

## Health Camp in Srikakulam

Appalagraharam in Santakavita mandalam of Srikakulam district was the venue of a health camp and *mela* on June 24. About 250 people from area villages participated in the event. AID volunteer Dr. Neelu Maghni conducted the health camp and many people lined up (or rather broke the lines) to consult her on their ailments. An exhibition showcased the efforts of the partnership between AID and Grassroot Action for Social Service (GRASS), a local NGO founded by Suryanarayana of Tolapi village.

At the mela, we sold saplings and vegetable seed packets to kick-start agricultural activities in the monsoons. We set reasonable prices to ensure that people would be motivated to plant them and take care of them. The prices were lower than nurseries in Vishakapatnam and Chilakapalem. About 200 saplings in all were sold.

Jeremy, an AID summer camp volunteer at the Bahutula Charitable Trust, measured blood pressure at the health camp. Srihari Dukkupati (AID San Diego) participated in readings of *Where there is no doctor* in Telugu with the children. Difficult words were earmarked for a children's dictionary. Also on display were posters made by AIDers on various health related issues.

The village women's groups were a strong presence

at the mela. Also on show was the Sunday village library. Appalagraharam is one of four villages where libraries were started three months ago. All libraries are flourishing and are now run by the children themselves. This has motivated the children and they were enthusiastically involved in the health camp measuring people's weights. The village youth helped sell the saplings and seeds.



*Dr. Neelu Manghani treats patients at the health camp*

The village women's groups and GRASS organized the camp. More photos of the camp and mela are at [people.qualcomm.com/sriharid/aravinda/health\\_camp](http://people.qualcomm.com/sriharid/aravinda/health_camp)

-- Ravi and Aravinda (AID-Mumbai)

## Meet our Saathis: Swati and Michael

AID recently elected Swati Desai and Michael Mazgaonkar as Saathis. Swati and Michael are social and environmental activists living in Juna Mozda, a tribal village 95 km from Ankaleshwar in the Bharuch district of Gujarat. Swati is a physics graduate. Michael has a degree in textiles engineering. Their families have been deeply involved in the Sarvodaya movement

Swati and Michael moved to Mozda in 1991, with the intention of integrating themselves with the tribal society in the village. Swati started a women's savings group and a very successful *dal* processing industry, both of which resulted in increasing earnings and savings for the village women. Michael researches alternative energy sources like solar, wind, and pedal power. He worked with AID Fellow Ravi Kuchimanchi to make the *bijli* bike a reality. He is now exploring environment friendly technologies such as thermo-acoustic engines and refrigerators. The two also treat villagers for common ailments, and assist them in medical emergencies.

In 1997, they formed the Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti (PSS), an organization dedicated to fighting natural resource depletion and environmental pollution in the *golden corridor*, a stretch between Sarigram in South Gujarat and Baroda. PSS increases awareness about the heavy toxic chemical industries in the golden corridor and their impact on health and the environment. Its activities include translating relevant scientific documents to local languages, participating in public hearings organized by the government, engaging government authorities in dialogue, and searching for alternatives. PSS also contributed significantly to the earthquake relief efforts in Bhuj, and is now involved in long-term rehabilitation efforts.

Swati and Michael's activities are in line with AID's vision of holistic development. The Saathiship enables them to pursue their PSS work full time and provides a unique learning opportunity for AID. They can be reached at [michaelm@arbornet.org](mailto:michaelm@arbornet.org).

-- Girish Bhatt (AID-BayArea)

### ***What is happening in Gujarat?***

AID-Bay Area cosponsored a talk on this topic by Martin Macwan and Gagan Sethi. Martin founded the Navsarjan Trust, a grassroots organization in Gujarat, which focuses on dalit rights. He received the Robert F. Kennedy Award for human rights and the Gleistman Foundation Activist Award for 2001. Gagan is the managing trustee of Janvikas, which provides training and support to NGOs in the fields of social justice, legal education and human rights. Janvikas also works on water management, primary education, housing, and support for traditional arts and crafts. After last year's devastating earthquake, Navsarjan and Janvikas spearheaded relief operations through the Janpath Citizen's Initiative, and are now focusing on long-term rehabilitation of affected peoples in Saurashtra.

The speakers felt that the relief operations lacked sensitivity and marginalized dalits and the poor. The affluent were compensated generously for damages while poorer communities that lost everything received very little help. Talking about reconstruction efforts, they said that such efforts should focus on watershed development, revamping health care and education. Decisions on rehabilitation must be decentralized and taken at the village level. Community participation is crucial and village committees should be formed to participate in decision making. Many small NGOs (a compendium is available) are tackling these issues and should be supported. By networking with each other, these organizations are capable of taking up even large-scale infrastructure projects. It is important to focus on building the capacity of these small organizations. Strengthening them now will help tackle future disasters. For video recordings of the talk, contact Savita@cisco.com.

-- Prashant & Aradhana (AID-Bay Area)

### **More on Michael...**

AID *Saathi* Michael Mazgaonkar gave three inspiring talks in June in Maryland. First, he discussed the earthquake relief efforts in Gujarat. Michael feels AID should seek out NGOs that haven't received any support and should support efforts to analyze the economics of relief efforts. In his second talk Michael described his experiences with alternative technology in the villages. He highlighted the mill made of rocks and sand that the Mozda villagers use to make dal. The mill has increased productivity fivefold. He also shared his experiences with solar cookers, parabolic cookers, and wheelbarrows. Finally, he discussed his life in Mozda and the activities of the Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti.

--Kavita (AID Maryland)

### **Fighting Big Tobacco in India**

Bobby Ramakant, South East Asia Coordinator of the International Non-Governmental Coalition against Tobacco, met AID Maryland volunteers in June. Bobby is a veteran anti-tobacco activist and has been spreading awareness of tobacco ill effects in schools across the country. His latest work is the film *Making a Killing*. Public antipathy in the US has forced tobacco companies to look overseas, and India is a prime target. Tobacco companies are very diversified and use a range of brand names and products to spread their tentacles. Legislation banning direct tobacco advertisement and promotional campaigns is on the table in India. Bobby outlined more ways of fighting the tobacco menace.

-- Kavita (AID-Maryland)

### ***The River and Life: People's struggle in the Narmada Valley***

This book by Sanjay Sangvai is an honest and empathetic portrayal of the efforts of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). It outlines the historical background, core issues, and formative processes of this multi-pronged and tenacious movement in the Narmada valley. Sanjay Sangvai is a journalist who has been writing about the NBA and other people's movements in English, Hindi and Marathi. AID is the exclusive distributor in the US and the book is priced at \$16. To order, please email Tarun at [tarun\\_jain@hotmail.com](mailto:tarun_jain@hotmail.com). Book excerpts are at [www.narmada.org/resources/books/RiverAndLife.html](http://www.narmada.org/resources/books/RiverAndLife.html)

### ***AID Receives Community Service Award***

AID received the 2001 Community Service Award from the Association of Indians in America (AIA), Metropolitan Washington D.C Chapter. Dr. Sam Bathena of AIA presented the award, consisting of a plaque, and a check for \$300. Guests at the award ceremony included Congresswoman Connie Morella and Hon. Alok Prasad, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India. Ashwin Mahesh (Maryland) received the award on behalf of AID and talked briefly about the recent activities and goals of AID.

--Nagini (AID-Maryland)

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