston from May 27th to 29th, 2000 at MIT, Cambridge was attended by volunteers from AID chapters across the US. The conference included discussions about new initiatives in AID, talks by eminent social workers, workshops, presentations by individual chapters and discussions about administrative issues and the state of AID.

Among the guest speakers was Ms. Nafisaben Barot from Utthan, Gujarat. She shared some of her experiences in working on water issues in Kutch and Saurashtra. Dr. Kamaljit Bawa from the organization ATREE discussed the issue of deforestation and told the audience about ATREE's conservation efforts in Karnataka. Noted activist Mrs. Mythili Sivaraman talked about women's empowerment.

New initiatives discussed included the 100 Block plan from the All India People's Science Network (AIPSN), the AID "Saathi" stimulated volunteer program, and the India's yearly dollar program, a unique fundraising idea proposed by AID Columbus. There were workshops on micro credit schemes, marketing of village products, the project review process in AID, sustainable living, campaign strategies for activist issues, theater and women's empowerment.

The AID General Body Meeting included a discussion on the "State of AID" and provided an overview of the legal and financial status of AID. Discussions on new initiatives, problems and lessons

Sevalaya's Goshaala funded by AID

AID Pittsburgh has recently funded the setting up of a Goshaala (cowshed) at Sevalaya., in Kasuva village near Chennai. The picture was taken during the inauguration of the Goshaala on 25th June, 2000. Sevalaya provides housing, food, and health-care facilities for more than 150 orphaned children in and around Kasuva village. AID Columbus has also funded the construction of a borewell in Sevalaya, to facilitate cultivation of crops and vegetables. The dairy and farm products will be used for self-consumption in the orphanage and for generating extra income by marketing these products.

- Raju and Neelu Patil, AID Pittsburgh



AID General Body Meeting in session at the AID US conference held at MIT, Boston from May 27 to 29.

learnt, and what the future holds for AID were also held. Administrative improvements including a plan to decentralize the activities of AID among chapters were also discussed.

Finally, there was entertainment with a message, including a dance performance by Aparna Sindhoor and a skit written by Aravinda Pillalamarri and performed by AID volunteers. The conference was a truly inspiring and learning experience for all.

The conference proceedings is available at

http://www.aidboston.org/events/conf_2000

-Aditya Bedekar, AID Pittsburgh

Inauguration of the Goshaala, funded by AID, at Sevalaya in Kasuva village, near Chennai



News and Notes

World Environment Day in Ann Arbor

AID-Ann Arbor celebrated the World Environment day with a painting contest for children and a talk about Indian Wildlife by conservation biologist Vivek Menon. Vivek Menon, author of the book 'On the Brink' and co-founder of the Wildlife Trust of India shared stories, accompanied by magnificent photographs, of his adventures in the wilds of India. The event concluded with Vivek distributing prizes to the winners of the painting competition.

-Priya Sundaravalli, AID Ann Arbor

Where Women Have No Doctor

The Hesperian Foundation (<http://www.hesperian.org>) is an organization committed to improving the health of people in underdeveloped communities by making health information accessible in different languages. AID-Bay Area has received a grant from the foundation for producing a Tamil version of a book co-authored by Jane Maxwell, "Where Women have no Doctor". Maxwell's talk to AID, Bay Area on the 8th of June, 2000 described how the book has helped empower health workers worldwide and even forced governments to make changes in healthcare policies.

-Aradhana Janga, AID Bay Area

Bharatanatyam recital in Boston

AID-Boston continued its support of local artistes with a 2-hour Bharatanatyam recital by Cambridge-based dancer Sunanda Narayanan. The event at MIT attracted about 150 people on Saturday, July 15. A 5-minute presentation before the break highlighted our oldest and newest projects, the primary school in Vanavasi, which we have been funding since 1998, and the Bihar water project, which we funded earlier this year.

-Sriini Veeravanallur, AID Boston

Orissa fund-raiser in San Diego

AID-San Diego in association with CRY-San Diego, organized an Indian classical music concert on July 15, to raise funds for the Orissa cyclone relief efforts. The event featured Ustad Aashish Khan on the sarod, accompanied by his brother Pranesh Khan on the tabla. We made slide presentations about the AID efforts in Orissa, and about AID in general, at the beginning of the concert. The event has attracted many new volunteers to AID San Diego. Many people visited the AID booth outside the auditorium and were keen to know more about AID and our projects.

- Srihari Dukkipati, AID San Diego

AID Video Project

John Mathias, an AID volunteer from Ann Arbor, is producing a video documentary for AID. The video will include coverage of the AID US conference held in Boston in May 2000, and present the activities of various AID chapters both in the US and in India. As part of this project, John is visiting various NGOs in India in August. The videos will feature interviews with AID fellows and with representatives of other NGOs supported by AID. It will also document the status of the cyclone relief efforts in Orissa. Two copies of the video will be available for each chapter in November, 2000.

- Sreekumar Vijaykumar, AID Pittsburgh

Report from Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh

A group of AID volunteers visited the Santakaviti and Ponduru mandals in Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh, in the last week of June 2000. AID had earlier helped set up five women's savings groups in this area. The groups are doing well, with a total savings of Rs.45,000. The AID team started a savings group in a nameless hamlet in the same area. The 15 member group has been named *Bibi Fathima Savings group*, and efforts are on to name the hamlet itself! The enthusiastic villagers hope that this organization into a group will also help them solve their long-standing problems like lack of electricity, difficult access to drinking water etc. The AID team had several informal discussions with the villagers about health care and other issues. The full text report by Ravi Kuchimanchi, with more details about the savings schemes, the availability of health care facilities, cleanliness efforts by local volunteers etc., can be read at <http://astro.princeton.edu/~vijay/Aid/srikakulam.html>

- Rukmini Kumar, AID Pittsburgh

Mark Your Calendar

- AID India run/walk on Sept. 17th 2000, organized by AID Milwaukee in association with India Music Society.
- Welcome for new students of the Carnegie Mellon University, organized by AID Pittsburgh, on Aug 14 and 15, 2000.

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MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO AID

- By credit card, please call (301) 513 0565
- By check, please send in favor of AID to **The Association for India's Development, P.O. BOX 149, College Park, MD 20741**

AID relies solely on your contributions to fund community development projects in India. AID volunteers work hard to put funds to optimal use in project and awareness work. Every project is visited and monitored. All donors receive monthly updates of our projects and activities. To obtain a copy of the current financial statement please write to AID. Documents and information pertaining to AID can be obtained from the Secretary of State for the cost of copies and postage.