

Vanavasi Ashram Trust

AID Boston has approved a funding of \$2000 for the Vanavasi Ashram Trust, which is working with the adivasis in the Wynad district in Kerala. The Trust runs a school in Ullannoor. There are 41 students in the school who are also provided with free mid-day meals. The children help with the kitchen garden on the school campus to grow vegetables for the school. AID Pittsburgh had earlier approved \$2000 for the Trust. The project that has been approved for funding deals with the implementation of the programs and actions for the educational, social and economic development of the minorities and backward classes and poor people, especially the tribal people. For more details, contact ravi@cdsp.neu.edu.

Personality database

AID-Boston has prepared a database to collect and present information about individuals in social service. The database is available at <http://www.aidboston.org/infocenter/index2.asp>. You can add information about any individual you know, to the database, directly. Whenever you read about someone who you think should be on the database, just go to the web site and add the information. Comments, suggestions on the contents and/or presentation etc. are welcome.

Nari and Ravishankar (Boston)

Latest on Narmada

Speaking after eight days of fast and silence in the village of Domkhedi in Maharashtra, Medha Patkar of the NBA announced the resolve of the *satyagraha* in the Narmada Valley. Men and women from 50 villages that face submergence this monsoon, farmers from Nimad, and students and supporters from Kerala, Madurai, Delhi, W. Bengal, Bhopal and Mumbai were present. Her memorable speech, entitled, "True Development from Narmada: Policy and Strategy" covered the history of the struggle over the past 14 years and the prospects for future. As district officials in both MP and Maharashtra have admitted that land was not available for rehabilitation, the people have no choice but to remain true to their vow "dubenge par hatenge nahin" -- we will drown but we will not move. And so not a single family has shifted house, stored belongings. Each family remaining at home is a *satyagrahi* holding fast to the truth.



On networking and AID

by Ravi, aid@vsnl.com

One of the buzzwords in AID is networking. After spending a year in India I realized that AID should not only think of creating networks, but also discover the already existing network and strengthen it. This will require greater trust and humility for it means accepting existing nets, understanding the importance of each link involved and getting connected. Some of the networks already existing between AID and other NGOs are:

1. Baba Amte the founder of Anandwan has moved from his ashram in Warora to the banks of the Narmada to give support to the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA).
2. Balaji via TNSF (Focus NGO) is networking with Datye who is into alternate energy. Aravinda met Datye in Colombo where he was presenting a paper in the WCD conference (WCD is an ongoing project).

A snippet from the latest issue of Business World...

Years of calculated sloth and indolence have enabled powerful political and social vested interests to divert subsidies adding up to over Rs. 60,000 crore, into their pockets till not much more than a quarter reaches the target groups for whom they originally intended. For instance, various studies have shown that not much more than a quarter of the food subsidies actually benefit the poorest segments of the population. *Did you know that the agricultural landless comprise 60% of the poor in India?*

by Malini, India

AID US Conference – Cassettes available!

The videocassettes of the AID-US conference held in Cincinnati are now available! The sessions for which the cassettes are available are AID Plan, GBM, Chapter coordination, Project Workshop, Chapter Activities, AID Forum, AID India Efforts, Personal Development Session, and Ravi Kuchimanchi's speech. Contact Mukundan, mramani@alpha.che.uc.edu or Satesh, rao.sp@pg.com for copies.

Latest on Narmada...contd.

If the valley survives this monsoon, and convinces the authorities to review the Sardar Sarovar in a new tribunal in which their voices also are heard, there will be major work ahead in implementing just and sustainable development in the tribal villages. Medha tai concluded her speech calling for a minimum of 50 people who could dedicate at least one year to the Narmada Valley.

Can you work for development in the Narmada Valley? Please contact Ravi or Aravinda at aid@vsnl.com.

To learn more about the struggle and also to lend your support for the cause, visit http://members.tripod.com/AID_SC/nba

On networking and AID, contd.

3. Sandeep Pandey, one of the key movers of ASHA, helped with education for the children of construction workers via Vivekananda Samiti, IIT-Kanpur. This later became an AID project and expanded to the Lodhar Village effort (Focus Village). Sandeep is the key person behind the Global Peace March and is using the AID slide projector to help with awareness and education in villages on effects of radiation.

4. Anand and Michael of the Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti (recent project of AID) attend meetings of the NBA whenever they are in Mumbai.

Reports from the chapters

AID Columbia Food Festival

by Vinod, vinod@cs.sc.edu

A heavy thunderstorm did not deter our efforts to flag off success and we did it. We had a total of 120 people show up for the AID Columbia Food Festival held on July 11. The response at the venue was so good that none had any glitches about the quality and quantity of food and I am sure we have won the trust of all attendees. It has been a great start and AID Columbia needs to gear up with activities in projects and I am sure that we would do great work for the kind of spirit and dedication we are upholding.

Candle light vigil

by Priya, priya@engin.umich.edu

The Candle Light Vigil to support the Narmada Cause on July 12 went off smoothly and successfully in Ann Arbor. About 18 of us gathered outside the Graduate Library, made on the spot posters, hung them on our T-shirts with double side tape, and passed the petition letters around. Reports by Priya Sudarsan and Nishant Jain marked the event. A resolve was made to educate ourselves about the Narmada Valley issue, keep up to date with the latest news, and continue bringing awareness to this issue.

Reports...contd on column 3

Upcoming events

1. AID Blacksburg is planning a dinner on 7/31 for about 50-60 people. AID volunteers will make the items, and there would be about 10 items in the menu. The charge is \$5 per person. For more details, contact Sivaram (sivaram@vt.edu).

2. Dr M P Parameswaran of Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) will be in NE USA until Aug 5. If you want to contact him, call (301) 513-0565.

Reports...contd from column 2

Talk by Satinath Sarangi

by Prasad Subramanian, psubrama@mahanadi.nrl.navy.mil

Satinath Sarangi, an activist from Bhopal, gave an absorbing talk about the Bhopal disaster and its aftermath on July 19. He is currently touring the US to give talks as part of an awareness campaign on the 15th anniversary of the Bhopal disaster. Activists around the world are joining hands with the people of Bhopal to plan an international day of action on the 15th anniversary of the Bhopal gas disaster. Wherever you live, we invite you to be a part of this international campaign. For more information on how to participate, please visit <http://www.bhopal.org>, <http://www.essential.org/action>.

Association for India's Development (US and UK) and AID-India rely solely on your contributions to support developmental projects in India. Please donate generously. Visit <http://www.aidindia.org> or email info@aidindia.org for more info on AID.

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