



Health for All – A Movement in the making

“Health for All by 2000!” In 1978, 134 countries of the world declared their resolve to provide health access to their entire populations. In India in 2000, the agenda stands betrayed, with hundreds of millions lacking access to basic healthcare. People’s movements and organizations seek to change this with a move that has the potential for revolution.

Dhaka, December 4-8, 2000. The international People’s Health Assembly. Grassroots health workers and NGOs from different parts of the world will come together to take over the *Health for All* agenda and implement it through community healthcare.

How is India responding?

Under the initiative of All India People’s Science Network (AIPSN), several important movements and organizations have joined in a coordinating role – like Community Health Cell, Medico Friends Circle, National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM),

and ACHAN - with about 1000 organizations participating.

The aim: To mobilize local communities in 100 blocks in 100 different districts all over India, to implement a model community health program starting in early 2001.

Key aspect: The program will be implemented by a committed set of on-the-foot village health workers. Each of these women will work with fellow-villagers to rediscover health as an integral part of community. She will be entirely supported by herself or the village, thus promoting self-reliance.

The challenge: To inspire thousands of ordinary untrained village women to commit to health work and to provide them the necessary basic training in knowledge and approach.

But how? In a unique build-up to the Dhaka meet, through *kalajathas* (street-theater), house visits and seminars at block and village level, thousands of volunteers will be mobilized, in addition to motivating whole villages to take up health agenda. This process will be nationally coordinated (see schedule).

When and where?

Apr 7-9: National campaign workshop, Hyderabad
Adoption of the campaign plan.

June 8: Health campaign kick-off, Coimbatore.

Jul-Aug: Village and block-level enquiry – house visits, assessing Primary Health Centers.

Sept-Oct: Collation of enquiry results, block and district level seminars for volunteers, presentations to officials, policy-makers.

Sept-Oct: Street-theater (*kalajatha*) at village level to mobilize volunteers, motivate villagers and raise development issues.

Nov 26-28: State-level conferences.

Nov 29-30: Trains from various states converge to Calcutta with 2000 activists.

Dec 1-3: National Health Assembly, Dhaka Chalol

AID is considering proposals for significant financial support to the “AIPSN 100 Blocks Plan”. Balaji Sampath, AID Fellow and TNSF volunteer, is State-level coordinator for the health campaign in Tamil Nadu. Ravi Kuchimanchi attended the National workshop at Hyderabad. AID is encouraging friendly NGO’s to join the national campaign. Contact: Balaji: kb@eth.net

Balaji Sampath in the U.S.!

Balaji Sampath, working fulltime in India on an AID Fellowship since 1998, will visit the U.S. from May 15th. He will talk to AID chapters and other U.S. based organizations on a packed tour.

Balaji will speak about his experiences working with the Tamil Nadu Science Forum, as well as future plans related to the nation-wide health and overall development campaign of AIPSN.

Don't miss his talk in a chapter near you!

For updates, see www.aidindia.org

Conferencing with AID – May 27-29

Continuing the pattern of College Park 1997 and Cincinnati 1999, AID volunteers, social workers from India and enthusiasts for India’s development will be spending the Memorial Day weekend at the *AID US Conference 2000* in Boston. Participants will discuss development concepts, action plans and volunteering ideas; AID will review its organizational progress and chart future course.

Besides Balaji, invited speakers include Nafisaben (Utthan, Guj., water management), Mythili Sivaraman (AIDWA, Chennai, women’s organization), Prof. Bawa (A-tree, forest resources).

All are welcome! Please register: www.aidboston.org

Snippets

✂ **Welcome AID chapter Down Under.** Eight enthusiastic Sydney-siders joined the AID family with their first meeting on April 9th. In their first fundraiser, *Pattachitra* designs by Narendra Bhoi, Orissa cyclone survivor, will be used to make cards from handmade paper and vegetable-dyes. Contact: nagini@hotmail.com

✂ **Prasad Subramaiam**, one of the key coordinators of AID's Orissa cyclone relief efforts, has returned to India. He will spend one month on a detailed trip to AID supported efforts in Orissa.

Distress in Umbergaon

July in AID 1999 carried the story of Kalpavriksh, the remarkable model organic farm of Bhaskar Save, visited by AID volunteers Venkatesh, Ravi and Aravinda. In a sad development, the farm is now under threat of destruction due to the big port planned at Maroli. Rich agricultural lands as well as the fish and marine life that forms the livelihood of 50% of the population, will all be destroyed, affecting lakhs of people.

Local people have been protesting for 15 months against this Rs.2600 crore port being built by U.S. company UnoCal. In an event that shocked the activist community, local leader Col. Pratap Save, succumbed to brutal injuries in police custody. After Bhopal and SSP, will India learn to heed the concerns of local people FIRST?

Petitions at: www.indiatogether.org

Abhiyan: An expedition to normalcy

Abhiyan, an NGO working incessantly in cyclone-ravaged Orissa, organizes self-help groups, runs schools for children (*Balwadis*), rebuilds roads and houses, and distributes food — all through active community participation, and especially through its food for work initiatives. Venkatesh Iyer, an AID fulltimer interested in promoting alternative technology through community participation, visited Purushothampur village and confirms *Abhiyan's* high quality of work.

In a special collaboration, Venkatesh brought techniques of bamboo construction from groups in Kerala, to help *Abhiyan's* efforts to rebuild houses after the cyclone.

Abhiyan is now organizing villagers to construct around 650 bamboo houses in Purushothampur, Goda and Sompur in Orissa. AID approved \$7,500 for the project. ✂

Back to Bio-Gas

Jnana Prabodhini, an NGO based in Pune, has been engaged in rural development through meaningful education since 1965. It was founded by Dr. V. V. Pendse, an educationist inspired by Swami Vivekanda's vision of a vital social intelligence engendered by educating the gifted in all strata of society. The organization is currently engaged in education, health, training in the use of machine tools and computers, youth organizations and research in the social sciences.

Jnana Prabodhini is simultaneously tackling unemployment amongst rural youth (and consequent migration to cities) and the decline in the use of bio-gas techniques. Training for Bio-Gas technicians will include maintenance and repair of Bio-gas plants, design, installation and service procedures, and tips on troubleshooting. The farm operator would be trained in rotating crops, using and maintaining improved agricultural tools, and improved farming methodologies. AID-Pittsburgh approved \$3,300 for the Bio-Gas technician training. ✂

Learning to Speak, Learning to Listen

"How do we know what the people we are working with want? In development work, we are often working with people in circumstances totally different from ours. Part of the process of training ourselves to work with others effectively is to humble ourselves, learn from their experience which would otherwise be inaccessible to us as our own patterns of university-style development is to them."

L.S. Aravinda, who has been working fulltime for AID in India since June 1998, spoke to audiences across the U.S. during March and April 2000 in a series "*Learning to Speak, Learning to Listen*." How are women's voices heard on the issue of large dams? What is heard and what is silenced in a district meeting, Supreme Court session or a World Commission of Dams hearing? In another setting, at the island school at Rajahmundry (A.P.), how do you convey the concept of India to children whose notion of Andhra Pradesh is a place where English is first language? Aravinda's talks brought out her experiences where she learned to see something differently, to recognize the flaw in what is taken for granted. ✂

Aravinda can be reached at: aravinda@unforgettable.com

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